



SA communities will be crushed by gaming machine “experiment”.

Community and sporting clubs across South Australia will be “kicked in the guts” if proposed changes to gaming laws become a reality, according to Clubs SA.

In the lead-up to the March state election, both SA Best and the Greens have outlined dramatic new laws for gaming machines – but there’s no true understanding of how much damage will be inflicted on not-for-profit clubs and the people they support.

“People don’t realise that clubs exist on a knife edge with 49% in severe financial distress,” said Clubs SA CEO, Mike Penfold.

“One of the key changes being proposed, the \$1 maximum bet, will cost literally millions of dollars to implement – money clubs simply don’t have and can’t afford to borrow. Money that simply won’t go back to the community.

“No research or analysis has been done. No-one knows what will happen and clubs don’t have the financial capability to overcome any more hurdles.

“It’s an extremely serious threat and, importantly, there’s no proof the changes will help problem gamblers at all. It’s an unnecessary experiment we just can’t afford to be part of.”

The Greens have gone even further, calling for the removal of all gaming machines.

“In real life, that means that clubs will close. All their positive community contributions will evaporate, and people with gambling problems will still have 100 ways to gamble.”

Of the 1272 licensed clubs in South Australia, 60 have gaming machines. Half of these are in regional areas, and half have 20 or fewer machines.

For example, on the Yorke Peninsula, one local club has six machines; another club in the Riverland has seven machines; in Whyalla one has 12 – all supporting their local community.

All SA’s community and sporting clubs – gaming and non-gaming – are not-for-profit, with all surplus funds going to support their services, facilities and local communities.

“The proposed changes would just shatter these club’s business model so some will simply have to close their doors,” Mike said. “That’s not just a possibility. It’s a certainty.

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“People will lose their jobs; hundreds of local sporting teams, charities and events will lose sponsorships; sporting and community facilities will shut.

“The impact will be enormous and unfair, and that’s what people have to understand.”

Clubs SA completely understands the concerns about problem gambling and has developed its highly effective Club Safe program to minimise harm.

But there’s no evidence the latest round of restrictions on gaming machines will help problem gamblers in any way. In fact, it will send people to other forms of less regulated gambling such as online gambling.

Instead, the proposals put at very serious risk the employment, enjoyment and lifestyle of tens-of-thousands of South Australians who interact with their local not-for-profit club.

In SA, community clubs annually provide:

- 19,800 jobs
- \$918 million annually in social contribution
- \$792 million in subsidised access to sporting, recreational and social facilities
- \$116 million in volunteer effort
- \$10 million in donations

(KPMG – 2015 National Clubs Census)

MEDIA - for more information, please call Mike Penfold, Clubs SA CEO, on 0400 242 272.