



AHA Position

The AHA supports the retention of state/territory government jurisdiction over gambling regulation.

The AHA supports a responsible gambling strategy that includes:

- Properly resourced counselling and support networks.
- Education and information programs to increase awareness of the risks associated with gambling, and how to obtain help.
- Research to gain a better understanding of the nature of problem gambling and measures that will help further reduce its prevalence.

The current exemption for hotels with 15 or fewer gaming machines from AUSTRAC compliance requirements should be extended to all hotels.

Background

Hotels play a significant role in creating employment, promoting tourism, providing hospitality and entertainment and supporting thousands of local sporting and community groups across Australia.

The industry's commitment to providing gambling services in a responsible manner has strengthened considerably over the past decade as evidence-based understanding has increased. During this period many improvements have been made and hotels now operate in a highly regulated environment with an emphasis on harm minimisation. Today less than one per cent of Australia's adult population are recognised as problem gamblers.

The AHA acknowledges that there remains more to do and is determined to work with Government, industry and experts in the field to develop targeted and cost-effective measures to further prevent problem gambling and assist those in need of help.

The AHA believes strongly that the regulation of land based gambling is a responsibility of the state and territory governments, with the regulation of online gambling being a Commonwealth responsibility. The AHA is opposed to a new tax on gaming machines to fund a Commonwealth bureaucracy that duplicates the role of the States and Territories.

The AHA supports an evidence-based approach and opposes public policy development and gambling measures that are unproven, including mandatory pre-commitment and any reduction in maximum bet limits.

Gaming machines should not be required to be mandatory pre-commitment capable or linked to a state-wide database tracking play. If a gaming machine is able to deliver voluntary pre-commitment to the player it should be allowed.

The AHA is opposed to any per day ATM withdrawal limit as it is unproven as a gambling harm minimisation measure and will negatively impact food & beverage sales, which comprise 70 per cent of hotel sales according to the ABS.

AUSTRAC

Hotels are acknowledged by regulators and police as representing a 'low risk' of money laundering and terrorism financing activity due to the small transaction amounts that occur. The AUSTRAC compliance regime is excessively and unreasonably burdensome on hotels in relation to the risk they pose.

The AHA supports:

- The current AUSTRAC reporting and cost recovery exemptions for hotels with 15 or fewer gaming machines being extended to all hotels.
- The retention of the obligation for hotels to report suspicious activity to AUSTRAC.

The AHA believes AUSTRAC should work closely with state and territory governments to understand existing legislation and regulation applying to gaming machines and prevent conflicting standards being applied.

