



ALLIANCE FOR
GAMBLING REFORM

ANNUAL REPORT



2022

ALLIANCE FOR
GAMBLING REFORM



**Support
gambling
reform
because**

People matter more
than profit.

 ALLIANCE FOR
GAMBLING REFORM

CONTENTS

Our purpose, vision and strategic objectives.....	01
Our Purpose.....	01
Our Vision.....	01
Our Strategic Objectives.....	02
Message from our Chair Sharon Dickson.....	03
Message from our CEO Carol Bennett.....	05
Our Board.....	09
Message from our Chief Advocate Rev Tim Costello AO.....	11
Our Voices for Gambling Reform.....	15
International gambling conference NZ.....	15
Progress in pokies forum VIC.....	16
Gavin Fineff.....	17
Marie.....	19
2022 in Review.....	21
Key events in gambling reform.....	21
Community awareness and information.....	23
Poll insights.....	24
Your voice.....	25
Top 10 stories of 2022.....	27
Advocacy and Policy.....	29
Snapshot of Alliance Activity.....	30
Advocating for gambling reform across the country.....	31
Advocating for online gambling reforms nationally.....	35
Work with Councils.....	39
Our Funders and Supporters.....	41

Our purpose, vision and strategic objectives

Our Purpose

To provide national leadership promoting action to prevent and reduce the harm from gambling in Australia.

Our Vision

To enjoy a just, healthy, and prosperous Australia, where people can happily socialise together and flourish without the harm created by gambling. By working together, we can achieve an Australia where there is no longer a need for our organisation.



ALGA National Conference Canberra
CEO Carol Bennett (left) and board member Susan Rennie (centre), meet with council representatives



Our Strategic Objectives



Continue Victorian advocacy on land based gambling reform and extend nationally where possible



Provide national leadership and coalition building in priority focus areas of land-based gambling, digital online gambling and sports betting advertising



Increasing organisational effectiveness and sustainability

Message from our Chair Sharon Dickson



Sharon Dickson
Chair

2022 has seen intense scrutiny on gambling and the impact of harm it can cause in the community. The many inquiries and Royal Commissions have provided visibility of the failure of regulators to be able to protect the interests of the public. Australia's casino sector, comprised of publicly listed organisations, is a debacle, as noted by Professor Pamela Hanrahan in the November 2022 issue of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

The NSW clubs and pubs sector have not escaped the spotlight with the NSW Crime Commission report highlighting widespread money laundering, fraud, crime and harm related to gambling across our NSW local communities.

Despite repeated compliance breaches resulting in record fines, there have been no Directors or Responsible Officers held to account for these failures. This speaks volumes of the political and private sector vested interests in an industry which is "too big to fail" but fails to manage the risks of operating lawfully, responsibly and sustainably. What is the cost of this corporate failure to our community and the shareholders of these companies where profit wins over ethical responsibility?

The Alliance welcomes the regulatory overhaul we are seeing in many states as well as recognition at national level across the party lines which has culminated in the inquiry into online gambling and impacts on those experiencing gambling harm. We need a national regulator and online gambling ombudsman.

In March 2022 the board met in person for the first time in person since COVID. We reviewed our strategy and refocused on deepening our partnerships with other organisations and communities. Transforming and maturing the Alliance has

compounded with adjustments needed to navigate the headwinds of the current financial climate. Support from the Leadership Councils in Victoria remains strong, and diversification of income streams also remain a focus. The Alliance has seen changes to board and staff including the end of term for two foundation board members Susan Rennie and Mark Zirnsak. Thank you for all your insights and guidance provided over the years! We are so fortunate to have incredible staff and supporters working with us, and a special call out to the Voices of Gambling Reform whose story telling continues to make such a difference.

Clearly the Alliance still has much to achieve before there is no longer a need for our organisation. We are inspired to continue our work with all the individuals, organisations and donors that share our vision.

Sharon Dickson
Chair



Leadership Councils



Message from our CEO Carol Bennett



Carrol Bennett
CEO

When I commenced in the role of CEO of the Alliance for Gambling Reform (the Alliance) in January 2022, my goal was to influence change to reduce the impact of gambling harm across Australia by drawing on 3 decades of experience (more than 20 managing peak national organisations) of working to reduce harm from other products and causes in the health sector.

Effectively, I was hoping to see a public health response to gambling, accepting that like alcohol and tobacco it's a product that causes harm and that

governments and communities should accept responsibility to manage it.

Not only is gambling and its attendant harms downplayed and minimised in Australia, but there seems to be a national blindspot when it comes to acknowledging the normalisation of gambling and the extent to which Australia leads the world in losses and harms. Gambling as a public health issue seemed a daunting and distant prospect.

I am pleased to say that 2022 has seen a significant shift in community awareness about gambling and its impact. This has arisen off the back of multiple inquiries, all of which the Alliance has participated in, including Royal Commissions into Crown Casino in Melbourne and Perth, as well as inquiries into both Star Sydney and Queensland and an ongoing inquiry into SkyCity Adelaide.

Our work to raise awareness and understanding of gambling and its harms has strengthened with a stronger media presence than ever before and our Chief Advocate, the Rev Tim Costello providing

exceptional insight in his public and media role representing the Alliance.

Our submission to the NSW Crime Commission received numerous mentions in the report which highlighted widespread money laundering, fraud, crime and other harms related to gambling across NSW in pubs and clubs in local communities.

Importantly, our Voices for Gambling Reform have been central to all of our policy and positions. Our Voices provided powerful and compelling evidence to all of the above-mentioned inquiries and Royal Commissions into Crown and Star Queensland and Sydney. A heartfelt thanks to Anna Bardsley and all our incredible Voices group who so courageously share their voice.

The impact of our work this year has been groundbreaking including:

- Major increases in fines available to states in case of non-compliance (Victoria record fine of \$120m for Crown's failure to comply with responsible service of gambling, NSW and Queensland record fines to their respective Star Casinos of \$100 million. This is remarkable when you consider that the available fines in these states were no more than \$1 million a few months ago!
- Significant bipartisan commitment to harm reduction measures including a mandatory pre-commitment, cashless card system in Tasmania and other states including NSW now actively considering it. Crown Melbourne will implement a scheme in the casino but the Alliance is pushing for this to be rolled out in all pubs and clubs
- Improved data collection and improved self-exclusion systems
- Special, independent managers keeping abreast of all elements of each casino's reforms in Victoria and likely in Queensland
- Regulatory overhaul in many states

There is still so much more to do but the Alliance remains committed to seeing substantive and lasting changes that reduce gambling harm.

This year we led campaigns and developed strong and lasting relationships with all major parties as well as independents and key decision makers at federal, state and local levels across every state of Australia. We led a federal election campaign calling for national action to:

- Ban sports gambling advertising across all broadcast platforms
- Close loopholes that allow gambling using credit cards
- Create a national regulator and online gambling ombudsman
- Stop political donations from the gambling industry

Following the election, we have seen some progress in changes to federal participation in reducing gambling harm such as the change in messaging from 'gamble responsibly' to new and more progressive taglines as well as a new national self-exclusion program and development of activity statements. We hope to see a greater national push into gambling reform more generally given that state governments have failed as shown by multiple inquiries to reign in the powerful gambling industry. With multiple crossbenchers and independents supporting our calls to end gambling ads and ensure a stronger integrity agenda, we believe this is possible.



Carol Bennett, Gavin Fineff and Anna Bardsley at Rethink Addiction September 2022

Signs are already there with the Alliance working with federal parliamentarians to establish a parliamentary friends of gambling reform group with MPs from all political parties. And importantly, we now have a national Inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm (which the Alliance provided a submission to). These are game changing movements.

