

PRIME MINISTER
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**MINISTER FOR BROADBAND,
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**MINISTER FOR FINANCIAL
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TACKLING PROBLEM GAMBLING IN AUSTRALIA

The Gillard Government today announced its plan to tackle problem gambling, helping the five million Australians affected by problem gambling in this country.

This plan means the Gillard Government will do more to tackle problem gambling than any Commonwealth Government in Australia's history.

The Government will act to:

- Undertake a large scale trial of mandatory pre-commitment;
- Expand pre-commitment technology to every poker machine across the country, that could then be used for mandatory pre-commitment if it is supported by a trial.

Rolling the technology out to every machine now ensures that we will be ready to flick the switch to a best-practice mandatory pre-commitment system, if the trial results support it.

We believe this evidence-based pathway to help problem gamblers and their families will gain the necessary support to pass the current Parliament.

It is our intention to introduce legislation in the first Parliamentary session of this year which will require that:

- All new poker machines manufactured from 2013 must be capable of supporting pre-commitment; and
- By 31 December 2016 all poker machines must be part of a state linked pre-commitment system, except eligible small venues which will have longer.

We will also continue to work on pre-commitment technology through the COAG Select Council on Gaming Reform. At this forum in May last year, state and territory gaming ministers agreed to support the required infrastructure for pre-commitment technology in all jurisdictions.

The Gillard Government understands that many Australians enjoy gambling responsibly. But for others it can have devastating consequences.

Problem gambling ruins lives.

That's why in November 2008 we asked the Productivity Commission to inquire into problem gambling in Australia.

The Productivity Commission found that problem gambling affects up to five million Australians, including friends, family and employers of people with a gambling problem.

These far reaching impacts are why the Australian Government is delivering genuine, long-lasting reforms to help problem gamblers and their families.

The Government is also taking a range of other actions to support problem gamblers and their families including:

- Introducing a \$250 daily withdrawal limit from ATMs in gaming venues (excluding casinos) by 1 February 2013;

- Electronic warnings and cost of play displays on poker machines by 2016;
- Additional counselling support with 50 new financial counsellors to work with problem gamblers, and expanding the reach of Gambling Help Online;
- Strengthening self-exclusion arrangements; and
- Improving training for staff in pokies venues.

Further, the Government recognises that gambling online and sports betting are a growing concern, and we will:

- Ban the promotion of live odds during sports coverage;
- Extend pre-commitment to online betting services;
- Crack down on online sports betting companies offering credit and introduce stricter limits on betting inducements; and
- Increase the powers of the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to enforce these new rules.

The actions the Gillard Government is taking will be the most significant and far reaching national reforms to tackle problem gambling ever seen in this country.

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