

#### **2.4.2. Three Random Surveys – Street Survey, Door Knock and Shop Survey**

The surveys were randomly conducted and though small due to time constraints (62 respondents in all) it was representative of the local community as far as the ABS statistics of residents' ethnic background and gender are concerned. They were, however, larger than the Focus Groups conducted by [redacted] (10 people in total), more representative and randomly selected from the local community. This increased our confidence in the trends identified in our survey.

The clearest findings of the Surveys (considered in detail in Section 4.2 below, and included in full in Appendices A, B, C and D) include the following:

- Gambling is perceived as a significant problem in the [redacted] area, and as particularly serious by interviewees from Asian communities (Vietnamese, Lao and Khmer).
- There appears to be a high degree of correlation between direct experience of the effects of gambling and the respondents' attitude to gambling as a problem.
  - Those most likely to express the view that gambling is a problem, and to oppose the introduction of further access to gambling opportunities in the local area, are those who report direct personal experience of problem gambling. For example, 80% of residents from an Asian background believed gambling to be a significant local problem, and 70% reported that they had personally seen the effects of gambling in their community among friends, neighbours, relatives, work colleagues and the like.
  - A high proportion of interviewees freely related experiences of problem gambling among people they knew. Experiences related were disturbing, and included suicide, loss of home and assets, break-up of families and severe family conflict. Interestingly, young Asian males interviewed were most fearful of the effects of family, having seen very severe effects on their friends and fathers. This reinforced more quantitative data from the surveys that problem gambling was a significant concern in this local community.
- Poker machines are seen as by far the most significant source of gambling problems (75% of interviewees).
- There is widespread opposition for the introduction of more gambling machines in the local area generally (86% of interviewees), and only minimal community support for the granting of the application for 15 gaming machines in the new [redacted] Hotel specifically (21%). Opposition was strongest among Asian-background residents.
- A major community concern is the introduction of gaming machines into the [redacted] shopping centre itself, a shopping strip that is currently without a venue with poker machines. There concerns mainly centred on:
  - Increased access to a gaming facility in an area where many people come to use the bank (3 lots up from the hotel), buy take away food, and buy groceries.
  - Fear that the presence of a 'shopfront' gaming facility, where the poker machine area is accessible directly from the street at the front of the Hotel, will change the character of the local area to its detriment.

- Concerns that the area is already very poor, and that residents will suffer from economic consequences from increased proximity to the immediately adjacent residential areas.

In summary, the surveys identify a local community in which a majority of residents believe that there is already considerable harm from the effects of gambling, and particularly poker machines. It is therefore not surprising that the surveys also show that residents strongly consider that there are sufficient gaming machines in the areas, as well as widespread opposition to the introduction of additional gambling machines in the new [redacted] Hotel.

The findings of this consultation is at odds with those of [redacted]. We believe our consultation process is both more objective, thorough and representative and hence should be given greater standing. Our conclusion is that the results of the survey do not support the granting of a license for gaming machines in the [redacted] Hotel, in terms of likely additional harm on the local community, or in terms of likely local demand.

#### **2.4.3. Interviews with key public bodies and services**

The SIA expressed concern that public bodies specified for consultation under section 171D(4)(h) did not respond to their survey, and so their views could not be included in the SIA's considerations. Whilst this may well be the case, I personally found no difficulty contacting and conducting structured interviews with each of those bodies.

Those I interviewed included Fairfield City Council, the NSW Department of Health / Western Area Health Service, NSW Department of Community Services, NSW Department of Housing and NSW Department of Education and Training. All of these organisations responded promptly to my phone call, and were available for interview within 48 hours of contact, with some agreeing to be interviewed after hours. Other relevant community agencies were also interviewed including the Migrant Resource Centre, Fairfield Community Aid, and the [redacted] Community Centre.

When questioned about the SIA questionnaire, some (DOH and DCS) indicated they had not seen a copy, while others indicated that they had perhaps sent it too late for inclusion (Area Health Service). They were, however, happy to provide whatever information they could.

