



SUBMISSION BY
revesby**workers'**club



THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION



THE CLUB

OVERVIEW

Revesby Workers' Club has been established in Revesby for over 47 years. The Club's main premises are situated within the suburb of Revesby, approximately 22kms south west of the Sydney CBD.

It currently ranks as the fourteenth largest Club in NSW at June 2008 generating a forecast Gross Revenue of \$40million.

The Club at Revesby services a community of 55,000 and has over 37,000 members. The majority of the membership resides within the suburbs of East Hills, Panania, Picnic Point, Milperra and Revesby, however, a significant number of Club patrons are non members with the Club attracting over one million visitors each year to a wide range of events, conferences, functions and activities.

The Club currently operates its primary hospitality venue from a significant property holding at Revesby featuring a 16,105m² Club premise on an operational site of over 28,049m². Its second major hospitality venue and property holding at Mooney Mooney features a 840m² Club premise on an operational site of 31,883m².

Mooney Mooney Club, located midway between Hornsby and Gosford on the Hawkesbury River and adjacent to the F3 Motorway has a membership of 3,085, representing 8.4 percent of Revesby Workers' Club's overall membership. The former Mooney Mooney Workers' Club was in liquidation and would have been lost to the local community, where it was an integral social structure, had Revesby Workers' Club not rescued the club and made a substantial investment in its future of in excess of \$4.5million. As a result, membership has grown from 800 to its current membership base of 3,000 over a period of five years.

Revesby Workers' Club also rescued Panania Bowling Club from liquidation in 1988, where lawn bowls are played by both male and female members. The club is now known as the Revesby Workers' Sports and Recreation Centre. In addition to lawn bowls, netball and cricket practise facilities are provided by Revesby Workers' Club. Whilst that club operates at a loss it provides a very important sporting venue and social facility for the local community.

Revesby Workers' is also finalising an amalgamation with Revesby Bowling Club, thereby ensuring the survival of its facilities for its members.

HISTORY

Revesby Workers' Club is a not-for-profit organisation. It is a company limited by guarantee and without share capital.

When Revesby Workers' Club first opened its doors in 1962, it was the only workers club in an area bounded by Botany Bay, the Georges and Lane Cove Rivers, Parramatta, Liverpool and the City. It serviced a community that sprang up rapidly in the post-war era through Housing Commission building programmes and massive industrial expansion. Forty five years ago it was a community with few services and no real facilities apart from the overcrowded and often unsavoury conditions of the local hotel. A group of far-sighted men saw the need for a place where people could meet socially and pursue common interests in comfortable, civilised settings.

It was in 1959 when drinkers at the only hotel in the South Bankstown area, fed up with the intolerable conditions they were forced to endure conceived the idea of a local club which would provide not only civilised drinking and socialising amenities but could also assist in the provision of better food, entertainment and other much needed recreational facilities.

Once the idea of establishing a local club was born it is interesting to note that the local committee formed to put this dream into reality raised a considerable amount of the necessary revenue by organising games nights which mostly consisted of gambling in the form of games such as Under and Overs, Crown and Anchors and an earlier form of poker machines.

It is also well worth noting that the deplorable drinking conditions which have been referred to meant that there were no hotel facilities provided for women to enjoy. To join with husbands, partners or to engage in social drinking with men they either sat on the verge or were brought drinks by males who might have been fortunate at that time to own a motor vehicle. Documentary pictures and vivid recollections of those who will recall that period are available. (*See Appendix I.*)

It was only the establishment of clubs through the provision of gaming which dramatically changed these archaic drinking and socialising conditions and in turn saw hotels lifting their standards.

Originally membership of Revesby Workers' Club was set to a maximum of 250. It was also decided to invite women of the community to become full members, something almost unheard of at the time. Since its inception, Revesby Workers' Club has given women full privileges and voting rights, and there has been a woman Director on the Board for the past 23 years, and a woman President for 13 years.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Over these 47 years the Club has operated hospitality venues with gaming to generate profits that are applied to community benefit. To date, the Club has provided community benefits in three ways:

- 1 Club premises at Revesby, Panania and Mooney Mooney being hospitality venues that are quality social and entertainment centres where none otherwise existed;
- 2 cash funding of 36 sporting, social and cultural bodies and 42 community groups including participation in the inception of Bankstown City Aged Care Facility and the Now "n" Then Occasional Child Care Centre in Brett Street, Revesby; more lately the Club has provided significant financial support for the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol Hawkesbury; and
- 3 provision of "in kind" administrative support and facilities for community bodies that could not otherwise afford those facilities, including the operation of loss making facilities like lawn bowls, and waived room hires.

