



Don Beggs
PO Box 541
SANS SOUCI NSW 2219
02 9583 1202
donbeggs@one.net.au
www.geocities.com/Eureka/8697/
31 October, 1998

Assistant Commissioner
Ralph Lattimore
Productivity Commission
PO Box 80
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

Dear Mr Lattimore

I wish to submit the following information for your *Inquiry into Australia's Gambling Industries*.

I am 57 years of age, and am a compulsive gambler. I am of average intelligence, come from a respectable family of non-gamblers and have this addiction which controls my life. I have gambled since I was eight years of age.

In 1991 I met a lady who helped me to control my disease, by urging me to stop gambling by looking at the realistic returns from gambling. I subsequently stopped gambling on 3 April 1991.

Walk Away A Winner

From that point I have studied most aspects of gambling, and in November 1997 I published a book called *Walk Away A Winner, Year One*.

A copy of the book is enclosed.

I intended to release three books: *Year One*, relating to betting on horseracing; *Year Two*, relating to betting on all other forms of gambling; and *Year Three*, how to control, and even how to stop, gambling.

I have very strong ideas in all three areas.

I am not going to write *Years Two* and *Three* because I have lost about

\$15,000 on my first book. Where this book is commercially based, that is, how to win, or at least not lose, at the races, the second two were to be self-help books, aimed principally at helping gamblers control their losses.

I resumed betting when I found a way in which I could win most of the time. My method does in fact win, but only on certain days, when certain criteria exist. On those days, my personal rules are to cease betting when I achieve my first result which puts me in front for the day, regardless of how much.

I am now in complete control of my gambling, however it hasn't always been like that.

Gamblers Anonymous

Over the years I have tried everything to stop betting indiscriminately - I tried counselling, hypnosis and attending Gamblers Anonymous. I have also attended Alcoholics Anonymous, not for myself, but for a friend I was once trying to help. Unfortunately, I believe that GA is not as powerful in retaining members as AA.

In fact, I have attended meetings of GA in a certain area of Sydney, and am repulsed by the actions of one of the principal speakers. He has been 'clean' from gambling for over 20 years, but assumes a position of judge and jury toward other attendees. If a person has a 'bust', he checks out typical gambling haunts, sees the person gambling and speaks about him or her at subsequent meetings. When the person does return to GA, he/she is admonished for his/her actions. I no longer attend GA meetings because the person in question does the rounds of various meetings in my area.

Controlled gambling

Even having attended GA, I sincerely believe that most gamblers would prefer not to actually stop gambling. I feel most, like me, would like to be



able to limit and control their betting, whatever form, and walk away with a small profit (preferably) or loss.

Unfortunately, most of us are unable to do this. I couldn't, that is until I carried out my research and wrote my book.

Controlled Gamblers Association

My firm belief is that most compulsive gamblers would accept, and join an organisation such as a *Controlled Gamblers Association*.

Whereas GA does not allow any betting whatsoever, including playing Bingo, my idea would be for these people to meet on a weekly basis and discuss

- their week in betting, whether it be good or bad
- whether they adhered to principles of controlled gambling, and if they did, how they did it, for the benefit of others
- whether they bet more than they should have
- whether gambling is creating problems at home
- if so, whether their home situation has improved, or declined
- and so on

I would probably try to dissuade colourful, (supposedly) successful big gamblers from attending, because these people display the glamour side of gambling. So few people are successful at gambling, I feel these kinds of people would be detrimental to the gambler and the meeting, and would exacerbate the problem.

The word gambling does have a social stigma in many minds, and it might be best, to gain universal success, to call it something like *Controlled Investing* or the like.

Gam Anon

Where GA has Gam Anon, I would like to encourage spouses and even children to attend the CGA meetings with the gambler, and to speak openly about their situation. This may not be possible, due to negative connotations at school.

I believe if most spouses could understand the disease more intimately, they may be able to help their gambler further. From personal experience, I have always turned away from a relationship when I have been criticised for my gambling. Conversely, if a person displays genuine interest in me and my problem, I will drop my barriers and allow myself to get very close to that person.

I would encourage gamblers and spouses to actually share their interest in gambling, where the non-gambler of the family allowed the gambler to bet, but to personally control the financial side of things.

Gamblers Anonymous at home

From experience, and speaking to other gamblers, most gamblers prefer not to be part of GA. They do not like to attend GA meetings.

If the problem became too intense, I would encourage gamblers to sit down with their spouses and children, and conduct their own GA-type meetings at home.

I would outline the various steps for all participants to take in the meeting. The absolute, most important aspect of these meetings would be *honesty*.

