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## Productivity Commission Gambling Enquiry

Dear Commissioners

We refer to the Productivity Commissions recent Draft Report on Gambling.

The Riverina Australian Football Club (Rules Club Wagga) lodged a submission with the Productivity Commission prior to the release of the Draft Report on Gambling. We ask that it be considered as part of a full analysis of the enquiries terms of reference. We also request that the Productivity Commission cover all the terms of reference, including those that require an analysis of the economic and community/social contribution of Clubs. We request that the Productivity Commission measure the costs of their draft recommendations as well as the benefits.

The Rules Club Wagga was established in 1973 and employs approximately 50 people which equates to almost 1.8 million dollars in wages per year. In the 2008/09 year the Rules Club Wagga had total revenue (excluding gaming revenue) of \$2,340,746 and gaming revenue of \$6,056,144. We paid \$1,395,400 including GST in gaming tax alone for the year. At the end of last financial year we had total liabilities of \$4,007,048 with total assets standing at \$9,585,261

The Club contributed over \$166,000 directly to the community through donations and sponsorships in the 2008/09 year. In addition the Club maintains two bowling greens and an oval which is used by a number of sporting bodies for varying purposes throughout the year at no cost. These include but are not limited to male and female groups, senior and junior football clubs, crickets clubs, soccer clubs and a number of schools.

In addition the Rules Club Wagga provides no cost meeting and function rooms for a wide range of organizations who would otherwise be without a place to meet. These groups include service clubs, organizations such as toastmasters, senior and junior sporting groups and many more varied organizations.



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In 2006 the Rules Club Wagga completed a major renovation which improved the facilities that we can offer to members and visitors. Areas including a lounge, café, sports bar, bowling lounge and gaming room were established or improved to give our members adequate places to socialize and interact. Senior members especially are provided with facilities that allow them to share experiences and keep socially active, which would otherwise not be available to them.

Some of these senior members also rely on the ATM located at the Club to access their funds in a safe and comfortable environment to be used for normal day to day living expenses.

In order to keep our facilities up to date and complete the renovation the Rules Club Wagga took on certain financial liabilities that currently stand at approximately 3 million dollars.

Our renovation was completed before the venue indoor smoking bans came into force in July 2007. Following Christmas 2007 the Rules Club Wagga saw a significant drop off in gaming income mainly due to the indoor smoking bans. The Rules Club Wagga has plans in place for the construction of an outdoor or "al fresco" gaming area without which the long term survival of the Club would be threatened. Part of our master plan includes the construction of a motel and a child minding or health centre on the vacant Club land adjacent to the Club.

The Rules Club Wagga's financial result for the year 2008/09 was an after tax loss of \$29,293.

Each of the extreme measures contained in the Draft Report including mandatory card based pre commitment, \$200 ATM daily withdrawal limit, \$1 maximum bet and \$20 input limit would put enormous pressure on the Club's ability to make enough revenue to continue to support the community to the extent that it currently does.



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In fact, we believe that **any one** of the measures listed would impact so severely on our Club that it would not be able to remain open. Therefore 50 jobs (1.8 million in wages), bowling greens, an oval for junior and senior teams, community cash support in the range of \$200,000 per annum, in kind assistance through meeting and function rooms, support of problem gambling counseling services and a social, interactive venue will be lost to the community of Wagga Wagga.

If this was to happen who would fill in the hole that is left?

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