There was a reasonable consistency in the responses of each of these public bodies, as well as the community organisations interviewed. The main views expressed included the following:

- Gambling was viewed as a major problem in the [redacted] area, as it is in [redacted] generally (all interviewed);
- The population, and particularly their clients in the local community were viewed as particularly vulnerable to the effects of gambling, which would be worsened by access to gaming machines in a shopping strip where there was currently none (DOH, DCS);
- Although the presenting problem for call-outs to domestic violence, child abuse incident and the like may be the violence involved, the underlying problem was often gambling-related, or precipitated by gambling problems (DCS);
- Fairfield Community Aid (FCA) runs the largest non-charitable emergency relief fund in the state (\$247,00 per annum which they have to severely limit to \$10-30 per client due to huge demand). This indicates that, according to the needs-based funding formula applied by the NSW State Government based on socio-economic indicators, Fairfield is regarded as one of the most disadvantaged, if not *the* most disadvantaged, LGA in the State. FCA believed that the underlying problem for many of its clients was gambling, and was strongly opposed to any increase in gaming machines, but particularly those in a 'neighbourhood shopping centre close to banks, supermarkets and cafes' which would increase access.
- Children in the area were very exposed to risk from parents who are problem gamblers, and primary school children often missed out on the basics in the [redacted] area (DET).

Professor Blaszczyński of the Area Health Service (Impulse Research Centre) provided his assessment of the likely impacts, which included the following

- Problem gambling is a major problem in the [redacted] area – 13 out of his current caseload come from the [redacted] area.
- The introduction of 15 machines to [redacted] will increase gambling access, have an impact on existing gamblers, and increase the number of problem gamblers in the area.
- South east Asians are 2.5 times more likely to experience problem gambling than other ethnic communities
- The revenue in the local business centre is likely to decrease marginally as money is diverted into the new poker machines. This could act to marginally decrease employment in general.

These findings are reported in more detail in the following sections.

Both the Department of Housing and the Department of Community Services reported that they had not seen copies of the applicant's survey. They commented that it was possible that it could have 'gone astray', or to other members of staff, but could not locate the staff member to whom it may have gone when they 'asked around'.

It seems surprising, given the requirements of the Act, that the applicant's consultant did not attempt to interview these organisations verbally to at least gain some idea of their views and concerns.

### **3.1.2. The approach taken to review the SIA and gauge community opinion**

Despite severe time constraints, we undertook the following consultation via a verbally-delivered questionnaire:

- Random Doorknock (each 5<sup>th</sup> house) in 4 streets closest to the Hotel, for 3 hours in daytime and 4 hours in the evening of 4 and 5 October using a Vietnamese interpreter (30 h/holds).
- Random street survey 11.30am – 12 noon on 3 October near busiest part of street (Commonwealth Bank 3 doors up from Hotel) - each 5<sup>th</sup> person who passed after a survey was completed was asked to participate (18 people)
- Random Shopkeeper survey each 3<sup>rd</sup> shop until 20% of shops surveyed (14 shops) on 4 and 5 October.

This yielded 62 interviewees who were representative in terms local gender and ethnicity. This is detailed in Section 4.2. and Appendices 1 – 4.

## **3.2. Problems with Factual Issues / Findings of the SIA**

### **3.2.1. SIA's Assessment of the Incidence of Problem Gambling**

#### **Section 171D (4) (d) The incidence of problem gambling within the local community.**

Section 8 of the Social Impact Assessment prepared by [redacted] assesses the number of problem gamblers in the area at 150 by assuming the incidence in the area is the same as the Australian average. Advice from Professor Blaszczyński (Impulse Gambling Service 5 October 2000) is that the incidence of problem gamblers in South East Asian Communities is 2.5 times that in the general population.



## 4.2. Community Surveys

In order to gauge community attitudes to the application, and also to gain community views of demand, a random survey of the local community was carried out by us (as described in 3.1.2. of this Submission).

Tabulations of Community Surveys are appended as Appendix A, and full surveys as Appendices 2,3 and 4. Key findings are set out below.

### 4.2.1 Demographic Profile

**Table 4: Ethnicity**

Ethnic background	Survey	Fairfield City
Asian	37.1%	22%
European/other	24.2%	32%
Australian	38.7%	44%

Asians appear to be over represented in the survey and Europeans under represented compared to the average for Fairfield municipality. The Fairfield figures are for country of birth where as the survey was based on the interviewers assessment of ethnicity hence Australians of Asian parentage would not be shown as Asian in the Fairfield figures but would be in the survey data. The low figure for Europeans/other is likely because of local concentrations of people of different ethnicity.

Over three quarters of respondents lived in the local community. 100% of those doorknocked, 61% of those surveyed in the street and 43% of shopkeepers lived in the local community.

Genders were equally represented, and in general we believe the demography to be representative of the area.

