



19 March 2009

Gambling Inquiry
Productivity Commission

ABN 35 000 958 136
5 Tyrrell Street (PO Box 300)
Wallsend NSW 2287
Tel: (02) 4951 7000
Fax: (02) 4951 8410
www.wallsenddiggers.com.au

Dear Commissioners

Thank you for the opportunity to allow Wallsend RSL and Community Club, trading as Wallsend Diggers, to submit a report detailing some facts about our Club and what Wallsend Diggers provides for their Members, Guests and the broader community.

Facts about Wallsend Diggers

Wallsend Diggers was established in June 1960. We are fast approaching our 50th Anniversary and are looking forward to the celebrations. The Club's main facilities consist of:

- Diggers Brasserie that seats 200 people
- News Café that seats 100 people
- Café Courtyard that seats 150 people
- Children's Gym
- Children's Games Room
- Entertainment Lounge
- Lounge areas for Leisure purposes
- TAB lounge that has two areas
- Keno Facilities
- Functions/Auditorium that seats 300 people
- 179 Gaming Machines
- Multi-Level and other parking that amount to over 300 vehicles

Wallsend Diggers has over 18,000 members. Most of the Clubs Membership resides within a 5km radius. Over 70% of the Club's Members are 5 year Members.

The core purpose of Wallsend Diggers is to provide Food, Beverage and Entertainment for our Members and Guests. The Club is a popular meeting place for people within the local community.

The Board of Directors of Wallsend Diggers consists of 5 RSL (Sub Branch) Members and 2 Associate Members. The Board of Wallsend Diggers has been very active in securing the long-term future of The RSL Sub Branch and also the Vietnam Veterans, Hunter Region. Both the RSL Sub Branch and the Vietnam Veterans, Hunter Region, have offices located at the Club. These organizations work tirelessly in providing welfare assistance and guidance for those ex service personnel who are in need of help. This includes Hospital Visitations and assistance to their families. Both organizations are very caring and have the full support of our Membership.

Anzac Day is the biggest day on the Club's Calendar and many of the local community come to the club to march and celebrate the day. Our local State Member, Sonia Hornery and Newcastle Lord Mayor choose to have breakfast with us on Anzac Day.

Economic Contribution to the Community

Wallsend Diggers is proud of the contribution that we make to our local and broader community. Some key points are as follows:

- Wallsend Diggers employs 96 staff. Most are permanent and permanent part time. The Club's wage bill this financial year will exceed \$3.3 million.
- Total Revenue for the last financial year, excluding gaming was \$5,479,360
- Gaming Revenue for the last financial year was \$8,785,224 (ex GST)
- Gaming Tax paid including GST was \$2,852,732
- Total Borrowings are \$2,635,483
- Wallsend Diggers Nett Profit for the last financial year was \$1,355,721. This included \$424,463 profit on the sale of land that the club had no purpose for.
- The Club is currently installing an elevator in the Multi-Level Car Park and constructing another outdoor area. These projects will cost \$270,000 ex GST.
- The Club is intending on building a new bar and extending the Brasserie due to popular demand. This will cost in excess of \$400,000
- Other future construction plans include a covered walkway from the Multi-Level Car Park to the Upstairs Lobby of the Club to provide safe access for all Members and Guests. This project also includes lighting for the pedestrian crossing out the front of the club that the local council refused to upgrade. The total cost of the project will exceed \$700,000.
- Other future plans include extensions to the Club's Lounge Facilities as our Membership has grown 80% over the past 5 years.
- Wallsend Diggers has a number of business partners that provide services such as food, beverage, repairs and maintenance. Over \$5million per year is distributed amongst these businesses for the services that they provide.

Social Contribution to the Community

Community Support is paramount to Wallsend Diggers. The Club is a community facility and the Board of Directors are very conscious of the role that The Club plays in assisting the needy and local sporting groups.

In 2008, under the Community Development Support Expenditure Program, Wallsend Diggers contributed over \$66,000 to Charity Groups and over \$83,000 to Sporting and other local groups. Without these contributions many of these groups would not survive. Team Sport helps develop our youth and gives them something to look forward to every week. They build friendships that in some cases last a lifetime and develop their own personalities in the process. The volunteers of these organizations are special and Wallsend Diggers recognises, acknowledges and praises the work that these people do.

Throughout the Club's promotions, The Club gives away over \$75,000 per month in promotions to the Members. This includes cash and vouchers to be used at our local retailers and within the Club. The local retailers are very happy that we do this as it also gives them more business that in turn creates employment.


Wallsend Diggers subscribes to ClubSafe to ensure that we strictly comply with all Legislation as we take the issue of responsible gambling very seriously.

Some of our local Charity Groups such as Rotary and the Lions Club use our facilities to host functions to raise money. Wallsend Diggers provides the rooms for free for such events. This is also not limited to those who are in need.

In June 2007 Wallsend was nearly washed away by a terrible storm. Wallsend Diggers helped the local community. One case was a local businessman who had his car repair shop flooded and lost all his equipment that was not insured. The Club hosted a fundraising night and raised money for that person to survive. As of today he is doing very well and still can't thank us enough for the help we provided.

Once again I would like to thank the commissioners for allowing Wallsend Diggers to make submission to this Inquiry. Wallsend Diggers is a very important asset to the local and broader community of Western Newcastle.

Yours sincerely


John Hume ACCM
Chief Executive Officer