

3rd March 2009

The Chairman
Garry Banks
Gambling Inquiry Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
Canberra ACT 2601

Re: Productivity Commission Inquiry into the Australia Gambling Industry

Dear Mr Banks

This is a submission in support of the role of the club industry in NSW and ACT. The Spastic Centre has a long association with the club industry and has been the recipient of their generosity and community support.

The Spastic Centre was established in 1945 by parents. It was the first organisation in the world to develop services for children and adults with cerebral palsy. Today the Spastic Centre remains the largest provider of services in NSW and ACT for people with cerebral palsy and similar disabilities. Each year over 4,000 children and adults and their respective families are supported by our numerous services. The services are provided in 70 sites throughout the metropolitan, regional and rural areas of NSW and ACT and offer a range of services that include:-

- Early Intervention and Therapy Services
- Individual and Family Counselling
- Accommodation and Respite Services
- Employment options for people with disabilities
- Recreational, Mentoring and Group Programs
- Day Support services
- Information and Education services

Cerebral Palsy :

- Is the most common physical disability in childhood (1 : 400 births) yet the cause of the condition is mostly unknown.
- Is a disability that remains as prevalent in western countries as other developing countries despite advances in obstetrics and neonatal care.
- Has no pre birth testing for identification.

- Has no known prevention and cure.
- A child is born with cerebral palsy every 18 hours in Australia (approximates 700 – 800 per year).

The Spastic Centre's Mission is :

'Building Futures for People with Cerebral Palsy'

For over 60 years The Spastic Centre has been providing the full range of therapy, family support and direct care services for over 4,000 children and adults with disabilities each year.

More recently, The Spastic Centre has recognised the need to find answers to the prevention and cure of cerebral palsy and has subsequently established the Cerebral Palsy Foundation to fund global scientific research.

The Spastic Centre's growth and success over the last 60 years has been significantly influenced by the generosity of the Australian community, including individuals, community groups, corporate bodies and respective levels of government.

However, during the early days the survival of the organisation rested with individual citizens and community groups. State and Federal governments did not provide predictable and sustainable levels of funding during the first twenty to thirty years of The Spastic Centre's history. The establishment of The Spastic Centre in the 1940's coincided with the birth and growth of community registered clubs throughout NSW. These organisations quickly recognised the link between their community charter and the needs of people with cerebral palsy and their families. Hence from the very beginning clubs throughout NSW and ACT have been regular and strong supporters of The Spastic Centre.

In recent times Clubs NSW and Clubs ACT have played a significant and tangible role in the sustainability and growth of Spastic Centre services. These tangible actions have included:

- Since 2003 The Spastic Centre has kept accurate records of the club industry contribution through the CSDE funds. From January 2003 to December 2008, 424 registered clubs have contributed \$ 2,192,269.50 to The Spastic Centre for the provision of essential equipment and services for children and adults with disabilities.
- Since 2001 Clubs ACT has contributed \$717,084 to allow The Spastic Centre to provide specialist therapy and equipment services to children with cerebral palsy living in ACT. It should be noted the ACT Government has provided no recurrent or "one off" funding. If not for the support of Clubs ACT and their members, The Spastic Centre would not be able to provide services to children and families living in

the ACT and surrounding regions.

- It is estimated that members of Clubs NSW and ACT over the last 7 years have also provided 'in kind' assistance to the value of over \$1.5 million. This includes access to club facilities, conference facilities (rooms, catering, advertising) for The Spastic Centre activities. These resources have allowed the provision of training sessions, parent meetings and social and mentoring programs for children and adults with disabilities.
- The Clubs Industry of Australia played a significant role in the Miss Australia Contest from the 1950's to the late 1990's. Every local community throughout Australia put forward a local contestant and many fundraising activities were conducted in registered community clubs. It is estimated that \$87 million was raised for the respective state based cerebral palsy associations including The Spastic Centre of NSW, during the span of the Miss Australia Contest.
- During the 1980's The Spastic Centre was extending its reach of services throughout the Sydney metropolitan area. The Marconi Club provided both financial assistance and office space to enable therapy services to be provided to children with disabilities living in south west region of Sydney. This support has continued for over 20 years with a major fundraiser being conducted at the Marconi Club each year. This event raises over \$150,000 per year.

The Relationship between the Club Industry and The Spastic Centre

The Club Industry and The Spastic Centre have shared a common history and purpose. Each provide services and support their members and encourage social integration and participation. Of the 4,000 individuals supported by The Spastic Centre, many of their family and friends are members of local registered clubs. Local clubs become the meeting place for people with disabilities to experience accessible community activities and entertainment.

For example many of the adults living in community group homes will regularly visit their local club. The reasons given by these adults include the wheelchair accessible environment, affordable food and entertainment and inclusive approach by club staff and members.

The relationship with Clubs NSW continues with negotiations to establish accessible gym facilities for people with disabilities and the aged. The Spastic Centre is working with Clubs NSW and corporate supporters to establish a number of accessible gyms across NSW and ensure that all population groups within the community have access to health and exercise facilities.

The Federal Government, through its Healthy Active Australia initiative has identified the priority of a healthier, more active Australian community. The club industry and The Spastic Centre also share this goal and want to make

all fitness facilities in registered clubs accessible for people with disabilities and the aged community .

In summary, The Spastic Centre acknowledges the breadth and longevity of support provided by the registered clubs industry over the last 60 years. Their generosity has provided many children with an essential service or a valuable piece of adaptive equipment (e.g. wheelchairs or walking frames) and enabled many adults with disabilities the employment opportunities and to link with their local community within an accessible and inclusive environment.

The continued financial and 'in kind' support has assisted The Spastic Centre to provide and sustain the range of services it offers.

Regards

Rob White
Chief Executive Officer
The Spastic Centre