



Asquith Bowling & Recreation Club

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25th March 2009

Gambling Inquiry Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
Canberra City ACT 2601

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Gambling Inquiry Productivity Commission from Asquith Bowling & Recreation Club.

The Club

Asquith Bowling & Recreation Club is located on the northern outskirts of Sydney, and had its origins in 1950, initially to provide a venue for the thriving sport of lawn bowls. Today our Club continues to fulfil that same service, whilst providing a family friendly atmosphere for all members and their guests, and encouraging and supporting a range of amateur sports and community groups.

Our Club is located on a site that was initially part of an orchard, then used as a pottery works, and served as a camp for displaced migrants after WWII. The site was purchased by Hornsby Shire Council in 1950, and ultimately by Asquith Bowling & Recreation Club in 1998.

In contrast to many small bowling clubs today, our club has maintained a consistent bowling membership over the past 10 years, whilst increasing our social membership. We have the largest male bowling membership in the Sydney metropolitan region. Our club serves the immediate surrounds of Hornsby and Kuring-gai Shires, where the demographic tends to be stable and aging. Visitors are drawn from a wide range of areas, but generally being guests of our local residents.

We have a total of 3,360 members that includes 340 male bowlers, 120 female bowlers and 30 junior bowlers. We subsidise membership fees for senior citizens by 80% and over 32% of our members are seniors.

Facilities offered to members and guests include 3 grass bowling greens, a bistro, coffee shop and Chinese restaurant, function facilities, tab and keno, as well as the traditional bar and gaming facilities.

Economic Contribution

Asquith Bowling & Recreation Club currently employs 20 staff from the local area. Our employment structure is 5 full time, 1 part time and 14 casual staff.

In addition we have a large number of volunteers who contribute to the success of our business by providing free bowls coaching, running weekly raffles and bingo games, and giving their time to work on internal club committees.

A summary of our revenue during the 2007-2008 financial year is:

Poker Machines and other gaming contribution	70%
Bar contribution	24%
Other Income Sources contribution	6%

Total revenue for the 2007-2008 year was affected significantly by the introduction of non-smoking in July 2007, and continues to decrease during the 2008-2009 financial year due to economic factors compounding the ongoing effect on non-smoking in licensed venues. The decrease was 22% for the 7 months from July to February 2008 compared to 2007, and a decrease of 71 % for the 7 months from July to February 2009 compared to 2008.

Social Contribution

Asquith Bowling & Recreation Club prides itself that regardless of being a small club we are still able to actively support our local community and local sporting organisations.

Support of the Local Community

Local groups supported by our club cover a broad range of the community including:

- Community Health Hornsby Kuring-gai Mental Health, Epilepsy Action, Delta Health (pet companions), Hornsby/Mt Kuring-gai Parkinson's Support Group, Hornsby Hospital, Heartmoves Exercise Classes, Technical Aid for the Disabled
- Education All local primary schools, Hornsby Hospital Nurses Education, Asquith Boys High School, Asquith Girls High School
- Special Needs Education Clarke Road Special School, Studio Artes, Smith Family Learning for Life
- Community Support Groups Italian Association of Assistance, Meals on Wheels, Friends of Richard Geeves, National Seniors
- Local Community Hornsby Heights Rural Fire Brigade, Accordion Society, 1st Hornsby Scout Group, Hornsby Legacy

We donated more than \$49,000 in cash and in kind to our local community in the 2007-2008 financial year and this was an increase of 16.2% compared to the previous financial year and 40.7% compared to 2005-06. The percentage of our total revenue donated to community groups (cash and in kind) has increased from 1.37% in 2006-07 to 1.78% in 2007-08.

