



30 March 2009

Gambling Inquiry Productivity Commission  
GPO Box 1428  
Canberra City ACT 2601

Dear Commissioners

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission for the Tuggeranong Valley Rugby Union and Amateur Sports Club Limited – The Vikings Group. The attached submission relates to the request by Chris Bowen, Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs for the Productivity Commission to undertake an inquiry into Australia's gambling industries.

The Vikings Group situated in the Tuggeranong Valley ACT, is the 2008 ACT Club of the Year, ACT Employer of the Year and recently received the 2008 Australian Services Industry Award at the Australian Training Awards presented by The Hon Julia Gillard MP. We are not only regarded highly by our peers in the Club Industry we are also recognised by the greater business community to be a socially responsible organisation committed to our community, 50 000 members and 300 plus staff employed by our organisation.

The attached submission provides a in depth explanation and understanding of the role the Vikings Group, one of ACT's largest Licensed Clubs, plays in the social and economic landscape of the ACT . We trust this submission will aid the Commission in its enquiry.

Please contact the undersigned if further clarification is required on any of the points outlined in the following submission.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Webb", is written over a horizontal line.

Mr Peter Webb  
Chief Executive Officer  
The Vikings Group



**Tuggeranong Valley Rugby Union & Amateur Sports Club Ltd**  
**SUBMISSION**  
**to the**  
**Productivity Commission Gambling Enquiry**

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Club Facilities</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3. Responsible Gaming</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4. Community Support</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5. Sustainable Water Use Program</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>6. Staff Training and Development</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>7. Employment</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>8. Contributing to the ACT Business Community</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>9. Conclusion and Future</b>	<b>15</b>

## **1. Introduction**

The Vikings Group commenced operations on December 12th 1979 from a small single room licensed premise, trading as the Tuggeranong Valley Rugby Union and Amateur Sports Club Incorporated with 204 members, 5 staff members and 4 affiliated sporting groups.

## **2. Club Facilities**

The Vikings Group has grown from its humble beginnings to one of the largest community clubs in Canberra and currently consists of:

- 5 licensed premises (Vikings Erindale, Vikings Chisholm, Vikings Town Centre, Vikings Lanyon and Vikings Capital Golf) totalling over 15,000 sq metres;
- several first class sporting facilities including Viking Park sports ground, tennis courts, championship lawn bowls greens, a cricket oval, 18 hole public golf course and a Health and Fitness Centre;
- 17 accommodation units in Bateman's Bay, Gold Coast, Bermagui and Narooma;
- a membership base exceeding 50,000;
- employ over 300 staff;
- held the reputation as the "Home of Amateur Sport in the Tuggeranong Valley" with a total of 55 affiliated sporting and social groups;
- provided community assistance of over \$2.2 Million throughout 2007/08; and
- recorded an annual turnover of \$39 Million (07/08).

### **3. Responsible Gaming**

The Vikings Group have been leading the way in providing Responsible Gaming venues since 1999. Vikings made the choice to lead the way with responsible gaming in the ACT with the release of the voluntary code of practice. It was with this in mind that the voluntary code of practice

was fully embraced by Vikings paving the way for Clubs in the ACT. Vikings policies and procedures have been used as templates for others throughout the ACT and have been discussed as a benchmark to work towards. As such by the time the code came into effect we only had to make minimal changes to be compliant as we had been following NSW policy for some six months prior to the voluntary code commenced.

In 2008 The Vikings Group contributed \$40,000 in direct assistance Lifeline Canberra Inc. This reiterates the commitment Vikings has to aiding those adversely affected by gambling.

Vikings employs a Gaming and Compliance Manager. This role is responsible for the group's entire gaming installation ensuring that all legislative requirements are met as well as maintaining relationships with organisations such as Clubcare and the Gambling and Racing Commission.

This role enables the organisation to have a central point of contact for the group's installation allowing a global view to be taken into account for key compliance issues. This view has enabled the organisation to implement many successful global policies and procedures that have kept the organisation free of breaches with an exemplary record to date.

Our staff conduct Internal Gaming Machine Audits of the Gaming installations at a rate of 25% of the floor per week. This enables us to be across the relevant sections of the ACT in ensuring members have all the information regarding their choice of machine available to them. The Vikings Group believes the responsible conduct of gaming is paramount and the audits are in place to ensure the group upholds a safe environment for members and guest to gamble in. When conducting Gaming Machine audits our employees are to ensure the following is in place.

