

IMPACT NEWS

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GIS website —
www.gisnsw.org.au



Index

<i>Who will be the one to stop feeding the pokie monster?</i>	1
<i>Society Activities</i>	2
<i>Xenophon's bid to reduce maximum bet on poker machines.</i>	3
<i>Joint select committee to tackle problem gambling</i>	3
<i>Call for review of online gambling</i>	4
<i>Problem gamblers pass on the habit</i>	4
<i>New expert panel to advise Australian Government on its gambling reforms</i>	5
<i>Upcoming events</i>	6
<i>Useful Resources</i>	7
<i>Membership form</i>	8

Exciting Breaking News for the GIS!!!

Kate Roberts, Chairperson of the GIS has been invited to participate as a member of the soon to be formed Ministerial Expert Advisory Group on gambling reform. See Media Release page 5

Who will be the one to stop feeding the pokie monster?

Kate Lahey

September 13, 2010

When Norwegian authorities noticed a rise in problem gambling among poker machine players in 2007, they removed all 15,000 machines from every venue in the country, including shopping centres and cafes.

A year later, Norway reintroduced electronic gambling but with the kind of system that Australia is hurtling towards.

Under a written agreement between the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, and the new Tasmanian independent MP, Andrew Wilkie, to secure his support, the federal government has pledged to introduce a national pre-commitment system for Australia's 198,000 poker machines by 2012.

This will either allow or force players to set their spending limits in advance, and looks likely to shut them out of the system for a period of time when they reach their limits.

Although gambling regulation is the responsibility of state governments, which draw billions of dollars or about 10 per cent of their annual revenue from gambling tax (mostly from poker machines), the Wilkie deal has the federal government seeking legal advice on how it can enforce a pre-commitment system if the states refuse.

Since the deal was struck on September 2, clubs and others in the industry have been determined to point out what they regard as the injustice, needlessness and futility of it.

But the prospect itself should not have come as a great shock. Last year in a draft

report and again in a final report in June, the Productivity Commission recommended the pre-commitment system after finding that about 41 per cent of the \$11.9 billion Australians spend on poker machines each year came from problem gamblers.

It pointed out that regular pokies players were the clubs' "best customers", providing most of the revenue, and it seriously questioned the public benefits that clubs claim to offer. The commission also dismissed concerns about job losses, saying "the presence of jobs in an industry does not mean that those jobs are additional in a net sense".

"The people employed by the gambling industry have skills that are highly valued in the service sector as a whole ... the longer-term employment effects of the gambling industry are likely to be negligible."

Few were talking about gambling during the election campaign. Wilkie was one of the few.

The new Member for Denison, a former intelligence analyst under the Howard government and an Iraq war whistleblower, drives a white, 2000 model Toyota Townace.

On top of his van is a two-metre long electronic ticker that refreshes every second to show Tasmanians how much money they have lost on poker machines in the five months since the state election. It is more than \$100 million and is set to reach \$225 million by the end of the year.

Continued page 2

Continued from page 1

Society Activities

With the upheaval of the election process to form a new government, it was disappointing to find that the Productivity Commission's Inquiry had very little consideration, when it was released in June.

Once again, our hearts sank with the realisation that our efforts, to address the needs of individuals, families and communities, struggling with the impacts of problem gambling, were undermined.

With his push for poker machine reform, and in conjunction with Senator Nick Xenophon, Tasmanian Independent Andrew Wilkie is targeting, in particular, the introduction of uniform pre-commitment - \$1.00 bet limit - smart card technology.

It was, therefore, encouraging to read Wilkie's website today, Oct.4th, and to learn that he "has a commitment in writing, from Prime Minister Gillard, that she will ask the state governments, to adjust their gaming laws to make the changes. If states do not agree, she will look for a legislative way to force them. This is unprecedented in this country", Wilkie concludes.

To add strength to his push to keep this political agenda moving forward, the GIS has given our written support to Andrew Wilkie. Both he and Xenophon have demonstrated that they are leaders with conviction, strength and perseverance; not only with regards to poker machine reform. They need to know that you support them!

So what can you do? You can email a few words of support to Andrew Wilkie at: - Andrew.wilkie.mp@aph.gov.au - or you can accept his invitation and relate your own experience of the impact of problem gambling on you life. To move this debate forward your valid support is vital.

If we choose to remain silent, then we are failing ourselves and all those whose lives have been impacted by problem gambling, and we all know someone, or a family in this dire situation—otherwise you would not be reading this article!

We need People Power to bring about reform. We need People Power to support strong leadership in this political debate.

