



MEDIA RELEASE

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GTA Addresses Federal Senators

Gaming Machine manufacturers today called for a new approach to the development of research and regulations controlling the gaming industry in Australia.

Addressing the Senate Community Affairs Committee Public Hearing today in Sydney, Ross Ferrar, Chief Executive of the Gaming Technologies Association, stated that Australia's gaming jurisdictions are widely regarded as the most regulated in the world.

"The companies which manufacture gaming machines work in a highly regulated and strenuously audited, total compliance environment," Mr Ferrar stated.

"No gaming machine products enter the marketplace in Australia without undergoing comprehensive testing and technical review."

"We have no complaint about the level of Government scrutiny to which our members are subjected. On the contrary, we believe that these high standards are important and that we can very confidently state that this industry operates with great probity and integrity."

Mr Ferrar stated that much of what is described as "Harm Minimisation strategy" in the various Australian jurisdictions has not actually achieved anything positive. He said that many of the measures introduced in the late 1990s and early this century around Australia were not based on real evidence and as a result, have subsequently been proven to be useless.

"Australians deserve better than this. They deserve policy which will provide help if and when it's needed – and leave the rest of the Australian public to enjoy a legitimate, legal form of entertainment."

The GTA is pleased that the Government has announced that the Productivity Commission will review its 1999 Report into Australia's Gambling Industries.

"We believe that this review will reinforce the various analyses that have been conducted by State and Territory Governments in the years since 1999, which have shown a decline in problem gambling in the community," Mr Ferrar said.

"We hope that this will result in the use of current data on the incidence of problem gambling instead of ten year old statistics."

Mr Ferrar called for the establishment of a new ongoing national research body funded by federal, state and territory governments to conduct a more comprehensive and objective research program. It should involve operators, manufacturers and related private sector businesses, as well as community and counselling sectors and regulatory authorities.

“This new body should examine all aspects of gaming in Australia, including the effectiveness of current regulatory regimes, harm minimisation strategies, the efficacy of counselling and support services, and possible future features of gaming machines,” Mr Ferrar said at the Senate Committee Hearing.

“There should be evidence-based research on the economic and social impact of gaming in Australia, both positive and negative. And all research should be required to be conducted transparently and objectively.”

“The result would be a body of knowledge in which all stakeholders could have confidence and on which all governments could build policy and regulation to protect and promote the interests of the whole community.”

“We would all be protected from the false opinions and claims of self-interested individuals whose motivations appear to us to lie in seizing a greater share of government expenditure on research for their own personal financial benefit.” Mr Ferrar claimed.

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GTA hosts and operates the annual Australasian Gaming Expo and the New Zealand Gaming Expo.

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