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Public urged to make submissions to Crown Royal Commission

The Alliance for Gambling Reform has urged members of the public who have knowledge and/or experience of gambling harm occurring at Melbourne's Crown Casino to take up the invitation to make submissions to the Royal Commission into the casino's operations.

The Alliance has welcomed [today's announcement that Commissioner Ray Finkelstein](#) will accept public and interested organisations' submissions to the Royal Commission, including submissions that "address issues concerning problem gambling, and criminal activity and influence at the Melbourne casino", especially addressing the below two Terms of Reference:

A. Whether Crown Melbourne is a suitable person to continue to hold the casino licence under the Casino Control Act 1991; and

D. Whether it is in the public interest for Crown Melbourne to continue to hold the casino licence in Victoria.

Alliance Chief Advocate, the Rev Tim Costello, said this was an opportunity for people with lived experience of gambling harm at Crown to tell their stories.

"Ever since Crown opened people have called, emailed and approached me, sometimes Crown staff themselves, to tell me about what can only be called predatory operations at that casino, which have led to people experiencing gambling harm," Rev Costello said.

"I'm talking about allegations from free drinks and parking, through to failing to prevent the entry to the casino of people who have taken the steps to self-exclude from gambling there.

"Then there are the exploitative busloads of people, often vulnerable members of our communities, being brought into Crown to gamble. Crown doesn't do that out of the goodness of their hearts, it's because these people lose money there and they profit from that.

"Then there are the family members of people who have experienced harm at Crown who also deserve the chance to share their experiences. Unfortunately some of the family members they will be speaking on behalf of are no longer with us due to how dangerous their harm became.

"I'm so pleased Commissioner Finkelstein has opened up the Royal Commission to hearing about this. It all goes to whether Crown deserves to have a casino licence, which is a privilege."

Rev Costello said the Alliance would make a submission to the Royal Commission, and hoped the many organisations that work in areas intersecting with gambling harm would do the same.

Anna Bardsley, who gambled at Crown frequently before her recovery, said she deeply valued the opportunity to make a submission to the Royal Commission.

"This is a real chance for those of us who have been preyed upon for decades to have our voices heard, and I won't be missing that opportunity," she said. "I hope I will have the chance to not just write about my experiences, but to actually tell my story in person to the Royal Commission.

"I don't think anyone can fully appreciate the consequences of gambling harm unless they hear about them directly from the people who have experienced it. We deserve to be heard, and Crown should be forced to answer for the vulturous behaviour of their business."

Media contact: Rebecca Thorpe on 0491 209 436 or rebecca.thorpe@agr.org.au

See [here](#) for a gambling language guide for journalists.

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