



Joint Media Release

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Commitment of funds to gambling assistance is essential, ahead of privatisation of TAB

The Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS) and the Financial Counsellors' Association of Western Australia, are calling for the State Government to commit to funding the reduction of gambling harm as part of any sale of the TAB and the introduction of a wagering tax.

“The harms from gambling can have a devastating toll on communities and we want to ensure that supporting services to tackle that harm is given the attention it needs,” said Louise Giolitto, Chief Executive Officer, WACOSS.

“We have strongly advocated for a point of consumption wagering tax as a fair and equitable revenue measure, which taxes a bookmakers' winnings in the state the bet is actually made, rather than in the jurisdiction in which they hold their bookmaking licence.”

“It is crucial that this revenue is used, however, to fund gambling support services and in particular those combining treatment of addiction with financial counselling,” said Bev Jowle, Executive Officer, Financial Counsellors' Association of Western Australia.

“Communities impacted by gambling harm can see increasing demand for services covering financial counselling, homelessness, alcohol and other drugs, and counselling. More often than not, these services are provided by the not-for-profit sector.

“We are also very concerned by the proposed introduction of virtual racing. Western Australians have benefitted from a strictly-regulated betting industry to date, as the only state to be free of poker machines outside of the casino. The proliferation of alternative gambling avenues, including the introduction of virtual and simulated racing products, increases the risks of gambling harm in our community,” Bev concluded.

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