

Inquiry into Australia's Gambling Industries

Submission by Gabriela Byrne

Hearing on Wednesday 25th October 2pm

Introduction:

Through my personal experience as a "**Gambling-Expert**" (gambling counsellor and former gambling addict) I would like to provide evidence that:

- Gambling Addiction can hit anyone irrespective of social standing
- The promotion of Gambling as so-called "entertainment" is destroying individuals their families and the community. The gaming venues are deliberately set-up of manipulation to attack all senses (examples: Lights, Hallelujah) and make it more difficult to limit spending or when to leave.
- The promotion of Gamblers Anonymous (GA) and BreakEven, exclusively by the Government Gambler's Helpline is inappropriate. Neither organisation can provide statistics and have no **standard** procedures. My experience with clients who have used those programmes indicates that they have little or no effectiveness. This rises questions about how serious the government is in its intention of wanting to **cure** people of their gambling addiction.

Recommended actions to take:

Money should be allocated towards:

1. Education

Compulsory school programmes, educating young people about the potential to become addicted to gambling

Educating the community at large through the production of a video and/or film material (see submission paper)

Regular Advertising exposing the harmful potential of the "entertainment" gambling

2. Warning Displays at gaming venues

These should clearly state that entering this venue and engaging in gambling can become addictive. It should be spelled out that, just by entering the venue they run the risk of reducing the capability to make a conscious decision about when to leave and how much money they will spend.

Every Pokermachine should have the "odds" clearly displayed.

3. Research

There should be an inquiry into the effectiveness of GA and BreakEven. The use of other currently available therapy programmes should also be explored.