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Gambling Inquiry Productivity Commission  
GPO Box 1428  
Canberra City ACT 2601

Dear Commissioners,

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## **Limitation of comments made in this submission**

The issues raised in this submission are limited to the poker machine industry. Some comments will not apply to all States or Territories in which poker machines are legal, but will apply in at least one State or Territory of Australia.

## **Mandatory smart cards will solve the poker machine problem!**

Exactly how mandatory smart cards solve the poker machine problem is the single most important issue in this submission.

Many activities in modern society require some form of proof that the person given the right to do something has the skills to do it, otherwise the right to do the activity is either severely restricted or denied until that person has the requisites to safely perform that activity. This is necessary to minimise harm to the person and those around them. From simple activities needing only a permit to special licences to drive heavy vehicles and equipment, individuals must demonstrate minimum levels of knowledge and skill to get a licence. Even recreational fishing or using fireworks may require a person apply for a permit.

Poker machines do not have any restrictions or limits placed on the user before they use a poker machine. This is because poker machines have gradually evolved from pull handle, coin operated, mechanical devices, into highly sophisticated Electronic Gaming Machines (EGM's) which now have banknote acceptors for up to AUD 100 notes, and linked jackpots to give more incentive to users to bet more. But despite the evolution of the poker machine into what it is today, no mandatory restrictions or limits for their use have been introduced.

A poker machine smart card that is mandatory for anyone who wants to play a poker machine is the only way to minimise the harm caused by poker machines when users do not, or cannot, limit themselves to betting within their financial means. Mandatory smart cards would be standardised using an open software standard, agreed upon by the industry, because the use of a common standard avoids the problems and costs of multiple different smart card approaches.

The smart card would not be a cash stored card. The current operation of poker machines would be unaffected, except for the need to insert the smart card into a card reader on the machine to make the poker machine operate.

The smart card would track cash in and cash out. At the point where the smart card reached the pre set limit for cash in minus cash out, the player would be unable to use any poker machine in Australia, until the card reset the following week.

The below Questions & Answers anticipate the concerns about the use of mandatory smart cards.

Do we live in a nanny state where someone else makes decisions for us to keep us safe?

No.

However, only the Government has the authority to make gambling legal, and with that comes the equal responsibility to ensure that gambling does not create harm to the user, or to other members of the community who may be harmed either directly or indirectly?

Why is the same restriction not needed for instant lotteries for example?

The features of poker machines set them aside from virtually all other forms of gambling. Comparing instant lottery tickets to poker machines is like comparing a garden rake to a lawn mower. Rakes and lawn mowers are both gardening tools, but a lawn mower must have guards over the blades to prevent potentially serious injury.

Who decides how much the limit is and how is that going to be fair to everybody?

The ability to be able to play poker machines is just as personal as how much a person can afford to spend at the shops or pay for rent. It is dependent on both their income and their assets. Only that person is properly aware of how much they could afford to lose on poker machines without causing a financial problem. Nor should someone be prohibited just because they receive a certain type of income, for example, Government assistance. Therefore, every player should be entitled to have a card issued with an initial limit set to AUD 50 per week (cash in less cash out). That still represents approximately AUD 2,500 per year, which may be a significant financial burden for that person or their family, however, AUD 50 per week at least sets an upper limit compared to the current no-limit situation. It is also suggested that the setting of an initial upper limit of AUD 50 should have the full endorsement of the industry itself, which claims the average cost of poker machines per week is akin to the cost of takeaway per week or other similar low cost social activities <sup>[1,2]</sup>. Certainly the industry should concede AUD 50 per week is a reasonable starting limit to provide anybody who wants to play poker machines.

For players who do have the financial resources to spend more than this per week, they would simply need to apply for their card to have a weekly limit increase. Applications for limit increases would be processed by a central authority, with increasing levels of evidence needed depending on the weekly limit applied for.

There is no upper limit proposed.

A person with the income or assets who chooses to spend AUD 10,000 per year, or AUD 100,000 per year, or even AUD 1 million per year on poker machines should retain their existing right to do so, but they should have to demonstrate they do have the legal means to fund this level, and do not have defaults on financial obligations.

Fees for smart cards could begin with a nominal charge for the initial issue of a card, say \$20 per annum, however, applications for an increase in the limit would have additional fees for the cost of processing the application. The fees would be used to fund the cost of the smart card system.

Would players swap cards to avoid the limits, or just get multiple cards?

No.