D. Webb

That's less than the \$3 billion Victorians lose a year in poker machines, and less than the \$5billion NSW players lose.

Among the dilemmas Wilkie faces is that he can't get his van – and its metre-high sign explaining the ticker – into the car park of the office he has taken from the former Labor MP Duncan Kerr. That may turn out to be the smallest of his challenges.

His agreement commits the government to a "full commitment scheme – that is uniform across all states and territories" and with "technology that is expected to have the best chance of reducing problem gambling".

The commission recommended each state and territory implement a system for gaming machines by 2016 which would, among other things, "provide a means by which players could voluntarily set personally defined pre-commitments and, at a minimum, a spending limit, without subsequently being able to revoke these in the set period ... encourage gamblers to play within safe spending and time limits, by specifying default limits ... [and] include the option for gamblers to set no limit on their spending."

Although Wilkie and his political ally, the anti-pokies independent senator Nick Xenophon, insist the intention and sentiment of the deal is for a mandatory system, many in the industry are not convinced that is what Australia is getting.

Between them, gaming companies and club and hotel associations give hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to Labor, and lobbying against a mandatory system is expected to be intense.

When the deal was announced, shares of the machine manufacturer Aristocrat dropped. Tabcorp and Tatts Group were mostly unaffected as the market knows neither will own poker machines after 2012, under licensing changes in Victoria.

Tabcorp plans to manage some gaming rooms for a fee for some venues, but its future is in casinos and wagering.

The Tatts chief executive, Dick McIlwain, recently revealed that he was not sad to be getting out of poker machines, as he considered them a grubby business.

But Tatts could stand to benefit from a pre-commitment system

**Phone
Gambling Help NSW
for information on your
local Problem
Gambling Service
1800 858 858**



INDEPENDENT senator Nick Xenophon has begun his bid to reduce the maximum bet on poker machines to \$1.

He introduced a bill into the upper house on Wednesday that seeks to limit gambling losses, adjusting spin rates to ensure gamblers don't lose more than \$120 an hour.

Senator Xenophon, who won his berth in the Senate on a "no pokies" ticket in 1997, said limiting bets to \$1 a spin will make a real difference after years of inaction.

Programs set up to help problem gamblers after they develop an addiction equated to the "ambulance at the bottom of the cliff approach", he said.

While the \$1 limit will potentially be just an interim measure, he said it would make an impact where so many programs had failed.

Senator Xenophon pointed the finger at the gaming industry, who he blamed for feeding the addiction of problem gamblers.

"Almost half of all profits come from problem gamblers," he said.

"This is an industry without a sustainable business care.

"It's unsustainable unless it is allowed to exploit the addicted."

But governments - both state and federal - were also to blame.

Gamblers lost \$5.4 million in state revenue each day the federal government failed to act on a Productivity Commission report, which recommended the \$1 limit.

Senator Xenophon rejected opposition from the industry, which says the measure will be too costly to implement, and called on his senate colleagues to support the bill.

"The Productivity Commission seems to be saying that we are all crazy unless we act immediately to curb the destruction caused by these machines of misery," he said.

"The time to act is now."

Debate on the Poker Machine (Reduced Losses - Interim Measures) Bill 2010 was adjourned.

News.com.au

New Committee to ensure no backdown on gambling reform

Lauren Wilson, *September 30, 2010*

A JOINT select committee to tackle problem gambling was established yesterday by Labor.

The establishment of the committee honours part of the deal struck with Tasmanian independent Andrew Wilkie to win his support to form a minority government.

Community Services Minister Jenny Macklin told parliament yesterday the government would not back down on its agreement to address the problem, announcing the establishment of a joint select committee on gambling.

Ms Macklin said the government remained committed to addressing "the devastation that can affect individuals and families as a result of problem gambling".

The Prime Minister has agreed to work with the states and territories to introduce a full pre-commitment scheme for poker machines by 2014.

The announcement came as Mr Wilkie and independent senator Nick Xenophon wrote last night to every federal MP warning them of a "misleading" and "highly organised" fear campaign waged by Clubs Australia.

They said Clubs Australia used misleading statistics, including a claim that only 0.5 per cent of Australians were problem gamblers and that a system of mandatory pre-commitment for all poker machines was untested.

"We are not going to let the poker-machine industry muddy the waters with misinformation and half-truths," Senator Xenophon said. "They are not going to slide through this on spin."

Clubs Australia chief executive Anthony Ball denied the allegations last night and said the organisation "absolutely still stands behind everything that it has said in this debate going back the last 10 years".

Mr Wilkie said any backflip on the poker machine agreement would throw in doubt his support for the government in supply and no-confidence motions.