In 2008 the Club contributed approximately \$0.75million in cash and "in kind" to supporting community services and benefits. Note – this figure is under pressure due to sharply increased poker machine tax and smoking bans.

ENTERTAINMENT

The area that Revesby Workers' services is a thriving urban growth area, enhanced by improved transport and road links that allow access to a broader population. As a community centre the club provides services and facilities for all ages, from pre-schoolers to senior citizens.

Revesby Workers' is recognised as THE major entertainment venue in south-western Sydney and is now listed as part of the "theatre circuit" which includes the State, Enmore and Metro Theatres.

Entertainment is the main point of difference distinguishing it from competitors and as part of the club's strategic marketing plan. Revesby Workers' Club has built a reputation as one of Sydney's leading entertainment venues through a combination of consistently high standards; the right variety and mix of entertainment; strategic targeted marketing; high technical and Operational

standards; experienced staff; specialised training and a commitment to exceptional customer service. With one of the biggest and best equipped live venues in south western Sydney, entertainment is one of Revesby Workers Club's marketing focus. The Venue has won Best Entertainment Club of the Year four years in a row the first time this has happened. The club attracts up to 30,000 people per month and the visitor to member ratio is 3:1.

STRATEGIC EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

The club is an active community member and is also a Designated Disaster Relief Centre in a bushfire and flood prone region. Revesby Workers' Club strives to not only meet the current needs of the community it serves, but to anticipate the requirements of an ever changing area.

Indeed in the disastrous bushfires of 1994 burnt out much of the Georges River National Park and a number of homes were destroyed at Alford's Point. Menai schools were evacuated and Revesby Workers' Club auditorium was made an emergency centre to care for school children until parents were able to take care of them. It is also worth noting that the club also cared for a large variety of animals including a horse such was the expectation of the club's capability of caring for its local community. There has been a number of these emergencies over the time Revesby Workers' Club has existed. As outlined earlier, Revesby Workers' Club also actively supports and assists the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol Hawkesbury in the provision of an emergency centre and building including wharf berthing facilities to an approximate value of some \$56,000.

INTERCLUBS

In addition to the registered club, Revesby Workers' is proud to have a large and diverse group of sub-clubs affiliated with it. There are 36 sub-clubs made up of Revesby Workers' Club members and their families, including 26 sporting clubs as well as cards and games, gardening and cultural activities clubs (*see Appendix II*).

The most recent group to affiliate is the Bankstown division of the Fellowship of Australian Writers. These sub-clubs contribute to the overall life of the club and local community, providing organised sporting, recreational social and cultural activities and programmes.

Although they raise their own funds they receive financial support from Revesby Workers' Club by way of annual subsidies and specific purpose grants, for example to develop

sporting facilities or to assist members to attend state and national championships. They in turn support Revesby Workers' Club's very active Charity Committee, a group of members who raise funds through raffles, coach trips, entertainment functions etc to make a substantial annual donation to a local charity, or one closely affiliated with the local area. This is generally of the order of \$50,000. Over the past twenty years the Charity Committee has existed over \$1million has gone to worthy charities. Revesby Workers' Club also supports sporting and community groups not affiliated with the Club. For example, it is making a donation of \$30,000 and a loan of \$60,000 available to East Hills Rugby League club to allow it to complete its clubhouse at East Hills. Financial assistance has also been provided for capital works at local sporting fields and the Revesby Swimming Centre.

