



**ALLIANCE FOR  
GAMBLING REFORM**

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Alliance for Gambling Reform  
**Victorian State Election Policy Platform**

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## ■ Ask 1: Uniform closing hours of poker machine rooms from 2AM-6AM

Enforcing breaks from Electronic Gambling Machines (EGMs) through reducing and harmonising operating hours across gambling rooms is a harm reduction measure which could have a significant impact.

The Productivity Commission in 2010 presented evidence that supports earlier commencement and longer duration of mandatory shutdown. It found that the mandatory shutdown should occur no later than 2am and be for at least six hours. The Commission accepted that venues' revenue derived from gaming machines would decline as a result of mandatory shutdowns and is to be expected if the measure is having an effect on reducing harm on gambling.

In 2004, the Victorian Government legislated to reduce opening hours of EGMs in Victoria to 20 hours a day. The changes in 2004 did not specify what hours venues must close their gambling room. As a result, venues have staggered hours across venues so that in many, usually high EGM loss municipalities, there is access to poker machines 24 hours a day.

### **Recommendation**

**The Alliance recommends a 2am to 6am mandatory closing period for all EGMs, and a commitment for an incremental change which sees all gambling rooms closed between midnight to 10am.**

## ■ Ask 2: Universal precommitment

A mandatory pre-commitment system can make a significant impact on reducing both gambling harm and the risk of money laundering.

A well-designed pre-commitment system can help empower people to take control of their own gambling through a range of tools that provide accurate information to them on the time and money spent gambling over a set period (session, week, month or year); facilitate them setting their own limits on time and/or money spent gambling over set periods; and facilitate short-term self-exclusion through setting a limit to \$0. It can also support venues pushing out tailored and dynamic harm minimisation messaging based on an individual's own gambling use or population norms. Pre-commitment systems like this can be stand-alone, or embedded into digital payment options.

Linked to a universal, identity-linked cashless gambling card, such systems can effectively support harm minimisation strategies, including precommitment and self-exclusion, and draw upon technology to support staff to intervene, while also eliminating money laundering.

In Victoria, the government has committed to introducing a cashless gambling card system at the casino, however it is critical it is also implemented at pubs and clubs too.

### **Recommendation**

**The Alliance recommends a mandatory, binding pre-commitment system for all poker machines in Victoria.**

## ■ Ask 3: Maximum \$1 Bets

The maximum bet (also known as the maximum wager by the National Gaming Machine Standards) for Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs) determines the maximum amount of money that can be lost.

Poker machine users betting \$5 per button push loose \$600 an hour, on average. This makes it very easy for gamblers to gamble beyond their financial capacity.

Lowering the maximum bet to \$1 is an effective way to reduce financial harm for at-risk gamblers, and has been recommended by the Productivity Commission.

Nine in ten recreational gamblers bet below \$1, whereas half of gamblers who are being harmed bet above \$1, making a bet limit effective at reducing harm.

### **Recommendation**

**The Alliance recommends a \$1 bet limit per button push on EGMs.**

## References

1. Productivity Commission 2010, Gambling, Report no. 50, Canberra
2. Thomas, A., Christensen, D., et al. Review of electronic gaming machine pre-commitment features: Limit Setting (AIFS, 2016).
3. Thomas, A., Rintoul, A., et al. Review of electronic gaming machine pre-commitment features: Transaction History Statements (AIFS, 2016).



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