In addition to national progress, we have been influential in major reforms in every State and Territory this year from highlighting \$66 billion in losses in Victoria over the 30 years since the introduction of poker machines to campaigning alongside Northern Territorians to force a moratorium on new poker machine applications.

We have provided more than a dozen policy submissions in areas as diverse as the use of facial recognition technology and other technologies in reducing harm; to codes of practice and training of staff; as well as the impact of gambling among military personnel and veterans.

Our policy papers have shone a light on issues from loopholes in legislation in Victoria enabling gambling venues in local areas to operate 24 hours a day to much needed changes to maximum bets.

We are grateful to our 22 leadership councils who work with us to advocate for better regulation of online and land-based gambling to their state and federal representatives. There were many highlights this year including local events and our council's support for our campaign to end gambling harm after dark in the lead up to the Victorian election.

The Alliance is fortunate to have the backing of so many organisations and individuals who support our work in so many ways. A special thanks to our local councils, foundations and individual supporters who enable us to do our work.

Of course I would like to acknowledge the efforts of our dedicated board chaired by Sharon Dickson. And the Alliance is supported by an amazing team including Policy and Advocacy Lead, Rose O'Leary whose knowledge and expertise of gambling policy is incredible – giving us impact and influence. The team have worked hard this year in their commitment to making a real difference to reducing gambling harm in Australia.

Carol Bennett
CEO

Our Board



Sharon Dickson
Chair

Sharon Dickson is a Non-Executive Director, technology executive and diversity champion.

Karen Carey
Deputy Chair

Karen Carey was the co-founder of Tonic Health Media, which is a communications network that disseminates high quality health information to patients and GPs at more than 5,000 healthcare



environments across Australia and has an audience in excess of 50 million viewers each year.

Elizabeth O'Shea
Secretary

Lizzie O'Shea is a lawyer, writer, broadcaster, and founding board member at the Alliance. She is regularly featured in the media to comment on law, technology, and human rights.



Amanda Power
Treasurer

Amanda Power is a Certified Practising Accountant who is passionate about the community sector, volunteering and health and wellbeing.





Kathy Richardson

Kathy is an Executive Director at Our Community, a self-sustaining social business that exists to provide practical, affordable training, leadership and technological solutions.

Ethan Taylor

Ethan is a community organiser and campaigner with lived experience of gambling harm. He was the founder and inaugural President of the Union of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students.



Pita Williams

Head of the the Risk and Audit Committee. Pita Williams has practised as a lawyer for more than 30 years, primarily in the financial services industry.

Tim Lo Surdo

Tim is the Founder and former National Director of Democracy in Colour - Australia's first racial and economic justice organisation led by people of colour.



Past Directors



Dr Susan Rennie (Until November 2022)

Dr Susan Rennie is a founding member of the Alliance Board and previous Board Chair.



David Beguely (Until March 2022)

David Beguely is a former Treasurer of the Alliance.



Dr Mark Zirnsak (Until August 2022)

Mark Zirnsak is the former Deputy Chair of the Alliance.

Message from our Chief Advocate

Rev Tim Costello AO



Rev Tim Costello AO
Chief Advocate

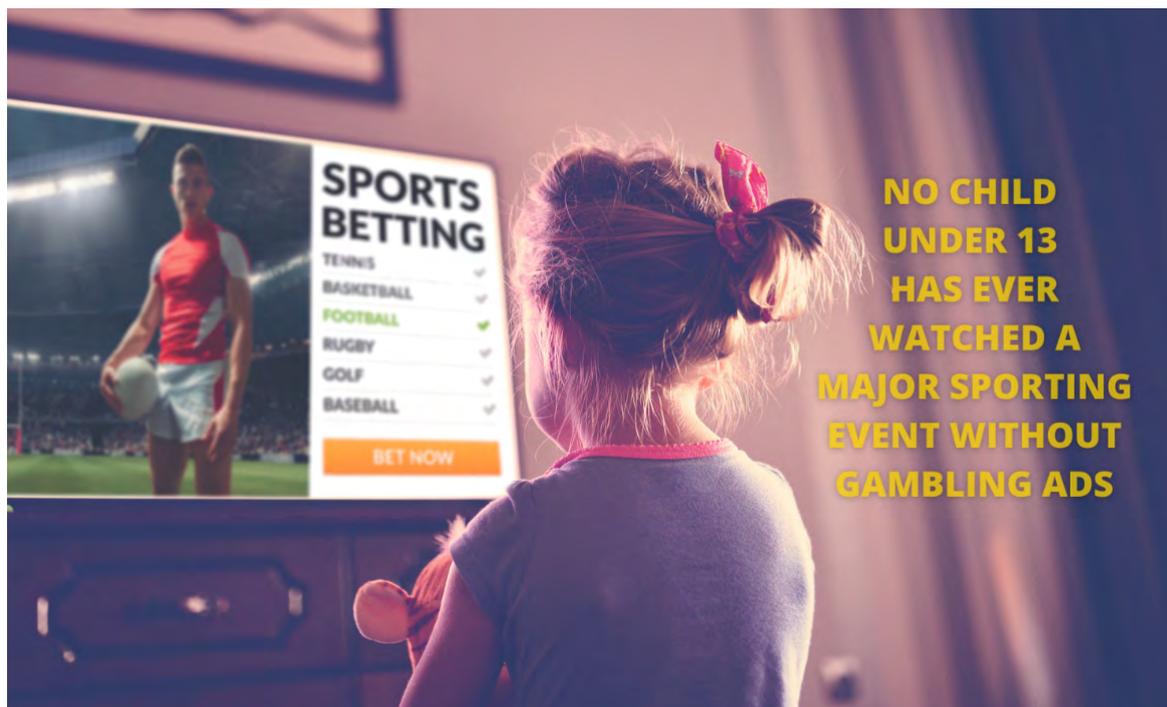
I am proud of the way that an under-resourced, small and yet highly committed organisation such as the Alliance together with its supporters and partners and those who have experienced gambling harm has been able to give this issue the long overdue attention it deserves.

It gives me great pleasure to say that 2022 was a year of increased awareness about the impact of gambling in Australia and a far greater level of dialogue about the responsibility of our leaders and regulators in addressing the significant, growing and unacceptable level of harm.

As an advocate for gambling reform for over 30 years, I have long lamented the nation's blind spot when it comes to gambling and its normalisation in Australia. Where ready availability of guns and lax laws are the norm for America, it could be said that gambling is Australia's weak spot.



Tim Costello meets with Senator David Pocock in Canberra, Dec 22.



The quest for gambling reform is truly a David and Goliath battle with a \$25 billion a year industry facing off against those who know that having a mini casino in every suburb in the form of a pub or club (very often with poker machines) is not normal or desirable by world standards and brings with it immense harm to those who gamble, their families and communities. They know that having our children exposed to saturation gambling advertising that impacts every Australian child by the age of 13 is not normal or desirable. They know that our much-loved sports have been corrupted when we and our kids are more aware of the odds on the game than the game itself or our favourite players.

