

SACOSS calls for immediate action on gambling recommendations

The South Australian Council of Social Service today welcomed many of the recommendations of the Productivity Commission's report on gambling, but expressed dismay that after an extensive review and repeated consultation by the Commission, the federal government had embraced just one recommendation and opted for more consultation via a COAG Select Council.

"There are a number of recommendations that the states and territories should consider implementing immediately" said SACOSS Executive Director Ross Womersley. "That said, those same governments are so reliant on income from gambling it is imperative the federal government take a lead role in implementing the Commission's recommendations. SACOSS is deeply dismayed that the federal government is adopting only one of the Commission's recommendations as a matter of any urgency".

"The Productivity Commission report contains a number of positive recommendations," said Womersley. "These include limiting the poker-machine 'spend', including compulsory signs on machines warning of the risks of problem gambling, disclosure about the 'expected' hourly expenditure on a pokies and the percentage cost of play, and a limitation on the amount you can bet at one go. State and territory governments could and should start on these now".

"State and territory governments should immediately start moving towards the full 'pre-commitment' scheme applying to all venues, as recommended. This is a system required to be used by all gamblers, incorporated into all gambling activities and devices, and centrally monitored and seamless in operation for gamblers. We would like to see a tougher regime with fewer options and clear limits" said Womersley.

"We also call on state and territory governments to adopt a public health approach recommended by the Commission, noting that gambling has adverse health, emotional and financial impacts on many more people than 'problem gamblers' alone," said Womersley. "Gambling policies should take account of that in the same way as drug and alcohol policies do in addressing harm from alcohol consumption."

SACOSS welcomes the federal government's immediate rejection of the liberalization of online gambling as recommended by the Commission.

SACOSS noted that the Commission's recommendation to remove the TAB's retail monopoly should also be rejected as it will encourage a proliferation of shopfront betting outlets.

[Download](#) SACOSS' submission to the Productivity Commission's Draft Recommendations.

[Download](#) the National COSS network's submission to the Review.