Experts in many countries have considered for a long time how to prevent card swapping. Suggestions include biometrics including iris scans and use of fingerprints etc. These solutions would not be expected to gain acceptance by users and therefore very unlikely to be introduced <sup>[3]</sup>.

However, a player's photo clearly displayed on a card reader at the machine while the person was sitting at the machine using it would enable the licensed venue operator to check the person using the machine was the person whose card it was. The operator would have the responsibility to enforce a no card swapping rule or risk fines or loss of their licence. This is akin to responsible service of alcohol and the industry should endorse this harm reduction measure to their patrons.

Privacy issues should not be a concern as the player's photo would be no different to a driver licence ID with photo and would only be displayed when the player was actually at the machine displaying it.

Why has nobody heard of this smart card solution before?

Two examples illustrate why sometimes the obvious is not actually obvious to experts at all. In one folklore example, at a cost of millions over many years, NASA developed a pen that could work in space where there is no gravity. The Russians just used pencils! In the other example, a truck becomes wedged under a bridge at peak hour. City engineers bring heavy lifting cranes to raise the bridge. A child asks why they do not just let some air out of the truck tyres!

Just because a solution is simple does not mean it does not work.

Is the cost too high to install the equipment to operate smart cards?

The industry advised the Senate Inquiry during 2008 that the cost would be AUD 5 billion, which they based on 200,000 poker machines at AUD 2,500 per machine. The cost, despite argument from the industry, is AUD 500 million on these numbers <sup>[4]</sup>. And that cost is less than the estimated cost of building 'outdoor' smoking rooms for poker machines to be installed in <sup>[5]</sup>. The cost would also be reduced by the application fee for the smart card and increase limit applications for smart cards, so that over a period of years, the smart cards would be another profit source for the industry.

### **How many players using poker machines does it take to generate AUD 8,000 (8B) to 10,000 million (10B) per year?**

Reliable sources estimate between AUD 8B <sup>[6]</sup> and 10B <sup>[7]</sup> is lost on pokies each year. This is not turnover!! This is net cash spent (cash in less cash out)! This is the actual amount lost by players!

The industry does not publish the statistics to enable the true pool of users and the range of their losses to be determined because they know what it would confirm.

For example, using AUD 50 per week, which is approximately AUD 2,500 per year, which would require 3.2 million players to lose AUD 50 per week every week of the year (to reach the lower estimate of \$8 billion)! Alternatively, 320,000 regular poker machine players losing AUD 25,000 each per year would also support 8 billion per year.

The group of casual and regular users is likely to be somewhere between 320,000 and 3,200,000, so if the industry released data to be consolidated across Australia, in the following format, using the existing loyalty card data to the extent possible, it would be far easier to know the size of the pool of players, and the level of losses.

Table of data 1

For the following ranges, the number of players:

Player loss (cash in minus cash out) per month:

AUD 1 to AUD 49

AUD 50 to AUD 99

AUD 100 to AUD 199

AUD 200 to AUD 299

AUD 300 to AUD 499

AUD 500 to AUD 999

AUD 1000 to AUD 1499

AUD 1500 to AUD 4999

AUD 5000 to AUD 9999

AUD 10000 to AUD 49999

AUD 50000 and above

For spending where loyalty cards were not used, this would need to be included to get the actual totals, but would not be reliable data on per person loss.

Table 2 data could report the same range of monthly loss, but rather than number of players in that range, it would report the number of hours played. Both the number of hours and therefore the cost per hour would be statistics which would be valuable to understanding this industry much better.

### **How big is this industry compared to other well known businesses?**

To understand just how enormous this industry is, consider that the annual profits of the countries biggest banks, of Telstra, Westfield and Woolworths are actually much lower than the AUD 8 billion this industry generates. The profit of each bank, Telstra, Westfield and Woolworths is perhaps half as much, even 1/5<sup>th</sup> as much, per year<sup>[8]</sup>. Unlike the billions in infrastructure and huge employment required by banks, Telstra, Westfield and Woolworths to generate their profits, the investment in infrastructure and employment by the poker machine industry is very low in comparison. The cost of 200,000 poker machines with lifecycles of at least 10 years is very low in contrast. But when each poker machine makes on average over AUD 40,000 per year (and many machines actually make several times the average), the return on investment is staggering.

Another way to understand the sheer size of this industry cashflow is to compare to the annual box office revenue of the Australia cinema industry. The total box office revenue has not even reached AUD 1 billion per year<sup>[9]</sup> yet, but poker machines already make 8 times more per year than the entire movie box office revenue!

