



WYNNUM R.S.L. SERVICES MEMORIAL CLUB INC.

The Bayside's Friendliest Club

P.O. BOX 327
Wynnum Central, 4178
ABN 93 450 206 369

174 Tingal Road,
Wynnum Central, 4178
Phone: (07) 3396 7333
Fax: (07) 3893 0915
office@wynnumrsl.com.au
www.wynnumrsl.com.au

3 December 2009

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

Dear Sir

Re: Wynnum RSL Memorial Club Inc Response to the Draft Report on Gambling

I have been asked by our club's Management Committee to write to you on behalf of our members to express our serious concerns over your Draft Report on Gambling.

The Wynnum RSL Memorial Club Inc is located on the main street of Wynnum. As stated in our Constitution or objects are:

- (a) To provide and maintain a clubhouse for persons who have served the Commonwealth of Australia in its Armed Forces, the Armed Forces of the British Commonwealth of Nations, in wars involving the British Commonwealth, or the Armed Forces of acknowledged allies engaged in similar wars, and also their relatives and/or citizens to meet socially and perpetuate the bonds of friendship created by mutual association.
- (b) To preserve the memory and records of those who served with the forces.
- (c) To establish and maintain libraries, reading rooms, educational facilities and other amenities, for the benefit, social, comfort and advancement of its members.
- (d) To affiliate with any body which has similar aims and objects, upon such terms and conditions as may be mutually agreed.
- (e) To carry into effect such objects and aims of the Returned and Services League of Australia as are set forth in the Constitution Rules and By-Laws of that organisation now in force, or as amended from time to time.

We currently employ 25 casual, 7 part-time and 12 full-time employees. We also use the services of at least 1 volunteer on any given day.

We have a total of over 8,000 financial members; a quarter of whom are returned service personnel or their immediate family. Our members visit the club for a range of services and facilities, including dining and entertainment as well as gaming. The Club has 100 gaming machines, 2 Keno outlets and a TAB facility.

The Club is committed to ensuring our gaming services are conducted in a responsible manner. We actively subscribe to the Queensland Responsible Gambling Code of

Practice, and we ensure that all our gaming staff are educated in our obligations and responsibilities to people who may have a gaming problem.

While we recognise that a gambling inquiry was long overdue, we are concerned that the draft report has the potential negatively impact the financial viability of our Club. This would almost certainly result in the loss of jobs, a reduction in the services we are able to provide our members and a reduction in our community contributions.

Last financial year the Wynnum RSL Memorial Club Inc returned a total of \$60,000 in cash and in-kind support. This went towards a range of projects, including a \$15,000 donation to the Girls Guides to relocate their clubhouse, free room hire to both affiliated and non-affiliated clubs and donation of \$3,500 towards local community events such as the Spring Parade and Australia Day Celebrations. These and other projects were all largely funded through community gaming at our Club.

We can see no possibility of being able to sustain this level of community support if adverse measures, such as those contained in the Draft Report, are placed on gaming machine operations. In fact, the reality for the Wynnum RSL Memorial Club Inc would be the inability to continue trading. We would simply have to close our doors, leaving our members and the local community without the much needed services and facilities that we provide, and which is made possible through community gaming.

We request that the Productivity Commission consider the practical reality of the recommendations made in their Draft Report. In particular, we urge the Productivity Commission to consider the following before finalising its Final Report:

1. Since 1999 extensive measures have been implemented to address problem gambling, and the rate of problem gambling has declined. In Queensland, this is currently 0.47% of the adult population.
2. Each State has different regulations, tax rates, market maturity and ownership models including splits between private and community ownership of gaming. Because of this we don't believe that a 'one size fits all' approach is possible. Nationally consistent research is needed so that an accurate understanding of the gambling sector can be compiled. We need firm data to build effective policy.
3. For clubs which are non-profit entities, the proceeds of gaming help support a range of community services and facilities. We believe it is crucial that there is a strong demarcation between community gaming conducted in non-profit venues and for-profit or entrepreneurial gaming.
4. While it's true technological innovations can open many possibilities for harm minimisation, as Queensland has already demonstrated with it's card-based gaming trials, it is important that any technology is evaluated first. Then, based on solid evidence, that technology can be accepted or rejected. The same applies to policy change.

We ask that the Productivity Commission strive to achieve a balance in the Final Report, between the needs of gaming venues and their patrons, given that only a very

small number have a gambling problem. There should also be an acknowledgement of the extensive responsible gaming measures already in place, many of which have produced substantial positive outcomes. We also strongly believe that some attention should be given to the concept of personal responsibility, as there is a limit to the controls that can be placed on gambling venues.

The Productivity Commission may like to consider how sport and welfare, charities and the like will be funded, should the draft recommendations remain unchanged. It is almost certain that community clubs will not be in a position to provide their current level of support. We would expect that a significant number of community clubs would have to close, should all the recommendations be taken up by respective Governments throughout Australia.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my Club's views on your Draft Report. I hope that the above is helpful to you in understanding the nature and importance of gaming in community clubs, and the impact your draft recommendations may have on community gaming.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Cauley
General Manager