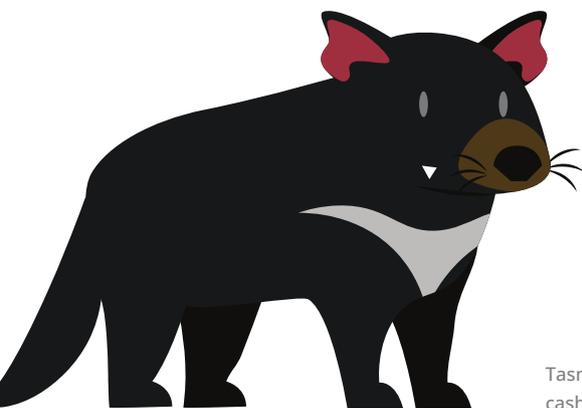
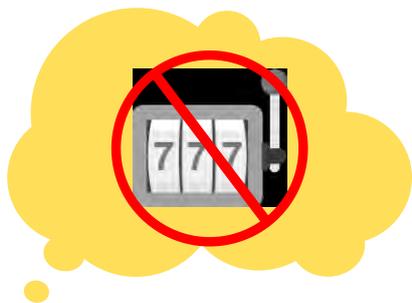
And what everyone should know is that Australia has the greatest gambling losses per capita in the world and those losses are 40% higher than the nation that is second (Singapore), which is a shameful failure of public policy. It is nonsense to say it's just cultural or because Aussies like a punt more than other nations.

It seems that the might of this powerful industry has reached into every part of our culture and community, bought our politicians, with our governments addicted to gambling revenue and political donations. This has made much needed reform a distant dream.



However, our obsession with gambling is finally being brought to light with successive inquiries, Royal Commissions and reviews highlighting the extent of crime, money laundering and fraud that goes hand in hand with casinos and pubs and clubs. Similarly, the failure of our governments to regulate the sports gambling and online industry has annoyed us all with incessant advertising and availability of gambling products everywhere we look. And that concern extends to our kids who are being groomed to gamble from an early age.

We are finally seeing fines that are more commensurate with the level of harm this industry causes. And we are starting to see politicians (especially the teals who run an agenda of integrity but also some of our major party leaders too) finally staring down the power of this predatory industry and introducing much needed reforms. Take for example the bipartisan support from the major parties in Tasmania for mandatory pre-commitment and a cashless gambling card. Outstanding leadership. And some of our leaders elsewhere such as Victor Dominello and Dominic Perrottet in NSW and Chanston Paech in the Northern Territory have also been prepared to have this much needed fight.



Tasmania supports a cashless gambling card.

And we have seen rare leadership from new regulators such as Victoria's Gambling and Casino Control Commission and its record casino fines of up to \$100 million (which have also been replicated in NSW and Qld).

I want to acknowledge the support of the Alliance team, especially Carol Bennett, Martin Thomas and Rose O'Leary who are committed, knowledgeable and a pleasure to work with. I also thank the Board of the Alliance for their support. I hope more people will get on board and provide the support needed to enable more resources to be directed towards our efforts in the coming year.

Who would have thought a year ago that we would have a federal parliamentary friends of gambling harm group with representation across the parliament let alone a national inquiry into online gambling and its impact on those with lived experience! Times are changing and it's refreshing to see the federal government sharpening its focus on gambling related harm.

There is much to be optimistic about. I hope to be reporting next year on a new national regulator for gambling harm!

Rev Tim Costello
Chief Advocate



Tim Costello joins Alliance team member Anna Bardsley with local supporters for our 'end gambling harm after dark' campaign to highlight a loophole enabling gambling venues to open 24 hours a day.

Our Voices for Gambling Reform:

Voices for Gambling Reform is a key program of the Alliance for Gambling Reform that supports and empowers people impacted by gambling harm to be powerful advocates and build their capacity to campaign for meaningful change.

Ensuring those with lived and living experience of gambling harm are centred in all that we do is a core tenet of our work here at the Alliance.

Some of our key Voices highlights this year are outlined below.

INTERNATIONAL GAMBLING CONFERENCE NEW ZEALAND 1 JULY

'The Journey from Harm to Empowerment' presented online by Anna Bardsley, Paul Fung and Carolyn Crawford.

Too often organisations invite people with lived experience to contribute to the agenda of others. Consumers are often engaged in ways that are shallow and disrespectful of their knowledge and expertise.

It is rare for people with lived experience to be given meaningful decision-making power and be included in organisational power structures.

The workshop invited participants to do better in this area. We spoke about what works and what doesn't work when engaging people with lived expertise.

Signs of Empowerment

- No filtering - say what you like
- A safe environment
- Consultation at an early stage - Co-Design
- Respect - we are more than our stories
- Share your privilege, open doors
- Ask us what do YOU want to do?

Every Story Counts



PROGRESS IN POKIES FORUM, MORNINGTON, VICTORIA

Ken Wolfe told his story of gambling harm which includes more than 30 years of gambling and eventually going to prison. He always speaks with honesty and insight and had this to say about being involved in the event.

As a lived experience person I was amazed with the knowledge and raw truth regarding the toxicity of and the amounts of money lost into EGMs (poker machines).

Rose O'Leary and Tim Costello spoke in such an impactful way that made all the participants sit up and take notice.

The way the Alliance team engaged with the audience was outstanding and I am sure it will start conversations across the municipality about this insidious issue.



Ken Wolfe, Rev. Joy Blaires, Rose O'Leary and Rev. Tim Costello

GAVIN FINEFF

My name is Gavin Fineff, I'm married with two beautiful children. I also have Chronic Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and gambling disorder.

Do you need to know that I lost more than \$8m? That I am bankrupt, facing jail, and without the career I loved that I am feeling like a failure as a husband, dad, son, and friend? The prejudice follows me everywhere, which I understand, but it obstructs amends and alights fear and helplessness. The same feelings I had during childhood domestic violence.

Gambling was my solution to a problem. I lost some money. I just wanted it back. I lost more, then I chased and chased. In 6 months, I lost \$44,000. 'If I concentrate and have a plan, I'll just get that back and stop', I told myself. The plans were always abandoned, and any wins lost. My gambling intensified, with the stages of grief reduced to seconds and then nothing. I knew I was dishonest about why I needed money, always justifying and rationalising in ways that weren't conscious. It made sense to gamble. I believed every deposit would be my last, and it would all be fixed.

I was approached, unsolicited, by companies with huge incentives to "try them out" then equally high inducements if I made new deposits. In the last 18 months or so of my betting I was given approximately \$3.5m of free bonus cash and in the same period lost \$4.4m, much of it other people's. I am not innocent, but neither is the industry. Something good must come of this catastrophe. Why wasn't I stopped? Good people have been hurt by my actions. Why hasn't change occurred?

My first Voices meeting was in early 2021 and I joined the Alliance action at NSW Parliament House on 16 March 2021. I knew immediately I was in an environment without prejudice, where I could be of value. On 22 March 2022, I promised myself that something good must come from my addiction experiences, it was the hope I needed to challenge the toxic shame and misery. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be a volunteer partner with the Alliance, it has been and is an honour. Of course, I stand side-by-side with the Alliance in whatever capacity is needed to achieve a gambling experience for Australians that is underpinned by enjoyment, integrity, and safety.

Sign our petition to make gambling companies accountable 🙌

[https://www.agr.org.au/
onlinegamblingreform](https://www.agr.org.au/onlinegamblingreform)

MARIE

My name is Marie and I am a part of the Voices for Gambling Reform. My family and I are living with the catastrophic effect of gambling harm as my 24 year old brother took his own life. He had tried everything he could to beat a gambling addiction and eventually the battle exhausted him.

I joined the Alliance and felt a mixture of emotions. Firstly, I felt heard by Anna and her team, who work tirelessly against the tsunami of corruption and greed that is the gambling industry. Secondly, I felt deeply disturbed because for the first time, I understood exactly why my brother felt the need to take his own life. He felt helpless and understood the nature of the gambling industry.

The more he learnt in his battle to beat this addiction, the less hope he had. He knew what he was up against and how this industry exploits vulnerable people for corporate greed. He felt there was no other way out other than ending his life to avoid further gambling harm.

As a part of the Alliance I want to do anything I can to assist with the development of a self exclusion register which is protected by law. I believe this would have helped my brother feel safe-guarded from the crippling addiction he was suffering and may help stop other people from resorting to suicide as the only viable solution to stop gambling.

