



## Office of the Mayor

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Mayor, Cr Stuart James  
 Monash City Council  
 PO Box 1  
 GLEN WAVERLEY VIC 3150

6 March 2020

<b>MONASH CITY COUNCIL</b>	
<b>FILE:</b>	
<b>FOLIO:</b>	
<b>RECEIVED:</b>	16 MAR 2020
<b>REFERRED:</b>	
<b>COPY TO:</b>	
<b>REPLY REQUIRED:</b>	YES NO

Dear Cr James

### JOIN THE CALL FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ROYAL COMMISSION REFORM

As the Mayor of Frankston City Council, I am writing to you in conjunction with the Alliance for Gambling Reform, asking your Council to join the call for a Federal Royal Commission into Gambling Harm.

Council at its meeting on 28 January 2020 adopted the following Notice of Motion:

*That Council:*

1. *Affirms the Australian Local Government Association commitment to support the City of Yarra Notice of Motion in calling on the Federal Government to:*
  1. *Establish a Royal Commission into the gambling industry and the \$24 billion in annual gambling losses nationally, the highest in the world in per capita terms.*
  2. *Embrace national harm minimisation policies to reduce gambling harm in Australia such as:*
    - a) *Following the lead of the UK Labour Party in supporting a ban on credit card usage with Australian licensed online gambling companies;*
    - b) *Introducing further restrictions on gambling advertising, emulating the approach taken with the tobacco industry;*
    - c) *Establishing a national ombudsman scheme to process consumer complaints and resolve customer disputes with online gambling companies;*
    - d) *Introducing a ban on federally registered political parties from owning gambling licences issued by Australian governments, including for the operation of poker machine venues.*
2. *Calls on the Federal Government, through support of the Australian Local Government Association, to investigate the gambling industry's influence on the democratic process, including political donations and third party campaigning;*
3. *Notes the letter of support from the Alliance for Gambling Reform in relation to this Notice of Motion;*

- 4. *Prepares a joint letter with the Alliance for Gambling Reform to all Mayors in Australia calling on similar council resolutions (including a generic Notice of Motion template); and*
- 5. *Resolves to not accept any corporate sponsorship for council based activities from gambling/gaming entities, without exception.*

Frankston City Council is part of the Alliance for Gambling Reform’s group of Leadership Councils because we are concerned about gambling harm and the damage it is doing in local communities. The latest data shows that across Australia, almost \$25 Billion dollars was lost in 2017/18 on gambling, an increase of 5 per cent from the year before . Given the scale of the damage done by gambling, and the costs to our communities, the Federal Government should establish a Royal Commission into the industry.

The last serious investigation of the gambling industry was by the federal Productivity Commission that concluded in 2011. This report found that significant changes to harm minimisation strategies were required such as reducing the maximum bet limit per button push to \$1 and limiting the amount of cash that can be inserted into a machine at one time. Since then, whistleblowers have come forward detailing a string of appalling behaviours. These are likely to be the tip of the iceberg that a Royal Commission could fully investigate.

**There are known links between gambling harm and issues that plague our communities such as mental-ill health, family violence, poverty, homelessness and chronic illnesses.**

Carolyn Crawford, a resident from Frankston City and an advocate with lived experience of gambling harm, said: “In 2016 at the age of 64, I was sentenced to 18 months in prison for taking money from my place of employment to gamble on the pokies. I went to the pokies every day after work and weekends. Many a time I would be driving home after losing all my money thinking to myself that I should just drive my car into a tree to stop the loneliness and pain I was feeling in myself.”

“The only thing that stopped me was the guilt I felt about causing pain and sadness to my family and friends. A gambling addiction is not something that you can see like alcohol or drugs but is just as mentally unhealthy.”

Research since the Productivity Commission report has revealed that harm to health caused by ‘low’ and ‘moderate’ risk gambling is greater than that experienced by ‘problem’ gambling . This change in our understanding of gambling harm warrants a re-assessment of the industry and its societal costs. Our understanding of gambling harm as a public health issue requires a wider scope than the Productivity Commission, and requires the Federal Government to fully investigate the problems within the gambling industry and take action to address these.

A Royal Commission into gambling will help address the social, political and industry regulation concerns arising from the continuous escalation of money lost and harms caused by gambling in communities across Australia. Given the extent of influence exerted by the gambling industry in Australia, nothing short of a nation-wide Royal Commission will achieve the degree of strengthened regulation and bolster the case for reform to reduce the gambling industry’s impacts on our communities.

Please join us in calling for a Federal Royal Commission into Gambling and for the Federal Government to embrace national harm minimisation policies. Together we can tackle harm from gambling in your community and call for reforms to give your residents the protections they deserve.

Attached is our Notice of Motion that you can use as a template for a motion at your Council. If you have any questions or would like further information please contact Kathryn Renwick, Social and Community

Planner, [kathryn.renwick@frankston.vic.gov.au](mailto:kathryn.renwick@frankston.vic.gov.au) or the Alliance for Gambling Reform's Council Gambling Harm Advisor, Katherine at [katherine@agr.org.au](mailto:katherine@agr.org.au).

Yours faithfully

*S. Mayer*

Cr Sandra Mayer  
**MAYOR – FRANKSTON CITY**

*T. Costello*

Rev. Tim Costello  
**ALLIANCE FOR GAMBLING REFORM**

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**ALLIANCE FOR  
GAMBLING REFORM**

**Template Notice of Motion:**

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2. Calls on the Federal Government, through support of the Australian Local Government Association, to investigate the gambling industry's influence on the democratic process, including political donations and third party campaigning;
3. Resolves to not accept any corporate sponsorship for council based activities from gambling/gaming entities, without exception.

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<sup>i</sup> "Expenditure on Gambling in Victoria and Australia" <https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/resources/gambling-victoria/expenditure-on-gambling-victoria-and-australia/>

<sup>ii</sup> Browne, M et al., "Assessing Gambling-Related Harm in Victoria: a public health perspective", Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (July 2016) <https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/resources/publications/assessing-gambling-related-harm-in-victoria-a-public-health-perspective-69/>