



Hon. George Souris M.P
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MEDIA RELEASE

NSW TOWNS TO SUFFER IF GAMBLING LICENCE IS INTRODUCED

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Communities in regional NSW will suffer greatly if the Federal Government introduces its mandatory pre-commitment scheme, Minister for Hospitality, George Souris said today.

“In NSW, there are 1,375 registered clubs with 2.5 million members - 829 in regional parts of the State. Clubs generate 45,000 jobs...26,000 of those in regional NSW, Mr Souris said.

“In the electorate of Port Macquarie, which today hosts the Community Cabinet there are 12 registered clubs which employ 518 people and have a combined membership of almost 60,000”.

“These clubs alone pay more than six million dollars in tax and donate almost \$700,000 annually to local community groups.

“In other words, just like registered clubs all over the State, the club movement in the Port Macquarie area is a vital and integral part of life here. It’s woven into the social fabric of this community.

“All this is under threat due to the intention of the Federal Government to introduce its ill-considered and damaging mandatory pre-commitment scheme, a scheme being introduced without any evidence that it will help problem gamblers.

“The price of introducing this scheme, being pushed by one independent MP, Tasmanian Andrew Wilkie, will be enormous.

“It will cost NSW clubs up to three billion dollars if you combined the cost of installing the technology and the revenue loss.

“It will also cost an estimated 16,000 jobs and many millions of dollars in donations to community groups as well as the subsidised meals, drinks and entertainment that the millions of members regularly enjoy.

“Last financial year, clubs allocated more than \$63 million to various community projects and services including aged, disability, youth and volunteer emergency services, an example of the generosity of the club industry”.

Mr Souris pointed out that the Allen Consulting Group found that in 2007, clubs mobilised 44,000 volunteers in support of their core purposes and provided 1,547 bowling greens, 366 golf courses, 163 playing fields, 81 gymnasiums and 66 swimming pools.

According to the Member for Port Macquarie, Mrs Leslie Williams,: “In the Port Macquarie area, the cost has been estimated at almost twelve and a half million dollars to the local economy and 173 jobs will be lost...and that is replicated all over NSW.

“It means, for instance, that school students in this area, who were recently the first in Australia to benefit from technology which helps overcome learning difficulties, thanks to a \$55,000 donation from the Westport Club, will no longer be able to benefit from such largesse from the local registered clubs.

“That’s just one example and it goes for a plethora of community organisations in the Port Macquarie area.

“The Liberals-Nationals Government stands shoulder-to-shoulder with registered clubs in opposing this awful scheme which will undoubtedly sound the death knell of many registered clubs,” Mrs Williams said.

“We will not support any measure that harms our communities and we intend to ensure that the voices of communities such as Port Macquarie’s are heard and jobs and community groups are preserved,” Mr Souris added.

“In fact, this Government, through a memorandum of Understanding with the Club movement, will introduce an improved clubs grants program which will deliver an additional \$85 million for community programs and services over the next four years,” Mr Souris said.

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