A new book

I said previously I lost money on the sale of my book. Apart from thousands of hours of my own time, I spent almost \$10,000 on the printing and binding, and another \$11,000 on expenses such as advertising, computer hardware and software, computer assistance, stationery and postage. I had 1,000 copies printed, and have



sold less than 200. My returns are less than \$6,000.

In the early part of the enclosed book, I continually warn against gambling, and excessive losses. I also point out the realistic situation, all losing, of betting on the first five favourites in horseracing.

Now that your Government is taking action in doing something about gambling, especially problem gambling, I would sincerely like to have some involvement, because I believe I have a great deal to offer.

I would now like to write a second book, containing the following types of information.

- Warnings against gambling as featured in my first book. The best part of my research was to personally learn the realistic returns from gambling, and how little hope the gambler has of being a winner. Learning this information virtually cut my betting, and my gambling instincts in half.
- All general information from this book which may be of help to fellow gamblers, but not raising the *how to win* of it
- Research, similar to that (but not so detailed) in my first book, into other forms of gambling including Lotto, Keno, poker machines, casino games and sports betting. In fact, I am able to divulge a method of playing poker machines which will definitely cut players' losses tenfold, but still provide them with sufficient entertainment
- Various personal scenarios, including having had to work two jobs to support my habit, and denying my loved ones holidays and the like due to my gambling
- My concept and introduction of a *Controlled Gamblers Association*

- If gamblers find that they are still unable to control their betting through CGA, my concept of GA. This concept is that family members would carry out their own GA meetings along similar lines to GA. I would provide actual stories and experiences, not just my own, but from other (agreeable) addicted gamblers in the book.
- I would do this so that gamblers and their families could read out these stories and see that their own problem gambler is not the only one in the world, and requires help from them, not criticism.
- I heard recently that doctors are being encouraged to become involved in helping people with stress-related problems, as a direct result of their gambling. I would continually encourage problem gamblers to seek help from their GPs. I would ask that GPs be provided with copies of the book to pass on to problem gamblers.
- I have successfully completed a self-hypnosis course, and, through the book and personally, I would like to pass on basic principles of self-suggestion to help gamblers overcome their habit.

I feel very, very strongly on gambling, and problem gambling. Authorities advertise gambling in a very colourful, positive light, and very little is said about the downside of gambling.

I realise my first book is not a piece of literary genius, it would have been much more polished had it been released by a proper publisher, but due to limited resources I had to publish it myself.

Being retired, I would now like to write, and have published by the proper people, a book along the lines I have described in this letter.



Unfortunately I cannot afford to write the book without financial assistance.

Submission

The whole point of this submission is

1. NOT to promote my first book in any way.
2. To request a Government Grant to write a book called, say *If you must gamble....*, or *How to control your gambling*, just two examples.
3. To advertise the book nationally, and to advertise and promote a form of *Controlled Gamblers Association* or *Controlled Investing etc.*
4. To have sufficient copies of the book printed to provide, for free, copies for members of this association, or anyone at all with gambling problems.
5. General Government support to see my book and idea through.

The book would not contain statistical-type information as shown in my first book but would contain summarised, mostly negative statistics for gamblers to consider.

Readable and interesting

I am certain, with all my experiences, both high and low (there are more lows), I could make the book a most interesting one, where the reader would picture him or herself in similar situations.

I also feel sure the book and CGA concept would be successful because the ideas are coming from an authentic person who has lost a fortune, a family and almost suicided due to his gambling disease. I could include these experiences in the book if advisable.

Having been a computer-trainer with the NSW Government's Roads and Traffic Authority, I would be pleased and sufficiently confident to address meetings for fellow gamblers, relating to our mutual problem.

Future steps

I am sure that hundreds of methods and experiences would evolve from these meetings, and personally I would be prepared to record each, and to document them in a further book relating to controlled gambling.

A guy called Charlie Drake once sang a song, *My Boomerang Won't Come Back*, and in the song he says *I'm a great disgrace to the Aborigine race.*

I feel exactly the same. I'm a great disgrace to my family, my friends and the whole Australian race. I have spent over 40 years in the workforce, and have virtually nothing to show for it. I would now like to dedicate the remaining twenty or thirty years of my life helping people to avoid following the path in life I have taken.

I would appreciate your favourable consideration in this matter. Either way, if you receive other information as a result of your Inquiry, I would appreciate a copy of your report, because personally, in one way or another, gambling occupies a very large slice of my life.

Many thanks for your time

Yours faithfully,

Don Beggs