

Julie Collins
Federal Labor Member for Franklin



The Right Reverend John D Harrower OAM
Anglican Bishop of Tasmania
GPO Box 748
HOBART TAS 7001

John
~~Dear~~ Bishop

Thank you for your letter of 26 July regarding the Tasmanian Anglican community's concerns with problem gambling and the Federal Government's proposed changes in gambling venues.

The Gillard Government accepts that gambling can be highly addictive and destructive – ruining lives and destroying families – and the biggest cause of that is poker machines. One in six people who regularly play on poker machines has a serious addiction and problem gamblers spend on average around \$21,000 each year, approximately one third of the average Australian annual salary.

In 2008, the Federal Government asked the Productivity Commission to conduct an independent inquiry into gambling in Australia. The Federal Government's reforms are based on the Productivity Commission's recommendations.

In light of the Productivity Commission inquiry, the Federal Government is working with State and Territory Governments, industry and the community sector to:

- Implement a full pre-commitment scheme for poker machines as recommended by the Productivity Commission. Implementation of pre-commitment arrangements will commence in 2012, with the full scheme commencing in 2014;
- Support the Productivity Commission's recommendations to implement poker machine dynamic warning and 'cost of play' displays to provide more information to players; and
- Implement a \$250 daily withdrawal limit from ATMs in venues with poker machines, except for casinos.

With regards to a proposed pre-commitment scheme, the Federal Government agrees with the Productivity Commission that it is the most targeted and effective measure to help problem gamblers and those at risk without adversely impacting on recreational gamblers. All State and Territory Governments around Australia have also agreed to support the required infrastructure for pre-commitment technology in all jurisdictions and make it available to all players in all venues.

The idea behind pre-commitment is that we can use technology to give people a tool, at the beginning of a gambling session, to think about how much they want to spend, set limits and stick to them.

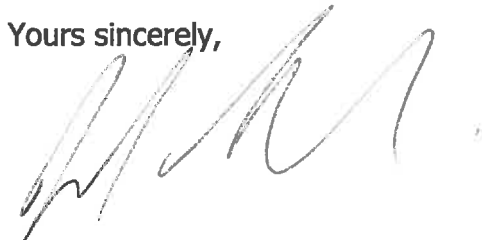
The Federal Government will progress a national response to the full set of recommendations on the Productivity Commission's report through the Council of Australian Governments' Select Council on Gambling Reform.

A Parliamentary Joint Select Committee has also been established to provide advice to the Federal Government on this national response as well as on the commitments outlined above.

In regards to your specific concerns about the Australian Labor Party refusing donations from organisations which profit from gambling, this is a matter for the administrative wing of the Party.

Again, thank you for writing to me. I will keep your comments in mind when discussing these reforms with my colleagues in Canberra.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Collins', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Julie Collins MP
Federal Member for Franklin
Parliamentary Secretary for Community Services

31 August 2011

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