

Submission on the Future of Gaming Consultation paper

In progress

Please find below my Submission on the Future of Gambling Consultation Paper.

There are two key criteria on which any government initiative on gambling reform must be assessed.

The first is "Does it minimise social harm?"

The second is: "Does it ensure super or surplus profits are returned to the state rather than private licence holders?"

The proposed framework set out in the consultation paper fails on both counts. This is not just my opinion but that of the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission, the body charged by Parliament with providing independent advice on gambling policy and regulation.

The TLGC submission and evidence to the parliamentary inquiry into Future Gaming Markets described direct licencing as 'highly problematic' because it was likely to increase social harm through encouraging competition between venues and making regulatory oversight more difficult and costly. The TLGC called for \$1 dollar bet limits, slower game speeds, shorter opening hours and other harm reduction measures - none of which have been adopted.

The TLGC also joined Treasury in supporting what had been until December 2017 also a non-negotiable Government principle set out in a ministerial statement by Peter Gutwein and multiple other forums, that poker machine licence or licences would be decided by a market-based process such as a tender.

The only way of ensuring that licence holders don't get an instant capital gain windfall by the new licences (other than the government retaining ownership of them) is to have an auction, tender or some other market based process. The Government's abandonment of this repeatedly enunciated and uncontroversial principle is inexplicable on any rational policy ground and will forfeit hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue for no public benefit.

The Government has ignored the advice of Treasury and the independent body charged with providing it with independent policy advice.

It has ignored the findings of the Parliamentary Inquiry.

It has abandoned its key principles repeated set out by the Premier and Treasurer in 2016 and 2017.

There is no modelling or expert advice to support the policy position set out in the consultation paper.

To minimise social harm and to protect the integrity of public finances, the implementation of the proposed model must be put on immediate hold.

Yours Sincerely

James Boyce