



Speech By  
**Michael Healy**


**MEMBER FOR CAIRNS**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 March 2025

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Gambling**

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (2.44 pm): I have been approached by several constituents voicing their concerns regarding the detrimental impact of problem gambling but more specifically poker machines. Raised as a major concern was the easy access to these devices and the fact that unlimited amounts of money can be ploughed into them. We all know that problem gambling can threaten health, leading to increased incidents of mental illness, suicide, low self-esteem, stress, anxiety and depression. Results from a representative national sample state that a concerning percentage of Australian parents with dependent children are classified as problem gamblers and children of problem gamblers are at risk of harm. We also know that problem gambling drives poverty by diverting household spending on essential goods and services. The impact of this on growing families and children should be hugely concerning to each and every one of us in this chamber and across this state.

Gambling can be an addiction just like drugs or alcohol. Unfortunately as a nation, according to the official government research, we now lead the world when it comes to gambling. Incredible as it may seem, Australians lose more than \$25 billion a year on legal forms of gambling, representing the largest per capita losses in the world. What a great place to be such a world loser! Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety released new research looking into the relationship between gambling and domestic violence. Although gambling does not initiate domestic violence, a recent study reports it undoubtedly exacerbates it.

I note that there is already action from some state governments in addressing those concerning statistics. The Victorian government has introduced strict limits on how much money can be loaded into an individual poker machine. From next December, the amount of money people can load into a machine in Victoria at any one time will be reduced from \$1,000 to \$100. In Tasmania a mandatory precommitment card is needed to use any poker machine in the state, with the loss limited to \$100 a day, and in New South Wales the government is considering similar measures but is further ahead on implementation. It recently concluded a cashless gaming trial and is currently considering 30 recommendations from a 530-page report. The New South Wales government reduced the amount of cash that could be inserted into a poker machine at any given time from \$5,000 to \$500 last July. Like a number of my constituents, I am very keen to hear what this LNP government is going to do to protect families and protect young people from serious problem gambling. It is a major issue across our community, it needs to be acknowledged and it needs to be addressed.