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For Immediate Release

NoPE calls on Essendon Members to Support Constitutional Change

NoPE is calling on Essendon members to support a Special Resolution proposed for the upcoming Essendon Football Club AGM.

The Special Resolution, which can be viewed and signed at nope.org.au/agm/ would amend the Essendon Constitution making it a requirement for the Club to publish a statement in future annual reports acknowledging that the operation of its 191 Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs) are causing social harm.

While the Special Resolution would not prevent the Club from continuing to operate EGMs at its two licenced venues, it would force the Club to publicly acknowledge the harmful consequences of being involved in EGMs.

NoPE President, Mike Read said "it is widely accepted that EGMs cause social harm. That damage extends beyond the individual experiencing gambling harm, with at least 184 suicides in Victoria between 2009 - 2016 directly related to problem gambling."

By operating 191 EGMs, Essendon Football Club chooses to contribute to the serious social damage that pokies inflict on the community, particularly in Essendon and Melton where the EGMs are located.

Since 2006, over \$235 million has been lost by people across Essendon's two venues in Essendon and Melton, including \$14.4 million in the last financial year alone.

"In that timeframe Essendon has not seen any major on-field success. It must be asked whether any perceived financial benefit the venues have brought the club, has instead embedded a culture of complacency, where the club continually fails to be the best that it can be - both on-field and off.

By first recognising the harm that EGMs cause, and then recognising that the decision to contribute to that harm is the club's choice alone, we hope that these proposed changes will empower the club to find a path away from pokies.

"We support the idea of the Club having non-football income streams. However, the consequence of these choices may have significant financial and reputational impact on the Club in years to come. This resolution will make sure that the Club's decision on this income stream is an informed one."

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About NoPE:

No Pokies At Essendon (NoPE) is a grassroots group of Essendon fans actively advocating for the Essendon Football Club to make a meaningful and public commitment to exit the poker machine business.