



NSW Council of Churches **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Churches call for NSW gambling inquiry

The President of the NSW Council of Churches, the Revd Dr Ross Clifford, has called on the O'Farrell Government to hold a wide-ranging inquiry into the gambling industry.

Dr Clifford, who was elected President of the Council on February 7, said the inquiry should examine the social impact of poker machines, telephone betting and online betting.

“NSW has around 50 per cent of the nation’s poker machines, and more problem gamblers than any other state. NSW also has a stable government, strong political voices representing healthy and informed discussion, and the numbers needed to achieve historic gambling reform,” Dr Clifford said.

“No one genuinely concerned about the devastating impact of problem gambling on individuals and communities in NSW wants to wait for a federal inquiry to report on federal issues. This is an issue for the states and NSW should take the lead,” he said.

The NSW Council of Churches supports mandatory precommitment technology and a \$1 bet limit for poker machines. The Salvation Army (Eastern Territory), a member of the Council, supports these reforms conditional upon pilot testing of mandatory pre-commitment to ensure the most effective outcome is achieved.

The NSW Council of Churches was founded in 1924 and represents the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT, the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia, the Churches of Christ in NSW, the Fellowship of Congregational Churches (NSW), the Presbyterian Church of Australia (NSW), and The Salvation Army (Eastern Territory).

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