



**Office of the Primate  
Anglican Church of Australia**

15 March 2012

**Media Release on Gambling Reform**

Australian Anglican bishops have urged the Government to persist with gambling reforms to help problem-gamblers and their families.

Bishops from around Australia have been meeting in Melbourne this week.

Anglican Primate Dr Phillip Aspinall said “The evidence from the Productivity Commission Report on Gambling (June 2010) is clear that poker machine problem gamblers account for about 40% of total poker machine spending.

“The bishops recognised that problems of addiction in Australia are much wider than the abuse of poker machines, but we were also confronted by the fact that around 95,000 people are addicted to the machines and each lose, on average, around \$21,000 per year. For this reason there was strong support for current proposals for a \$1.00 limit on poker machine bids.

“Despite a cashed up campaign against reform, as Church leaders, we know the costs of problem gambling for the individuals and their families: suicide, depression, marriage breakdowns, job losses, bankruptcy and crime. Through our parishes and Anglicare programs we continue to provide assistance to problem gamblers and their families, seeking also to educate against addiction. Our work indicates that often people drift into addiction out of their loneliness and social isolation,” Archbishop Aspinall said.

The bishops affirmed their support for:

The introduction of \$1 maximum bets to limit losses (to around \$120 per hour, per person compared with the current high-impact machines which can lose \$1200 per hour, per person);

- Setting limits on ATM withdrawals in gambling venues;
- Greater restrictions on on-line gambling;
- Restrictions on public advertising of betting, at sports venues, on television and in other places where young people can be socialised into a gambling culture.

“Following the Productivity Commission Report on Gambling and recent community debate we now need outcomes which only our Parliament can deliver.

“We urge the Federal Government to introduce poker-machine reform in the coming sessions of Parliament. We add our voice to those of other community groups and the Australian Churches Gambling Taskforce, in urging these reforms,” Archbishop Aspinall said on behalf of the Australian Anglican bishops.

Note: Anglican Primate, Dr Phillip Aspinall is available for interview today only ie. Thursday 15 March.

Further information:

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