I feel physically sick as I sit and write this because, like many others, I believe gambling harm is something that is completely preventable. The Australian Government has much to answer for. Simply put, the gambling industry is profiting at the detriment of mental health in a direct and purposeful way. The current practices are criminal. My only hope is that there is a culture shift in the way everyday Australians view the gambling industry and those struggling to understand that their brain has been hijacked by these deeply unethical practices.

Let's never forget that gambling harm is single handedly taking lives. It should not be normalised and we need to make change.



Carol Bennett, Anna Bardsley, Kate Seselja and Paul Fung at Rethink Addiction, Sept 2022

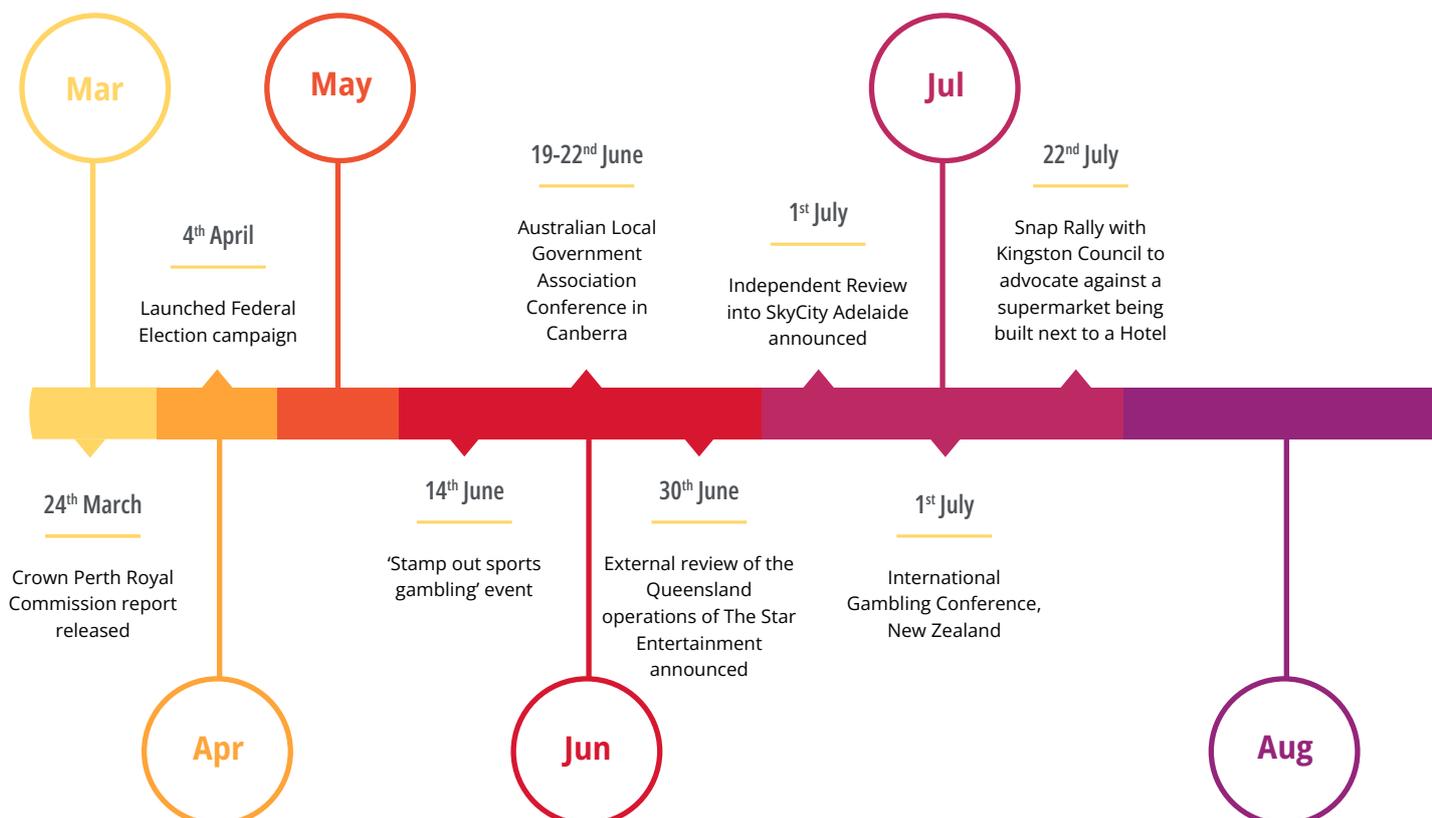
2022 in Review

2022 will be one for the history books when it comes to gambling reform. Several inquiries into casinos, significant shifts in community sentiment around gambling and major media stories have been published each week about the predatory, unlawful and unethical practices of the gambling industry.

The Alliance has been actively involved in advocating and participating in:

1. Royal Commissions and inquiries across the country.
2. The Tasmanian government's bi-partisan support of a cashless gambling card and a mandatory pre-commitment scheme.
3. A moratorium in Alice Springs against the expansion of at least 60 new poker machines.
4. A national inquiry into online gambling.
5. And the establishment of a Parliamentary friends of reducing gambling harm group.