In addition to direct funding, Revesby Workers' Club supports its sub-clubs and many local groups with the provision of its facilities for meetings and other functions at no cost, ie the Club waives hire fees and also absorbs the set up and clean up costs. Local groups assisted include organisations such as Rotary, View and Probus clubs, as well as branches and sections of the Australian Labor Party, which the Club under its constitution specifically supports. Many local schools use the Club's auditorium for presentations and end of year "formals"; In fact the Revesby Workers' Whitlam auditorium is the only one in the Bankstown area large enough for some of these events. *(See Appendix III.)*

SERVICES & FACILITIES PROVIDED BY THE CLUB

Nine bars; three restaurants / eating areas; 1,200 seat theatre; free daily entertainment; Fitness Centre; Function Centre; retail shops; members' rewards programme; 36 interclubs; disaster relief centre; Welfare officer; Taxi / mini bus service; Holiday units; Scholarships; Annual Film Festival and Film Scholarship; Marina (Mooney Mooney site); 4 bowling greens, 2 x netball courts, 3 x soccer fields & cricket nets; RWCTv (in-house television centre & broadcast centre); Interactive website. A hairdressing salon and travel agent are also located on site to provide a service to members.

TAX

Revesby Workers' Club paid a total of \$10.6million in State and Federal Government taxes for the 2007-2008 financial year. Total revenue for the same financial year was \$39.4million. It is generally recognised that the State Government in 2004 increased poker machine tax to an unsustainable level.

This was subsequently reduced by a small amount in recognition of overwhelming evidence of the damage done to the Club Industry.

Quite obviously if Governments tax clubs to unsustainable levels, clubs will simply be unable to support members and the community as they have in the past.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOLUTIONS

The Club actively works towards improving our environmental impact in the following ways: Recycling bins situated around the venue for all staff to collect all glass, paper and cardboard for recycling; All glass bottles used in bars are recycled. Administration staff actively tries to minimise paper use within the office and reuse scrap paper before recycling.

The Catering department recycles cooking oil by selling it back to a company.

Rainforest Alliance Coffee, which is environmentally friendly, is available in the Club's coffee lounge, one of the first clubs to become one hundred percent Rainforest Alliance.

The Club is being outfitted with environmentally friendly light globes that use less power; therefore, giving out fewer emissions (ongoing at Revesby Workers' Club; completed at the Revesby Workers' Sports & Recreation Centre).

To assist the Mooney Mooney community Revesby Workers' spent \$50,000.00 on water tanks.

Club air conditioning is run on a BMS (Building Management System) that schedules when it turns on and off; thus using less electricity and reducing emissions. Water reduction devices have been fitted to basin taps

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

The Club is a significant employer in both the Revesby and Mooney Mooney areas. There were in February 2008 296 employees: 87 full time staff, 93 permanent part-time and 116 casuals. The wages and employment cost for 2008 was \$10.85million for all employees.

The club is committed to the personal and professional development of all employees. Training occurs at the club on a daily basis. The introduction of two in house programmes: L.E.A.P.

(Lead, Empower, Achieve, Partner) and M.A.D. (Make A Difference) in the past 12 months have contributed to the professional development of Senior and Duty Managers, as well as up and coming potential managers. The club offers dozens of diverse internal and external training courses to all staff members from Diplomas in Hospitality, Conflict Management, First Aid and CPR to TicketMaster training, RSA and Financial Management to name just a few. Through the clubs Performance Appraisal process we are able to identify educational and professional development needs for individual employees.

REVESBY WORKERS' CLUB BUSINESS NETWORKING AND ASSOCIATIONS

Revesby Workers' Club is a member of ClubsNSW and the Federation of Community Sporting & Workers Clubs. The club works closely with local Government, the Police and is part of the Bankstown Licensing Accord; TAFE (on site diploma course); sporting associations and a number of community organisations including schools, hospitals, charities etc. It is a major sponsor of the Bankstown Talent Advancement Programme assisting young people seeking a career in singing, dancing and general entertainment.

RESPONSIBLE SERVICE OF GAMING POLICY

Revesby Workers' Club takes its responsibility as a provider of Gaming very seriously and, accordingly, has written policies on both which are part of the training programme for new employees and for which current employees have been trained (*see Appendix IV*).

Harm Minimisation

Revesby Workers' Club is committed to displaying adequate signage and information brochures which provide details of counselling and other services available to problem gamblers.

Revesby Workers' Club is committed to informing patrons of the dangers of gambling and the chances of winning prizes on approved amusement devices by displaying signs and providing information in the gaming areas of the Club.

