



MEDIA RELEASE

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HUNTER MEN SENTENCED FOR ROLES IN POKER MACHINE “RE-BIRTHING” SCHEME

Two Hunter region men have been convicted and sentenced for their role in a fraudulent scheme involving the illegal possession and sale of poker machines.

Gaming machine technician Graeme Nowicz and business owner James Tupou were sentenced in Mount Druitt Local Court on Thursday 6 July after being found guilty of offences under the *Gaming Machines Act* in March.

The case follows an investigation by Liquor & Gaming NSW into the illegal sale of poker machines that were damaged in a fire at Maitland Park Bowling and Sporting Complex in December 2014 and written off for insurance purposes.

A former secretary of the club, Chad McLetchie, sold eight of the machines to Mr Nowicz for \$10,000.

A number of the machines were refurbished and then sold by Mr Tupou to venues in the Hunter and Central Coast.

Mr Nowicz was fined a total of \$17,000, placed on a good behaviour bond and ordered to pay \$19,400 in legal costs, while Mr Tupou was fined a total of \$11,000 and ordered to pay legal costs of \$20,800.

In November 2016, Mr McLetchie was convicted and fined \$5,500 and given a two-year good behaviour bond for his role in the illegal scheme.

Liquor & Gaming NSW’s Director of Compliance Operations, Sean Goodchild, said the Local Impact Assessment process controls the number of gaming machines in local communities and individual venues.

“Strict requirements are in place to tightly control the custody and movement of gaming machines,” Mr Goodchild said. “The *Gaming Machines Act* imposes serious penalties, including fines and imprisonment, for illegal trading and transfer of gaming machines.

“Such offences can threaten the integrity of the gaming industry and lead to a lack of public confidence in regulatory controls. It is against the law to be in possession of a gaming machine in NSW unless properly authorised, with maximum potential penalties of up to \$11,000 and or 12 months imprisonment. Suspect gaming machine sales can be reported for investigation on 02 9995 0837 or compliance.lgnsw@justice.nsw.gov.au”

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