**Inter Church Gambling Taskforce**

**Loss limits on pokies**

*Always I hope I’ll get a big win, people around me sometimes have winnings spilling into their machine tray, and still I am losing. The more I lose the worse I feel and when I leave empty handed, I am gutted, depressed. Wishing I hadn’t gone there, thinking about what I could have bought with the money I have wasted. If I lose $40 I tell people I lost $10. I’m too ashamed to tell the truth. So I dislike myself more for lying but that’s what pokies do to you.”*

Person with a gambling problem (‘Haunting addiction hits home’, *The Stratford Press,* 9 June 2011)

Over the last few years many of you have written letters or sent postcards in support of the introduction of a system that will allow pokie gamblers to set themselves limits on their losses. While the Federal Coalition Government has moved to unwind all the gambling reforms on pokies introduced by the Gillard Government, the Victorian Coalition Government has been constructively moving ahead with the roll out of a system that will allow pokie gamblers to set a limit that will apply to all machines in the state. The *Gambling Regulation Amendment (Pre-Commitment) Act 2013* makes it compulsory for pokie venues to connect their machines to the statewide limit setting system from 1 December 2015.

Allowing gamblers to set themselves a limit is an important step to curbing the harm caused by problem gambling. However, this Bill will still allow people to keep gambling once they reach their limit because it’s not enforceable. We hope that once this system is in place we will be able to get it changed to allow gamblers to set themselves enforceable limits.

The limit setting system will allow de-identified data about gamblers’ behaviour to be released to researchers to better help identify measures to combat problem gambling. However, on the negative side, pokie venues will be allowed to link loyalty schemes to the limit setting system.

So, on the one hand, gamblers will be encouraged to set limits on how much they are willing to lose and on the other hand they may be encouraged to lose more to earn loyalty points. We need your help to stop this from happening. Limit setting on pokies should not be undermined by allowing pokies barons to have loyalty schemes that encourage people to gamble excessively.

**What you can do**

Please write polite and respectful letters to:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The Hon Edward O'Donohue  Minister for Liquor and Gaming Regulation  Level 26, 121 Exhibition Street  Melbourne, Victoria, 3000  E-mail: edward.o'donohue@parliament.vic.gov.au  Salutation: Dear Minister | The Hon Dr Denis Napthine  Premier  Level 1, 1 Treasury Place  Melbourne, VIC 3002  E-mail: premier@dpc.vic.gov.au  Salutation: Dear Premier |

Points to make in your letters:

* Express deep concern regarding the harms gambling, especially the pokies, continue to cause in our community, pointing out the last measure of problem gambling in Victoria found around 29,000 adults had gambling problems.
* Thank the Government for rolling out a system that will allow gamblers to set limits on pokies on all machines by 1 December 2015 and for the removal of ATMs from pokies venues.
* Also thank them for allowing data from the limit setting system to be used for research to further identify how to curb problem gambling.
* Ask that they don’t allow the limit setting system to be undermined by permitting loyal schemes that encourage more gambling to be part of the system.