

## Universal pre-commitment background briefing

A universal pre-commitment system on all Victorian electronic gambling machines would provide an opportunity for people to keep track of their use and to set reasonable and realistic time and spending limits. The Royal Commission into the Casino Operator and Licence made the recommendation (10) for mandatory pre-commitment to be implemented in Crown Casino. The Alliance for Gambling Reform advises in the strongest possible terms that the Victorian Government extends this recommendation to all EGMs in the state to ensure meaningful impact on preventing gambling harm.

Victoria is in a unique position to implement a universal pre-commitment scheme as the YourPlay hardware and software technology is already installed on all electronic gambling machines. YourPlay, being a voluntary pre-commitment system, currently has a very low participation rate and poor implementation by venues, although those who do use it do experience some benefits including being more aware of their expenditure and finding it easier to stick to limits they set for themselves<sup>1</sup>.

Internationally and nationally there are few examples of a full, binding, mandatory pre-commitment schemes, however below are some examples of pre-commitment worth highlighting:

- The Nova Scotia example which is often referred to is a partial mandatory pre-commitment scheme with non-mandatory harm prevention features. However, there were benefits for those who did use specific harm prevention features and a decrease in losses<sup>2</sup>. The program was discontinued after it saw a 25% decline in revenue (which jumped up back by 11% weeks after the system was removed)<sup>3</sup>. This is, however, an outdated example which came across technical difficulties in its implementation.
- Norway has had a mandatory pre-commitment scheme and has reasonable limits (around \$100 AUD a day or \$425 AUD a week) and has seen a significant decrease in the number of calls to their gamblers helpline, as well as large decrease of EGM gambling losses and participation rates<sup>4</sup>.
- A South Australian trial of pre-commitment measures in 70 venues reported high risk gamblers reduced their spending by 56 per cent<sup>5</sup>.

Recent media reports have highlighted the risks associated with only implementing a full, universal pre-commitment scheme in the casino and not implementing it in Hotels and Clubs<sup>6,7,8</sup>. **To prevent these risks, and watering down gambling harm prevention benefits, a statewide universal precommitment system is required.**

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<sup>1</sup> [Evaluation of YourPlay Final Report 0.pdf \(justice.vic.gov.au\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Pre-commitment systems for electronic gambling machines \(aifs.gov.au\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> Sulkunen, P., Babor, T., Cisneros, J., Egerer, M., Hellman, M., Livingstone, C., Marionneau, V., Nikkenen, J., Orford, J., Room, R., & Rossow, I. (2018). *Setting Limits: Gambling, Science and Public Policy*. (1st ed.) (Oxford Medicine). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198817321.001.0001>

<sup>4</sup> [Review of electronic gaming machine pre-commitment features: Limit setting \(apo.org.au\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [SA precommitment cover-PROCESS \(treasury.sa.gov.au\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Victorian Labor accused of going soft on 'donor mates' at Crown casino Melbourne \(brisbanetimes.com.au\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Plans to cut Crown pokie players' losses on ice amid feasibility fears \(smh.com.au\)](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Victoria denies it's walking away from pokie reform - RN Breakfast - ABC Radio National](#)