

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Minister for Ports and Freight
Minister for Fishing and Boating



Friday, 29 April 2022

UPHOLDING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS AT VICTORIA'S CASINO

The Andrews Labor Government is making sure Victoria's casino operator is held to the highest standards of probity and integrity – ensuring the failures uncovered by the Royal Commission can never happen again.

The *Victorian Budget 2022/23* will deliver \$55.6 million to implement the Crown Royal Commission recommendations – in a massive boost to casino and gambling regulation in Victoria.

It will support the work of the Special Manager, which has been given unprecedented powers to oversee all aspects of the casino's operations and report on whether they are satisfied Crown is suitable to continue holding the operating license for Melbourne's casino.

It also includes funding to strengthen oversight of the casino with the establishment of the dedicated Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission (VGCCC), which will hold the casino operator to account with specialised staff and dedicated casino commissioners.

This investment supports transferring and establishing the liquor regulation function within the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

We will also ensure Crown is paying its fair share with an electronic gaming machine measure that will generate up to \$30 million a year that will mean from July 2023, Crown's machines will be subject to the same tax rates as those operated by not-for-profit, community-based venues such as RSLs.

The first tranche of the Labor Government's response to the Royal Commission included the removal of arrangements with Crown – introduced by the previous Coalition Government – that prevented the State from changing regulations without having to pay compensation.

This change has paved the way for fairer taxation arrangements.

Legislation passed in 2021 means the VGCCC already has increased powers to hold Crown to account, including a duty for casino operators and their associates to comply with the VGCCC in a frank manner and do everything necessary to ensure the casino operations are conducted with integrity.

Since receiving the Royal Commission's final report, the Government has prioritised the most urgent actions necessary to provide stringent oversight of the casino operator, to ensure those who hold a casino licence in Victoria uphold the highest standards of probity and integrity – and are accountable for their actions.

The Government will implement further reforms this year to continue acquitting all the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

Quote attributable to Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation Melissa Horne

"We're getting on with delivering the reforms and investments needed to strengthen oversight of Crown and the whole Victorian gambling industry, with a focus on harm minimisation."

Quote attributable to Treasurer Tim Pallas

"This is a fair and reasonable change that means Crown is paying the same tax rate on its pokies as smaller, community-based venues throughout Victoria. For too long, Crown has benefited from preferential tax treatment."

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