The Gillard government has pledged to implement warning displays and cost of play displays on machines and to implement a \$250 daily withdrawal limit for ATMs with poker machines.

Call for review of online gambling

Sydney Morning Herald

September 22, 2010

Independent Nick Xenophon says a review of gambling must also be extended to include online betting to avoid addicts simply migrating to other gambling sources.

The federal government on Tuesday agreed to establish a ministerial expert advisory group on gambling following a meeting with anti-pokies independent MP Andrew Wilkie.

Senator Xenophon, a long-time anti-pokies campaigner, participated via a phone hook-up from Adelaide.

Under the deal, pre-commitment technology such as smart cards would eventually be installed in every poker machine in Australia to track gambling use and limit losses.

But Senator Xenophon has warned that there must be a holistic approach to gambling addiction if the problem is to be addressed, and has called for there to also be a review of online gambling.

"Obviously you don't want to close down or deal effectively with one problem and another is created,"

Senator Xenophon told ABC Television on Tuesday night.

"I think you'll find the most significant source of gambling addiction in this country is because of poker machines - something like 85 per cent of gamblers."

"But we also need to review online gambling laws so we don't have an emerging problem in years to come."

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Julia Gillard pledged to tackle problem gambling in exchange for Mr Wilkie's support in forming a minority government.

The advisory group, to be chaired by former Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet secretary Peter Shergold, will include problem gambling counsellors, club and hotel representatives, gaming software specialists and academics.

It will provide advice to the government and a yet to be established Joint Select Parliamentary Committee on Gambling on the implementation of gambling reforms.

The government has also committed to implementing ATM withdrawal limits in venues with poker machines, excluding casinos, and poker machine dynamic warning and cost of play displays.

Problem gamblers pass on the habit

Jason Dowling *October 4, 2010*

CHILDREN of parents with a gambling problem are at least 10 times more likely than their peers to develop gambling problems later in life, new research has found.

The research shows the effect of parental problem gambling on children is much greater than previously understood, leading to calls for urgent government action.

The new findings, outlined in the recently released report *Children at Risk of Developing Problem Gambling* paint a disturbing picture of the influence problem gambling parents have on their children.

It found the children of a father with a gambling problem were 13.5 times more likely to develop a gambling problem than their peers - for a mother with a gambling problem the children were 10.6 times more likely. Previous research had indicated the children of problem gamblers were two to four times more likely to develop gambling problems.

Disclaimer:

The views and opinions contained in this newsletter are not necessarily the views and opinions of GIS (NSW) Inc.

"A lot of it actually starts off as card playing at home or accompanying parents while they are betting on the dogs or the track or the TAB," report co-author Professor Alun Jackson from Melbourne University said. "Parents are the people who introduce them [children] to gambling."

The report took 2½ years to produce and involved national surveys with 3953 adults, 612 secondary students and 823 students aged between 18 and 25.

Professor Jackson said parents have to look carefully at how tolerant they are of gambling activity.

"I think the implications of our study are that great caution should be exercised in going down a road of family friendliness [in relation to gambling]," he said.

"I think the implications of our study are that great caution should be exercised in going down a road of family friendliness [in relation to gambling]," he said.

"The sort of message being targeted in campaigns like kids absorb your drinking, is exactly the sort of message that we think should be given in relation to gambling as well."

The InterChurch Gambling Taskforce's Mark Zirnsak said the results were "a wake-up call around the harm that gambling is causing to children, as well as the gamblers".

Continued page 5

Continued from page 4

He said it countered the gambling industry's argument that gambling was a personal choice. "This is highlighting it affects their children as well, these children aren't given a choice," he said.

The report was commissioned by Gambling Research Australia, a body established by Australia's state and territory gaming ministers to manage national research.

Spokeswoman for the Brumby government, Rebecca Harrison, said Victoria's laws were designed to ensure "that minors are neither encouraged to gamble nor allowed to".

But she said it was "up to parents to set a good example" for their children: "Parents can decide for themselves where to take their children and if they are comfortable with dining in or attending a venue that also offers gaming."

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Media Release
JENNY MACKLIN MP
Minister for Families, Housing,
Community Services and
Indigenous Affairs
BILL SHORTEN MP
Assistant Treasurer
Membership of the Ministerial
Expert Advisory Group on
Gambling announced

Twenty-two people have been selected to advise the Australian Government on its gambling reforms through a new expert panel.

The Ministerial Expert Advisory Group on Gambling, chaired by Professor Peter Shergold AC, will provide specialist and technical implementation advice and play an important role in assisting the Government to deliver its gambling reforms.

