

## **GLAI welcomes Government plans to legalise casino gaming**

**Wednesday, 25th February 2009:** The Gaming and Leisure Association of Ireland (GLAI) today broadly welcomed Government plans to legalise casino gaming through the introduction of a strict licensing regime to be applied to all private members gaming clubs.

David Hickson, Director of the GLAI said "We cautiously welcome the decision by the Minister for Justice to finally address the need to regulate the land-based casino sector and look forward to working with the Minister to ensure that the regime in place will allow responsible operators to provide consumers with a credible, safe and well regulated environment. We have long called for regulation, as a means to create jobs, maximise tax returns to the Exchequer and protect consumers. We see the Government plans in this regard as a good first step towards allowing for the development of a legitimate casino sector, obligated to protect the vulnerable, and would urge the Department of Justice and the Revenue Commissioners to work together to ensure there is a viable regime in place for responsible operators.

The GLAI has lobbied tirelessly for regulation of this sector since 2005. In the absence of a regulatory regime GLAI members have worked to a voluntary code of conduct while competing in a legal grey-area with a small number of Private Members Gaming Clubs not abiding by any self-regulatory code. David Hickson commented "We are delighted that this grey area has now been addressed and that responsible operators will be in a position to operate within a clear legal framework. We also welcome the Minister's intention to conduct a wider review of the overall gambling sector in the near future, although we do believe that the narrow issue of legalising private members gaming clubs or land-based casinos should be dealt with as a primary concern, leaving the wider review outside the scope of the AML legislation. Failure to do so, given the complexity of the overall regulatory landscape, would lead to an unnecessary delay of the AML legislation."

*Note to Editor:*

*The GLAI is a non profit trade association representing the interests of its members around Ireland, both nationally and at EU level. The Association represents private members gaming clubs who provide casino-like services to their members.*