



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr Peter Cain MLA (Chair), Dr Marisa Paterson (Deputy Chair), Mr Andrew Braddock MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Gaming Machine Amendment Bill 2023

Submission Number: 003

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Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
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21 September 2023

Dear Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety,

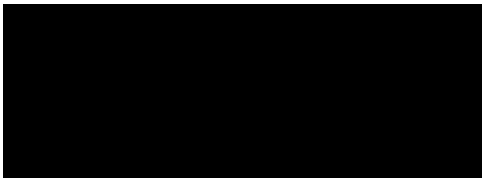
Re Inquiry into Gaming Machine Amendment Bill 2023 - ACT Legislative Assembly

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the ACT Legislative Assembly's Gaming Machine Amendment Bill 2023.

The Alliance welcomes this Bill which has been informed by community consultation demonstrating strong support for a poker machine free Molonglo Valley. We believe this Bill will reduce the escalating and significant losses and harms from gambling in the ACT. It is particularly important that in areas where there are young families, exposure to gambling venues is reduced to minimise the potential for exposure by children to a harmful adult product.

We hope that this will be the first of many such bills that will enhance community safety in the ACT and across Australia.

Yours sincerely



Carol Bennett
CEO

Alliance for Gambling Reform Submission Inquiry into Gaming Machine Amendment Bill 2023 - ACT Legislative Assembly

September 2023

About the Alliance for Gambling Reform

The Alliance for Gambling Reform is a national peak body which represents a collaboration of organisations with a shared concern about the harmful aspects of gambling and its normalisation in Australian culture. We are a registered health promotion charity. The Alliance supports public policy and regulatory regimes that make Australia a safer, healthier, and more equitable society by reducing the level of gambling harm. We prioritise policies and actively campaign for changes that prevent gambling harm and minimise its consequences.

Response to the Gaming Machine Amendment Bill 2023

The amendments to the Gaming Machine Act 2004 will preclude the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission from issuing authorisation certificates for Class C gaming machines in the Molonglo Valley and other undeveloped areas of the ACT.

The Alliance for Gambling Reform warmly welcomes the Gaming Machine Amendment Bill 2023 to ensure that the Molonglo Valley and other undeveloped areas of the ACT will not have poker machines in their communities. This Bill has been underpinned by community consultation which has shown support a poker machine free community in the Molonglo Valley and ensures this developing community is able to thrive and develop without the harms poker machines create.

Around Australia when new communities are being developed 'mini casinos' in the form of clubs with poker machines are often developed before other critical community infrastructure. It is important that the ACT government supports this amendment to provide the future Molonglo Valley community and other yet to be developed communities with the opportunity to live in a safe and connected community without the risk of poker machine gambling harms.

Research from Victoria suggests people residing further from gambling venues are less likely to gamble and those within close proximity of gambling venues to people's homes where people experience increased financial hardship and mental health problems¹.

More needs to be done to ensure these harms are combatted such as the introduction of mandatory pre-commitment and lowering maximum bet limits, however, this amendment is a good step in the right direction to prevent gambling harm in these communities.

This legislation demonstrates strong leadership by Dr Marisa Paterson MLA in proposing a valid solution to a growing problem that is causing significant harm in the Canberra community. It is a proposal that the Alliance strongly believes would be welcomed and should be implemented in emerging communities in other states and territories across the country.

¹ Badji, S, Black, N, Johnston, D 2021, *Proximity to gambling venues, gambling behaviours and related harms*, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, Melbourne.