

2 February 2009
Gambling Inquiry Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
Canberra City
ACT
2601

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for providing the opportunity to provide a submission on behalf of City Diggers Wollongong.

City Diggers Wollongong is located in the Wollongong CBD on the south coast of NSW. It was first established in 1927 as the Wollongong Soldiers Club, and over the last eighty years has retained strong and active links with the returned services movement.

We currently have over 14,000 members, drawn mainly from inner Wollongong and surrounding suburbs. We provide beverages, café and bistro dining at subsidised prices, function and meeting areas at subsidised prices (or in many cases free of charge to community groups) as well as gaming facilities such as Keno and poker machine gaming.

We currently employ seventy staff, as well as engaging numerous sub contractors and dealing with mainly local suppliers to service and supply our operations. Our combined club and catering payroll generates approximately \$2,000,000 per annum into the local community.

In our financial year ended 31 March 2008, poker machine revenue contributed 73% of our total revenue-revenue that is vital to retain our members facilities and be able to provide product and services at subsidised cost levels, and continue our support for local community and charity organizations. Without gaming revenue, our Club could not have developed to our current situation over the last eighty years.

Over the last year we have provided direct financial support to , for example:

- the Wollongong City Surf Lifesaving Club (being a major sponsor for over twenty years)
- Greenacres and Para Meadows-supporting disabled services
- The Shepherd Centre-supporting disabled children
- The Kokoda Youth Challenge-sending a local youth to Kokoda
- Lifeline-counselling and emergency services
- The Wollongong Wesley Mission-supporting homeless services
- Shire Counselling-providing gaming counseling services

as well as a host of local community organizations who rely on donations such as ours to exist. We proudly provide funding each year for the Central Vision Impaired support group, who have no other source of funding and could not exist without this direct financial assistance and gratis meeting space. We provide free of charge meeting rooms to many RSL and community based organizations such as Legacy and War Widows.

During 2008 City Diggers Wollongong, along with four other Wollongong clubs funded the set up of an onsite gaming counseling service, located here at City Diggers Wollongong on an appointment basis. This service is provided by the Reverend Chester Carter from See Change counseling and is currently providing face to face gaming counseling in the Wollongong area. We see it as a very positive action by Clubs to provide face to face counseling on site in a gaming venue.

This action supplements our Responsible Conduct of Gaming procedures: all staff are RCG trained and the Club has been a long standing member of the Clubsafe initiative with ClubsNSW-including a self exclusion procedure, and has an association with a Wollongong based counseling service (Wollongong Mission).

Thank you for your considerations

Regards
Phil Ryan