### 4.2.2 Gambling as a problem

68% of respondents felt that gambling was a problem in the area. 58% of respondents had seen the effects of gambling in the local community. Amongst Asians 74% saw gambling as a problem with 61% seeing the effects in the local community. There is also a correlation between experience of effects of gambling and the respondents attitude to gambling as a problem. 80% of resident Asians considered gambling a problem and 70% had experience, often graphic, of effects of gambling. 40% of resident Australian/Europeans considered gambling a problem and 35% had experience of effects of gambling. This supports the view that gambling is a significant problem in Asian communities.

In terms of reasons given for the belief that gambling is a problem in the [redacted] local community, the following represented reasonably typical comments:

'There are poker machines everywhere. There is no where you can go where they don't have them'

'Gambling is so bad for families around here. This is such a poor area, yet so much seems to go through the pokies. I can't understand it'

It's so obvious. You only have to go into the clubs around here to see how big a problem it is' (see Appended surveys for detailed comments)

In terms of personal experience of problem gambling, interviewees were surprisingly open and reported some very personal matters. Some were visibly upset as they talked, with young Asian males the most concerned.

'I gave my mate \$1000 to help out with a family problem. He put it all though the pokies in 10 minutes'

'I really worry about my mates. Some of them out all their Austudy though the pokies. Then there are family problems'

'2 people close to me have suicided because of gambling'

'The young people in my community (Vietnamese) – they steal from their parents to support their gambling. It's terrible'

'My workmate lost their house – just came in one day and said, I've lost everything'

#### **4.2.3. Types of Gambling**

75% of respondents felt that Poker Machines had an impact on the community. This was followed by 23% of respondents who felt there was no effect, 18% cited casinos and similar, 16% the TAB, 10% card machines and 7% Internet gambling. Clearly Poker Machines are a major concern within the Local community.

#### 4.2.4. Support for more Poker Machines in the [REDACTED] Area.

3% of respondents agreed that more poker machines were needed in the area with 11% undecided. 42% disagreed and 44% strongly disagreed. Again opposition was higher in Asian communities with 52% strongly disagreeing compared to 39% for Australian/European. 78% of Asians surveyed in the random street survey strongly disagreed.

21% of respondents supported the proposal to install the 15 gaming devices with 79% opposed. Again opposition was stronger in Asian communities at 83%.

Typically, qualitative results (comments in response to the open questions) were:

'Why do we have to have pokies here as well as everywhere else. This shopping centre is not that type of area – more a cafe area. All that will change if pokies come here'

'The Hotel is just near a bank. People will be able to come straight out and put their money through the machines'

Access will increase use – especially if you put them in a shopfront where everyone can just walk past and go in'

Putting them in the shopping centre will just attract more people – people who may not go as far as the other pubs around here (Kookaburra and El Cortez).

#### 4.2.5. Overall Findings.

- Gambling is perceived as a significant problem in the area, and as particularly serious by interviewees from Asian communities (Vietnamese, Lao and Khmer).
- There appears to be a high degree of correlation between direct experience of the effects of gambling and the respondents' attitude to gambling as a problem.
  - Those most likely to express the view that gambling is a problem, and to oppose the introduction of further access to gambling opportunities in the local area, are those who report direct person experience of problem gambling.
  - A high proportion of interviewees freely related experiences of problem gambling among relatives, neighbours, family or work colleagues. This reinforced more



quantitative data from the surveys that problem gambling was a significant concern in this local community.

- Poker machines are seen as by far the most significant source of gambling problems.
- There is widespread opposition for the introduction of more gambling machines in the area, and only minimal community support for the granting of the application for 15 gaming machines in the new [redacted] Hotel.
- A major community concern is the introduction of gaming machines into the [redacted] shopping centre itself, a shopping strip that is currently without a venue with poker machines. There concerns mainly centred on:
  - Increased access to a gaming facility in an area where many people come to use the bank (3 lots up from the hotel), buy take away food, and buy groceries.
  - Fear that the presence of a 'shopfront' gaming facility, where the poker machine area is accessible directly from the street at the front of the Hotel, will change the character of the local area to its detriment.
  - Concerns that the area is already very poor, and that residents will suffer from economic consequences from increased proximity to the immediately adjacent residential areas.

#### 4.2.6. Conclusion

In summary, the surveys identify a local community in which a majority of residents believe that there is already considerable harm from the effects of gambling, and particularly poker machines. It is therefore not surprising that the surveys also show that residents strongly consider that there are sufficient gaming machines in the areas, as well as widespread opposition to the introduction of additional gambling machines in the new [redacted] Hotel.

