

## Coalition committee members' additional comments

1.1 Coalition committee members agree with the need to find effective prevention measures and treatment methods to further improve rates of problem gambling. We therefore broadly agree with the direction of the committee's report.

1.2 We stress that problem gambling needs to be addressed through approaches that can effectively prevent, mitigate and address problem gambling. Effective policies are those that target the small percentage of the population who suffer gambling problems and gaming addictions.

1.3 Policies must be demonstrably capable of delivering real, meaningful and measurable outcomes for problem gamblers across all forms of gambling.

1.4 Coalition committee members do not support comments in the report that "little or no progress has been seen" with respect to tackling problem gambling. The committee was provided evidence of industry and others initiatives that indicate work being undertaken to address problem gambling.

1.5 Some specific committee observations in the report such as those contained in paragraphs 2.15, 2.64 and the end of 6.21 appear to Coalition committee members to be gratuitous. For example, in the absence of a specific committee observation and/or recommendation regarding how a 'public health approach' should be applied to 'upstream' activities, Coalition committee members do not associate themselves with these general observations.

1.6 Although the report expresses disappointment that Clubs Australia, the Australian Hotels Association, and the Australasian Casino Association did not appear as witnesses before the committee, Coalition members recognise the industry groups have provided significant assistance and information to the committee on numerous occasions historically, as well as agreeing to answer questions on notice.

1.7 The committee view at paragraph 8.93 of the report is not a view necessarily shared by Coalition members. Arbitrary daily limits on ATMs located in venues, although well intentioned, have not been adequately justified by evidence.

1.8 In November 2011, the Coalition launched a policy discussion paper on gambling reform<sup>1</sup> and established a working group to consult with industry, state and territory governments, experts and the wider community to investigate policy options that effectively address problem gambling. The gambling landscape changed in January 2012 when the Prime Minister reneged on her deal with Mr Andrew Wilkie MP. There is now a stalemate with the government refusing to introduce its gambling legislation until its passage through the parliament is assured. The Greens and Senator Nick Xenophon have contributed to stalling gambling reform by refusing to support the legislation. Meanwhile, arrangements for the trial of mandatory pre-commitment

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1 *The Coalition's Policy Discussion Paper on Gambling Reform*, November 2011.

in the ACT are on hold until the government legislation is passed. As the final Coalition policy will need to take account of any government legislation that may be passed as well as the status of the trial it will release its final position on any changes to gambling laws when appropriate.

1.9 In the meantime, in the absence of government action, Coalition committee members are pleased to note that clubs have been developing their own response. The policy paper, *Part of the Solution* highlights the range of prevention, intervention and treatment measures clubs across Australia have put in place to help problem gamblers. It also makes a number of evidence based recommendations.<sup>2</sup> This shows how the industry is willing to be part of the solution to introduce evidence-based measures to assist problem gamblers.

**Mr Steven Ciobo MP**

**Mr Josh Frydenberg MP**

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2 Clubs Australia, *Part of the Solution, Clubs Promoting a Culture of Responsible Gambling*, 2012.