



**SUBMISSION TO THE
PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION**

***INVESTIGATING SOCIAL AND
ECONOMIC IMPACTS
OF
POKER MACHINE GAMBLING***

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November 1998

OUR STARTING POINT

A JUST SOCIETY

A just society recognises that all citizens have a right to housing, clothing, food, rest, education, health care, employment, and security in old age.

A commitment to social justice promotes :-

- fairness in our dealings with other people
- fairness in the way responsibilities are shared
- fairness in the distribution of income, wealth, power in our society
- fairness in the social, economic and political structures we have created
- fairness in the operation of those structures so that they enable all citizens to be active and productive participants in the life of society.

Access to these things must be on the basis of need and not be limited to a person's status in society or ability to pay.

In a just society, its members and its structures serve the common good.

CHURCH

The people of God are called "to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God" (Micah 6v8). The Church has a continuing responsibility to join with all people of goodwill in working for a society where structures serve truly just ends.

The principles underlying our concerns for social justice include :-

- to respect human dignity with its rights and responsibilities
- to live in solidarity with others, aware of our interdependence
- to seek the well being of all
- to value work and creativity
- to give priority to the needs of the poor.

The Church is called to embrace faith, hope and love. This is agape love which inherently involves charity and justice. (1 Cor 13 v 13)

'Charitable works in the service of those in need must go hand in hand with the work to establish structures so that citizens do not have to depend upon acts of charity.'
(New Zealand Social Justice Statement 1993)

The Church's calling involves speaking out against injustices and publicly advocating for the disadvantaged as well as providing practical assistance.

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

Some people hold a minimalist view of government, where the role is to ensure the nation's security and to foster law and order. Within this view, the government does not intervene in health, housing, education, welfare, but leaves this to private enterprise and market forces. An alternative view, supported by the Church, and which is inherent in the Good Shepherd philosophy, is that: good government is about protecting and promoting the public interest. Governments have an indispensable role in ensuring that no citizen is deprived of human rights.

Human persons are fulfilled within the community - a sense of community needs to be encouraged and facilitated by government.

In the public interest, governments need to be fully accountable for all financial arrangements involving public monies and their performance.

While the 'state', much less the market, cannot meet all human needs, just government policies will be consistent with a commitment to the dignity of human beings and will promote and preserve conditions within which people will flourish.

In summary, we are committed to a view of government which serves the common good and which secures and protects the dignity of every citizen. Governments need to provide conditions where each person is enabled to respect the rights of others and where each can enjoy freedom and fulfilment in the economic, political and cultural life of the nation.

GOOD SHEPHERD SISTERS

The order of the Good Shepherd sisters began 150 years ago in the reign of Louis XIV in France when the poor, the disadvantaged, the marginalised and the forgotten were of no interest to the King.

The founder of the Order of the Good Shepherd Sisters, Sister Mary Euphrasia experienced discrimination, exile and deep personal loss as a young girl which influenced her understanding that "the ills she saw in the early 1800's were not primarily the product of 'individual pathology' requiring symptom relief, but were the result of embedded structures of injustice, embedded values, that did not put the human first."

The philosophy of the Good Shepherd Sisters calls for the promotion of social justice by caring for individual needs and generating structural changes. While being committed to bringing justice into heartfelt action, Sr Mary Euphrasia valued each person. To quote "one person is of more value than the whole world".

The Good Shepherd Sisters work spread throughout the world with a group settling in Abbotsford, Melbourne, over 100 years ago.

GOOD SHEPHERD YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICE

Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service is a community services agency committed to working with low income and disadvantaged individuals and families which has come out of the work of the Good Shepherd sisters in Victoria.

Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service's philosophy endorses the commitment to promoting and building a just society. (See Appendix 1)

THE GOOD SHEPHERD SISTERS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT

In the early days, the sisters were totally reliant on benefactors, the generosity of the Church and on their own hard work.

Government's direct responsibility for the needs of the poor was virtually non-existent in the early days and slowly developed over the next seventy years.

By the early 1970's, the Victorian government, through its Community Services Department, was paying the Good Shepherd Sisters a small weekly fee (around £1) for young women in the sister's care who were on guardianship orders. Small amounts of money were being made available for non-guardians and to assist the young women going into independent living.

The government's contribution was only a token at this stage, with the sisters generating their own resources and maintaining their communities.

Primarily the Good Shepherd Sisters developed their services out of a commitment to the poor and disadvantaged - with a special emphasis on women and girls - in response to community needs. Their doors were open to people in need who found their way to the convent. Even in the early days, the sisters had a strong connection to areas like St Kilda where women working on the street were known as "women of ill repute".. The Good Shepherd Sisters have maintained their commitment to these women, now known as "sex workers", as well as responding to new community needs.

By late the 1970's, governments and the Good Shepherd Sisters were in the process of closing their large institutions and support for young people was being transferred into the community, although the state government maintained some juvenile justice facilities.

At this time the Good Shepherd Sisters supported the development of Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service as a community services agency to offer local support to young women moving into independent living. The No Interest Loans program was developed to enable the young women to set themselves up in flats in the local area without being dependent on hand-outs. There are now more than 30 No Interest Loans programs operating across Victoria with others developing interstate.

