

New measures to address problem gambling

The Treasurer, Michael Aird recently announced a number of new initiatives to continue to address problem gambling in Tasmania. This information sheet provides a summary of all of the measures.

The Tasmanian Gaming Commission will implement many of the changes. Work is underway in relation to some measures, while others can only commence after the *Gaming Control Act 1993* is amended later this year.

The Department of Health and Human Services will implement measures relating to problem gambling support and the Tasmanian Government will also develop a whole-of-government strategy to combat problem gambling.

Enhanced training for gaming staff

The existing Responsible Conduct of Gaming course will be enhanced with a specific focus on problem gambler identification and appropriate intervention by venue staff.

Within 12 months of the introduction of the enhanced course, when gaming is in operation, venues will be required to have one special employee on duty who has undertaken the enhanced training.

Further limits on the use of cheques in casinos

Casinos will be required to ensure that cheques drawn on Australian banks are banked within five business days in order to minimise the use of un-presented cheques as a form of credit betting.

Reduced maximum lines played on gaming machines

The maximum lines permitted to be played on gaming machines will be reduced from 50 to 30.

Reduced bet limit on gaming machines

A maximum bet limit of \$5 per spin will apply across all venues for all gaming machines. Currently there is a \$10 limit in hotels and clubs and none in casinos.

Reduced cash input limits on gaming machines

The cash input limit on note acceptors will be reduced from \$9 899 to \$500. Once a credit meter reaches or goes over the \$500 limit, any further notes will be rejected.

Improved information to players on gaming machines

Player information displays used on gaming machines in casinos provide more information to players than those in hotels and clubs.

The Commission will investigate the possible introduction of the casino display format in all venues.

TGC role on harm minimisation

The *Gaming Control Act 1993* will be amended to clarify the Commission's role in relation to responsible gambling and harm minimisation.

Restricted access to gambling by minors

Penalties will be increased for venue operators allowing minors to enter a restricted gaming area, and penalties will also be extended to all gaming staff.

Strengthened gambling exclusions scheme

The *Gaming Control Act 1993* will be amended to:

- mandate minimum and maximum periods for self-exclusion; and
- limit the type of exclusion to either the whole venue or not participating in gaming offered at the venue (which will include not entering into a restricted gaming area).

Non-monetary measures will be investigated as an alternative to fines to enforce exclusion provisions.

New mandatory code of practice

The current voluntary codes will be replaced by a mandatory code. The content of the code will be developed following industry consultation and will include provisions relating to:

- advertising gambling products;
- player loyalty programs; and
- inducements that may lead to problem gambling behaviour.

Limit on attendant service of alcohol and food

Attendant service of alcohol and food in public gaming areas between the hours of 9 pm and the close of operations each day will be prohibited.

Minimum lighting requirements

Venues will be required to comply with a minimum standard for lighting within gaming areas. The standard will ensure that all signage within that area can be easily read.

Clocks in gaming areas

It will become mandatory for venues to ensure that clocks are displayed on the wall in gaming areas.

Further restrictions on access to cash

Casinos will be required to limit EFTPOS transactions for gaming within their venues to one per person per day. This limit currently applies to clubs and hotels, but not to casinos.

All venues will be required to comply with a maximum limit of \$1 000 for cash payments of winnings from gaming machines and Keno.

Cashing winnings cheques on the same trading day at a gaming venue will be prohibited.

Improved signage

Venues will be required to display "plain English" signage. Specific signage will include an explanation of "return to player".

Enhanced education for at risk groups

The Government will be undertaking a specific educational campaign for "at risk" target groups.

Gambling Helpline service review

The effectiveness of Helpline services will be reviewed.

For further information on progress towards implementing each of these measures, go to www.gaming.tas.gov.au and watch for updates in the Liquor and Gaming Branch newsletter 'Liquor and Gaming review'.

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