- Warning signs are in place at the entry of each designated gaming area.
- Gaming Machine License

- Code of Conduct signage
- Gaming Machine ACT
- ATMs located outside gaming rooms
- Warning signs on each Gaming Machine. Each gaming machine must have clearly displayed in a predominant position, a warning about excessive Gambling.
- Each machine has a return to player percentage displayed in an approved position by the commission.
- Each Machine has clearly marked if it is part of a link arrangement and the percentage of turnover set aside for the payment of linked jackpots.
- The serial number is correct on the compliance plate as well as the Machine access registry as well as the Machine Database.
- The game name of each machine matches the serial number and house number.
- Ensure the door meter on each machine is operating correctly. This is done by opening the machine door and checking the "MAR" is in consecutive order.
- All faults are correctly recorded in a fault book for technicians.
- Clocks are clearly displayed and can be seen from any where in the gaming area.

If an error or problem is found it is immediately reported to the Operations Manager at each site. The Operations Manager then acts upon the information and fixes or rectifies the problem immediately.

Although all of our staff are trained in the provision of responsible gaming, they are well aware of the sensitivity of the issue and will not approach members directly. They will log incidents of concern and our senior managers will deal with the issue in a manner that causes the least intrusion to the member. The senior managers also deal with 3<sup>rd</sup> party problem gambling notifications.

Each of the five venues has been provided with a digital camera which must always remain on site. The main reason for this is the instance in which a problem gambler may request a Self Exclusion but may not be able to provide current photographs. The gambling Contact Officer will be able to take a photo enabling the exclusion to go ahead immediately. This also allows for the Clubs self exclusion register to be updated instantly with an electronic copy to be placed

on the Clubs common files as well as hard copies placed on file at all venues.

Being a multi site venue, we also have the ability to meet as a group of Gambling Contact Officers to discuss the provision of Responsible Gaming. If a member is displaying signs of having a problem, we often are able to call on input from all five sites, rather than just one.

At the commencement of 2005, the Clubcare program provided training for our staff. However, the Vikings Group undertook to provide personnel in the field that can provide our RSG training in house and at times suitable to our operation. The increasing legislative demands have necessitated this move as the provision of training amongst our staff needs to be fully flexible.

As the legislation states that all staff exposed to the gaming environment must be trained in Responsible Conduct of Gambling, Vikings has maintained a register of employees which includes their date of training. This enables us to see at a glance who has been trained and when they will require refresher training. Thus ensuring that not only do we meet the required legislation but we also have a workforce that is able to identify and deal with issues concerning responsible gaming.

Rather than only training staff who are employed in gaming areas Vikings actually trains all staff who are employed in all areas in all Clubs. This ensures that our entire licensed Club staff body are fluent with the policies of responsible gaming. This not only ensures that we have fulfilled our legislative requirements but also gives us flexibility to move staff around within different areas and also that all staff are receiving a consistent message in regards to the Clubs policy on responsible gaming.

We use our website and Membership Information Booklet to further increase membership awareness of our policy with regard to Responsible Gaming. In fact, we promote this aspect more so than the actual gambling products.

All Clubs provide a full Gamblers pack on request that includes information on exclusion, counselling phone numbers, Gaming Contact Officers' phone numbers, the actual deed of exclusion and the ACT Gambling & Racing Commission pamphlets detailing information for the patrons.

We have details available in each Club toilet as well as in the foyer of each Club and behind Reception.

The Vikings Group are constantly represented at the table of any Responsible Conduct of Gaming meeting. The Club's CEO is involved with the CEO of Clubs ACT with regard to policy and Legislation, while our Gaming and Compliance Manager was part of the panel addressing the role of Clubcare in the ACT and how it can be enhanced to further assist both the providers and users of Gambling services.

#### 4. Community Support

The Vikings Group, over its 30 year history, has supported the community in accordance with the Club's Constitution:

- to foster and encourage the Rugby Union Football Code and Amateur Sport in the Tuggeranong Valley;
- to provide recreation and sporting facilities for Members of the company and the community generally;
- to promote social intercourse and good fellowship among players of, and persons interested in, Rugby Union Football and other Amateur Sports.

