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## **Call for single regulator to oversee casinos around Australia**

The Alliance for Gambling Reform has called for the introduction of a new single, well- resourced regulator for all casinos across Australia. This comes after revelations aired on [Four Corners last night](#) about failings by the Victorian regulator in its oversight of Crown Casino.

Alliance Chief Advocate, the Rev Tim Costello, said it was past time there was coordinated oversight of casinos in Australia via a single regulator.

“As Four Corners revealed, and evidence presented at both the Victorian and Western Australian Royal Commissions has made abundantly clear, state-based regulators are too often toothless tigers,” Rev Costello said.

“Again last night we heard that Crown has, and uses, the resources and the power so that the regulator simply lost its appetite to regulate. The regulator ends up relying on information given to it by the casino about operations that make the same casino many millions of dollars. Who would be surprised if, as was claimed last night, the information was only what Crown wanted the regulator to see?”

“These are very serious issues, and when coupled with the fact the state is regulating a large source of its own income, then matters of conflict of interest must be addressed.”

Rev Costello said gambling was a dangerous, adult product that needed comprehensive regulation and serious oversight to ensure these regulations were adhered to.

“Reports by Victorian inspectors to reduce criminal activity, to prevent money laundering, to stop infiltration by international organised crime, were ignored, blocked and delayed for years, while Crown kept reeling in the profits.

“The Victorian regulator had irrefutable video evidence of bags of money being laundered at Crown and did nothing. When evidence came out through the media, still nothing happened. It staggers me that criminal behaviour in Victoria’s casino was ignored by that state and was only initially investigated by NSW.

“A well-run, well-funded single regulator without conflicts of interest, overseeing casino regulation around Australia would have a much better overview of what’s happening.”

Gambling Reform Advocate Anna Bardsley, who lost time and money at Crown, agreed a single regulator would be an important step forward to reducing gambling harm in Australia.

“I’d like to see a single regulator across all of Australia, coupled with a massive increase in fines for regulatory breaches by the casinos,” Ms Bardsley said. “At the moment, a maximum fine of \$1 million is just a drop in the ocean for them. It’s the cost of doing business, really.

“If they were suddenly getting serious fines every time they breached regulations such as failing to intervene when someone is showing signs of gambling harm, or preying on people with predatory incentives to gamble, they’d suddenly start following the rules a lot more closely.

“Their profits come at a cost to people, a cost to their families, to our communities. That cost is more than financial, it’s a cost of time and opportunity, of health and wellbeing. It’s time we stopped paying those costs.”

**Media contact for Tuesday 6 July: Gordon Ramsay on 0491 209 436 or [gordon.ramsay@agr.org.au](mailto:gordon.ramsay@agr.org.au)**

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