



# FAMILY FIRST



Steve Fielding Family First Senator for Victoria

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **FAMILY FIRST'S BOLD NEW LAWS TO GET POKIES OUT OF SUBURBS**

Family First has declared war on poker machines in a radical plan that will see pokies phased out of pubs and clubs and restricted to racetracks and casinos.

“Everyday Australians are ambushed by the temptation of poker machines at local pubs and clubs,” Family First leader Steve Fielding said.

“Family First wants pokies to be restricted to racetracks and casinos, which are dedicated gambling venues where people go to have a flutter, not community venues where families go to eat dinner.”

Family First will introduce legislation next week to phase in a new federal tax on poker machines in pubs and clubs to push pokies out of community venues. The tax will be phased in over a number of years to allow these businesses to wean themselves off pokie profits. All revenue from the tax will be held in a trust fund to help community and sporting groups through the transition.

“South Sydney Rugby League Club The Rabbitohs proved clubs can operate without pokies when they decided to scrap their poker machines last year,” Senator Fielding said.

“In Western Australia poker machines are already successfully restricted to casinos.”

Senator Fielding is calling on both sides of politics to support the plan.

“Labor and the Coalition have both stated they are concerned about the pokies, so here is a real opportunity to put their words into action,” Senator Fielding said.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said, “I hate poker machines and I know something of their impact on families”. Opposition Leader Brendan Nelson said, “We have reached a point where enough is enough”.

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## HOW POKIES DAMAGE FAMILIES AND PROFIT GOVERNMENTS:

- 36,000 of the 42,000 problem gamblers in Victoria used poker machines and more than 80% used poker machines weekly or more. <sup>1</sup>
- Each problem gambler has a negative impact on five to ten other people – that's approximately 290,000 other people effected. <sup>2</sup>
- Problem gamblers accounted for 42% of expenditure on poker machines nationally. <sup>3</sup>
- More than 50% of regular poker machine users, are problem gamblers or at risk of becoming problem gamblers. <sup>4</sup>
- Problem gamblers spend about 20% of their household income on gambling, while other gamblers spend just over one per cent. <sup>5</sup>
- One in 10 people with significant gambling problems said they had thought of committing suicide because of their gambling. <sup>6</sup>
- State & territory government revenue from poker machines and Keno nearly doubled over the last 10 years – up from \$1.45 billion in 1996-97 to \$2.85 billion in 2005-06. <sup>7</sup>
- Punters from lower income suburbs in Victoria lost \$2.5 billion in 2006-07 on poker machines, or \$7 million a day. <sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Livingstone, C and Woolley, R, Risky business: a few provocations on the regulation of electronic gaming machines. *International Gambling Studies*, vol.7(3), pp 361-376, December 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Australia's Gambling Industries, Productivity Commission, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Australia's Gambling Industries, Productivity Commission, 1999

<sup>4</sup> Livingstone, C and Woolley, R, Risky business: a few provocations on the regulation of electronic gaming machines. *International Gambling Studies*, vol.7(3), pp 361-376, December 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Australia's Gambling Industries, Productivity Commission, 1999

<sup>6</sup> Australia's Gambling Industries, Productivity Commission, 1999

<sup>7</sup> Australian Gambling Statistics 1980-81 to 2005-06. 24th edition. Queensland Government Treasury, 2007

<sup>8</sup> Commission for Gambling Regulation