	2007-2008	2006-07	2005-06
Total Cash	\$31,660	\$26,610	\$21,828
Total Revenue	\$2,763,650	\$3,074,046	\$2,780,068
Membership	3,379	3,240	2,848
% of total revenue	1.15%	0.87%	0.79%
\$ per member	\$9.37	\$8.21	\$7.66
Total In Kind	\$17,410	\$15,610	\$13,055
% of total revenue	0.63%	0.51%	0.47%
\$ per member	\$5.15	\$4.82	\$4.58
Total Support	\$49,070	\$42,220	34,883
% of total revenue	1.78%	1.37%	1.25%
\$ per member	\$14.52	\$13.03	\$12.25

Our in-kind support includes the use of club facilities at no charge and provision of food and beverage at no charge and the provision of prizes (eg. club caps, restaurant vouchers, gift packs of wine) to support fund raising events by community groups.

Support of Local Sport

During the 2007-2008 financial year we supported a broad range of local, amateur sports encompassing various age groups, gender, team and individual.

Examples of local, amateur sporting groups that we support include North Shore Girl's Cricket, Hornsby Eagles Junior AFL, Asquith Soccer Club (junior and senior girls' & boy's soccer) and St Patrick's Netball Club. Our club also supported a talented individual soccer player who was selected to represent Football NSW in their upcoming elite development tour to Brazil-Daniel Seifert.

We actively support the development of Junior Bowls through school sports for local high schools and we run an annual bowls tournament for local primary schools, as well as free coaching every week for our junior bowling members.

We promote senior bowls and encourage all our members to take up the sport. We offer an 83% reduction in bowling membership fees for first time bowlers to encourage them to "have a go" at minimal cost and provide free coaching and free use of club bowls.

Our total support for amateur sport totalled \$250,059 in cash and in kind during the 2007-2008 financial year and this is 9.05% of our total revenue compared to 8.4% in the previous year and 7.59% in 2005-06.

Environmental Contribution

Over the past 2 years Asquith Bowling & Recreation Club has completed a major capital project that has resulted in significant water savings and will continue to do so into the future, and we have also implemented a range of operational changes that contribute to our environmental sustainability.

Our major water harvesting project was undertaken with the co-operation and assistance of our local council and the endorsement by way of cash grants from the State (Water Savings Fund) and Federal (Water Fund) Governments.

The Club embarked on this major project as part of our commitment to environmental sustainability and to secure the future of our three grass bowling greens in spite of potential water restrictions.

We have installed 4 underground water tanks with a total capacity of 320,000 litres. The project harvests storm water and run off from the three bowling greens, from the roof of the club house and the green keepers shed, and from our 2 car parks. The project traps run off from irrigation to the bowling greens. The project traps underground water that accumulates around the base of the water tanks. The water tanks have been connected to our irrigation system that serves the greens and immediate surrounds, and has been connected to all the club toilets.

We have saved 35% to 40% of water each year since the completion of the project.

Responsible Gambling Commitment

Our club has a strong commitment to the responsible provision of gambling services. All staff must complete the Responsible Service of Gaming course. Self exclusion is readily available for members and visitors, and all senior staff are able to offer advice on accessing this scheme.

Asquith Bowling & Recreation Club subscribes to the Club Safe program and has literature available throughout the club on services to assist patrons to control gambling if required.

In addition we have implemented a “Club Chaplaincy” service whereby a local reverend offers confidential, non-denominational help to our members on a wide range of problems and concerns.

Conclusion

Poker machine revenue is a vital income stream that has allowed our club to grow, and to expand our support of the local community and local sport. A strong revenue base has also allowed us to implement capital works to greatly improve our environmental sustainability and generate significant water savings that ultimately benefit the entire community.

This revenue stream is currently under pressure and this will impact on our ability to support the local community and sporting groups to the level to which we aspire. It will also affect club patrons, many of whom are senior citizens and rely on the more affordable products that our club offers and the friendly, safe environment that we provide.

Please contact me if any further information is required.

Yours Faithfully

**For and On Behalf Of the Board of Directors
Asquith Bowling & Recreation Club**

Mary Houghton
Secretary Manager