The findings of this consultation is at odds with those of [redacted]. We believe our consultation process is both more objective, thorough and representative and hence should be given greater standing.

Our conclusion is that the results of the survey do not support the granting of a license for gaming machines in the [redacted] Hotel, in terms of likely additional harm on the local community, or in terms of likely local demand.

### 4.3. Interviews With Services And Public Bodies

A range of services were interviewed to ascertain their views and issues in relation to impacts on the community. These are summarised briefly below.

#### 4.1. Fairfield Community Aid (Coordinator, Cheryl Wilmott, 5 October)

- Fairfield Community Aid (FCA) runs the largest non-charitable emergency relief fund in the state (\$247,00 per annum which they have to severely limit to \$10-30 per client due to huge demand). This indicates that, according to the needs-based funding formula applied by the NSW State Government based on socio-economic indicators, Fairfield is regarded as one of the most disadvantaged, if not *the* most disadvantaged, LGA in the State. FCA believed that the underlying problem for many of its clients was gambling, and was strongly opposed to any increase in gaming machines, but particularly those in a 'neighbourhood shopping centre close to banks, supermarkets and cafes' which would increase access.

#### 4.2. Department of Community Services (Greg Skelley, Manager, Fairfield Area Office, 3 October 2000); Department of Housing (Tim Flynn, Acting Team Leader, 5 October), and Department of Education and Training (Public School, 6 October 2000).

- Gambling was viewed as a major problem in the area, as it is in Fairfield generally (all interviewed).
- The population, and particularly their clients in the local community were viewed as particularly vulnerable to the effects of gambling, which would be worsened by access to gaming machines in a shopping strip where there was currently none (DOH, DCS);
- Although the presenting problem for call-outs to domestic violence, child abuse incident and the like may be the violence involved, the underlying problem was often gambling-related, or precipitated by gambling problems (DCS);
- Children in the area were very exposed to risk from parents who are problem gamblers, and primary school children often missed out on the basics in the area (DET).

Even though child protection is our core business, much of the problems in families come from low income and stress. Even though gambling may not be the reason the police are

called to the house, in my experience it often precipitates it when you ask a few questions. Dad comes home late from the pub, he's lost all the family's money on the pokies. A fight starts, things get violent, the police are called and we get called in.

The effects of gambling on low income families can be devastating. We're the ones who pick up the pieces. Surely the spread of pokies has got to stop somewhere, especially in a poor community like this. I'm definitely opposed to the proposal (Greg Skelley, DCS).

The Hotel [redacted] may say it's only 15 more poker machines, but it's the cumulative impact on the community and its about access. The streets nearest the hotel have the highest concentration of public housing in [redacted], so it will directly affect our clients. We can't support the applications for more pokies in that area (Time Flynn, DOH).

#### **4.3. Professor Blaszczyński, Western Sydney Area health Service (5 October 2000).**

Professor Blaszczyński, a recognised expert in gambling research, reported that he had provided a submission to the applicant's consultant's on their request for inclusion in the SIA. It does not appear in the SIA, and he believes he may have forwarded it to them too late for inclusion. He was unable to provide me with a copy of the research as he had been 'paid to produce it' (presumably through gambling funding to the Impulse Research Centre).

However, he was able to provide me with the main findings that he had drawn from previous research. These finding included:

- Problem gambling is a major problem in the [redacted] area – 13 out of his current caseload come from the [redacted] area.
- The introduction of 15 machines to [redacted] will increase gambling access, have an impact on existing gamblers, and increase the number of problem gamblers in the area.
- South east Asians are 2.5 times more likely to experience problem gambling than other ethnic communities
- The revenue in the local business centre is likely to decrease marginally as money is diverted into the new poker machines. This could act to marginally decrease employment in general.

