

**SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY INTO**  
***ATMs and CASH FACILITIES IN LICENSED VENUES BILL 2008***

Committee Secretary  
Community Affairs Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

28 September 2008

To the Community Affairs Committee,

I am writing to support the aim of the *ATMs and Cash Facilities in Licensed Venues Bill 2008* i.e. ‘to limit ATM and cash facilities in licensed venues, and for related purposes’. This would certainly assist in preventing harm to individuals, families and communities caused by Electronic Gaming Machine (EGM) gambling.

There is clear and solid evidence that the presence of ATMs in venues leads to excessive and problematic gambling on EGMs [e.g. Livingstone, Woolley, Borrell, Bakacs & Jordan, 2006, pp. viii, xiv].

The reason that the easy availability of cash facilitates problematic gambling is that *loss of control for gamblers is intrinsic to the product itself* thus annihilating possibility for true consumer choice in many cases and leading to ‘runaway’ spending.

Various (mainly government-commissioned) studies have demonstrated that a high proportion of regular EGM gamblers have problems with their gambling – between 16 and 48 per cent of ‘players’, depending on the type of venue studied (club or hotel), jurisdiction and research methodology (in Australia – Productivity Commission, 1999, pp. 6.1, 6.54; Blazczynski, Sharpe & Walker, 2001, p. 55; in Canada – Schellinck & Schrans, 1998, pp. 3, 15). The Productivity Commission comprehensively found that around one in five weekly EGM gamblers have significant problems (1999, p. 6.1). More recently, in a Victorian Government study, only **31.1 per cent** (130) of 418 EGM users were found to be ‘**non-problem gamblers**’, with 27 per cent (113) being ‘problem gamblers’, 25.4 per cent (106) ‘moderate-risk gamblers’ and 16.5 per cent (69) ‘low-risk gamblers’ (Rodda & Cowie, 2005, p. 81).

Importantly, according to Dickerson, Haw & Shepherd (2003), *loss of control is not inherent in some players but is a 'common and expected outcome of the regular interaction between human beings and contemporary forms of gambling'* (p. 22).

Thus, while I support legislation that limits access to cash in EGM venues (or any venues that provide access to continuous forms of gambling) I believe that legislation should also focus on the primary point of harm perpetration i.e. the design of EGMs and their gambling software. Furthermore, I believe that we should take a leaf from emerging environmental policy that requires industries to be accountable for the harm generated through their products (e.g. via carbon emissions) (for elaboration see Borrell, 2007).

Thank-you for your attention to the above matters.

Sincerely,

**Jennifer Borrell**

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## References

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