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## Policy or Politics?

With the ink on the Productivity Commission's draft report on its gambling inquiry barely dry, politically charged proposals were made today by Senator Nick Xenophon in an apparent attempt to hijack an otherwise sensible public debate.

Senator Xenophon announced that he will introduce a Private Senator's Bill during the next sitting session making one dollar the maximum bet on any poker machine in Australia.

"The Productivity Commission's inquiry process has been thorough and independent" said Ross Ferrar, Chief Executive of the Gaming Technologies Association (GTA). "This process is not yet complete and should not be demeaned. Opportunities for all interested people to express their views have been made available during the next two months to inform the inquiry further prior to its final report" he said.

"Minister Macklin indicated yesterday that any changes should be based on good evidence and we agree with that. Gaming machines are designed to entertain. They're exhaustively tested prior to approval and they are carefully controlled in operation. The Senator's proposal is physically impossible because of software redevelopment and testing, government approval processes and enormous logistics issues.

"Around half Australia's gaming machines operate in jurisdictions with a \$5 maximum bet. In practice, Australia's gaming machines are capable of much less than 1,200 bets per hour and we will be providing sensible, cool-headed information to the Productivity Commission's inquiry over the next two months to ensure it remains well informed.

"I am looking forward to meeting with Senator Xenophon to discuss the Commission's draft report" said Mr Ferrar.

The GTA noted that 2,200 people are employed in Australia in the supply of gaming machines. 140,000 people are employed in hospitality venues as a result of the gaming machine industry, which contributes 3.5% of Australia's GDP and provides valuable export revenue for Australia.

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