



# Media Release

## Time for policies not politics on gambling epidemic

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Tasmania's peak social welfare group, TasCOSS, has called on Tasmania's three political parties to stop playing politics with problem gambling and start announcing policies to address the epidemic of problem gambling in the Tasmanian community.

TasCOSS CEO Tom Muller described the Treasurer's response to questions in parliament today from Opposition Parties on the Government's response to last year's social and economic impact study into problem gaming as simply not good enough.

"The community sector campaigned for years to get the State Government to undertake an independent study into the social and economic impact of problem gambling on the Tasmanian community and now we need to see the findings of that report implemented in full, Mr Muller said.

"It's simply not good enough for the Government to fund the report only to now hide behind the deed with Federal Hotels as an excuse for not having to implement the findings."

"The Liberal Opposition also needs to start saying what they intend to do if they win Government to reduce the devastating impact of poker machines on the Tasmanian community."

"The reality is any substantive response to problem gambling in Tasmania must include tighter regulation of gaming venues including restrictions on advertising and changes to opening hours."

The gambling social and economic impact study released last year showed:

- The main source of problem gambling comes from poker machines in hotels, clubs and casinos.
- One third of all gaming machines are located in two casinos. The report also highlighted that gambling machines now account for 92% of the total expenditure in Tasmania's two casinos – this is a massive change from 8% in 1997/98;
- There is a disproportionate concentration of machines in lower socio-economic areas; and
- That 10% of gaming machine users account for 40% of gaming machine turnover.

**For further comments and information call Tom Muller on 0448 310 043**