Advertising

In advancing the prevention of problem gambling, Revesby Workers' Club will not publish, or cause to be published any gambling advertising relating to the Club:

- That encourages a breach of any law, or;
- That depicts children, or;

- That is false, misleading or deceptive, or;
- That suggests that winning a prize is a likely outcome of participating in gambling activities, or;
- That suggests that participating in gambling activities is likely to improve a persons social standing or financial prospects, or;
- That suggests that a players skills can influence the outcome of a game that is purely a game of chance, or;
- That depicts or promotes consumption of alcohol while engaging in gambling activities, or;
- That is not conducted in accordance with decency, dignity and good taste and in accordance with the commercial television code of practice as in force at the time that gambling advertising is published.

Revesby Workers' Club in furthering the objectives of this policy will not offer any gambling inducements such as any free or discounted liquor as an inducement to participate, or to participate frequently, in any gambling activity at the Club, or offer free credits to players, as an inducement to persons to become players, of approved gaming devices at the Club.

Self-Exclusion

In conjunction with ClubSafe Revesby Workers' Club is proactive in offering its members and guests availability to a self-exclusion scheme. If an individual feels the need to exclude themselves from a venue due to the fact they are gambling too much then all gaming / management staff are trained how to handle the situation.

The self exclusion scheme makes available to members and guests written material for the guests to take away as well as access to phone counselling. Exclusions are in place for a minimum of six months and after this time if the person would like access to the Club then they have to apply to the Board of Directors showing evidence that they have combated their gambling issue with approved recognised counselling prior to being allowed access to the venue.

A small number of members do apply for self exclusion annually.

RESPONSIBLE SERVICE OF ALCOHOL POLICY

In the best interests of its members, guests and the community Revesby Workers' Club promotes the Responsible Service of Alcohol. Responsible serving of alcohol is vital for legal, health and community reasons.

Our society is now less tolerant of the irresponsible use of alcohol that leads to drunkenness, drink driving and under age drinking. We are now far more aware of the serious social problems that are associated with such behaviour.

Revesby Workers' Club has adopted strategies for the Responsible Service of Alcohol (see Appendix V).

Revesby Workers' Club effects its Responsible Service of Alcohol strategies by:

- Implementation, monitoring, and modification on an on-going basis of the house policy.
- Preventing under-age drinking by insisting on "proof of age" by requesting a drivers licence or passport.
- Preventing intoxication by recognising the signs of intoxication and avoiding serving anyone to the point of intoxication. We will deny entry of service to anyone who is already intoxicated.
- Managing intoxication, anti-social, or disruptive patrons by attempting to discourage them from becoming involved in activities which can harm themselves or others.
- We will promote the service of non-alcoholic beverages and food.

Preventing Intoxication

By law it is an offence to sell or supply any liquor to any person who is at that time in a state of intoxication. (The state of intoxication can be described as a state in which through intoxicating liquor a person has severely lost the normal control of his/her bodily and mental faculties).

Revesby Workers' Club ensures the prevention of intoxication by:

- actively marketing low or non-alcoholic drinks through pricing and promotion.
- encouraging customers to have non-alcoholic drinks in-between rounds.
- promoting food sales.

Our Responsible Serving Practices Aim to:

- Prevent under-age drinking.
- Prevent or manage intoxication and intoxicated behaviour.
- Prevent drinking and driving.

THE FUTURE

Whilst Revesby Workers' Club has always sought to invest for the future to enable the provision of first class dining, socialising, sporting and entertainment for members, which has led to count-

less significant awards, it was in 2003 that a decision was taken at Board level following expert advice and management input to embark on the current major development proposal, which will involve more future revenue being derived from commercial operations rather than gaming.

It is the view of Revesby Workers' Club that with the impost of significantly increased poker machine tax in September 2004, and the hostile attitude of some politicians, the Club will need to reduce its dependence upon gaming. Accordingly, the Club is currently preparing the business for a major building development over the next five years that will include the refurbishment of the existing club, child care centre, a new fitness and aquatic centre, a retail shopping complex and a hotel (*see Appendix VI*).

This development is being undertaken with utmost care, with the full support of the Club membership, local community and unanimous approval of Bankstown City Council.

Expert advice is being provided by leading firms of architects, consultants, engineers, accountants and lawyers.

National Australia Bank is the leading bank accepted by the Club to finance the project with several of the Nation's leading banks also very enthusiastic to be involved.

Given current economic conditions prevailing locally and overseas the Board and management of Revesby Workers' Club will be proceeding cautiously with the project so as to minimise the Club's short term debt requirement and optimise security of income before proceeding with each of the individual packages comprising the project's Master Plan.