GOOD SHEPHERD YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT

At its inception in 1981, Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service was supported by resources from the Good Shepherd Sisters as well as receiving some funding from the Victorian government to offer support for young people in the local area. In those days Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service workers primarily offered support and assistance to people living in the local Collingwood/Abbotsford area.

In the past 15 years Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service's work has expanded and an increasing number of the programs have received funding from the Victorian government. Currently approximately half of our overall budget comes from government monies, including Local Council funds. As well as receiving funding for specific programs funded by the state government, we have received a number of small grants from Local Councils for specific projects such as camps, group work and youth activities.

With changes in government policy and service provision, Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service now offers services to people living across large municipal areas: City of Yarra (*Collingwood*); City of Brimbank (*St Albans*); Mornington Peninsula Shire (*Hastings*) and St Kilda. Only the St Kilda Office is totally supported by monies from the Good Shepherd Sisters. At the other three sites there are programs funded by government and others funded by Trust monies and donations. However, with all our services, we have endeavoured to respond to community needs, being innovative and moving to new growth areas with large numbers of low income and disadvantaged people (Hastings, Mornington Peninsula, St Albans, Brimbank).

NATURE OF COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service sees itself as a community organisation supporting those characteristics inherent in voluntary organisations. These organisations are neither mini-bureaucracies nor failed commercial enterprises - rather they are private (private sector businesses) or not-for profit organisations. In fact, voluntary organisations provide a unique way of organising socially based on values of :-

- *independence (freedom of innovation)*
- *altruism (concern for others)*
- *community (collective action)*

Voluntary organisations are not mendicants begging for government aid nor are they a new generation of slick deal makers, vying for scarce government resources. They are about participation as much as provision : citizenship as service. They are an essential part of the fabric of civil society.

These organisations which represent a sector that has arisen from the community to help overcome alienation and market failure cannot be remade along either bureaucratic or market principles, as agents providing government defunded services without destroying their service.

The relationship between voluntary organisations and government should be one of interdependence and complementarily - which is fostered by mutual respect. (Garth Nowland-Foreman, NZCOSS 1995).

INTRODUCTION

As an organisation offering a range of support and counselling services to low income and disadvantaged groups within local communities Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service is committed to working in partnership with residents, community groups and government for vibrant, healthy and safe communities.

Many of the comments made in this submission regarding the social and economic impacts of poker machine gambling within the Mornington Peninsula Shire are based on community perceptions and identified strategies of these impacts which have emerged during the '**Peninsula on Pokies**' research project which Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service is currently conducting in cooperation with the Mornington Peninsula Shire, community groups, retailers and local residents. (*See Appendix 2 for an outline of the project*).

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

The research reports commissioned by the *Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority (VCGA)* provide an important foundation for a community survey such as '**Peninsula on Pokies**'. One of our aims is to provide a more human face to the figures and broad conclusions outlined in these reports. We will also make reference to the Queen of Hearts survey where we had Good Shepherd representation on the reference group and a range of other Good Shepherd reports related to the Redevelopment of Human Services and Taxation reform. (*See Appendix 3 for a list of publications*)

RESEARCH FINDINGS

We are currently finalising the data collection phase of the '**Peninsula on Pokies**' research. The specific impacts highlighted in this submission will be based on the views of community members and retailers. We are currently interviewing community workers and are still planning to interview interested venue operators.

While our prime aim in this submission is to highlight the perceived social and economic positive benefits and negative impacts of poker machine gambling coupled with strategies for addressing the negative impacts, we will also focus on the wider structural context including the current legislative framework governing poker machine gambling as well as gaming and planning policies with a view to encouraging greater protective mechanisms.

The specific issues to be discussed will include: legislation; regulations; advertising; gaming policy; role of Local Council in planning and policy issues; Community Support Fund allocations; demand for community support services, current taxation reform proposals; and public interest concerns.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is in its preliminary phase. While no formal quantitative data is yet available, a range of comments made by community members in *Hastings, Mornington* and *Rosebud* are included. While we do not claim that such findings provide an exhaustive or totally representative range of views, we have been committed to canvassing a diversity of views. These findings overwhelmingly highlight the community's concern about the negative impacts of poker machine gambling, although a range of positive benefits were elicited.

POSITIVE BENEFITS

(see Table 1)

Specifically, these ranged from increased employment in poker machine venues, upgrading of hotels and clubs, more money spent by tourists in the Mornington Peninsula Shire to increased entertainment options especially for the elderly and those with limited social activities. Venues were also seen to provide a safe and friendly environment where adults of all ages are welcome.

NEGATIVE IMPACTS

(see Table 2)

Clearly the general concerns about the impact of poker machine gambling as well as specific social and economic impacts quantitatively far outweigh the identified positive benefits. These impacts can be grouped under the following headings:

- ❖ Impacts on individuals
- ❖ Families
- ❖ Local communities
- ❖ Numbers and locations of machines
- ❖ Advertising
- ❖ Alternative recreational options

IDENTIFIED STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING THE NEGATIVE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

(see Table 3)

Identified strategies could be summarised under the following headings: greater controls on numbers, locations and movement of machines; limiting the number of venues with machines and the operational hours for these venues; increased advertising which raises community awareness, warns of the real dangers and ceases to emphasise the "big win"; greater regulations governing poker machine gambling to protect people and their families (comparisons were made between "out of control gambling" and "out of control drinking", the current Drink Driving Campaign and the legal framework); increased allocations of gambling profits and especially Community Support Funds being returned to the local community; examination of a wider range of entertainment options (emphasis on low cost); local communities having a greater say over what happens in their community (as a counter to the current sense of powerlessness).