The Government has invited 22 representatives to join the Ministerial Expert Advisory Group from:

- problem gambling counselling and support services;
- clubs, hotels, casinos and gaming machine manufacturers;
- the Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union; and
- research and academic institutions that specialise in understanding problem gambling behaviour and harm minimisation measures.

The group will consider key issues such as the implementation of a best practice, full pre-commitment scheme on poker machines, the roll out of poker machine dynamic warning and cost of play displays and establishing ATM withdrawal limits in venues with poker machines (excluding casinos).

The group will be guided by the latest evidence on gambling and will seek advice from other stakeholders where necessary.

The group will meet for the first time in early November. They will provide advice to the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Assistant Treasurer regularly, through the Secretariat and the Chair.

Tomorrow the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) Select Council on Gambling Reform, which includes Treasurers, Ministers responsible for gambling regulation, and Ministers responsible for community services, will meet for the first time to develop national solutions to minimise harm from problem gambling.

The Australian Government has committed to work with the states and territories, industry and the community sector to progress a national response to the recommendations of the Productivity Commission Report on Gambling.

The Productivity Commission estimates that there are between 80,000 and 160,000 problem gamblers in Australia. In addition there are between 230,000 and 350,000 people at moderate risk.

Problem gambling destroys lives - not only the life of the problem gambler but also the lives of their families and friends.

Continued page 6

Continued from page 5

The Government's national reforms will help limit the damaging effects of problem gambling, while continuing to let thousands of Australians enjoy recreational gambling in pub and clubs.

Ministerial Expert Advisory Group Membership

Chair: Professor Peter Shergold AC, Macquarie Group Foundation Professor, Centre for Social Impact, University of NSW.

The Government has invited the following people to join the Ministerial Advisory Group on Gambling:

- Ms Cheryl Vardon, Australasian Gaming Council
- Mr Anthony Ball, Clubs Australia
- Mr John Whelan, Australian Hotels Association
- Mr Chris Downy, Australasian Casino Association
- Mr Ross Ferrar, Gaming Technologies Association
- Mr Rohan Martin, ATM Industry Reference Group
- Mr John Duffy, International Gaming Technology
- Mr John Bresnan, Crown Limited
- Mr David Curry, Australian Leisure and Hospitality Group
- Mr Simon Schrapel, ACOSS and UnitingCare Wesley, Adelaide
- Dr Mark Zirnsak, Victorian InterChurch Gambling Taskforce
- Major Brad Halse, Salvation Army Southern Territory
- Ms Rosemary Hambleton, Relationships Australia South Australia
- Mr Barry Sheehan, Centacare Toowoomba
- Ms Kate Roberts, Gambling Impact Society
- Ms Louise Tarrant, Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union
- Dr Paul Delfabbro, Associate Professor in Psychology, University of Adelaide
- Professor Nerilee Hing, Director, Centre for Gambling Education and Research, Southern Cross University
- Professor Alex Blaszczynski, Chair in Psychology, University of Sydney
- Mr Ashley Gordon, Centre for Gambling Education and Research, Southern Cross University
- Dr Charles Livingstone, Deputy Head, Department of Health Social Science, Monash University

Contact: Keely Bell 0417 297 157

Date: 21 October 2010

Upcoming Events

Gambling Impact Society (NSW) Inc.

Management Committee meets monthly, third Wednesday of the month, 12.30 –2.30 pm. Nowra Neighbourhood Centre 134 Kinghorne Street, Nowra. Contact: Chairperson Kate Roberts Tel: 02 4421 5077

Gambling Conferences

Australia

1-3 December 2010 Gold Coast—National Association of Gambling Studies 2010 Annual Conference

International

15-17 November 2010 Las Vegas 10th Annual Gambling and Addictions conference

16-18 November 2010 Las Vegas—Global Gaming Expo [G2E]

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Useful Resources

Don't Leave It to Chance: A guide for families of problem gamblers—Edward Federman, Charles Drebing & Christopher Krebs (self-help book)

Adolescent gambling—Mark Griffiths

Teenage Gambling—Carol Silverman Saunders

Losing Your Shirt—Mary Heineman (self-help book)

Behind The 8-Ball—A Guide for families of Gamblers—Linda Berman & Mary –Ellen Siegel (self-help book)

Overcoming Compulsive Gambling: A Self-Help Guide - Prof. Alex Blaszczynski

Stop Gambling—A Self-Help Manual For Giving Up Gambling - Simon Milton

Wanna Bet—Winners And Losers In Gambling's Luck myth - Tim Costello & Royce Miller

Stop Gambling Start Living - Laraine Rasmussen.