As previously mentioned, the Club's main objective is to foster and develop sport. Due to this, a large proportion of its community assistance funds are channelled into this area. The Club does however aim to fulfil a broader social responsibility by offering support across all four categories of eligible community contributions as determined in the Australian Capital Territory Gaming Machine Act 2004. Support ranges from local schools to Youth Soup Kitchen to the Cancer Council. The total of these grants were in excess of \$2 million and consisted of \$2.1 million Direct Assistance and \$101,080 In Kind Assistance for 2007/08.

Additionally, The Vikings Group does not restrict its community assistance to providing only a level of support in line with the legislated 7% requirement by the Gaming Machine Act. The Vikings Group is proud of the commitment to our significant community responsibilities. The Vikings Group returned over 14.5% to the community – the highest percentage of Net Gaming Machine Revenue from all of the ACT's "large" Club groups.

**Sport** –The Vikings Group has remained committed to the promotion and development of Sport in the Tuggeranong Valley and ACT. Due to this commitment, their 55 affiliated sporting Clubs had 5912 junior athletes and 3631 senior athletes (some represented in the 602 affiliated teams) competing in local competitions. These figures are representative of their affiliated Clubs alone. In addition to this, through other major sporting grants to amateur sport, over 1400 athletes are also supported. In terms of measurement, the following outcomes were achieved through the Group's major grants.



- Tuggeranong Valley Rugby Union Club – Direct Assistance \$588,000  
Over 511 players participated as a result of this assistance.
- ACT Rugby Union – Direct Assistance \$100,000.
- Affiliate Club Grant Scheme – Direct Assistance of \$126,100  
Due to this commitment, their affiliated sporting Clubs had 5912 junior athletes and 3631 senior athletes competing in local competitions.
- Primary Schools Rugby Union Program – Direct Assistance \$40,000  
Over 500 Tuggeranong Children were active in this competition.
- High School/College Rugby Union Program – Direct Assistance \$35,000  
Over 150 Tuggeranong High School Children were active in this competition.
- Affiliate Clubs – In Kind Assistance of \$78,400.  
This program currently assists 55 affiliated Clubs. Without this assistance, many affiliated Clubs would struggle to field such a large volume of athletes.

**Infrastructure** - The quality of facilities that the Club provides for the community are testament to the effectiveness of the Club's program. The six million dollar multi sports facility Viking Park, Vikings Capital Golf Course, Vikings Health & Fitness Centre, Bowling Greens, Tennis Courts and Tuggeranong Ovals provide quality sporting venues for their members.

- Viking Park – Direct Funding \$433,000  
The Viking Park complex is not just used by local sporting teams for the Rugby Union and baseball season matches - it also hosted numerous sporting events including the Australian Schoolboys Vs Samoa Schoolboys Rugby Union Test Match and the Australian Schoolboys Rugby Championships. The Brumbies also hosted training sessions at Viking Park during the year and hosted Kubota a professional Japanese Rugby Team as well for a two week training camp.
- Vikings Capital Golf Club Course – Direct Funding \$433,500  
The Vikings Capital Golf Club course is a public course so that any one can play there and is one of the cheapest courses in Canberra to join and play. Another feature of this course is that it offers free monthly coaching clinics for junior golfers.

- Bowling Greens – Direct Funding \$432,000  
The Club maintains three international standard Championship sized Bowling Greens. These cost the Club \$432,000 in wages and equipment in order to maintain such a high standard. These are also the only bowling greens in the Tuggeranong Valley and recently hosted The Australian Sides Tournament.
- Oval Maintenance – Direct Funding \$47,000  
The Club also looks after the government ovals at Chisholm and Conder and prepares the cricket wickets upon these ovals.

**Charitable and Social Welfare** –The Group participated in ClubsACT monitored welfare programs, meeting their broader responsibility aims, in addition to other direct contributions.