CASE STUDIES

(see Table 4)

In seeking the community's views about poker machine gambling, we also sought case studies of people who had experienced difficulties with poker machine gambling known to those being interviewed. A range of these case studies are included to highlight the extent of the impacts amongst all sections of the community.

Research Responses:

To date we have received 180 community members responses (*Hastings 101; Mornington 40 and Rosebud 39*). We also have 44 responses from retailers located in *Hastings (12), Mornington (24) and Rosebud (8)*.

Interviews with approximately 30 community workers involved in a wide range of community services are currently being undertaken. Focus groups with young people in senior years at school along with people who gamble regularly are also being planned. We are also seeking interviews with venue operators.

Both quantitative and qualitative data will be available in the final report.

Background/Research Material:

There has clearly been an unprecedented growth in gambling, driven and supported by governments in many countries. In the early 1990s U.S.A. was confronted with systematic economic downturn, involving major closures of factories and businesses, the shedding of employees and shifting production to lower wage areas and countries. The quick fix of casino gambling became a tantalising option for addressing increasing welfare rolls and a reduced tax base. (R Goodman 'The Lucky Business' 1995, Free Press Paperback).

Cities across the country were being forced to deal the swelling ranks of the unemployed, enormous public budget shortfalls, dwindling opportunities for work alongside the escalation of drug problems and increasing crime rates. Political and business leaders were looking for solutions to these problems through new partnership arrangements between public and private sectors at all levels of government.

In this climate, the decision was made to pursue gambling as an economic development strategy (Goodman 1995).

In 1988 casino gambling was only legal in two states (Nevada and New Jersey). Six years later (1994), twenty-three states had authorised or operating casinos and many others were proposed.

Gambling has certainly reaped significant national revenue: between 1988 and 1994, total national yearly casino revenues nearly doubled from \$8b to \$15b. Between 1992 and 1994 the figure grew by 15%. In the early 1990s, gambling revenues were climbing two and a half times faster than the nation's manufacturing industries. By 1995, legal gambling was generating \$37b in yearly revenues.

In just a few years, gambling had been transformed from "an illegal seedy criminal activity to a saviour of economic misfortune". What had been feared for its potential for moral corruption, its corrosive impact on the work ethic, its potential devastation of family savings was suddenly transformed into a leading candidate to reverse the fortunes of communities across America. Some proponents eager to sanitise the older connotations of gambling even went so far as saying "*it is about entertainment...it is a true social expression...there are no gender based, race based or physical barriers to access*" (Goodman 1995).

However, Goodman goes on to caution that gambling as an economic development strategy creates more problems than it solves.

The use of gambling to raise public revenue is an old approach to solving shortfalls in government revenues. In England as early as 1566, the Royal family used betting on a lottery to pay for its expenses. In America, public and private lotteries existed on and off since earliest colonial times. However by 1870, all gambling except in Louisiana had been outlawed because of corruption. From 1993 til 1963 all gambling was illegal until New Hampshire legalised a state lottery.

Since that time, politicians have become more dependent on an expanded menu of lotteries, casinos and electronic gambling to generate revenues and to justify their claims of creating jobs for their constituents. Within this framework, the role of government has been dramatically altered from *regulator* of a potentially harmful enterprise to *promoter* of that enterprise. (Goodman 1995)

However the unintended consequences of such a strategy are considerable. These include:

- in the new convenience gambling economy, money flowing into poker machines, casinos etc is being diverted from goods and services in other local businesses.
- convenience gambling enterprises have the potential to 'cannibalise' local economies. Gambling in general and gaming in particular can be equated with a parasitic activity that cannibalises communities in the name of increased government revenue
- money and time spent at casinos, pokes and such represents time 'lost' to other activities including time with family, as well as other recreational and entertainment activities
- missed opportunity costs: while the illusion that gambling creates new jobs for the unemployed and fresh revenues to replenish depleted public treasuries is being actively promoted, there is a lack of recognition of other costs to individuals, families, other businesses local communities and such.

- in the name of raising revenue and creating jobs, this strategy has the potential to create an economic time bomb to produce even more devastating future costs and problems for the community
- one of the most problematic long term consequences is the difficulty, if not impossibility of undoing the development of legalised gambling
- potentially undermines the government's role as protector of the public interest.

The parallels between the development of electronic gambling in Victoria since the Gaming Machine Control Act (1991) was introduced and those documented above are startling. (See Fact Sheet On Poker Machine Gambling in [Appendix 2](#); Growth of Gambling and Gaming Machine Usage in Victoria in [Appendix 4](#); Key Findings EGM Gambling Fifth Community Gambling Patterns Survey - VCGA December 1997 in [Appendix 8](#); Legal Forms of Gambling in Victoria by Expenditure, VCGA June 1997 in [Appendix 9](#) and Gaming in Australia (in Queen of Hearts Research) in [Appendix 11](#)).

