

## Senate Standing Committee on Economics

### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

23 – 24 February 2011

Question No: AET 9

Topic: Gambling reform and pre-commitment

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Cash asked: In what trials has mandatory pre-commitment resulted in a reduction of problem gambling prevalence rates?

Answer:

To date, no Australian trials have involved:

- mandatory pre-commitment of any kind

- the numbers of people needed for accurate statistical inferences about problem gambling rates.

All Australian trials of pre-commitment have been voluntary schemes, and so would underestimate the effectiveness of mandatory schemes. The Commission has just noted the limitation of the Nova Scotia trial.

Notwithstanding the (inevitable) limitations of evidence from past studies, there are significant empirical and theoretical reasons to expect significant benefits from pre-commitment. Problem gamblers indicate that they have control problems and many try to control their future actions. That many resort to self-exclusion — an imperfect though useful system — is an extreme illustration of this. Even ordinary consumers suggest that they have difficulty controlling spending on gaming machines. There have been positive results in some areas from voluntary pre-commitment, and utilisation should be greater if mandatory pre-commitment were available.