

Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBIDGEE

MEDIA RELEASE

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Local gambling research expert lends her full support for the ACT's increase on the Betting Operations Tax

Dr Marisa Paterson MLA, Labor backbencher, lends her full support to the ACT Government's further 5% increase on the Betting Operations Tax. And she's one who should know, as the former Director of the ANU's Centre for Gambling Research and expert on reducing harm from gambling.

A Betting Operations Tax of 15% was introduced in the ACT in 2019. On 1 July 2022, this was raised to 20%.

Dr Paterson said that most Australian online sports betting companies and bookmakers are based in the Northern Territory but that this is a 'point of consumption' tax, meaning that the tax applies to bets made from within the ACT, payable by the operator, to the ACT Government.

Dr Paterson welcomes the ACT Government's betting operations tax increase, stating that "COVID lockdowns saw online gambling companies' profits skyrocket, and most of those billions in profit goes straight overseas – these companies make no contribution to our local community".

Dr Paterson continued to note that "research suggests that aside from those that play casino table games, those people that bet on sports and special events are most 'at-risk' of gambling harm in the ACT. 80% of those that engage in sports betting are male and 42% are aged between 18-29. There are very easily identifiable sectors of the community that need to be targeted to reduce the harm from online gambling.

"I think the companies responsible for this harm should be held accountable".

Dr Paterson recently introduced a motion through Private Member's Business to the ACT Legislative Assembly, calling for a review of online gambling, its marketing and its impact on our community. The motion also called on the ACT Government to investigate ACT revenue sources that can be used for harm minimisation activities for the ACT community that target online gambling. "An increase to the Betting Operations Tax is an excellent first step, and I look forward to working with ACT government to ensure that online gambling harm amelioration activities will form part of the focus for the increased revenue" Dr Paterson said.

"Online/sports gambling is largely something that is regulated at the federal government level – historically this has created a divide between responsibilities. However, I think at the ACT Government level we can no longer view the harm caused by online gambling as something outside of our jurisdiction – it's not, it's happening right here in our community and we need to start being proactive and innovative in addressing the harm" Dr Paterson said.

Statement ends

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