Accordingly, the first two projects comprising a new Health Mates fitness centre catering for 5,000 members and a ninety place child care centre will be opened for business in June 2009. (Note the ninety place child care centre will also cater for special needs children who are not presently catered for locally.)

It is interesting to note that when Revesby Workers' Club built its first fitness centre, now catering for some 2,800 members, it was at a time when private centres were being promoted, heavily advertised, money taken and in many instances they were out of business within a short time and members were out of pocket. Revesby Workers' Club's centre has now been operating for thirteen years.

As outlined in Appendix VI the Board and management of Revesby Workers' Club's vision and development approval is based on providing its members and visitors with first class casual and

fine dining including an outdoor piazza, excellent facilities for social interaction, entertainment, an aquatic centre, vastly improved function facilities and auditorium.

The commercial development includes a Coles supermarket and some 24 specialty stores which members and the local community are most anxious to come on board as they believe it will provide greater competition for the area's only other major supermarket, Woolworths.

Since its inception, Revesby Workers' Club as a small typical club for its time has had various Boards and management teams that have always sought to improve the amenities and services provided to members.

This would not have been possible, however, without the input of gaming revenue. Throughout this period there has always been a conscious acknowledgement of the responsibility placed upon successive Boards and management for the conduct of gaming and the service of alcohol.

It is the current Board and management's view that we have lived up to the accountability and responsibility placed upon us.

Revesby Workers' Club recognises and is accountable for sensible gaming policies. The Club, however, requires some level of Government policy certainty given the tens of millions of dollars to be invested in community and member infrastructure during one of the most challenging financial periods in the past fifty years.

SUMMARY

Revesby Workers' is proud of its history, achievements, its service to its members and its contribution to the community, both local and statewide.

As recently as last month it made a \$16,000.00 contribution to the victims of Victoria's horrific bush fires.

In 2005 the Club made a \$12,100.00 donation to the Indonesian Tsunami victims through Father Chris O'Reilly's organisation "Youth off the Streets".

Organisation after organisation will state that they simply could not carry out their sporting, social and cultural activities in a meaningful way without the in-kind or direct financial support Revesby Workers' Club is able to provide.

Be it the Club's 36 internal sub clubs or the organisations that either receive financial support or simply meet in the Club meetings rooms, function rooms or auditorium; all are unanimous in stating their reliance upon the support they receive.

Yes, the engine that drives the Club's revenue base is gaming – but, yes, Revesby Workers' Club believes it conducts its gaming responsibly and with its membership and community obligations firmly set as its uppermost priority.

As a club we are most conscious of Government, community and member expectations. We are greatly disappointed and concerned at much of the ill informed and unjust criticism that is increasingly directed at clubs' gaming and liquor operations.

Indeed, it is quite possible in future years for community minded capable people being deterred from offering themselves to serve on club Boards should the image of clubs continue to be unfairly tarnished by the type of attacks previously referred to.

Club Directors, in particular, find it difficult to understand why these attacks are made upon a movement, unique in world terms, serving its members and offering so much for so little reward.

Problem gambling is an issue of understandable public concern – it certainly is to the Board and management of Revesby Workers' Club. It is for this reason the Club is proactive in supporting positive Government initiatives and embracing the policies referred to in this submission.

A visit to the Club's bingo days when, in particular, the ladies so enjoy their little "flutter" is educational. To many it is perhaps the highlight of their week and woe betide some innocent newcomer who sits in the seat of a regular for these bingo sessions.

Are these ladies problem gamblers? – Revesby Workers' Club believes not.

Are the ninety nine percent of players who enjoy a little "flutter" on the Club's poker machines problem gamblers? – Revesby Workers' Club believes not.

As a Club we look to the Productivity Commission to apply the wisdom of recommending that balance between the ninety nine percent who enjoy a "flutter" and those who, regrettably, have a gambling problem.

PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION SUBMISSION

Appendices

- 1 Photo of drinkers outside Revesby Hotel
- 2 List of interclub organisations (pages from Club journal)
- 3 List of organisations
- 4 Responsible Service of Gaming Policy
- 5 Responsible Service of Alcohol Policy
- 6 Major Development (page 4 of February/March/April 2009 journal)