

## Submission to Consultation Two for the Future Gaming Market Bill 2021

From Margie Law



To The Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance

Re: Future Gaming Market

As a public policy researcher with 17 years' experience working directly with people affected by gambling, I offer my insights for this consultation phase.

While the Government claims to have the best harm minimisation measures in place, Tasmania's bet limit is much higher than jurisdictions overseas and our poker machines are allowed to make it look like you have won when you have actually lost. These are not best practice and can be fixed in this legislative process.

As recommended by the Gaming Commission and many community sector organisations, we need to make poker machines less dangerous by reducing the maximum bet limit to \$1 and slowing the spin speed to about 6 seconds.

This would be like lowering the speed limit on roads – I often enter lower speed zones only to find I am already below the speed limit – because I am a slow driver. But for people who drive fast, the speed limit hopefully encourages them to slow down and if they don't slow down they are at risk of a speeding fine.

Most people who gamble on pokies do so occasionally and bet at low rates and not at fast speeds – this is a fact that comes from the Social and Economic Impact Study for Tasmania. But if we set a lower bet limit and slower speeds it would help reduce the harm to those people who currently bet high and fast. Why wouldn't we do this?

We also need to get rid of losses disguised as wins. When you put money into a machine, we allow the machine to celebrate even if we have lost money. For example, you can put \$5 in and the machine gives you a result that makes it look like you have won \$3.50. The machine celebrates. You think you have won. But you have not won \$3.50 – you have actually lost \$1.50. I have seen this. It is designed by the industry to confuse people. Why wouldn't we get rid of this misleading feature?

Pokies cause harm and those most at risk are people who use them regularly. Like drinking, speeding, smoking – these are not issues that should be left to individual responsibility as the effects affect us all through our public services. The Government is complicit in causing harm by allowing the machines to take money quickly and allowing the machines to lie to the person about whether they have won or lost. The Government has been terrific about implementing public health initiatives to protect the community from COVID but we need a similar approach on this issue. Let's do our best.