



**Andrew Wilkie MP**  
INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR CLARK

18 MAR 2020

**Submission to the Tasmanian Government's Future Gaming Market regulatory model**

We know from research that poker machines are a dangerous product designed to addict, and that poker machines increase crime, child poverty, domestic violence and suicide. We know poker machines in the suburbs increase gambling addiction.

When a product is proven to be dangerous, governments have a duty to either ban it or impose measures to make it safer. Just as seatbelt and drink-driving laws make driving safer, we need measures to make poker machines less harmful. I am very concerned that the Future of Gaming in Tasmania Public Consultation Paper 2020 states that the Future Gaming Market policy does "not propose any specific changes to the harm minimisation framework". Nowhere is there any mention of proven consumer protection measures such as slower spins, \$1 maximum bets, tougher fines for venues and the removal of addictive features from poker machines. These are the four components of my Poker Machine Community Protection Plan and the State Government must include them in its regulation.

I am also concerned that the Government intends to conduct the Social and Economic Impact Study every five years instead of three. This study provides regular, independent snapshots of the impact of gambling in Tasmania and in previous reports has put the cost of gambling to the community at two to three times the value of the poker machine tax. Delaying this study is a Government trying to hide the problem.

Another concern is the Government has abandoned its promise to tender the right to operate poker machines for the next 20 years. This would have raised hundreds of millions of dollars for the state. Instead it will virtually gift licences to pubs and clubs, which will instantly increase the value of the hotels. The consultation paper does not specify what tax rate will be applied to poker machines in casinos, but Federal Group is expected to secure a rate cut. There is no justification for this beyond a dividend to a political ally.

Monash University's gambling expert, Associate Professor Charles Livingstone, has estimated the windfall to the poker machine industry from the tiny annual licence fees, increased value of hotels and tax cuts is worth a thumping \$350m. Imagine what a difference \$350m could make in our hospitals and schools. Imagine how many houses it could build.

Lastly, while the proposed new cap of 2,350 machines in pubs and clubs is a reduction on the current limit, in reality it will still allow 50 new poker machines in Tasmania's suburbs. The question is where will they go? My bet is on the most disadvantaged communities where the industry makes the most money.

In summary this policy is nothing more than payday for the poker machine industry which bankrolled the Liberal Party's 2018 state election victory. To proceed without adding effective and proven harm minimisation would show the Government only cares about lining the pockets of its rich poker machine mates and nothing about poker machine harm and gambling addiction.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'AWilke'.

Andrew Wilke MP  
Independent Member for Clark