The current perceptions of the impacts of gambling in Victoria were summed up in the Fifth Community Gambling Survey (December 1997) as :

“Generally there is strong agreement that gambling problems are worsening and that it is a serious social problem. There is also the belief that gambling is too widely accessible in Victoria and that the number of EGM venues should be reduced. However, it is also strongly recognised that the introduction of EGMs into Victoria has resulted in more jobs and that the new casino provides a big boost to the State economy. There is also a low level awareness amongst the Victorian population (16% of community projects funded from gambling revenue. Additionally, Victorians do not generally believe that they personally have benefited from community projects funded by the gambling revenue”.

The views outlined by residents in the Mornington Peninsula Shire will form the basis of a range of recommendations which call for greater protective mechanisms for local communities and for individuals experiencing difficulties with poker machine gambling along with calls for changes to planning and gaming regulations and legislative amendments.

Outlined below are community responses in the four tables :

- *Table 1 - Positive Benefits*
- *Table 2 - Negative Impacts*
- *Table 3 - Strategies for Addressing Perceived Negative Impacts*
- *Table 4 - Case Studies*

Following that specific issues needing consideration are highlighted.

A set of tentative recommendations which have been drawn from the community's perception along with views issuing from Good Shepherd's commitment to social justice and the public interest are outlined.

In terms of the '**Peninsula on Pokies**' study, the recommendations for the report will be finalised in conjunction with the Project's Working Group.

Table 1 : POSITIVE BENEFITS

- More money spent on Peninsula.
- Provided a new entertainment option.
- Some people use it only as an entertainment options spending a fixed amount of money.
- Improved facilities at some venues.
- Keep older generations occupied.
- Brings in money from tourists.
- Social activity for lonely people.
- Potential benefit for group such as RSL :
 - However conditional on specific allocation of machines
 - RSL needs 20 machines promised to enable them to keep open
- Improved clubs and hotels.
- Gets people out of the house more.
- Perhaps it has decreased amount people drink - while they're probably not drinking as much.
- Hotels and clubs seem to be doing better economically.
- Hotels have refurbished, which must mean they're making a profit.
- The opening hours allows people to attend when it suits them, eg people on night shift, casual etc being open all hours, means that avoid "six o'clock swill".
- Some building work at RSL and Rye Hotel especially - employment opportunities.
- Are positives, eg few '?' but negatives are more ongoing.
- Often people are lonely and provides company and a safe environment. Not intimidating environment for women sometimes older men don't want to join senior citizens, exclusively catering for older people. Poker machine venues provide bright friendly environment which has all ages and is an enjoyable place to go.
- Pokes seem particularly attractive to people who have little other positives in their lives - may have stayed home and watched TV before.
- Gambling is in Australia's blood - always gambling option - it's the potential impacts which have changed.
- Insurance and Health Fund:
 - Business has increased
 - Machines provide a lot of enjoyment for people
 - Don't believe poker machines are such a big problem
 - Some businesses blame anything on their poor management.

Table 2 : NEGATIVE IMPACTS

- Hotels making too much money.
- Pleasant hotels have become neon-light dens.
- Downgrade community behaviour - destroying families, decline in communities, young people vulnerable, women also very vulnerable, poker machines are a disease - destroys communities.
- People short of money.
- Unable to pay bills on time.
- Spend more than they can afford.
- Low-income people hoping in desperation for a big win.
- Lack of community exists - people feel isolated and attend poker machine venues as a response and then become more isolated by continuously playing machines.
- Interferes with family life - reduces general family activities.
- Increased level of frustration amongst people especially when they loose.
- Children suffer - no money for extras, school costs, clothing etc - left alone even at night - general neglect.
- More family breakdown.
- Affects relationships and increases social problems such as domestic violence and suicide.
- Dramatically affects family resources.
- Elderly people gradually dwindle their savings.
- Increase in social problems - allegedly at least one case of suicide with gambling related issues per week.
- Poker machines are blight on society.
- Any economic benefit reaped by TAB, Tattsлото, and manufacturers of machines not by community.
- People spend too much time and money on machines - more than they can afford.
- Poker machines get 'a hold' on people.
- Addiction, associated problems.
- Bankruptcy increases
- Increased borrowing friends and banks.
- Some banks may be profiting.
- Increased heartache because of financial and associated issues.
- Increased demand for emergency relief to buy food and pay bills, eg St Vincent de Paul.
- At RSL having to re think machines - people using machines as form of entertainment - members are complaining and loss of attendance by them at RSL is a direct result.
- Encourage destructive behaviour.

- Anti-social.
- Can be addictive - people don't know when to stop playing.
- Too many venues - can't go to pub without being faced with poker machines.
- People spend on poker machines - reduced sales in business - shopping centres much quieter.
- Affect spending - some people only go to hairdresser now if had a win.
- Change in spending patterns - carpet cleaning "extras" especially.
- Only fixed amount of money being redistributed differently.
- Financial problems.
- Increased financial burdens.
- Limited or no money for necessities of life.
- People relying on poker machines to get them out of difficult financial situations 'false hope' - 'pressure of materialism'.
- Families who are struggling financially will go to poker machine venues with hope of increasing their income.
- Too many especially in depressed areas such as Hastings, rosebud and Dromana.
- Machines too accessible.
- Greater regulation to protect people unable to resist 'the pull of the potential win'.
- People currently go from one place to another hoping for a big win.
- Clubs seem more profit oriented in Victoria compared to Queensland where money is put back into the community. In Victoria prices of meals etc have been reduced with the introduction of poker machines whereas things have in Queensland.
- Young people especially vulnerable, until they can go in legally the "poker culture" encourages them to get the idea of gambling - drugs often go with such activities.
- Women especially vulnerable - 90% women in venues get caught in poker machines compared with other forms of gambling. Different group of people at horse races - need to use intelligence, background intelligence.
- Poker environment 'very noisy' - dehumanising full of glare and action.
- Few winners - most people are losers and can't afford to lose.
- Changing socialising environment - hotels now full of glare and action - quiet rooms with pleasant atmosphere, music etc fast disappearing.
- Effecting 'band scene' also for young people especially.
- People spend savings may even lose house and spend superannuation, pay outs etc.
- People can experience dramatic changes in lifestyle.
- People too reliant on gambling - what does this say about nature of community.
- People are deceived by pokes: thing (truly believe) they will win and often become addicted.