## **What percentage of the worlds gaming machines are in Australia: 20% or 2.4%?**

A lot of critics of the industry, most often World Vision CEO, Tim Costello, highlight that Australia has 20 percent of the world's poker machines <sup>[10]</sup>. His opponents, and most notably, Ross Ferrar, the CEO of the Gaming Technology Association (GTA), criticises the percentage claim as nonsense, and suggests the real percentage is 2.4 percent <sup>[11]</sup>. Few, if any, are perhaps aware that Ross Ferrar is quoting from a report commissioned by GTA (formerly AGMMA), and that the base of machines globally has been expanded by including the 4.9 million Japanese pachinko 'gaming' machines <sup>[12]</sup>. A pachinko machine is essentially an upright pinball machine where players pay for balls which can be played, and then traded for prizes, or unofficially, for cash from 3<sup>rd</sup> parties <sup>[13]</sup>. The Japanese do not actually consider this to be gambling, although it does exhibit similar traits of addiction. However, the potential for harm is much lower than with Australia's poker machines. To compare these two types of gaming devices is just as ridiculous as treating a pushbike, or 125 cc motor bike as potentially as harmful as a 1200 cc super motorbike. The potential for speed related death is much higher on a superbike capable of top speeds greater than 250km/h than on a postie bike or push bike! The inclusion of pachinko machines in the survey has not been mentioned when the GTA openly criticises opponents of their industry for using scare tactics about Australia having so many of the world's poker machines.

## **What is the true maximum bet on a single spin on a poker machine?**

The GTA, again often represented in the media by Ross Ferrar, states Australia's poker machines have a maximum bet per spin of AUD 10 <sup>[14]</sup>. However, perhaps this misinformation indicates the industries own association is not aware of the design of machines by its member companies, or is deliberately excluding the private gambling rooms of the countries casinos. But the fact is that Australia does have poker machines which have a maximum bet per spin of AUD 100. Machines with maximum bets between AUD 10 and AUD 100 are located in private gaming rooms of casinos. Perhaps the assumption is that players in private gaming rooms of casinos must be able to continuously afford losses running into thousands, or tens of thousands per week to use these high impact poker machines. Clearly it is an industry that ignores harm to their customers, so long as the money flows.

## **Are static warning stickers and posters enough?**

No.

Few players would be thinking about warnings on stickers or posters placed on or near the machines. Their focus is on the screen changing, the messages flashing before their eyes confirming they are winners. The player is mesmerised by whether the symbols are lining up, which more often than not are near misses, almost enough to get a good pay, but rarely actually paying more than a low amount, perhaps even less than the amount bet for the spin. So the "bet within your limit, not over your head", and "the chances of winning the major prize are less than one in a million" messages are quickly forgotten as the player falls into the zone, a trance like state where the only thought in their head is what the next spin will bring. Players are not thinking about the consequences of another session of losing.

### **Are responsible gambling trained staff any use?**

Yes and no. The fact is that staff are employed by and paid by the venue. Staff are not in a position to make a player leave the premises even when the staff member has reason to believe a person is gambling too much (perhaps based on visual cues but excessive gambling can be very hard to detect at the best of times). Unlike alcohol where excessive drinking is usually visible, a person can continue to lose to the limit of the available cash and perhaps not even show any physical signs. The law pays lip service to responsible service of gambling.

### **Are employees, in a business with poker machines, exposed to OH&S issues such as stress?**

Yes.

Job related stress due to venue employees watching the players lose over and over, where they may know the persons situation, but cannot do anything to prevent that person continuing to play and lose and perhaps knowing that person is harming family or friends through their actions, creates job related stress <sup>[15]</sup>.

### **Are politicians using opposition to the industry for self gain <sup>[16]</sup> or do they really care about the harm to the community?**

Few serving politicians have enough concern for their community to oppose the industry, and retired politicians may have voiced their regret but done nothing more to reform the parasitic industry they helped to create <sup>[17]</sup>.

Senator Nick Xenophon has stood up to the industry, addressing directly an Industry Expo in 2008 <sup>[18]</sup>, telling the industry very clearly that they know the harm they are causing, but that they do not choose to stop it because they are as addicted to the profits as players are to the machines. Nick Xenophon did as much as possible in South Australia before taking his cause to the Federal level. The public is well served by a Senator who believes in what he was elected for.

Fifty years ago, Ralph Nader accused the auto makers of not ensuring cars were safe enough, leading to avoidable harm. At the time, much like the poker machine industry today ridicules Nick Xenophon, the auto industry ridiculed Ralph Nader, ignoring calls for safety glass and seat belts until forced to make their cars safer by the Government when responsibility was taken from drivers, and put on the automakers to ensure their cars were safe to use.