## APPENDIX A

### RESULTS OF COMMUNITY SURVEY INCLUDING:

1 RESULTS OF RANDOM STREET SURVEY

2 RESULTS OF RANDOM DOOR KNOCK

3 RESULTS OF RANDOM SHOP SURVEY

	Random Street Survey (RSS)	Random Door Knock (RDK)	Random Shop Survey (RSH)	Total	Random Street Survey (RSS)	Random Door Knock (RDK)	Random Shop Survey (RSH)	Total
<b>1.1 Ethnic Background</b>								
Asian: Viet, Lao Khmer	9	10	4	23	50.0%	33.3%	28.6%	37.1%
European NESB	4	7	4	15	22.2%	23.3%	28.6%	24.2%
Aust	5	13	6	24	27.8%	43.3%	42.9%	38.7%
Total	18	30	14	62	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>1.2 Suburb of Residence</b>								
Canley Heights	11	30	6	47	61.1%	100.0%	42.9%	75.8%
Canley Vale	3	0	0	3	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%
Cabramatta / Cabramatta West	2	0	2	4	11.1%	0.0%	14.3%	6.5%
Fairfield	1	0	1	2	5.6%	0.0%	7.1%	3.2%
Other	1	0	5	6	5.6%	0.0%	35.7%	9.7%
Total	18	30	14	62	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>1.3 Gender</b>								
Male	9	14	8	31	50.0%	46.7%	57.1%	50.0%
Female	9	16	6	31	50.0%	53.3%	42.9%	50.0%
Total	18	30	14	62	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>2. Do you consider gambling is a problem in this area?</b>								
Asian	7	2	2	11	77.8%	80.0%	50.0%	73.9%
Aust/European	8	1	9	18	88.9%	40.0%	90.0%	64.1%
Total	15	3	11	28	83.3%	53.3%	78.6%	67.7%
<b>3. Have you seen the effect of gambling in the local community?</b>								
Asian	7	2	3	12	77.8%	70.0%	100.0%	60.9%
Aust/European	6	3	9	18	66.7%	35.0%	90.0%	58.4%
Total	13	5	12	30	72.2%	46.7%	64.3%	58.1%



	Random Street Survey (RSS)	Random Door Knock (RDK)	Random Shop Survey (RSH)	Total	Random Street Survey (RSS)	Random Door Knock (RDK)	Random Shop Survey (RSH)	Total
<b>4. What types of gambling do you feel have an impact on the community, if any?</b>								
TAB	4	3	3	10	22.2%	10.0%	21.4%	16.1%
Poker Machines	16	18	12	46	88.9%	60.0%	85.7%	74.2%
Card Machines	2	2	2	6	11.1%	6.7%	14.3%	9.7%
Internet Gambling	2	2	0	4	11.1%	6.7%	0.0%	6.5%
Mixed venues, eg Casinos	4	7	0	11	22.2%	23.3%	0.0%	17.7%
None of the Above	2	11	1	14	11.1%	36.7%	7.1%	22.6%
Total Respondents	18	30	14	62				
<b>5. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: More Poker Machines are needed in the _____ area?</b>								
Asian								
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Agree	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Undecided	0	0	2	2	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	8.7%
Disagree	2	5	2	9	22.2%	50.0%	50.0%	39.1%
Strongly Disagree	7	5	0	12	77.8%	50.0%	0.0%	52.2%
					100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Aust/European								
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Agree	0	1	1	2	0.0%	5.0%	10.0%	5.1%
Undecided	2	3	0	5	22.2%	15.0%	0.0%	12.8%
Disagree	2	10	5	17	22.2%	50.0%	50.0%	43.6%
Strongly Disagree	5	6	4	15	55.6%	30.0%	40.0%	38.5%
					100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total								
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Agree	0	1	1	2	0.0%	3.3%	7.1%	3.2%
Undecided	2	3	2	7	11.1%	10.0%	14.3%	11.3%
Disagree	4	15	7	26	22.2%	50.0%	50.0%	41.9%
Strongly Disagree	12	11	4	27	66.7%	36.7%	28.6%	43.5%
					100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

	Random Street Survey (RSS)		Random Door Knock (RDK)		Random Shop Survey (RSH)		Total		Random Street Survey (RSS)		Random Door Knock (RDK)		Random Shop Survey (RSH)		Total	
	Random Street Survey (RSS)		Random Door Knock (RDK)		Random Shop Survey (RSH)		Total		Random Street Survey (RSS)		Random Door Knock (RDK)		Random Shop Survey (RSH)		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
<b>6. Do you support the proposal to install 15 gaming devices in the new Hotel?</b>																
Asian	0	9	1	9	3	1	4	19	0.0%	100.0%	10.0%	90.0%	75.0%	25.0%	17.4%	82.6%
Aust/European	2	7	5	15	2	8	9	30	22.2%	77.8%	25.0%	75.0%	20.0%	80.0%	23.1%	76.9%
Total	2	16	6	24	5	9	13	49	11.1%	88.9%	20.0%	80.0%	35.7%	64.3%	21.0%	79.0%