- Used to say 'there's a pub on every corner' - alcohol over use/abuse, have become a huge social and economic problem; now there's a poker machine on every corner.
- People who have never gambled, are now gambling.
- More jobs lost than gained, eg jobs in poker machine venues, but loss jobs in shops.
- Changing culture of clubs, eg golf clubs - people use poker machines who wouldn't be members.
- Poker machines are unsocial way of 'enjoying oneself'.
- 'Voluntary tax on the poor'.
- Poker machines are greedy, soul destroying machines intent on wrecking the social fabric.
- People who have never gambled before in their life and are now totally addicted - devastating effect on their lives and families.
- Money and business flowing away from ordinary shops - retail industry hit as money goes to gambling.
- Impact on organisations such as RSL, Hastings Cricket Club - uncertain tenure regarding machines. Licensee can choose to move machines if they are not reaping enough profit, eg RSL Hastings needs 20 machines promised or they may have to close.
- Tour operators, roadhouses experiencing loss of business from day trips to New South Wales and South Australia.
- People experiencing loss of money on payday/next few days leaving them without money until the next payday. However, they then return to the poker machines, despite existing hardship.
- Increased more experience types of machines - increased number of machines with 9 lines - take more money than the five lines. This has compounded problems for people struggling on limited incomes.
- Gambling has affected people vulnerable to addiction.
- Increases in crime, thieving and embezzlement.
- Professional car thefts - especially noticeable in city, but also elsewhere.
- People being imprisoned because of gambling related issues- even elderly pensioners are shoplifting.
- Country community - people suffer addiction waiting for the 'big win'.
- Health issues - people spend long periods of time in unnatural environment, limited exercise and surrounded by smoke.
- Advertising by poker venues - is enticing both in terms of 'the win' and what is offered such as free drinks, meals etc and people expect instant gratification.
- More women have become addicted - especially once they turn 18, wasting money they don't really have.
- Increased borrowing of money - especially from friends initially, causes tensions and difficulties.

- Significant growth in buy/sell cash shops, pawnbrokers and second hand shops.
- People used to take children to pub for counter mean - family outing, now children are exposed to pokes wherever they go.
- Rentals harder to collect - shops and houses greater evictions.
- Loss of clientele - only come irregularly or when they've had a win.
- Increased vandalism.

Table 3 : STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING PERCEIVED NEGATIVE IMPACTS

- Remove all of the machines.
- Shorter hours of operation.
- Less machines - restrict numbers of machines. Strictly limit number of machines in community. Introduce permits for machines.
- Prohibit their introduction into shopping centres.
- Too available at any time - restrict availability.
- Do not increase number of machines.
- Discourage as a social event.
- Should allow machines in non-profit organisations, eg RSL, football clubs, so they can pass on benefits - better facilities, reduced prices of meals.
- Encourage alternative activities/outlets for people who gamble for leisure.
- Encourage people to use alternative forms of entertainment - there are enough - healthier options.
- Advertising the dangers of gambling - raise awareness of the problem - real odds and real dangers such as addiction. Control advertising about million dollar jackpots (should not be allowed).
- More counselling services to assist people with gambling related issues.
- More government funding to support services.
- Introduce locations with no poker machines (Mornington already doing this).
- More advertising of Help Line.
- Stop promoting the Casino etc.
- Advertise in newspapers - anonymous case histories: awareness, realise not on own, where to get help, information, education, may deter - especially target elderly women and young people.
- Local communities need more assistance from government because of the influence of gambling in communities.
- People must protest, to get rid of machines in area, need to encourage church and all other sectors of the community to be involved.
- Introduce legal limit to .05 for drunk driving increased action required by venues in regard to people "out of control".
- Ban "free offers" as to enticing - deceptive - as makes venue out to be community minded and generous whereas really 'effective advertising'.

