



30th November, 2009

Gambling Inquiry – Draft Report
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
CANBERRA CITY ACT, 2601.

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to write to you to express the grave concerns my Board of Directors and members have in regards to your draft report on Gambling.

Cazalys is situated in Cairns North Queensland and has been supporting our community for over 40 years. Our constitution clearly spells out our core roles being to support and develop the game of AFL in North Queensland and provide support to the wider community.

We currently own and operate the biggest stadium in Far North Queensland and our club is situated on the ground which plays host to national and international events.

Cazalys currently employs 80 staff on these premises and provides management assistance to 3 other small clubs in the area. Cazalys absorbs all of the administrative costs to ensure these clubs can continue to operate and service their local communities.

Cazalys provides vital funds to AFL Cairns which proudly boasts the following levels of support and community involvement.

- 1200 participating juniors between under 8's to under 18's,
- Full schools program coming into contact with 30000 students annually
- Full Auskick programs operating.
- 4 Permanent Development Officers employed in promoting the game From Townsville to the Cape including an extensive indigenous population
- 650 registered senior Competitors.
- Maintain and develop the Umpires Association to the tune of \$100,000 per year.

Cazalys has over 24000 members who use the club for a wide variety of reasons not just gaming. Our Goal is to provide social interaction to a wide demographic from families to seniors and provide all of our members with a safe and enjoyable environment to have a meal, meet friends, see some great shows see world class entertainment at Cazalys stadium and much more.

As a club we are very proud to be an integral part of the social fabric of our great City of Cairns.

As a club we understand the importance of conducting gaming in a responsible manner. We subscribe to the Queensland Responsible Gambling Code of practice and go above

344 Mulgrave Road (PO Box 1033) CAIRNS QLD 4870
Tel: (07) 4054 1464 Fax: (07) 4033 2038 Email: cazalys@lig.com.au
ABN 20 054 194 973

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and beyond our duties in ensuring we reduce the risk and harm to any person who may have a gambling problem.

We are not here to deny there are such people but would like to make the point very clear the long term success of our industry and our club relies on a proactive response to the issue of problem gambling and to ensure we have process, policy and procedure in place to deal with any such patrons.

I know as an industry and individual club we welcome the report but must stress our concern as to the negative outcomes presented in the draft document. The proposed recommendations will undoubtedly have significant impact on our club which first and foremost will affect our ability to

1. Maintain levels of employment.
2. Dramatically diminish the funds available to support our community.
3. Reduction in member facilities and benefits.

In 2009 Cazalys provided sponsorships, donations, of over \$2.3 million dollars. Our support was throughout the Cairns Community not just AFL. Other beneficiaries included, Cairns Base Hospital, 12 Cairns Schools, Cairns Art Gallery, RSPCA, Cairns Assistance Dogs, Cairns Meals on wheels just to name a few.

This figure only relates to the cash component and we cannot forget the hundreds of volunteer hours provided in supporting the sport of AFL and many of our other community projects week in week out.

Without doubt all facets of support we offer could be severely hampered if such adverse measures as mentioned in the draft report are placed on community gaming.

As a club looking forward the Board has grave concerns for our ability to provide many of our services and these recommendations could spell the end to many of the services we provide especially in the area of supporting sport and bringing good sporting events to Cairns. Our members will also suffer as our ability to develop and move forward we feel is in definite jeopardy. Prior to the final report being issued we would hope the commission would consider the following:

- Problem gambling is declining in Australia generally. In Queensland it currently stands at .47% of the adult population measured through some of the most extensive surveys in the world.
- Prior to making such extensive policy decisions we need to be sure that data and research is consistent nationally. All states are very different in their legislative frameworks. Queensland Clubs have been proactive in working with Government and clearly boasts a framework and voluntary subscription to responsible gaming practices that are second to none.
- The report has to consider the structure of gaming of not for profit "community gaming" as opposed to privately owned "for profit gaming." Recognition of the fact that the club model clearly utilises gaming funds for the benefit of its members and the community is a significant point to consider when such dramatic changes are recommended. To consider all gaming venues the same is definitely out of touch as to a clear and very present difference as to the aims of clubs as opposed to privately owned venues. Clubs and Community are two words that have, and always will go hand in hand.
- As an industry we feel it is vital that research on technology and its ability to assist harm minimization is tested and evaluated first and then implemented or discarded pending solid evidence. This should stand for the policy as a whole.

In finishing we would ask that the commission please take the time to understand the role clubs play in their society and acknowledge that as an industry in Queensland we have been proactive, since the introduction of gaming machines, in working with Government. The aim has always been to minimize harm and provide an enjoyable form of entertainment for the majority of our members remembering problem gamblers represents such a small percentage of those who utilize all of our services regularly. Our business is based on providing a safe environment for all patrons. We clearly recognise the issues with problem gambling and hence practice best practice techniques to ensure we minimize such risks to our patrons.

If the draft recommendations were to remain unchanged we strongly urge the Productivity Commission to consider how the significant funds provided to our local communities (which is obviously the same throughout towns and cities everywhere in Queensland) will be compensated for. The big losers will be our members, sport and our community. Cazalys ability to support its smaller clubs would be the first thing to go ultimately resulting in their demise. We gather this would be the case for many community clubs throughout Australia.

We strongly hope this information assists the commission in understanding our club, the benefits of community gaming, the distinction between community and for profit gaming and ultimately the serious and harsh facts of the impacts the proposed draft recommendations will have on community gaming and those who benefit from it

Yours Sincerely
FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS


Jason Salecich
General Manager