- Lifeline Canberra Inc – Direct Assistance \$40,000
- The Spastic Centre – Direct Assistance \$17,000
- Camp Quality – Direct Assistance \$11,000
- Red Cross – Direct Assistance \$26,000
- Royal Prince Albert Hospital Transplant Unit - Direct Assistance \$10,000
- The Salvation Army – Direct Assistance \$8,000
- Victorian Bushfire Appeal – Direct Assistance \$20,000

## **5. Sustainable Water Use Program**

In 2007, The Vikings Group embarked on a Sustainable Water Use Program, with costs incurred for 2007 totalling \$219,500. This upgrade saw the following improvements implemented:

### **Vikings Capital Golf Club**

- Dam overflow has been raised by 30mm this enables the capture and storage of an extra 2MI of water.

### **Viking Park**

- Investigate, design and seek approval for a sewerage system to enable us to recirculate 7.5MI of water for use on the playing fields at Viking Park.
- Constructed, tested and received approval from Territory and Municipal Services for the operation of a bore on Viking Park. This will provide a non-potable water supply of 30MI for use on Viking Park.
- Returfing the number one oval of Viking Park with a low water use grass which will save 20 Mega litres of potable water per year.

### **Vikings Lawn Bowls Greens**

- Implement new pumping arrangements to provide non-potable water for bowling greens and surrounds from an on-site dam.
- Investigate, design and seek approval for a new bore to subsidise the non-potable water supply.

### **Vikings Erindale, Chisholm, Town Centre, and Lanyon.**

- Water usage has been reduced by 50% in conjunction with ACTEWAGL guidance and surveys. Reducing usage from 56MI to 26MI per year.

## 6. Staff training and development

### Our Philosophy

The theme of continuous improvement is evident in the Vikings Group's philosophy on staff development and performance management. We strongly believe the survival of our organisation is intrinsically linked to the continuous improvement of the service we offer our Members and their guests. We ensure this continuous improvement by investing heavily into our staff development program. In 2007, an incredible \$309,900 was outlaid in staff development and training which equates to 4.3% of our payroll. On average approximately 848 hours per month is allocated to training of which we had 53 permanent staff participating in traineeships ranging from Horticulture through to Diploma of Business Management.

The allocation of such a large resource to training would be wasted if not partnered with a strong, transparent and quantifiable performance management program. At the Vikings Group a philosophy of reward and recognition at all levels is fostered.

The core aims and objectives summarises The Vikings philosophy on staff development and performance management, they are:

- continuous development of key supervisory staff and management - combining job skills with formal qualifications and training that ensures growth past the elementary industry qualifications to vocational career paths solidifying an educated work force;
- creating an environment where staff do not become stalled in their personal development due to a bottleneck, rather they can continue to learn and grow within the organisation, sponsored and encouraged by The Vikings Group;
- an educated workforce thriving on autonomy in a self managed environment;
- a formal succession plan to address vacancies left in non-traditional industry roles such as marketing, accounting, HR and IT. This reduces recruiting costs widening the neck of the "bottle" to realistically provide other avenues for progression;
- extending our commitment to the community and offering education to employees who may not otherwise have the means to study and work concurrently;
- establishing a unique Human Resources program helping to make the Vikings Clubs an industry leader in training and raising our profile generally among community;

- securing a reputation as an employer of choice, thus widening our pool of potential staff who will contribute to the Vikings Club's diverse culture and superior working environment.

### **Staff Development and Performance Management Systems**

2007 provided the Vikings Group with a number of challenges. One of the foremost challenges was our ability to recruit and retain staff in such a tight labour market. To successfully meet this challenge we modified our HR systems to best fit the current climate. This was executed using the following key elements of staff development and performance management.

#### **Recruitment**

The recruitment net was cast much more widely to capture segments of the labour market not traditionally used. This included;

- increase number of Australian School based Apprenticeships – total 6;
- participation in the Australian Defence Force Transitional Employment Expo – only Licensed Club represented;
- introduction of a mature age employee program specifically aimed at mature aged workers wishing to re-enter or retrain in the Club Industry.

#### **Training**

A move away from traditional training methods previously adopted to more precise and efficient methods that enabled us to quickly skill new entrants into our industry. This method encompassed:

- bite size training that reduced down time and delivered specific skill sets such as conflict management;
- the utilisation of an in-house trainer to deliver Responsible Service of Alcohol and Responsible Conduct of Gaming on a schedule that ensured attendance – e.g. night and day time training;
- a solid partnership with the CIT which enabled our training coordinator to deliver qualifications that were not only nationally recognised but specific to the needs of the Vikings Group.

