

Media Release

Monday, 6 February 2023

COALITION POKIE REFORM PACKAGE WELCOMED BUT DEVIL IN THE DETAIL

The peak social services body in NSW has welcomed the NSW Coalition's announcement today to make every poker machine in NSW cashless by 31 December 2028.

NCOSS CEO Joanna Quilty said the Coalition's policy has the potential to make a real difference in the lives of NSW citizens impacted by gambling harm.

"We commend NSW Premier Dominic Perrottet's commitment to gambling reform," Ms Quilty said.

"While five years is a long way away to see the reform completed, it is heartening to have a detailed and comprehensive plan put on the table to mandate cashless gaming in NSW.

"As always, the devil is in the detail and having independent expert advisers as part of the Transition Taskforce will be critical to getting design and implementation issues right.

"I implore the Premier to ensure that people with lived experience are involved in the design and implementation process, and that the taskforce consults with communities, social services dealing with the fallout of gambling harm, and others who have been impacted.

"We now need bi-partisan support for the approach, given it has the potential to curb addiction and lessen the gambling harm we see in NSW."

Ms Quilty also asked for clarity on the Premier's point around community organisation grants.

"In particular I would like to see more detail around the proposed community grants program for small to medium sized pubs and clubs – particularly if it further entrenches the ClubGRANTS scheme under its current operating model.

"We have strongly advocated for the ClubGRANTS scheme to be reformed after extensively reviewing it and providing a report to the NSW Government in August 2021.

"The ClubGRANTS scheme is fundamentally flawed, it puts the clubs' interests ahead of the public interest and needs to be brought into the 21st century.

"NCOSS remains ready and willing to engage with both sides of Parliament to ensure any reform of the ClubGRANTS scheme is considered and well-informed."

For more information, visit www.ncoss.org.au.

Media contact: Billy Briggs | 0474 697 235