

ITEM 3.4. PROUDLY POKIES FREE CAMPAIGN**FILE NO: S051491****MINUTE BY THE LORD MAYOR**To Council:

Last night, (Sunday 23 October 2016) the Proudly Pokies Free campaign, directed at reducing the harm caused by the pokies in Australia, was launched at the Oxford Art Factory, a leading Sydney live music venue, with the support of the Whitlam's Tim Freedman and several leading bands.

The campaign has been initiated by Tom and Anna Lawrence whose late father, Neil Lawrence, produced the documentary *Ka-Ching: Pokie Nation*, which exposed the gaming machines industry.

Proudly Pokies Free aims to raise awareness about the negative impacts of poker machines on the Australian community. Research for the campaign has found that Australia has 20 per cent of the world's poker machines, even though Australians constitute only 0.3 per cent of the global population. Apart from Nevada (Las Vegas), NSW has more pokies than any other state in the world.

Around \$12 billion is lost through gambling on poker machines every year, with 40 per cent of these losses by people with a gambling problem. An estimated 300,000 people are addicted to poker machine gambling in Australia, with seven additional people affected for every one problem gambler. Most concerning is the revelation that people aged between 18 and 24 spend more on poker machines than any other age group.

Poker machines have had an adverse impact on Sydney's live entertainment offering. The past three decades has seen entertainment rooms in hotels being converted into gaming rooms, with lost opportunities for live music, pub theatre and cabaret.

The goals for the Proudly Pokies Free Campaign are:

- to have less people playing pokies;
- to provide support for venues that are proudly pokies free; and
- to encourage harm reduction by supporting legislative change.

They aim to do all this by raising awareness of the damage that pokies cause, by promoting venues that don't have pokies and by campaigning for pokies reform.

The Proudly Pokies Free campaign complements our OPEN Sydney Strategy in that it is seeking to promote a safe, inclusive and diverse night time economy. It is a campaign I strongly support.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that Council support the Proudly Pokies Free campaign by raising awareness about it through the City's website, media and social media networks.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor