

David Harris

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty
Minister for Gaming and Racing
Minister for Veterans
Minister for Medical Research
Minister for the Central Coast



Media Release

Responsible Gambling Officers introduced into pubs and clubs across NSW

Friday, 2 February 2024

From 1 July 2024, venues with more than 20 gaming machine entitlements will be required to have a Responsible Gambling Officer on duty while poker machines are in operation, in the latest initiative by the NSW Labor Government to reduce gambling harm.

Responsible Gambling Officers will help identify patrons at risk of harm or displaying concerning gambling behaviour, refer them to gambling support information and services and facilitate requests for self-exclusion.

All hotels and clubs with gaming machines will also be required to keep a Gambling Incident Register and a Gaming Plan of Management as part of a suite of reforms being implemented to reduce risk of gambling harm and support people who may need help.

The new requirements are being implemented through amendments to the *Gaming Machines Regulation 2019*.

A position paper on the incoming requirements for pubs and clubs will be published online today. Industry stakeholders and harm minimisation organisations have been extensively consulted during the development of the paper and the Government's approach.

This will provide industry with certainty about the new harm minimisation measures, timeframes for implementation and enable staff to undertake the necessary training.

Clubs with more than 100 gaming machine entitlements will be required to have additional Responsible Gambling Officers, to ensure enough sufficiently trained staff are available to support patrons and to ensure they have a reasonable workload across larger gaming floors.

Responsible Gambling Officers and other people with specified roles will also need to complete Advanced Responsible Conduct of Gambling (ARCG) training under the proposed changes.

The proposed new requirements would be implemented in stages to allow NSW venues, staff, management, and training providers time to adjust.

The position paper on Responsible Gambling Officers is available at:
<https://www.liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au/documents/publications/Responsible-Gambling-Officer-position-paper.pdf>

The GambleAware phonenumber 1800 858 858 is open 24 hours a day for anyone needing support. It is free and confidential. For more information visit www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au

The NSW Labor Government has already implemented a number of reforms to reduce gambling harm and prevent money laundering in NSW pubs and clubs including:

- reducing the cash input limit from \$5,000 to \$500 for all new gaming machines
- reducing the state-wide cap on gaming machine entitlements by approximately 3,000
- banning political donations from clubs involved in gaming
- establishing the Independent Panel on Gaming Reform to oversee a comprehensive trial of cashless gaming in NSW across 4,430 electronic gaming machines - far exceeding the government's election commitment of 500 machines
- banning external gaming-related signage, and internal gaming-related signage that can be seen from outside the venue.

Minister for Gaming and Racing David Harris said:

“The NSW Government is committed to gambling reform, reducing gambling harm and stopping money laundering and criminal activity associated with poker machines.

“Harmful gambling not only impacts individuals, but also their loved ones and the broader community.

“We know there is no single solution to address harm from gambling, which is why we are implementing a range of gambling reforms.

“In NSW, gaming machines represent the highest risk of gambling harm.

“One in three people who gamble regularly are considered to be moderate or high-risk gamblers according to the Problem Gambling Severity Index.

“The introduction of Responsible Gambling Officers is the next important step in supporting people who may be experiencing gambling harm.

“They will be across pubs and clubs where gambling is happening, and be alert to patrons at risk of harm or displaying concerning gambling behaviour and link them in to the support they need, such as the GambleAware hotline.

“It is great to have industry on board with our gambling reform agenda as well as harm minimisation organisations. Together we are making a real difference in tackling gambling related harm.

“The NSW Labor Government is committed to evidence-based gambling reform and has delivered more in 10 months than the previous government managed in 12 years.”

MEDIA: Alison Ayres | Minister Harris | 0488 463 648