



John Williams, MP
MEMBER FOR MURRAY-DARLING

16 April 2009

The Commissioners
Gambling Inquiry Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

Dear Commissioners

I write as a State Member of the N.S.W. Legislative Assembly and a member for the electorate of Murray-Darling. My electorate covers some of the most remote communities in Australia.

On behalf of the Registered Clubs in my electorate I would like to make you aware of the important role Registered Clubs play in my communities.

In the smaller communities the Club is sometimes the only facility that meets the social need of the township and the wider area. The Club in most cases is the only structure large enough to provide for one-off occasions, forums or information sessions. The Clubs provide catering, in some cases the only place to provide a meal. The Clubs in these smaller communities financially support sporting and cultural activities, build infrastructure in most cases not reflecting the purpose of the Club, but something that is needed by the community. In actual fact these Clubs fill the funding void between Local, State and Federal government.

On many occasions I have the opportunity to attend functions in Registered Clubs in my electorate and see no evidence that Clubs are ignoring their responsibility to problem gamblers, in fact in all situations I see no evidence of patrons gambling beyond their means.

Just a few examples of the great work Clubs do for communities relate to sporting facilities, sporting grounds, bowling greens, golf courses, indoor sporting activities, all facilities that would not exist without the input of Registered Clubs.

In casual observations, I see the Coomealla Club providing funds for an Ambulance Station at Pooncarie, a Doctor's Surgery provided by the Club at Tooleybuc, a proposal to build an Aged Care Centre at Barooga, sporting and academic scholarships provided by numerous Clubs. The Clubs provide not only the funds but in a lot of situations, the administrative support for Organizations.

.../2.



**John Williams, MP
MEMBER FOR MURRAY-DARLING**

2.

Clubs in N.S.W. have unfortunately been seen as a milking cow for State Revenue, regardless of continual review of gambling compliance. Today Registered Clubs in my electorate now represent not only the most responsible, but also the most important facilities in my communities providing all of the above, but also employing a significant amount of locals, and in some cases the biggest employer in the community.

Your enquiry into gambling will need to understand the significant commitment Clubs in N.S.W. have made to address problem gambling and despite some views, in the majority of cases gamblers in Clubs do it because they can afford to.

Thank you for your consideration of the small Clubs in Western N.S.W. and the Southern Riverina.

Yours sincerely

Signed

**JOHN WILLIAMS, MP
Member for Murray-Darling**