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Mr G Banks AO
Chairman, Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2, Collins St.
East, Melbourne, VIC 8003 Australia
gambling@pc.gov.au

Re: Gambling Inquiry - Denial of Data

During 2009 I made several telephone calls and wrote to government departments and members of parliament seeking access to some gambling data collected by the Queensland Government. These requests were ignored, passed on or denied. Following my lack of success in requesting data, I made an application through the *Right to Information Act 2009*.

Specifically, as at 25 August 2009, the Queensland Government refused my request under the *Right to Information Act 2009* for access to the datasets of:

- Queensland Household Gambling Survey 2001
- Queensland Household Gambling Survey 2003-04
- Queensland Household Gambling Survey 2006-07.

The reason provided by the review officer is that:

“I have been advised that even if names and contact details of individual respondents were removed from the data files, through cross-checks and data matching analysis, the identification of an individual respondent is possible.”

A telephone enquiry on 31 August provided further details stating we could do “magic” and identify individuals from other characteristics.

I have consulted senior faculty colleagues from The University of Sydney’s disciplines of Marketing, Econometrics and Business Information Systems and do not believe in “magic”. What I do believe is that it is possible and feasible to remove potentially problematic data fields (e.g. name, address, age). I will appeal this initial decision.

This Queensland example reflects that it is exceptionally difficult to obtain gambling prevalence data from State and Territory Governments. Without fresh insights obtained by analyses of these data that are for paid by public funds, there is less knowledge about gambling than there should be for objective evidence driven public policy.

Yours faithfully,

Rohan Miller