

# Independent Tony Windsor's pokies stand could cost Labor

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**INDEPENDENT MP Tony Windsor has warned he is unlikely to support fellow crossbencher Andrew Wilkie's proposed poker machine reforms, in an move that could cost the Gillard minority government dearly.**

Mr Wilkie has repeatedly declared that his poker machine pre-commitment scheme is non-negotiable, and he would withdraw his support for the government if they were not implemented, for whatever reason.

After meeting with clubs representatives from across his rural NSW electorate, Mr Windsor expressed doubts over the workability of the reforms and their impact on the clubs industry.

"There is no doubt in my mind after talking with smaller club managers that if some of the proposals being talked about come to fruition, they would potentially wipe out some clubs," he said.

"I'm not convinced that some of the proposals will have the effect of reducing problem gambling.

"I will obviously wait to see the legislation, if and when it reaches the parliament.

"But unless substantial changes are made to the proposal, I will not support anything that will wipe out community based organisations."

Mr Wilkie wants gamblers to be able to set loss limits before playing, in a move slammed by clubs as a threat to their survival.

The Tasmanian independent this week gave the government less than 14 months to introduce the measure or face losing his support.

The anti-gambling campaigner said he would either switch his support to the Coalition, or "no one", if Labor failed to deliver the promised gambling reforms by the 2012 May budget.

He acknowledged that "obviously and regrettably the country would enter uncharted political waters" if he opted to back neither major party.

"My agreement with Prime Minister Gillard is absolutely carved in stone," he said.

"My support for her and her government hinges on it and I will withdraw my support from the Gillard Labor government if that is not progressed in accord with my agreement with the Prime Minister."

Mr Wilkie backed Ms Gillard to form government in exchange for a promised mandatory pre-commitment scheme, which will force gamblers to carry cards on which they set bet limits before they play pokies.

Cash machines near pokies would also have withdrawal limits of \$250 under the deal.