House of Cards: Hope for gamblers and their families - Tom Raabe.

The Addictive Personality—Craig Nakken

Creating Self Esteem—Lynda Field

Practical Financial Strategies Booklet: A Self Help Guide for Problem Gamblers By Gerri Coleman (Contact Central Coast Problem Gambling Service, 02 4344 7992).

Free Yourself—Self-help Guide and Audio Tape kit - cost \$49.95 (Contact Gabriela Byrne, 0414 844 387)

My Passionate Affair with Poker Machines (video) - \$49.95 (Contact Gabriela Byrne, 0414 844 387)

Free Yourself (video) - \$49.95 (Contact Gabriela Byrne, 0414 844 387)

You Figure It Out— Resource Kit (including video, CD and training notes for Community Education with High School Students— Know The Odds, Tel: 0417107440)

Overcoming Compulsive Gambling - desensitisation/relaxation audio tapes (Contact Prof. Alex Blaszczynski, - Westmead Hospital, Sydney)

Illawarra Health Gambling Recovery Program - group treatment manual for counsellors - (Contact Responsible Gambling Fund Unit, Dept. Gaming & Racing for info. on reprints)

Women & Gambling Information Kit—Karen Richardson & Kate Roberts- contact GISW(NSW) 02 4421 5077

Less than Even: The Hidden Cost of Gambling—video. Contact GISW(NSW) 02 4421 5077

Against the Odds—Youth & Gambling—Discussion CD. Contact GISW(NSW) 02 44215 077

No More Bets Please - video. Contact monkeyssee@monkeyssee.com.au or sales@livingsolutionsbookshop.com.au



General Interest Websites

www.socialwork.unimelb.edu.au
www.nags.org.au
www.unsw.edu.au
www.afm.mb.ca
www.knowodds.org
www.societystudygambling.co.uk
www.camh.net
www.pgfnz.co.nz

Do you know any interesting websites relating to problem gambling?

Let us know and we'll include them in our next edition

Email: info@gisnsw.org.au

Resources from NEW ZEALAND

PG Counselling Manual
 PG Education In High Schools- manual and video
 Pow Pokies T-shirts
 Facts Sheets
 On Gambling

Contact:
www.pgfnz.org.nz

Shoalhaven Gambling Resource Library— GIS (NSW)

has developed a community library with reports, books, self-help literature & videos for loan to GIS (NSW) groups and others in the Shoalhaven locality. We can supply a resource list and are always looking for ideas for additions. Contact: GIS (NSW) 02 44215077

Do you have any other suggestions? Please send them to us so we can share your ideas with others.

Self-Help Websites

www.gisnsw.org.au
www.nrgs.org.au
www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au
wwwsvh.stvincents.com.au/
www.education.mcgill.ca
www.gamblersanonymous.org.au
www.miph.org/gambling/
www.freeyourself.com.au
www.responsiblegambling.org
www.responsiblegambling.qld.gov.au
www.gamblingproblem.co.nz
www.femalegamblers.org/suggestedreading.htm

Do you know any interesting self-help websites relating to problem gambling?

Let us know by email info@gis.nsw.org.au



Return Address:
Nowra Neighbourhood Centre
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Nowra NSW 2541

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WHY NOT JOIN & RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER QUARTERLY?

The Gambling Impact Society (NSW) Inc. looks forward to providing you with regular information and education on gambling and related subjects. The Society aims to increase public awareness through the newsletter, and provide a forum for support and information for those directly affected by problem gambling, community service providers and the gambling industry. We welcome your contributions to this newsletter and in joining we hope to provide you with an outlet for discussion, support & information. Your membership will contribute to the ongoing work in this field and help us achieve our goals.

Your membership fee will go to resource the publication of this newsletter and the further development of the society, which is a non-profit organisation developed and run by volunteers. Membership to 30 June 2010 is as follows:

Organisations \$50

Individuals \$25

Concessions/Students \$10

Additional donations welcome.

Name.....

Organisation.....

Address.....
.....
.....

Telephone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Please circle:

Organisations \$50

Individuals \$25

Concessions/Students \$10

Cheques payable to: Gambling Impact Society (NSW) Inc.

Mail to: Gambling Impact Society (NSW) Inc.
c/o Nowra Neighbourhood Centre
134 Kinghorne St, Nowra
NSW 2541

*Any news, personal stories, comments on articles, important information etc., please send correspondence to **The Editor** e-mail—info@gisnsw.org.au and mark in “subject” section - **for newsletter**, or mail to above address*