

OPEN LETTER TO NSW MPS ABOUT BUDGET 2021/22

When will the real cost of gambling harm be shown in the Budget?

Tuesday 22 June 2021

To NSW MPs

At Budget time every year, we see Treasury planning on increased tax revenue from gambling. This increased tax revenue can only come from higher gambling losses, which means the NSW Government is budgeting on increased harm.

This cannot continue.

Meanwhile, the social costs of gambling are ignored.

We are yet to see in Budget papers what is actually needed -- a significant increase in spending on gambling harm prevention and minimisation.

It is relatively simple to tally the social cost of gambling harm against the tax revenue it generates. In 2017, researchers calculated that the tax revenue from gambling in Victoria in 2014/15 was \$1.6billion, the gross profits to the industry were \$5.8 billion, and the social cost to Victoria was \$7billion. No similar research has been conducted in NSW but, like Victoria, NSW must be going backwards while it still has 90,000 poker machines draining money daily.

This is so deeply concerning that I recently sat down with the Moderator of the NSW/ACT Uniting Church, and the CEO & Superintendent of Wesley Mission, to discuss the NSW Budget. [You can watch our 1 minute conversation here.](#)

Along with the Alliance's new CEO, Gordon Ramsay, I will be continuing these conversations with faith leaders across NSW.

We'd welcome discussing gambling reform with you too. Ahead of this, as a most welcome first step you could address gambling reform in any speech or media release you do about the NSW Budget this year.

Yours in hope of gambling reform,

Rev Tim Costello
Chief Advocate
Alliance for Gambling Reform