

Media Release

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OPPOSITION POKIE PACKAGE A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, BUT MORE TO BE DONE TO TACKLE HARM CAUSED BY GAMBLING

The peak social services body in NSW has welcomed most of the elements of the NSW Opposition's poker machine package but wants more done to support vulnerable communities.

"We welcome the detail announced today by the NSW Opposition on what they plan to do to tackle the harm done by poker machines across the state," NCOSS CEO Joanna Quilty said.

"An expanded mandatory trial of cashless gaming, covering at least 500 poker machines, is welcome along with an independent panel to oversee the trial. But ultimately, it must lead to cashless gaming state-wide.

"Cashless gaming systems have significant potential to minimise gambling harm, with the design and implementation of the system key to their success. Punters need to be given the tools to manage their gambling - like being able to set loss limits - especially those who have a serious problem.

"So while it is important to identify the best technologies from the trial, we must implement a mandatory cashless gaming system right across NSW.

"It is also vitally important that the independent panel is truly independent and includes people with lived experience.

"We welcome the commitment from the Opposition to publicly release the panel's findings."

However, Ms Quilty said NCOSS was unconvinced by the proposal to implement mandatory facial recognition technology in pubs and clubs to enhance self-exclusion.

"We have concerns that mandatory facial recognition technology could be misused and about safe data storage. It would make more sense to consider options for an effective, state-wide self-exclusion system, including the pros and cons of facial recognition, as part of the expanded cashless gaming card trial," Ms Quilty said.

NCOSS also welcomed the proposals to limit cash input per machine, ban external signage, reduce the number of poker machines, introduce Responsible Gaming Officers and the establishment of a harm minimisation fund.

In addition, NCOSS is urging political leaders to overhaul the NSW ClubGRANTs scheme.

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

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