

Media release

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### **Australia pursuing pre-commitment for pokie machines**

The Australian Productivity Commission recommends that each jurisdiction in Australia adopt a full pre-commitment system for pokie machines by 2016.

Pre-commitment is a system of consumer protection whereby people are able to set limits on the amount of time and money they want to spend before they start playing on a pokie machine.

The Productivity Commission's recently released report on gambling (that follows its groundbreaking 1999 report) concludes that 'pre-commitment is a strong, practicable and ultimately cost effective option for harm minimisation'.

Graeme Ramsey, Problem Gambling Foundation CEO, says this is a real option for New Zealand to consider.

"The technology for a pre-commitment system already exists. Pre-commitment is not about the 'nanny state', rather it is about making pokies safer and making sure that consumers are in control of their own actions and activities when they are gambling," he says.

Victoria has already set a requirement to introduce pre-commitment by 2015.

"In New Zealand Lotto online operates a pre-commitment system. Otherwise, we have not pursued this consumer protection mechanism. The Australian Productivity Commission Report examines all current research and concludes that this is a system that offers real benefits while not eroding self responsibility and freedom of action," Graeme Ramsey says.

The Problem Gambling Foundation is asking Government to investigate the feasibility of a pre-commitment system here as it has in Australia.

"New Zealand has led the way in limiting gambling harm internationally for many years. Now we are seeing that other countries such as Norway and Australia are the ones finding new ways to minimise the impact of problem gambling by putting the gamblers in control. With presentation rates to problem gambling services in New Zealand rising, now is the time," Graeme Ramsey says.

The Australian Productivity Commission report on gambling can be viewed at <http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/gambling-2009/report>

For free, professional and confidential help with gambling problems:  
Ph 0800 664 262, Email [help@pgfnz.org.nz](mailto:help@pgfnz.org.nz) or visit [www.pgfnz.org.nz](http://www.pgfnz.org.nz)

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