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## Crown decision the right one for the people of NSW, and to prevent money laundering

The Alliance for Gambling Reform has applauded the [decision](#) to refuse Crown Casino the ability to open its Barangaroo casino ahead of the findings of the Bergin Inquiry.

The Bergin Inquiry has revealed multiple concerns about Crown's fitness to hold a casino licence in NSW, and thus also in Victoria and Western Australia.

Alliance Chief Advocate, the Rev Tim Costello, said evidence presented at the inquiry should be of major concern to the governments in states where Crown operates, or hopes to operate.

"The revelations coming out of the Bergin Inquiry have been nothing short of astonishing," Rev Costello said. "The words that come to mind are dodgy, shady and shonky. What a disgrace Crown Casino's operations in Victoria have been. NSW is right to stop them from opening.

"The money laundering evidence has been particularly concerning. We are talking about the proceeds of crime being cleaned via an organisation licensed by the government. It's disgraceful.

"We've been calling for a Royal Commission into Crown, and the gambling industry in Australia more broadly, for years due to concerns over their operations and connections to power. It's justified."

Rev Costello said the evidence presented to the Bergin Inquiry made it imperative proposed changes to poker machine [legislation](#) and regulations in NSW were passed as soon as possible.

"The [cashless gambling card](#) proposed by Minister Dominello goes a long way to limiting the laundering of money via poker machines, something that has been an open secret for decades," he said.

"Even [academic reports highlight](#) poker machines and how effective they are as money laundering tools. There are video recordings of Crown accepting shopping bags full of cash for laundering.

"Every day in poker machine venues around NSW, hundreds of thousands of dollars are put into machines and very quickly cashed out, minus a few dollars, cleaning drug money and other proceeds of crime, not only legitimising crime, but costing forgone tax dollars on other black money."

A cashless gambling card would also have the benefit of helping people struggling with gambling.

"This proposal has positives all around, and you really have to question why anyone, especially the gambling industry, would push back against it," Rev Costello said. "Isn't reducing money laundering and gambling harm at the same time a real winner? Surely local pubs and clubs don't want to be part of the problem, when they can be part of the solution?"

"There is a real opportunity for NSW to lead the way with this cashless gambling card, in conjunction with its proposed self-exclusion legislation. Gambling reform in NSW is where it is most needed, as the state with the most poker machines and losses in Australia.

"Wouldn't it be fantastic for them to set the bar much higher in terms of reducing gambling harm, and have the other states follow suit? This is a real watershed moment for all Australians.

"When you consider that around \$12.5 billion a year is lost to poker machines around Australia, you realise how big of a shift this would be, benefitting us all."