Sir..

I see you as perhaps the only rational independent member of the current Australian Parliament. Having said that I can't agree with all your positions on various subjects but at least you do offer an objective perspective.

Please consider the following: (my opinions)

Gambling:

1. The primary issue is education.

What the average poker machine player must be made aware of is that every gaming machine is a computer ; worse a networked computer; and the return to the player pool is predetermined. The gaming operator and the Govt get a fixed % return based on the volume of gaming activity; the balance is returned to the punters by the software applications controlling the gambling network.

There are some misinformed gamblers think that they can sit for hours at one poker machine playing under the assumption that the longer they stay, the more likely they will win. In reality the probability of a win is the same each time they pull the lever but they should be aware that the network software may actually work against an individual machine paying out.

Ordinarily, this is not a problem for a recreational user. But do you do with the addict?

2. Regulation

If you prohibit something for being a problem, what usually happens is that the problem moves to another place where it's not regulated. (e.g. internet).

History should always guide you. You just have to sight the Volstead Act in the US.
It caused the rise of the Mob and the Mexican border towns. Look at Mexico today.

Gambling Regulation should not be imposed on a majority to influence the behaviour of a minority. For the majority, any limitations should be voluntary.

What has to happen is that any mandatory regulation has to be targeted to those specific members of the community where a recreational activity turns into an addiction, and to treat that addiction as a medical condition.

The trick here is to identify the addict?

The people that are most affected by addicts should identify them as problem gamblers. This could be their family or a creditor.

To be brief , I think you might consider the imposition of an AGO : **Apprehended Gambling Order.** This is a judicial mechanism to identify and control an offender with a gambling problem.

Once an AGO is in place , that individual will have limitations or prohibitions placed upon them. Of course an AGO, once issued, would require a medical/counselling intervention. Once on the AGO register, there should be a mechanism to remove the AGO; but it should be fairly difficult. The AGO register would have to be Federal in scope (perhaps web based and cross referenced to the Medicare No or a TFN) even though the STATES may have to enact/modify laws under their criminal/civil codes.

To give it teeth, you could basically state that any gambling debt incurred by an AGO offender will NOT be legally enforceable. Then you leave it up to private enterprise to figure out how to exclude AGO offenders from their premises or to moderate /limit their activity under the terms on the AGO.

Casinos global invest millions in identifying professional gamblers, now they use it to identify problem gamblers. How that might apply to a local Leagues or SportsClub I will have to ponder about.

As usual the death will be in the detail but that's why we have a Parliament and a supporting Public Service.

3. Parliamentary approval

What ever Anti-gambling measure is adopted, unless there is conscious vote on the bill, it will always appear that the process has been hijacked by an individual(s) with an prohibitionist agenda. Not a good look.

I hope this has helped.

PS: My demographic is:

1. Baby Boomer
2. Uni educated
3. Disgruntled labor voter who voted GREENs for the first time in the Reps. Always voted for the third party in Senate.

Regards
Dave Graham