Key events in gambling reform - 2022

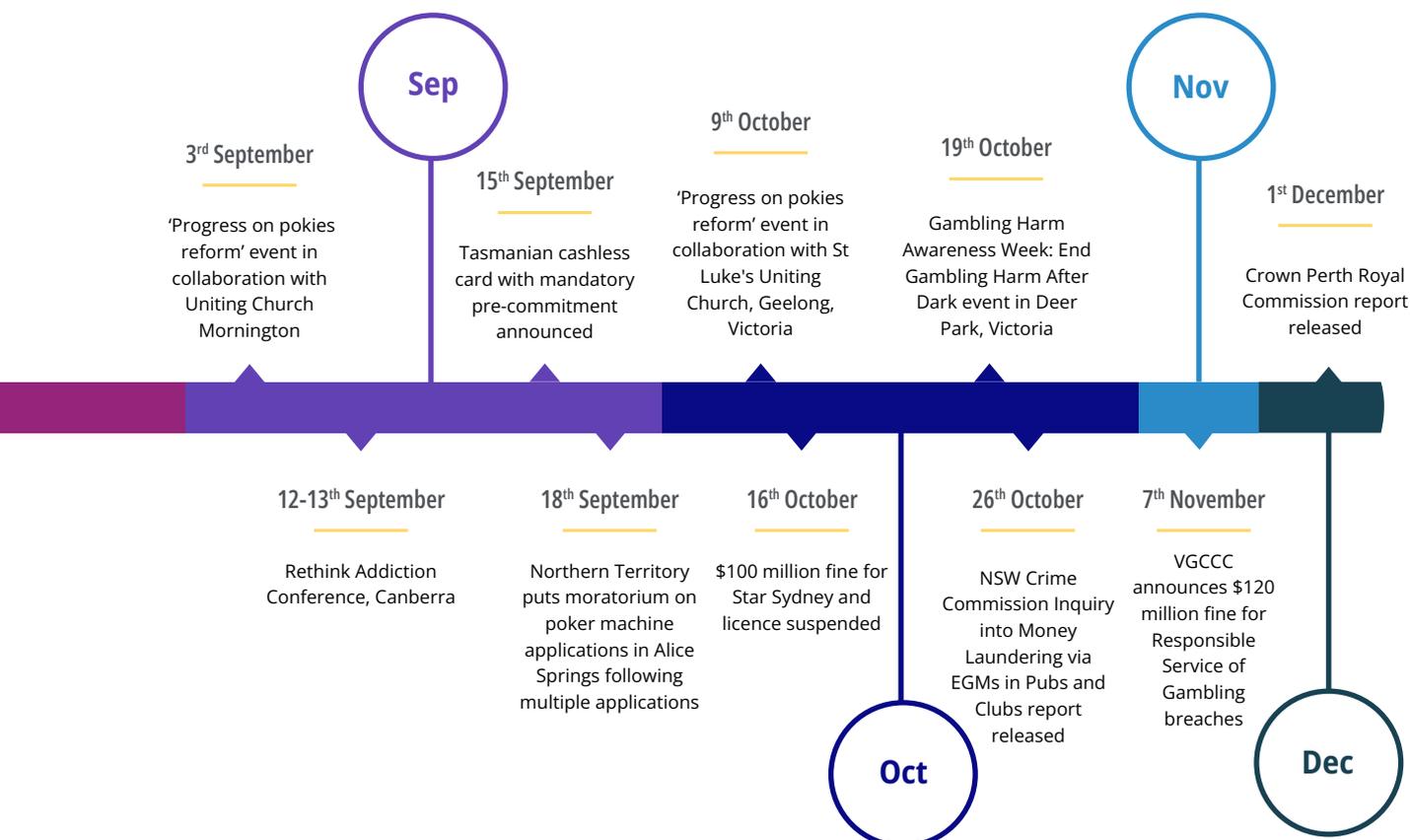


We've made a number of submissions involving lived-experience in the national space, including a submission into the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicides.

There has also been some significant movement with the National Consumer Protection Framework including mandatory activity statements for those using online gambling and new messaging for gambling ads.

These highlight the risks; as well as the construction of the soon-to-be-released National Self-Exclusion Register, BetStop.

We've also supported our leadership councils, hosted a number of events to raise awareness, and continued our campaign to 'End Gambling Ads'.



Community awareness and information

2022 has been a monumental year for building community awareness about gambling harms and the urgent need for reform. We have published 31 media releases, had 10 opinion editorials published and undertaken dozens of media interviews.

We have been at the forefront of breaking news in all states and territories and have provided interviews regarding the casino inquiries, sports gambling and its impacts, relentless gambling advertising, and money laundering in pubs and clubs. It's through this media reach that we have been able to continue to place pressure on decision makers.

Importantly, those with lived experience of gambling harm have been both shaping and influencing the media dialogue when it comes to gambling harm; decreasing stigma and providing meaningful solutions. These stories have brought life to the realities of gambling and its harms. We made over 1300 posts on social media with breaking news and updates for

our followers. Our social media engagement has also increased with additional followers and reach to thousands of people every day including over 6000 visits to our twitter profile each month, up from 1900 in January. We were also mentioned on twitter by over 580 other pages this October (up from 22 in January). Facebook page visits have increased from 200 in January to a peak of 1500 this October.

The volume of our social presence has increased from 25 posts per month (across all platforms) to well over 200.



Poll insights

Australia has more than 75 per cent of the world's pub and club pokies. How do you feel about this?



Should Australia plain package poker machines and take away 'the bells and whistles' as was done for cigarettes?



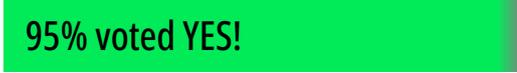
Should Australia reduce the spin rate of poker machines? (this means people would have to play for longer to loose the same amount - saving them money)



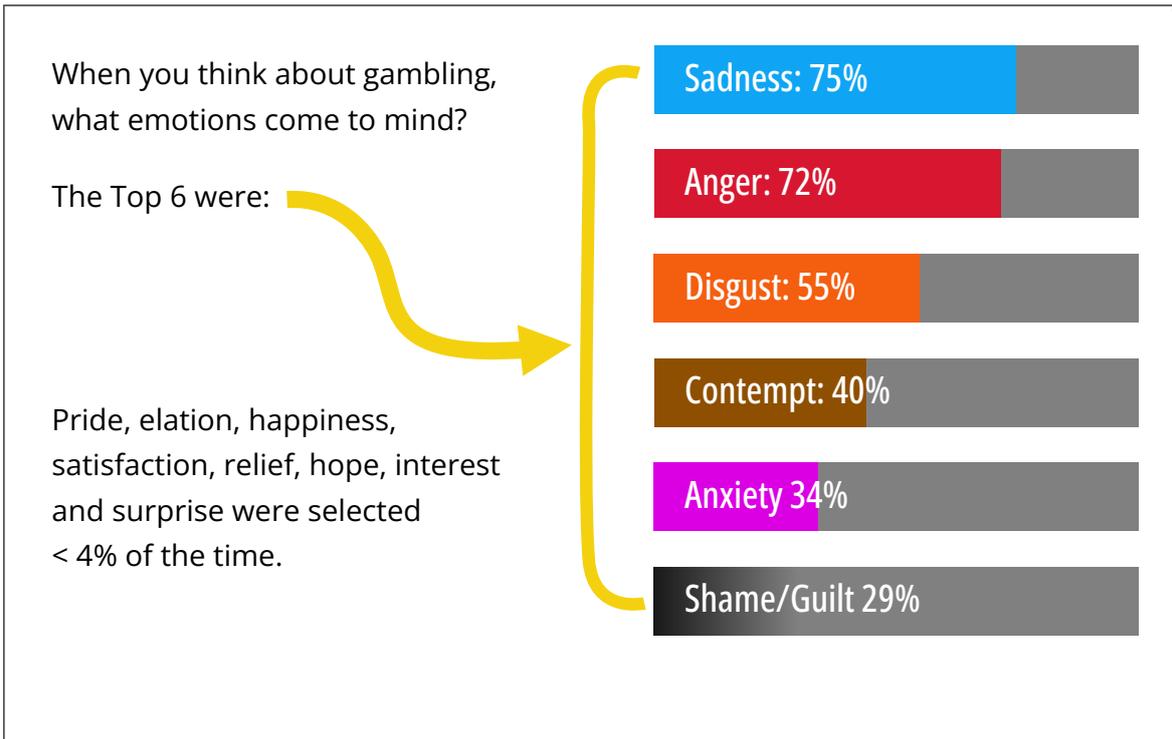
Some people who own gambling venues stagger their closing times, so that people can go from venue to venue, and gamble 24 hours a day. Should Australia limit the opening hours of these venues to prevent this?

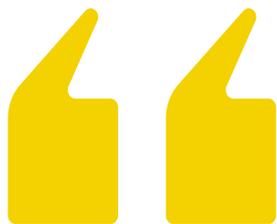


Sometimes machines will tell you that you have won money, when in fact in total you have lost. Should Australia ban 'losses disguised as wins'?



To add your voice to our campaigns visit: <https://www.agr.org.au/campaigns>





Make gambling venues less accessible and continue to reduce number of machines per venue.

The gaming industry is predatory.

My partner has been a heavy poker machine user (in and off) for about thirty years. **Things got increasingly worse during and after COVID in 2020.** I'm not sure what the future holds for him (or us). Anything we can do to rid our communities of the scourge of poker machines (and the overwhelming harm they do to individuals, families, and communities) we should do. **Let's keep fighting.**

Anything that reduces gambling, in any way, is a good thing.

Gambling is a silent addiction that is **destroying family life.** We have to protect the vulnerable like our young people who can fall into the habit. They have a 'poker machine in their pocket' Shame on greedy state and Federal Governments for **turning a blind eye** to this problem.

Gambling in all its forms (online not just pokies) preys on peoples weakness or at a particular time in someone's life when they are seeking some form of comfort and then unscrupulous operators do everything in their power to hook them.

