



**MERRYLANDS BOWLING SPORTING
& RECREATION CLUB LTD**

15 February 2009

*Gambling Inquiry Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
Canberra City ACT 2601*

Dear Commissioners

*Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to outline the contributions **Club Merrylands Bowling** provides to its member, guests, & the boarder community and the extent to which our gaming revenue enables us to do so.*

Economic and social links with the local community.

Club Merrylands Bowling is located in the western Sydney metropolitan area 5 Minutes from the City of Parramatta CBD in NSW and was established in 1948.

The club is a Bowling club with 24,500 member surrounded by high density residential housing including housing commission properties in the LGA of Holroyd.

Our main community support is subsidized dinning with three food outlets to choose from that include a 500 seat buffet restaurant, a 180 seat cafe / a la carte restaurant and a 150 cafe/ Bistro restaurant. We are renowned for providing affordable meals in a modern setting to the residents in the LGA of Holroyd and beyond. Our regular food promotions attract patronage to our club and at the same time provider subsidies such as buy one get one free meal offers valued at \$20.00 every quarter to all of our members. All our catering is contracted out with our cost of promoting each outlet far surpassing the rental income received....

Many community organisations meet and congregate and celebrate within the clubhouse, with related costs of room hire and staffing covered by the club.

With all the residential units surrounding the club we find that whilst the population is somewhat transient the local population more often than not prefer to visit our clubhouse to relax in one of the clubs lounges and being amongst others and relating with people(social interaction) rather than sitting in their unit.

Our club operates a free community courtesy bus shuttling people to and from their homes within a 5 five Km radius.

Each Month our Club hosts a variety day lunch time show consisting of live entertainment and a two course luncheon for \$15.00. This is solidly booked by members and guests in our community including busloads of seniors from various nursing homes in our community. This lunch show is heavily subsidized costing the club on average \$2,500 per month.

We offer A1 Lawn Bowling facilities to our community via two bowling greens with free coaching, uniforms for Pennant players, subsidized meals and transport for all players from senior social to junior squad recruits.

We support two local schools via our Bowls Scholarship Scheme for junior bowls. A large number of school students participated in the flagship program that commenced in 2004 and continues on today supporting students financially towards school costs whilst they pursue Lawn Bowls and represent our club. Through our junior development program we have developed a number of players who now represent the state in lawn bowls.

The other main facilities and events provided for members and guests include:

- Poker machines;
- Keno;
- TAB (which runs at a huge loss each year) heavily subsidized
- Function facilities. (Budget weddings our specialty)
- Free live entertainment;
- Bingo (3) three sessions a week (heavily subsidized \$88,891 last year)

Economic contribution

Club Merrylands currently employs 63 staff (26 full time, 35 part time and 2 casual). Over 90% of our staff reside in the local community.

Poker machines and gambling services accounted for 78.7% of Club Merrylands' revenue during 2008.

Revenue generated from bar sales accounted for 14.5%.

In 2008 our contribution to taxes included the following:-

- Poker machine tax and CDSE duty - \$2,607,918
- GST - \$776,898
- Payroll Tax - \$118,665

Social contribution

Profits from our Poker machines place us in a position to contribute to the CDSE Scheme NSW. Over the past 3 CDSE years, our club has contributed \$701,910 to worthy causes within our local community including services and sporting clubs. Club Merrylands is a member of the Holroyd Local Area Committee. We are dedicated to maintaining and increasing our pool for allocation through our local government committee recommendations assisting many local services in need and work together as a team with the other committee members to highlight the community services that would most benefit the many disadvantaged or disabled residents of Holroyd .

We also support many sporting clubs throughout the area. These clubs would have difficulty existing without our ongoing assistance as the gap between government support and community needs is widening in the western suburbs. Particularly in the areas of immigrant support and social services.

We also support many local schools and church groups through donations of free meal vouchers at our club and other prizes for their fundraising nights that are not covered by CDSE Scheme. Last year this support totalled \$10,392.00

Responsible Gambling commitment

In partnership with the community, Club Merrylands Bowling promotes the responsible conduct of gaming. For the vast majority of patrons, gaming is an entertaining and enjoyable pastime. However, like all things, it should be enjoyed in responsibly.

Club Merrylands Bowling is a member of the Clubsafe Responsible Gambling Program developed by Clubs NSW. The Club ensures that all our staff are fully trained by an accredited training provider, provide proactive support to our patrons through self exclusion schemes as part of our Responsible Conduct of Gaming Policy:

We are committed to the Responsible Conduct of Gambling at Club Merrylands Bowling and we advise all patrons that the best bet is the one you can afford. In doing so, we hope they treat gaming as an enjoyable recreation.

Conclusion

Poker machine revenue made up 78.7% of Club Merrylands' revenue during 2008. Due to this important revenue stream, our club over the years has been able to grow and maintain our support of Lawn Bowls and our community. We have weathered the constant changes in legislation in terms of Public liability, OH&S, Liquor & Gaming legislation and managed to renovate and renew our amenities and facilities providing added safety, security and comfort to ensure our future going forward.

Club Merrylands Bowling, our for non profit organisation has managed to consolidate and rationalise our concern to counter the additional gaming duty and reduction in revenue resulting from recent smoking regulations however there is a worrying percentage of clubs who are struggling. It will be to the detriment of the members and visitors and the local communities of these establishments if they fail to remain solvent.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if I can provide any further information to assist in your review.

On behalf of the Board of Directors



Neil Watts - Chief Executive Officer