- Limit poker licenses:
 - Need to encourage existence of hotels/clubs without poker machines
 - Keep poker machines in Casino.
- Will often queue up waiting to go in especially on pension day - need other organised activities so that not so reliant on poker machines.
- Greater availability of notices, information about gambling support services. (Eg used to be GA cards at cashiers at venues, don't appear to be there.)
- Need a community fund established where gambling venue is actively transferred back to the community for its benefit.
- All profits should be returned to the community.
- Re-emphasis importance of family/community - avoid dangers such as poker machines.
- Difficult to control way people choose to spend their money 'personal choice' versus responsible behaviour issues.
- Make pokes cheaper - could play longer
- Encourage development of 'poker type games' or computer - no cost, but lots of enjoyment.
- Replace dearer nine line machines with five line machines again.
- Need to encourage more controlled gambling, introduce 'gambling police': who would assist people with problems - limit their gambling activities when it is clear they are 'out of control'.
- Reduce the opportunities for legalised gambling as much as possible without stimulating the rise of an illegal industry.
- More education.
- Sense of hopelessness and lack of control makes it difficult to feel can do anything about problems such as lose of income, gambling addiction, family problems.
- Restrict poker machines to particular venues - and only parts of venue. Poker machines should not be freely available and especially not for young people. Women also especially vulnerable.
- Poker machines should not be in shopping centres.
- Rediscover alternative community opportunities, eg Cyberspace Salvation Army - reinforce 'simple things' in life, people have become too oriented to mechanical, quick action etc.

Table 4 : CASE STUDIES

- A single woman (40-65 years) with a child, who works part-time/casual kept gambling because she thought she would win the "big one". After she lost all her money she felt sorry, but still felt the urge to go back. All her bills piled up and she felt suicidal.
- A married woman (40-65 years), with a business gambled her business, home and all her savings.
- A woman aged 18-24 years, married with children explained that she found it difficult to answer the questions from a community point of view as the impact on a personal level, of her husband's poker machine gambling activities has been so devastating on her family.
- Her husband's gambling activities caused him to lose his employment after 10 years. He also received a criminal conviction.
- His activities caused great emotional and financial hardship on the family.
- A woman aged 40-65 years, who is a student with a partner suffered severe problems because of her addiction to gambling.
- She became financially reckless and socially withdrawn. She experienced sleep pattern disturbances. Her employment status became unstable. She developed credit problems, mortgage problems and partnership problems.
- A retired couple aged 40-65 years, spent all their savings on poker machine gambling.
- While experiencing marriage problems they also lost friends through lying and compounding excuses for non-payment of loans, unfulfilled promises and such. They have worked hard to sort themselves out, but the "costs" have been significant.
- A single woman aged 40-65 years with a child who works part-time found herself having to borrow and beg money for gambling. She also lied to families and friends. She only had money for the basics of life - this meant she and her child were denied treats. This led to low self-esteem, depression and near despair.
- A woman aged 40-65 years was unable to walk past a poker machine venue without entering it. She gambled large amounts of money regularly. As a result her relationship was "in tatters". She did seek local support when the difficulties reached crisis point.

- A married woman with children aged 25-39 years, who worked part-time experienced a whole range of personal, emotional and social problems associated with gambling. Her marriage broke down and their business went bankrupt.
- A 25-39 year old man lost his job, his house and his wife because of gambling problems.
- An older woman in the 66+ age group lost everything because of her gambling activities.
- A married woman aged 25-39 years, spent long periods of time away from home playing poker machines, causing considerable neglect of her children and her home. It also caused significant financial difficulties.
- A retired woman in the 40-65 age group who is a widow won \$10,000 on the "pokies". She then put it all back into the machines in an attempt to win it back again.
- A retired couple lost their house and now live in a caravan park. They still play poker machines.
- A middle aged female gambled away her son's accident compensation payment and left him without any financial support for his future.
- Also unpaid bills at local retailers could not be paid.
- A married man with children aged 40-65 years, spent more money than he could afford on gambling. As a consequence, he had to sell his house to clear his debts.
- Uncertain if his marriage finished because of poker machines or if, in fact, the time he spent gambling reflected an unhappy marriage in the first place.
- A single mother aged 25-39 years with 3 children "threw away" thousands of dollars which was badly needed for the upbringing of her three children. She was addicted to the hope of winning.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

POKER MACHINE GAMBLING

Each subsequent *Victorian Casino and Gambling Authority (VCGA) Report* during the last few years has reinforced the increasing trend to poker machine usage (EGMs).

The primary motivators for EGM usage was recorded as :

- social reasons (**56%**)
- thrill (**34%**)
- boredom (up from 1996 level to **18%**)
- atmosphere/buzz (**13%**)

Pubs and hotels experience the highest levels of visitation. The major reason for visiting an EGM venue was social experience (75%). Dining out was the major combined activity (55%).

Main characteristics associated with EGM gamblers differ from other forms of gambling.

- Higher proportion people from rural areas amongst regulars.
- Stronger belief that gambling does more good than harm amongst regulars.
- Higher proportion social gamblers and acknowledged heavy gamblers amongst regular (VCGA 4th Survey December 1997).

The attraction of people on low incomes to poker machine gambling is clear. Distribution of machines along with re-allocation of machines is clearly based on 'profit motives'. Low income areas clearly have significantly higher percentages of machines per population. Mornington Peninsula Shire (MPS) is one prime example of this. In an area with significant pockets of low income individuals and families and high unemployment MPS has one of the highest numbers of machines in the State.

Because of cost constraints entertainment options are often limited for low income people. Several factors would appear to make poker venues attractive to low income people:

- Close to home (limited transport costs).
- Welcoming, friendly, non-discriminatory (non judgemental re clothes, presentation and such).
- Small amounts of money can be used (\$20 can be split into lots of coins if necessary).
- A range of incentives - free food, and drinks, specials, warm and no restrictions on length of stay during opening hours.
- Few other viable entertainment options coupled with associated limited life choices.