Advertising is the beginning of it all and it must be stopped and a more rigorous campaign about the perils of gambling must be embarked on. Just like we have with smoking and alcohol.

Sports betting is out of control, all the kids are getting hooked, very very sad.

It's time to **protect consumers** not the industry.

YOUR

I have never seen something so harmful considered so benign - because of the cultural light in which it is cast by venues across Australia.

The **Government is too dependent** on the revenue it gets!

Having previously worked at gamblers help I see the impact and know there are no benefits to society of having these machines. They are just a way to funnel wealth from the community and those who need it, to business and the rich who do not. It's one of **our greatest political, social and health failings as a country.**

Gambling addiction is a very real and **destructive feature of society** at large and strong measures need to be taken to (at the very least) reduce the problem.

Destroys so many lives.

Gambling Ads should be banned

from the media. It worked for smoking. My teenage grandsons watch a lot of sport on TV when gambling Ads are at their most prolific & give the impression that gamblers always win.

Poker machines have destroyed my life.

They kill. They have ruined NSW and Australia.

Luring people into an addiction that can ruin not only their life, but their families, is abominable. It is so shameful that **greed and corruption** is currently ruling NSW's gambling legislation.

I have 3 generations of gamblers in my family & **worry for my grandchildren.** Just like cigarettes, gambling advertising should be banned.

This is a predatory industry **praying on vulnerable people** in our society. These machines are purposely made to addict and changes need to be implemented to reduce harm.

VOICE

Gambling venues and times should be minimised.

Clubs should take more responsibility for identifying and stopping regular gamblers. Gamblers often gamble away money that is NOT theirs. Clubs should be giving MORE money back to the community as the money they makes comes from the community.....managers should NOT be on huge salary packages as well as other spending perks.

It is disgusting that so many gaming companies are allowed to advertise so constantly on our TVs for something that is so dangerously addictive. I think the ACMA should restrict advertising significantly. Combined with the proposed restrictions above, this will start to **help vulnerable people in our communities.**

As a family carer of a loved one who lives and manages daily with a severe mental illness and now manages a gambling addiction aided by suitable medication **I've seen the damage it can do** to a user of poker machines and the ripple effect on families and friends. I am heartened by the efforts made by Tim Costello and the Alliance for Gambling Reform Team - Many thanks



Top 10 Stories of 2022

1. Record fines for Casinos

The record \$80m fine imposed on #CrownCasino shines a spotlight on the pitiful penalties available to regulators in response to evidence of money laundering, organised crime, fraud and foreign interference at #StarCasino. The Chief Advocate of the Alliance for Gambling Reform, Rev. Tim Costello, said despite appalling evidence of wrong-doing Star was not able to face a similar penalty to that imposed on Crown.

Thu, 2 Jun

Read it here: [Record fines for Casinos](#)

More here: Nov 2022: [Crown Melbourne fined \\$120M](#)

2. VGCCC enforces all recommendations of the Finklestein report

Last month the VGCCC published new rules for the conduct of gambling for gambling machines at Crown Casino. The rule changes include prohibiting poker machine users at Crown from gambling on more than one poker machine at a time.

Sat, 21 May

[VGCCC Report](#)

3. Star Casino (Sydney) found 'not suitable' to hold a licence

The Star Entertainment Group has been found unsuitable to operate its casino in Sydney after a damning inquiry into the company. "The institutional arrogance of this company has been breathtaking," Philip Crawford, the NSW Independent Casino Commission chief, said.

Tue, 31 May

[ABC story from May](#)

[ABC Story from September](#)

4. \$66 Billion dollars lost in Victoria (30 year anniversary of pokies)

While we shake our heads in disbelief at America's guns, the rest of the world shakes their heads in disbelief that we've allowed this." Said Chief Advocate Reverend Tim Costello.

Sun, 17 July

[Media release](#)

[Front page of The Age](#)

5. National Self-Exclusion Register

The Alliance welcomes the introduction of BetStop - a new National Self-exclusion Register. When it is ready, you will be able to self-exclude from all licensed interactive wagering services for a minimum of 3 months and up to a lifetime.

Thu, 21 Jul

[BetStop - National Self-exclusion Register](#)

6. Facial recognition technology in venues

How helpful is facial recognition in pubs and clubs in tackling gambling harm? Unless there are adequate safe guards the data could provide opportunities for the industry to better target gambling products to people who are already vulnerable. More in The Canberra Times with Alliance for Gambling Reform CEO Carol Bennett.

Fri, 19 Aug

[Media release](#)

[Canberra Times Story](#)



7. Bi-partisan report and real reform in Tasmania

The Alliance for Gambling Reform has praised the Tasmanian Government's move to introduce a mandatory cashless card for all poker machines, hailing it as a significant move to reduce harm and to combat money laundering.

The Alliance's Chief Advocate, Tim Costello, said the cashless card was a move that the Alliance had long campaigned for and the Tasmanian government's leadership on this issue was to be praised.

Thu, 15 September

[Media release](#)



8. "Gamble Responsibly" tagline to be dumped with 7 new slogans to reduce harm

"Bravo. Whatever else, they are closer to the mark of a genuine warning, rather than a glib repetition of a phrase that has lost all meaning." Read more with Peter FitzSimons on the new replacements for the 'gamble responsibly' tagline. Peter comes up with a few good ones himself!

Thu, 3 Nov

[Sydney Morning Herald Story](#)

[Carol Features in The New Daily](#)

[Link to our survey - Tell us what you think](#)



9. NSW Crime Commission Findings

No surprises that the NSW Crime Commission finds money laundering is out of control in clubs, we are talking billions of dollars, but don't expect any government response, gambling interests own governments across Australia.

Fri, 19 Aug

[Media Release](#)

[ABC Article](#)

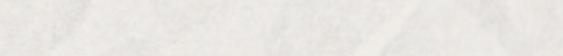


10. Federal Inquiry into Online Gambling

Chief Advocate Tim Costello, CEO Carol Bennett, Voices Coordinator Anna Bardsley and other Voices are speaking at the national Inquiry into Online Gambling on Monday.

Thu, 2 Jun

[Parliament House Media Release](#)



Advocacy and Policy

Casino inquiries and Royal Commissions

Following on from the ground-breaking Bergin Inquiry in NSW into Crown Casino, inquiries into casinos landed in every corner of the country including the damning Royal Commissions into Crown Casino in Melbourne and Perth, as well as inquiries into both Star Sydney and Queensland and an ongoing inquiry into SkyCity Adelaide.



Stephen Mayne, Councillor for Manningham and Carol Bennett at the ALGA conference, Canberra

The Alliance supported those with lived experience of harm at these casinos to tell their stories and the impact of this work has been monumental including:

- Major increases in fines available to states in case of non-compliance (Victoria, NSW and Queensland have all seen increased fines of \$100 million)
- Significant commitment to harm reduction measures including mandatory pre-commitment, cashless systems, improved data collection and improved self exclusion systems
- Special, independent managers
- New regulatory systems in many states

There is still so much work to be done in this area especially extending all changes to casinos to also be implemented at pubs and clubs.

Snapshot of Alliance Activity

Western Australia

Submissions to Perth Royal Commission into Crown, including discussion paper on regulatory framework.

Northern Territory

The Alliance supports community campaign that leads to a 9 month moratorium on new poker machine licences. Then met with the Attorney General Hon. Chansey Paech and commended his leadership.

Queensland

Submission and public evidence provided to QLD Star Entertainment inquiry.



New South Wales

NSW Crime Commission Inquiry into pubs and clubs recommending mandatory cashless card.

Australian Capital Territory

Issued policy paper on \$1 maximum bets following a review of poker machine bet and credit limits.

South Australia

Submission to Sky City Adelaide inquiry.

