



**Submission on the New Zealand International Convention Centre Bill
to the Government Administration Committee**

From the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

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Summary of Submission:

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand does not support the New Zealand International Convention Centre Bill and we urge Parliament not to pass this Bill into legislation as it has the potential to increase the social and financial cost to problem gamblers, their loved ones and the wider community. We appreciate the opportunity to make this submission and to have our views heard.

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand:

The Presbyterian Church is part of the wider family of Christian churches and the third largest denomination in Aotearoa New Zealand. With over 400 churches the length and breadth of New Zealand, and more than 350,000 people identifying as Presbyterian in the 2006 census, our Church is a significant voice within our country. The 30,000 people who attend a Presbyterian church every week are actively involved in serving their communities.

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand believes it is called by God to work with others in making Jesus Christ known through: teaching and nurturing people in Christian faith; loving service responding to human need; proclaiming the Gospel; seeking to transform society; and caring for God's creation.

The Basis of the Presbyterian Church's Opposition for the Bill:

The Presbyterian Church is a voice for the people in our communities who are negatively impacted by problem gambling.

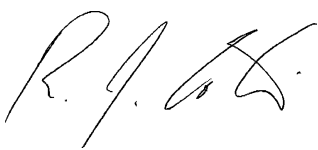
If passed into legislation, the International Convention Centre Bill will see the introduction of cash-less technology for pokie machines, and more pokie machines as well as other forms of gaming; more pokies will equal more problems for children and families of problem gamblers. An increase in problem gambling will see an increase in social harm.

The Presbyterian Church does not accept the argument that the financial contributions pokie machines make to community activities justify their existence; cash-less technology is more likely to be addictive, and even with the planned measures to counter excessive spending, common sense tells us that more people will lose more money.

The social and financial cost to problem gamblers, their loved ones and the wider community, outweigh the economic benefit derived from the planned construction of the new convention centre.

The Presbyterian Church has a strong tradition of advocating for initiatives that strengthen families and communities across Aotearoa and it has a long-term commitment to trying to stop the liberalisation of gambling. The Church has written on previous occasions to Parliament on this issue, including opposing the introduction of internet gambling.

We urge Parliament not to pass this legislation that will increase access to gambling and mean that more families and more communities will suffer the corrosive effects of problem gambling.



The Right Rev Ray Coster

Moderator of the General Assembly* of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand**

*General Assembly is the Presbyterian Church's top decision-making body.

**The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand is the elected spiritual leader of Presbyterian Church and the spokesperson of the Presbyterian Church.