### **Who speaks for the victims of this industry?**

The victims of the industry are poorly represented. There is no profit and no votes in helping those broken by the industry. As a percentage of the population, they are not a large group. Most often the addicted gamblers who have undergone treatment and understand the problem will try to stop the industry. A good example is The Duty of Care Inc which was formed by three women who personally experienced the addictive nature of poker machines. For many years, the Duty of Care has worked to reform the industry. Another good example is Gabi Byrne who developed her own methods to overcome addiction and who has since worked to reform the industry <sup>[19]</sup>. Another supporter is Paul Bendat who runs a website known as

PokieAct<sup>[20]</sup>. The purpose of PokieAct is to prevent exposure of children to poker machines at venues where play areas are provided near to poker machine rooms, or provided principally to ensure parents have someone to leave children with, when they use poker machines. Paul Bendat is standing up to protect harm to children now, and later when they are old enough to become tomorrow's addicted players.

### **Are Governments who legalise gambling breaching their duty to protect those hurt by legalised gambling?**

Yes.

Gambling is illegal except when the Government makes it legal. The burden of duty of care is therefore enormous. But the conflict of interest is well documented as the taxes on poker machines are a big source of Government revenue so any reform that could reduce these taxes is not likely to succeed.

### **Are executives of companies that profit from this industry risking class action by victims of addiction?**

Yes.

Overseas experience, in particular, the Loto Quebec class action by individuals who have become addicted to video lottery terminals (the equivalent of poker machines) commenced in late 2008<sup>[21]</sup>. Should that case be successful, a string of class actions by players for the cost to overcome addiction could be expected across the world.

### **Why are poker machines so appealing to keep players hooked even as the losses and negative side effects grow?**

The poker machine experience is really quite unique in terms of gambling products. No single or even main reason can explain why normally rational people, who can gamble safely with other types of gambling, will begin to spend more and more time and money on poker machines. Below are only some of the explanations of this phenomenon.

- Unlike other types of gambling, a player does not need to have any understanding at all of how to play. A novice player can begin betting immediately, without any knowledge of the rules of the game. Compared to other casino style gambling, this provides a simple means to make a bet. The deeper reason as to why people gamble at all is outside of the scope of this submission, other than to note that there is a certain level of thrill from risking money to potentially win more than the amount risked.
- Poker machines condition the human mind to want to see what the next spin brings. The process of conditioning the brain with an intermittent reward schedule (this involves randomly changing the outcome of a given action so that a reward is not always received for the specific action) has been proven by science<sup>[22]</sup>. When an action such as pressing a bar for a food pellet to drop does not have a predictable result, a rat will learn to press the bar over and over, trying to get a food pellet to drop, even if it is not hungry. Human brains have certain base level function which means that intermittent reward schedules can begin to change their ability to control their own actions. Sometimes people who do not have experience of poker machines



flippantly say that nobody holds a gun to the players head to keep playing. But those same people might themselves exhibit signs of intermittent reward schedule, such as checking email or social networking site updates much more frequently than necessary, just in case they have received some wonderful email or invitation. Not checking actually creates certain anxiousness for them <sup>[23]</sup>.

- The actual design of poker machines using a combination of powerful symbols, hypnotic music, loaded and starved virtual reels and much higher jackpot prizes, which has made them much more appealing than old fashioned, coin operated, non jackpot, mechanical machines. It is no accident that the symbols used by the most successful poker machines include goddesses, symbols of peace and safety such as dolphins and unicorns, hearts and treasure chests. These symbols affect the players at a sub-conscious level. The music itself contains certain qualities which again will work at the sub conscious level. And the loading and starving of the virtual reels with symbols that give the appearance of a near miss so that a player thinks the chances of winning are much higher than they actually are (loading reels means putting more of one symbol on that reel than the other reels, and starving a reel is having few of the symbols, so that the odds of all needed symbols appearing on a payline is low, but appears to be high). When jackpots worth thousands of times a single bet are dangled in front of players, the urge to play for longer and spend more can be over-whelming and keep a player at the machine much longer. Even the comfortable seating and room lighting, temperature, availability of complimentary food and drink and other services all act to create an addiction to the machines and the experience. The father of the industry, Len Ainsworth, told the ABC during an interview that the success of poker machines is due to designing appealing machines that keep players returning <sup>[24]</sup>. Ainsworth should know, as he built Aristocrat Leisure Machines company to be a world leader in the design of poker machines.