Victoria

The Alliance highlights the \$66 billion lost to poker machines over 30 years since they were introduced to the state.

Opening Hours Paper released.

Election focus on gambling harm after dark campaign.

Tasmania

Submission calling for mandatory precommitment and cashless card.

Submission to Tasmanian Liquor and Gambling Commission on responsible gambling officer training.

Advocating for gambling reform across the country

Victoria



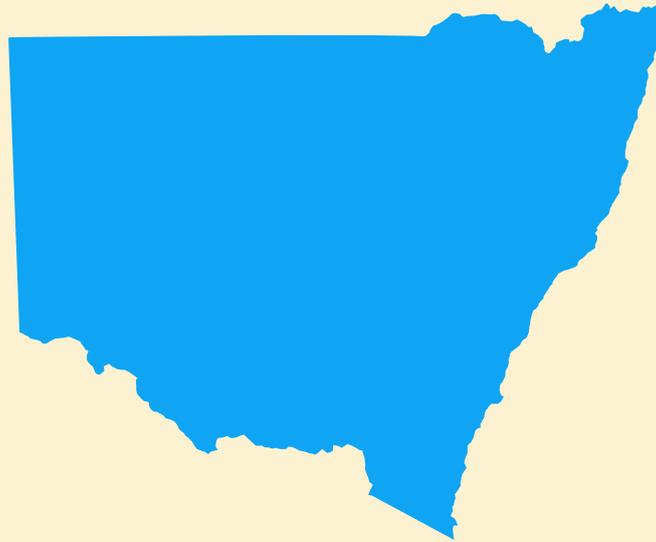
The 17th of July 2022 marked 30 years since poker machines were introduced to the state. The Alliance worked with The Age to report that \$66 billion dollars had been lost from poker machines in those 30 years. This news came following record breaking losses across the state on poker machines.

Throughout the year we continued to advocate for strong action following the Crown Royal Commission: ending gambling harm after dark; a mandatory pre-commitment system on all poker machines; and a ban on harmful features.

Following the Victorian state election in November, we will continue to work with continuing and new MPs to ensure gambling reform is a priority.

The Alliance welcomed consultation on the Victorian suicide prevention and response strategy. The Alliance made a submission and stressed that Victoria's new Suicide and Prevention and Response Strategy must include a dedicated focus on gambling related suicides. If the strategy's vision of 'towards zero suicides' is to be achieved, there must be significant gambling reform and a genuine focus on gambling as a public health concern.

New South Wales



Following the Inquiry into Star Sydney and the Crime Commission inquiry into money laundering in pubs and clubs, calls for reforms have never been louder. Crown Barangaroo had a delayed opening and the state is moving closer to a cashless system with mandatory pre-commitment which will significantly reduce harm. The Alliance will continue to advocate against facial recognition technology due to the significant risks associated with the technology as well as its harmful use overseas.

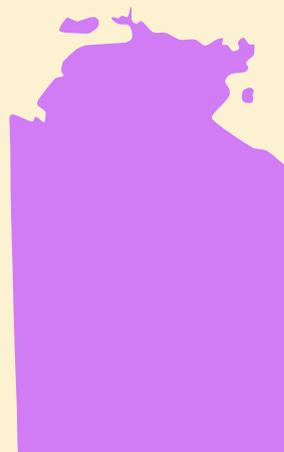
The Alliance made two submissions (January and June) into the NSW Crime Commission inquiry into money laundering in pubs and clubs. Our submission was made in relation to recommendations to the inquiry urging a universal, identity linked cashless payment system which is designed to reduce gambling harm as well as hinder money laundering.

Tasmania



Significant consultation has been undertaken in Tasmania and has led to bipartisan support for a cashless system with mandatory pre-commitment and important default limits. The Alliance welcomes the commitment to this model and made a submission to the Tasmanian Liquor and Gambling Commission's consultation on EGM Harm Minimisation Technologies calling for the change. The Alliance also made a submission to the Tasmanian Liquor and Gambling Commission's consultation on Responsible Gambling Officer Training.

Northern Territory



Following four applications for new poker machines made by Iris Capital in Alice Springs, a significant community campaign was run against the additional machines with over 700 submissions provided by residents. Thankfully, the Northern Territory government made the decision to suspend the applications for nine months following the community backlash. There is still a way to go on this, however, the Alliance is excited to continue working with the Alice Springs community.

The Alliance also made a submission to the Northern Territory Racing Commission Consultation Paper on the Code of Practice to Reduce Gambling Harm.

South Australia



There is currently a casino inquiry ongoing in South Australia, this time into SkyCity Adelaide's operations. The Alliance made a submission to this review and is keenly awaiting the findings in February 2023.

Australian Capital Territory



The Alliance has been in regular contact with stakeholders in the ACT following community consultation around the ACT's Electronic Gambling Machine (EGM) bet and credit limit review. The Alliance launched our \$1 Maximum bets policy paper and will continue to advocate for lower bet and load up limits on EGMs.

Queensland



The Queensland Government announced an external review of the Queensland operations of Star Entertainment, held public hearings which included testimony from our Voices group and released the report which the Alliance welcomed. The Alliance made a submission to this inquiry and worked with people who wished to share their stories of harm at the casinos.

Western Australia



The Alliance actively made a number of submissions to the Perth Royal Commission including the discussion paper on the regulatory framework and praised the findings of the review which were tabled in parliament in March.

Advocating for online gambling reforms nationally

Federal election

The Alliance launched a federal election campaign calling for candidates to commit to the following:

- A ban on sports gambling advertising across all broadcast platforms
- Close loopholes that allow gambling using credit cards
- Create a national regulator and online gambling ombudsman
- Stop political donations from the gambling industry

We heard back from multiple crossbenchers and independents and they supported our calls to end gambling ads and ensure a stronger integrity agenda.

Following the election, we worked to establish the inaugural parliamentary friends of reducing gambling harm group.



You can read the blog on this topic here. <https://www.agr.org.au/blogs/2022-federal-election-platform>

Inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm

On 15 September, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs announced an inquiry into online gambling. The Alliance provided a submission with 19 recommendations in seven key areas and provided support to 10 people with lived experience of online gambling harm to share their stories. The Alliance is keen to leverage the opportunity of this Inquiry and advocate strongly with the Australian public for significant changes very similar to those we called for in the federal election campaign.



Australians gamble 20% more online than any other country in the world.



The Australian online gambling market is the third largest in the world.



432 000 Australian children under 16 are already gambling.

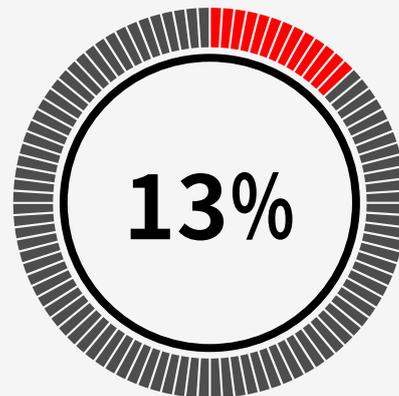
Supplementary information for the Parliament of Australia Inquiry into Online Gambling. The Alliance for Gambling Reform, Dec 2022

Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicides

The Alliance made a submission to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicides and urged the Commissioners to make recommendations that recognise that in order to prevent such suicides there needs to be action taken around gambling harm, highlighting the link between Returned Servicemen’s Leagues clubs, poker machines and gambling harm among this population.