## **Recognition**

Recognition for effort is the key to retaining staff. Previous systems recognised the employee body as a whole as opposed to individual efforts. This did not encourage achievement rather it fostered a complacent attitude. To address this a new appraisal system was introduced with the key elements listed below:

- face to face appraisals with all staff;
- KPI's introduced at all levels;
- the ability to reward achievement and
- identify training needs as a result of identifying poor performance.

## **Mature age worker program**

In 2007 we introduced a new recruitment initiative to target at the mature aged workforce.

The key elements included:

- opportunity to enter the ACT Club industry;
- 3 month program offering qualifications in Certificate 2 Hospitality;
- 3 months paid work experience;
- Opportunity to obtain fulltime work at the completion of the 3 month program.

## **7. Employment**

The Vikings Group is a major employer in the ACT private sector currently engaging 300, fulltime, part time and casual staff.

The financial year to date has seen in excess of 300 employment applications being received. We believe in the current economic climate this figure will only increase as the workforce turns to the Club Industry for supplementary income.

The Vikings Group provides career opportunities in a variety of disciplines ranging from traditional hospitality roles through to accounting, HR, marketing, horticulture, and building services. The Vikings Group is also a valuable source of supplementary income for residents of the ACT and surrounding areas battling to survive on a single income.

The Vikings Group is the 2008 ACT Club of the Year, 2008 ACT Employer of the Year and recently received the 2008 Australian Service Industry Award at the Australian Training Awards presented by The Hon. Julia Gillard MP. The Group was also 1 of 3 finalists for the Australian Employer of the Year again presented by The Hon. Julia Gillard MP. To receive these awards is a great honour. Not only does it validate our HR and general business practices, it benchmarks our strategic approach to our operations against the wider business community including large multinational corporations.

## 8. Contributing to the ACT business community

The Viking Group contributes to the ACT business community in a substantial way. Below is an example of the economic contribution made by the Vikings Group.

Item	2007/08
Wages	\$7,207,500
Gaming Machine Tax	\$5,373,185
Entertainment / Marketing	\$3,223,918
Kitchen costs	\$354,161
Electricity/Power	\$764,217
Repairs & Maintenance	\$1,290,705
IT Services	\$131,654
Sports Grounds	\$1,365,448
Sport & Community Grants	\$2,149,341
Insurance & Rates	\$317,262
Security	\$670,331
TOTAL	<b>\$22,847,722</b>

As seen by the above example, The Vikings Group makes a significant contribution to the financial fabric of the ACT. Wages alone are in excess of \$7 million; the flow on effect of that economic stimulus should not be understated.



## **9. Conclusion and future**

The Vikings Group are not only highly regarded by our peers in the Club Industry we are also recognised by the greater business community to be a socially responsible organisation committed to our community, 50,000 members and 300 plus staff employed by our Group of Licensed Clubs.

We strongly believe our success as an organisation has been built on sound business practices which embrace our social commitments and the needs of our Members and their guests.

The Vikings Group and the Club Industry as a whole has a charter which first and foremost provides for the community. In the ACT alone the Club Industry is responsible for facilities such as sporting ovals, basketball courts, tennis courts, bowling greens, swimming pools, golf courses, BMX tracks, and senior citizen facilities, just to name a few. The ACT's two national sporting teams, the Brumbies and the Canberra Raiders are significantly aided financially by ACT Licensed Clubs. These facilities are maintained at a considerable cost to licensed Clubs. The financial strain on local governments to maintain these facilities in the absence of licensed Clubs would be extraordinary.

The future plans for the Vikings Group is to maintain to the best of our ability the facilities and services we offer our Members and guests. We will continue to be responsible in the way we conduct our gaming operations as we have always believed an irresponsible approach to this core activity has no benefits. We will continue to work closely with regulative bodies to ensure our industry is sustainable and ensure we have a voice in this arena.

In conclusion the Vikings Group is committed to progressing our business in a social and economically responsible manner, however, we cannot continue to achieve this if the regulatory framework that we operate in is not constructed in consultation with the industry. We trust our submission aids in your enquiries and may open up possibilities for future consultation. Thank you for your time.