### **How does Woolworths supermarket group have such a large interest in poker machines that the average person would not read about?**

This surprising fact is seldom promoted by Woolworths. The profits from poker machines to Woolworths are via its majority shareholding in Australian Leisure and Hospitality subsidiary which owns approximately 270 hotels which have poker machines. This is a very profitable arrangement with Bruce Mathieson (the minority shareholder) who became a billionaire from running hotels with poker machines <sup>[25]</sup>.

### **Why removing ATMs or imposing limits on withdrawals is not a good idea?**

Placing of ATMs near poker machines is without doubt adding to the problem as players can make a quick decision to reserve a losing machine, withdraw more cash, and continue to play in the hope of winning back mounting losses. If ATM's were outside the venue, players may rethink a decision and not return to continue playing. However, not all people who withdraw cash from ATMs in venues use poker machines or would be at risk of spending too much, and the number of people in that group would obviously exceed the much fewer who would. Removing ATMs would disadvantage more people than it potentially benefited, perhaps even putting at unnecessary risk patrons forced outside to withdraw cash, and at increased risk of threat or harm. This risk is far too high to consider removing ATM's. That solution is like cracking a nut with a sledge hammer. And capping ATM withdrawals is also not a solution as again, more people not affected by poker machines would be disadvantaged by this. Those it

was aimed at helping would possibly just have multiple cards from different banks so that caps and limits would not prevent players losing at the same rate as presently. The answer lies not in removing the source of cash, but in putting a smart card barrier on the machine itself. This is the main point of this submission. The smart cards eliminate the need to look for other methods to restrict spending on poker machines.

### **What is the community saying about poker machines?**

When newspapers publish articles on the shocking amounts lost to poker machines, or where parents have left children in cars while using poker machines, or stolen money to feed the habit, reader comments are split between blaming the player for lacking self control, criticising those trying to reform the industry of wanting a nanny state, justifying the industry which pays a lot of tax because it means tax is not collected in some other form, sharing personal stories of the financial and emotional devastation on families as poker machines consumed someone close to them and calling for the outright removal of poker machines completely. Sometimes the reader comments on a news story will reach the hundreds as people debate, for example, whether anyone on social security should even be allowed to use poker machines. With respect to all of these individuals' views, the industry has gone to great lengths to keep the truth suppressed about the profile of the users of their products, because while people debate myths and stereotypes, the billions of dollars continue to pour in each year. Debate will keep the status quo which the industry is relying on.

### **What can the industry do to assist?**

The industry should accept it has a duty of care equal to, and perhaps higher, than for general products or services where by law they would be required to ensure their product or service is not likely to harm the user, and to act in a conscionable manner and have fair practices, or be prosecuted under the law. The industry has grown without effective trade practices because the Government is lobbied by the industry with statistics showing per capita rates of harm from their product that disguise the much higher percentages of harm within the much smaller group of people who actually do use their product. The Government has a big conflict of interest because the taxes collected from the industry are needed to provide services, or else have to be raised in some other form of tax. The industry says it operates under the best regulation in the world, and any changes the Government legislates must be followed. As such, industry could lobby the Government to make mandatory smart cards a legal requirement.

### **So what has industry lobbied for that was a good idea to help the problem?**

Clubs Australia has proposed a dob in a gambler approach, as used in South Australia <sup>[26]</sup>. These rules would permit a family member or friend to intervene and require the person at risk of harm from poker machines be barred until cleared by a gambling counsellor. This idea has not really worked in South Australia but has merit, but criticisms include expecting children to inform authorities of concerns if both parents are using poker machines, or the risk of violence where family members dob in another family member. Most critics of this idea consider it non workable.

The Australian Hotels Association proposed to make education in schools about poker machine gambling part of the curriculum <sup>[27]</sup>. This idea has merit as it might stop the next

generation of players learning myths and folklore about how poker machines operate and reduce the potential for them to start on the road to addiction. But critics point out that schools have too many subjects already to build in gambling, and may actually just groom young players to want to begin gambling.

### **Could the States show Senator Xenophon goodwill by legislating for pokies harm reduction in light of his support for the Federal Government infrastructure billions?**

Yes.