AS LIKELY THAN CIVILIANS TO FALL INTO GAMBLING HARM

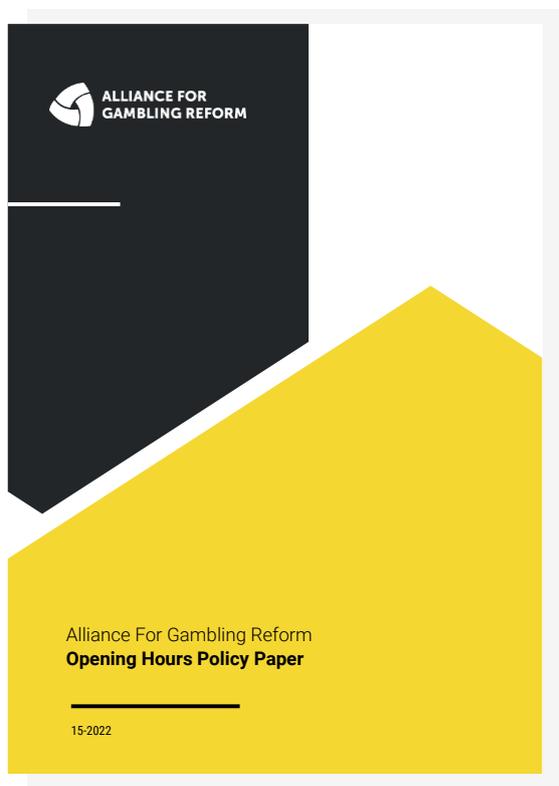


OF VETERANS EXPERIENCED SOME LEVEL OF GAMBLING HARM WITHIN FIVE YEARS OF QUITTING THE MILITARY

Metcalf, O., Lawrence-Wood, E., Baur, J., Van Hooff, M., Forbes, D., O'Donnell, M., Sadler, N., Hodson, S., Benassi, H., Varker, T., Battersby, M., McFarlane, A. C., & Cowlishaw, S. (2022). Prevalence of gambling problems, help-seeking, and relationships with trauma in veterans. PLOS ONE, 17(5), Article e0268346.

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/australian-military-veterans-almost-twice-as-likely-to-face-gambling-problems-than-civilians/360f9981-55e2-40a9-99fc-c2a0f06bc2b6>

Policy papers developed by the Alliance



Opening Hours Policy

The Alliance developed a policy paper that supported our continued advocacy work to see a national closure of all poker machine rooms from midnight to 10am. The policy paper outlines an evidence based approach and has been shared with ministers, regulators and peak bodies.

\$1 Maximum bets

It is well known and documented that poker machines have a range of harmful features which increase their addictive nature. One of those features are maximum bets (how much money can be gambled in a single press on the machine) which currently ranges from \$5 to unlimited. The Alliance advocated for a \$1 maximum bet (as recommended by the 2010 Productivity Commission review) to dramatically decrease potential losses across states and territories on poker machines.



Work with Councils

In 2022, our dedicated group of Leadership Councils went from strength to strength. The City of Greater Shepparton and Moonee Valley Council joined the Alliance, adding to our 21 other Leadership Councils.

Attending this year's Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly in Canberra gave us the opportunity to meet many of those Leadership Council representatives, who were happy to show their support for our 'End Gambling Harm After Dark' advocacy, especially in the lead up to the state election in Victoria.

This year the City's of Melbourne, Maroondah and Glen Eira all faced applications for more poker machines. While Melbourne lost theirs, the Maroondah application was eventually withdrawn, and we are anticipating the outcome of the application at Glen Eira which we provided a submission to. It will be the first such decision made after the recent legislative changes via the Casino and Liquor Legislation Amendment Act 2022 giving the Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission (VGCCC) a sharper focus on harm minimisation and stronger powers to regulate against harm from gambling.

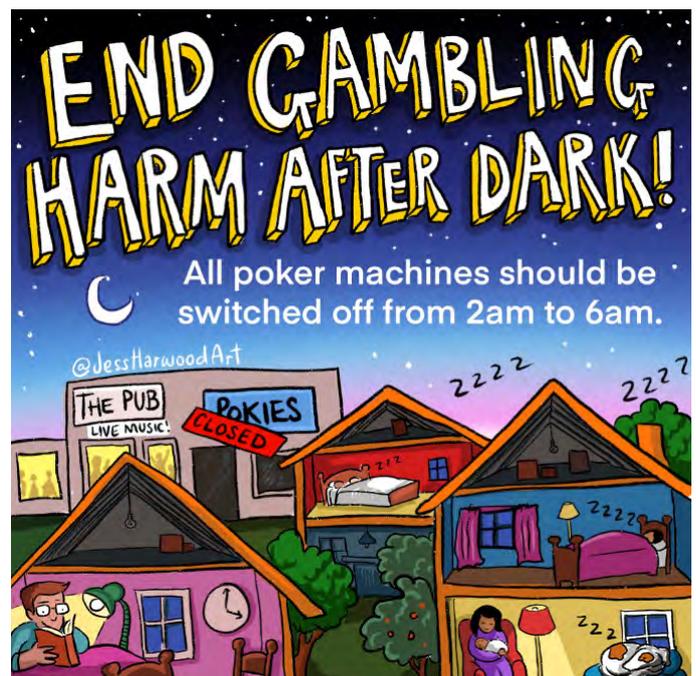


ALGA local conference, Carol Bennett and Manningham Council representatives, September 2022

The City of Kingston mounted a large campaign to close a loophole that allows for large scale retail spaces to open in close proximity to poker machine venues. Woolworths in 2022 won a Supreme Court case allowing them to build a supermarket a mere 75 metres from a poker machine venue. In any other context, a poker machine venue would not be allowed to be developed next to an existing supermarket, however, there are no such prohibitions on the opposite from occurring. Community members came together with their council and Rev. Tim Costello to show their disgust at Woolworths taking advantage of this loophole.

Several of our councils are also in the process of updating their gambling harm minimisation policies in 2022. Greater Dandenong, Monash, Darebin, Banyule, Maribyrnong and Mitchell are all reviewing and updating their policies to ensure they are utilising best practice and every possible lever available to council to reduce gambling harm in their communities. The Alliance looks forward to providing further input where required.

During Gambling Harm Awareness Week this year, several of our councils held public events to raise awareness of gambling harm. Hume, Mornington Peninsula, Kingston, Monash, Knox, Kingston and Maroondah all participated in the week and facilitated events. We really value councils putting on these events and all of the work councils do to highlight to their communities the impacts of gambling harm. Our lead councils are vital partners in driving the increasing momentum from the community to question why this harmful industry has been allowed to invade so many parts of our lives with so little restriction from legislators.



Our Funders and Supporters

This year, The Alliance has fine-tuned our approach to fundraising and continues to expand our fundraising efforts across four domains.

Individual Giving

We have facilitated individual giving via the <https://www.agr.org.au/donate> button on our newly developed website.

[Donate Today!](https://www.agr.org.au/donate)



Gifts in Wills

A new partnership with Gathered Here, enables our supporters to create a free will and make a gift in their will via the <https://www.agr.org.au/donate> button on our website.

In September 2022, we officially launched our partnership with Gathered Here through our participation in Include a Charity Week, at which time we invited our supporters to prepare their own free online will and consider creating a life-changing legacy.

Trusts and Foundations

We are grateful for the support of major donors, both previous and current including the Reichstein Foundation, Ross Trust, Equity Trustees, Australian Community Foundation. We thank them and look forward to our continuing partnership.



Collier Charitable Fund



Tim Costello speaks to supporters

Local Government Leadership Councils

Since our inception in 2015, the Alliance has established ongoing sponsorship with more than 20 Leadership Councils in Victoria, enabling us to establish grass-roots campaigns across the state. Our network of Leadership Councils are vital to the work of the Alliance. We thank them for their participation, leadership and support in reducing harm from gambling in local communities.



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