

SUNNYBANK COMMUNITY & SPORTS CLUB

1 December 2009

Gambling Inquiry – Draft Report
Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2, Collins St. East
Melbourne VIC 8003

Dear Sir

RE: Club Response to the Draft Report on Gambling

I have been asked by the Directors of my Community Club to convey the serious concerns of our club and its members on your Draft Report on Gambling.

Our Club is situated in Sunnybank, a suburb of Brisbane, Queensland. The principal purpose of our existence, as stated in our constitution, is "to encourage, foster and promote rugby union football". The club currently provides four football fields and amenities, located next to our licensed facility, that allows over 1,000 junior, schools and senior players to participate in there sport. Without our continued support of these facilities all of these players would not be able to participate in there sport.

The club currently employs 50 casual, 10 part time and 60 full time employees. We also use the services of over 150 volunteers on any given day through the football club in coaches and managers.

The club has a total of 25,000 members, 51% being female members and 49% being male members. Our members visit the club for a range of services and facilities. Apart from gaming, these mainly include socialisation, dining and entertainment. Our gaming facilities include 219 poker machines, TAB and Keno outlet.

It is in our absolute interests to ensure that our gaming services are conducted in a responsible manner. We subscribe to the Queensland Responsible Gambling Code of Practice and are very much aware of our obligations and responsibilities to people who may have a gambling problem.

While we welcome the gambling inquiry, as it was long overdue, we are very concerned about the negative impact that the draft findings and recommendations would have on the financial viability of our club. This would most likely include loss of jobs, curtailment of services we currently provide to our members and, most importantly, a reduction in our community contributions.

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trading as Sunnybank Community & Sports Club

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In the last financial year, we returned a total of over \$950,000 in cash and in-kind support to the community. This went towards a range of projects including;

\$55,000 to Autism Qld to fund a Kids Start Program and purchase of a Sunshine Van
\$44,750 to Multicap to fund a Sunshine Coach
\$30,000 to Flexible Learning Centre to fund a Family Work Project
\$20,000 to Centacare to fund an At Home and Not Alone Program
\$20,000 to Student Care Welfare to fund a Talking through Toys Program
\$15,000 through Variety Qld to fund the purchase of a special van to transport a disability child in Mathew Holland
\$10,000 to Sunnybank St Vincent de Paul conference to fund a community support program for disadvantaged families
\$10,000 to Mater Little Miracles
\$6,898 to St Stephens School
\$6,360 to Runcorn State High School Disability Centre
\$5,400 to Australian Huntington's Disease Qld
\$5,000 to Mt Gravatt State Special School
\$5,000 to Runcorn Swimming Club
\$5,000 to Rochedale St Vincent de Paul Conference for food hampers
\$3,000 to Macgregor Netball
\$2,500 to Cerable Paulsey League.

This does not include the significant support the club provides toward the development of junior sport and school sport within our local community.

The club has also included a 2007 and 2008 report on our initiatives in each of those years along with the front page of our Local Community News. The club sets aside over 30% of our operational profit before tax to these community based programs and organisations. These contributions to the community will not be replaced by any other government agencies or private organisation and we are only one of hundreds of clubs in Queensland that contribute significantly to the community.

There is no way we can sustain this level of community support if adverse measures such as those contained in the Draft Report are placed on community gaming. The harsh reality for our club would be to simply close our doors, leaving our members and the local community without the much needed services and facilities that is made possible through community gaming.

We urge the Productivity Commission to seriously consider the practical reality of their recommendations. In particular, we urge the Productivity Commission to consider the following when finalising its Final Report:

- The rate of problem gambling has declined across Australia because of the extensive measures that have been implemented since 1999. In Queensland, this now stands at .047% of the adult population – measured through one of the largest surveys of its kind in the world.

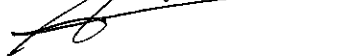
- We need firm data, not estimates, to build effective policy. Therefore, nationally consistent research is needed; if there can be a 'true' understanding of the gambling sector. A 'one size fits all' approach is not possible because each State is different, with different regulations, tax rates, maturity of market, ownership model & splits between private and community ownership of gaming.
- Gaming serves different purposes in different venues. For clubs which are not-for-profit entities, gaming is a community initiative, which supports a range of community services and facilities. It is critical that there is a strong demarcation between community gaming and for-profit or entrepreneurial gaming.
- While technology innovations open many possibilities for harm minimisation, it is critical that this technology is evaluated first and then, based on solid evidence, accepted or rejected. Queensland in this regards is far ahead with its card-based gaming trials. The same also applies to any policy change (i.e. modelling to determine impact and effectiveness of the policy change before accepting or rejecting the policy platform)

Finally, our view is that the Productivity Commission should strive to achieve a balance in the Final Report between the needs of gaming venues and their patrons (of whom only a very small number have a gambling problem). There should also be an acknowledgment of the extensive responsible gaming measures that are already in place (many of which have produced spectacular positive outcomes). Some attention should also be given to the concept of personal responsibility as there is a limit to which controls can be placed on gambling venues.

Should the draft recommendations remain unchanged, the Productivity Commission may like to consider how sport and the considerable support for welfare, charities and the like will be funded, as it is highly likely that community clubs will not be in a position to provide their current level of support. In fact, we would expect the demise of a significant number of community clubs should all the recommendations be taken up by the respective Governments throughout Australia.

I hope the above is of some assistance in understanding the nature and importance of gaming in community clubs and the impact the draft recommendations may have on community gaming.

Yours Sincerely



Michael Callaghan
General Manager