Senator Nick Xenophon was elected to Government on a No Pokies platform. He has made his intentions very clear as he saw the harm from poker machines first hand, and has worked to reform the industry. Earlier this year, Xenophon held the swing vote of whether to reject or accept the Federal Government stimulus package. The billions of dollars of infrastructure spending and cash handouts to individuals that will flow within each State and Territory depended on his vote. He could have demanded before giving his vote that the Governments provide assurance they would legislate to reduce harm from poker machines in return for his vote. He settled for advanced funds for the Murray Darling River which is his other key issue. Now, with the billions from the Federal Government flowing into States, it would be appropriate for the Governments to act to change the poker machine industry by introducing smart cards to limit losses. Although taxes collected would fall, the billions from the Federal Government exceeds many times over the potential reduction of taxes that would occur. In any case, as money was redirected from poker machines, it would flow to other businesses where GST and company and personal income tax would be collected and recirculated, acting as another stimulus to the economy.

### **What legacy of leadership will be left to our children?**

Today's leaders should consider the future better regarding this industry. What their actions do today will impact on the lives of today's children as they grow up. Many of those in leadership roles may just simply lack the information needed to make good, informed decisions. They may be employed in the industry, or they may be responsible within a government role, but few would have sufficient personal experience or knowledge of the actual delivery of the poker machine product to the consumer. The endless debate and divided opinions is not going to resolve the plight for the players, their families, friends or wider community. Quality data on player profiles is critical to making informed decisions, and the data is readily available due to the widespread use of loyalty cards. This data must be consolidated and based on that information, the true level of the pool of players (both casual and regular) and the levels of spending, and hours of use would then enable effective leadership to reduce the harm and confirm the need for smart cards to reduce the ability to lose beyond the players intentions or financial ability. For those leaders who lament their decisions to introduce poker machines such as former Queensland Premier, Wayne Goss, and for those who challenge the industry head on such as Senator Xenophon, or former Fairfield councillor Thang Ngo <sup>[28]</sup>, or at least declare their own view of poker machines such as Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, who says he hates poker machines and knows something of their impact on families <sup>[29]</sup>, what legacy will other leaders want to be remembered for?

Over the next ten years, without the introduction of mandatory smart cards, at current levels, more than AUD 80 billion dollars will be lost from communities, often communities least

able to afford the losses. Some will be given to the Government in taxes, some back to the community via clubs (but often not the community from which the money was taken), but billions will flow to a very small group of Australian business men and women who control the poker machine industry.

The Productivity Commission review of the gambling industry in Australia represents the last hope for many years for effective reform of the poker machine industry. The Commissioners have the opportunity to take a place in Australian history as leaders who were able to judge this industry for what it has become, without regard for nostalgic nonsense and spouting about how all the community benefits<sup>[30]</sup>, and without the constraint of Government policy concerning the raising of taxes. The industry should be judged on whether it intentionally or otherwise harms people and actions needed to prevent such harm.

### **Does lack of submissions to the PC enquiry mean everybody is ok with the industry?**

No.

At the date of making this submission, the level of submissions to the PC enquiry is very low (48 submissions). It is most certainly not because nobody has any concerns about this industry. It is likely to be for the following reasons:

- The counsellors who treat gamblers and their families receive funding from the Responsible Gambling Fund or equivalent. Open criticism of the industry that funds their work is not likely. The counsellors prefer to work with the situation and do what they can.
- The PC enquiry has been commenced during the Global Financial Crisis which dominates the news. Many organisations would not have the resources to prepare more submissions, perhaps having expended their budgets on each past enquiry, up to the Senate Inquiry held in 2008. They may be relying on the Commission to use all of those past submissions in their review.
- The general public has virtually no knowledge of the Commission enquiry as it appears not to be advertised in the main media, nor is it making general news.
- If the Commissioners were to clearly identify themselves and go to venues where poker machines are available, or just into the public areas and speak to the people themselves, they would quickly ascertain the real problems. Families of addicts willingly talk to strangers about the extent of the loss, pain and misery inflicted. The public wants someone to do something. But few would know they could make a submission.

Richard David

Footnotes (the URL links are provided for reference purposes)

[1]

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/opinion/lets-not-get-in-a-spin-about-pokies/2008/03/18/1205602381761.html>

[2]

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/nationalinterest/stories/2008/2195284.htm>

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<http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/senate/commttee/S11203.pdf>

[4]

<http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/senate/commttee/S11204.pdf>

- [5]  
<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/millions-up-in-smoke-gamblers-butt-out/2008/09/19/1221331206963.html>
- [6]  
[http://www.pc.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/84961/issues-paper.pdf](http://www.pc.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/84961/issues-paper.pdf)
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<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,23004550-5013946,00.html>
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