- For many people their major alternative entertainment option is watching TV in the home environment, the poker venue provides a welcoming "community facility".
- life-style issues - may be limited recreational, physical activities already occurring. Long hours sitting at poker venue may be replacing long hours of isolation and boredom at home.

The story of neglect of children, the inability to pay bills, the increasing need to seek assistance from emergency relief providers and the growing instability caused by evictions, bankruptcy and family breakdown are becoming all too familiar. Perhaps they are signs of deeper issues which we as a community need to address. Increasing numbers of people trapped in poverty, increasingly feeling marginalised in a materialistic, consumeristic society, isolated and alienated who are enticed into the 'poker machine venues' because they are welcoming and afford them the opportunity of the "longed-for" win. In the name of economic prosperity, increased government revenue to stimulate jobs growth and the building interest vulnerable people are being exploited and innocent children are being neglected. Alongside this local retailers already struggling because of a multitude of pressures including growth, people's mobility, increased shopping options, uncertainty in the employment market are now being confronted with millions of dollars being taken from people's household expenditure. Many of the retailers on the Peninsula attest to significant downturns despite the fact that retailing overall experienced a slight increase last financial year. (VCGA Report December 1997)

Local Council:

Despite community perceptions, Council have had little control over the local and conditions of operations of gaming machine venues. State legislation by way of The Gaming Machine Control Act (1991) and the Planning and Environment Act (1987) govern allocation, distribution, placement, movement, planning and policy issues related to poker machine gambling and the role of Local Council.

Where the floor space available for gaming machines is less than a quarter of total floor space in a venue, no planning permit has been required.

According to the Gaming Machine Control Act (1991) and in accordance with Ministerial Directions, venues may hold up to 105 machines.

While new poker machine venues are currently not allowable in strip shopping centres, existing hotels within such areas are permitted. Hotels with "poker machines" exist in each of the three areas of the Mornington Peninsula Shire where our research was concentrated.

Many people in an area like the Peninsula reported feeling "hopeless"/"powerless" in terms of doing anything about "the poker invasion". They report dramatic increases in people known to them experiencing difficulties, as well as changes to general entertainment environment. Comments such as "hotels have been transformed into dark, noisy, light filled dens" were common. The only hotel without poker machines in Mornington was reported to be extremely crowded. Younger people stated that the "pub music scene" had suffered because of poker machines.

While many people reported they wanted less machines or no machines at all, they felt that the wider forces at work in the situation were harder to counter. Greater local control was seen as imperative.

Tax Reform:

The current Federal tax reform proposals provide a significant opportunity to ensure that states have adequate revenue to provide quality community services. The State government's increasing reliance on gambling tax revenue must be halted as a protection against the most vulnerable. We will be urging the current Senate Inquiry to consider this issue in the light of fundamental changes to financial Commonwealth-State relations being proposed. (See Trojan Horse paper)

Public Interest:

The State government's inherent role to protect the public interest of all its citizens is being potentially undermined by current gaming policies. Greater protection for vulnerable individuals and communities must be legislatively established if the public interest is to be upheld. (Refer [Appendix 13](#)) Balancing personal rights and responsibilities is clearly at issue in regard to 'out of control' gambling patterns.

This will require changes in regulations governing gaming licences and the placement and movement of machines. Increased Local Council controls in co-operation with the community need to be legislated for. Harm minimisation principles need to be reinforced also.

Community Support Fund:

In terms of poker machine gambling, the return rate is 87%. However many individuals and those financially dependent on them experience significant losses despite the occasional "wins".

One of the taxes levied by the State government is on poker machine revenue collected in hotels. This relates to 1.15% of the revenue taken in the machines. Based on this, the Premier has publicly stated on many occasions that more than half a billion dollars of taxes has been raised with this tax alone and is located in the Community Support Fund.

The legislation governing the administration of these funds known as the Community Support Funds has been systematically broadened out from primarily support for people experiencing problems with gambling and research to ascertain the social and economic impacts of poker machine gambling to include a broad range of community initiatives including major community projects deemed appropriate by the Premier (such as the Aquatic Centre). \$297m had been allocated to a range of community projects by December 1997. ([Appendix 5](#))

The most recent legislation change now allows for allocation of \$25m per year being allocated to general revenue for health and education services.

While significant amounts of money leave Local Council areas such as the Mornington Peninsula Shire only a small percentage comes back into the area via community grants. Residents and retailers believe greater amounts of this money need to be returned to the local areas.

Advertising:

Regular advertising campaigns which reinforce the "real odds" as against 'the big win' as well as the dangers of poker machine gambling are essential to ensure a balanced approach.

Increased advertising in the venues and a greater adherence to harm minimisation principles in general would be beneficial. (Refer Queen of Hearts - Recommendations, [Appendix 11](#))

The parallels between out of control drinking and out of control gambling are clear. An examination of the development of public campaigns in area of health, smoking and drinking have much to offer campaigns regarding the dangers of poker machine gambling.

TENTATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Call for a co-ordinated consultation between local government bodies, representative peak bodies, community services, Inter-Church Gambling Task Force and State government to consider legislative changes to the Planning and Environment Act (1987) to allow for greater local control of venue licences and machine allocations.**
- **Call for a re-examination of practices and regulations governing licenses currently held by Tatts, Tabcorp, in terms of allocation and movement of machines in and around local areas.**
- **Call for greater protective mechanisms which recognise the extreme disadvantage that local communities face when large number of poker machines are placed in low income areas.**
- **Call for an impact study of the 'true costs' of poker machine gambling on the Victorian community and particularly on low income people and the communities in which they live.**
- **Call upon the Local Council to support a broad ranging consultation to canvas views of the local community in terms of low cost entertainment options which are safe, welcoming and accessible.**
- **Call upon the Local Council and the State government to support local projects that enhance participation, reinforce tolerance, acceptance, harmony and citizenship.**
- **Call for greater amounts of Community Support Fund to be allocated to community services, research and specific local projects which provide relevant supports for those affected by poker machine gambling and for general community enhancement.**

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - Submission for funding for '**Peninsula on Pokies**' Project.
- Appendix 2 - '**Peninsula on Pokies**' details methodology, brochure and facts sheet.
- Appendix 3 - List of Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service publications.
- Appendix 4 - Growth of gambling and gaming machine usage in Victoria - Table 1.6 page 14, VCGA Report, Fourth Study, December 1997.
- Appendix 5 - Community Support Fund - VCGA Report Fourth Study, page 319, December 1997.
- Appendix 6 - Local Government Responsibilities VCGA Report Fourth Study, page 15, December 1997.
- Appendix 7 - Executive Summary, VCGA Report Fourth Study, December 1997 (Consultants: Department of Human Services Australia, Deakin University and Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research).
- Appendix 8 - Executive Summary Fifth Community Gambling Patterns Survey, VCGA December 1997 (Consultants: Market Solutions and Mark Dickerson).
- Appendix 9 - Legal Forms of Gambling in Victoria by Expenditure, VCGA June 1997.
- Appendix 10- Moreland City Council, Responsible Gambling Strategy Draft March 1998.
- Appendix 11- Queen of Hearts - The Needs of Women with Gambling Problems, Sarah Brown and Louise Coventry, August 1997 (Financial and Consumer Rights Council)
- Recommendations (page 81)
 - Gaming in Australia (pages 5 & 6)
- Appendix 12- Newspaper Clippings re impacts of poker machine gambling.

Appendix 13- The Role of Government in Common *Wealth*, the Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission, April 1996, vol 5, No. 1

Table 1 - Positive Benefits

Table 2 - Negative Impacts

Table 3 - Strategies for Addressing Perceived Negative Impacts

Table 4 - Case Studies

Good Shepherd

Good Works

Appendix 1: A SUBMISSION TO THE SMALL GRANTS FOR RURAL VICTORIA
FROM GOOD SHEPHERD YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICE

GOOD SHEPHERD YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICE

Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service is a community services agency which works in partnership with, and offers support to low income and disadvantaged people living in the inner suburbs of Melbourne, the Western Region and across the Mornington Peninsula Shire which incorporates significant semi-rural and rural areas within its boundaries.

Good Shepherd has a commitment to promoting and building a just society, where all citizens have equity of access to the systems, structures and resources of our society.

Guided by the philosophy of the Good Shepherd Sisters, the Agency believes it has a fundamental obligation to work in solidarity with all those who live in poverty or experience oppression, social deprivation and marginalisation. It also has a commitment to take up social issues on behalf of those with whom it works.

Good Shepherd offers a range of counselling and support services across the Shire from locations in Hastings, Rosebud and Mornington.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

The Mornington Peninsula Shire has a diverse range of towns and communities in urban, semi rural and rural areas.

According to the 1991 ABS Census, there were 103,512 people living within the Mornington Peninsula Shire, which was formed after the amalgamation in the past few years of several smaller Shires, including Hastings, Rosebud and Mornington. More than half the entire population resides in Mornington (16,103), Rosebud (11,210), Rosebud West (3,191), and Hastings (6,652). While there are several other larger communities such as Somerville (9,680), Mount Martha (16,935) and Rye (10,103), Somerville (9,680) and Mt Eliza (8,193) there are five small communities with less than a 1,000 people and eleven others with between 1,000 and 3,000 residents (Appendix 1).

Nearly half of the population is between the ages of 20 and 59 years (49.17%), with more than a quarter being less than 19 (28.9%) and slightly less than a quarter being older than 60 (21.94%) (Appendix 2).

According to a report released recently by Dr Bob Birrell from Monash University, nearly 40% of children in Mornington and Hastings live in poverty, with their families in receipt of incomes less than \$25,000 (Appendix 3). One can assume that a similar figure applies to residents in Rosebud and other parts of the Shire, given that a significant number of residents are on low incomes and rent holiday homes during the off season. This is in stark contrast to the affluent areas of the Shire, and to the holiday makers who frequent the Marinas and resort beaches along the coasts. In a further recent study by Monash University, which highlights the contrasts within the Shire, while 17% of men living in Mornington Peninsula - West, earn more than \$52,000, 27% of men in Mornington Peninsula Shire - South, earn less than \$15,600 (Appendix 4).

Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service Inc.

117 Johnston Street Collingwood 3066 Tel: (03) 9419 5477 Fax: (03) 9416 2340 Email: goodsherp@infoxchange.net.au	1 Church Street Hastings 3915 Tel: (03) 5979 4443 Fax: (03) 5979 4432 Email: goodsherp@peninsula.starway.net.au	354 Main Road West St Albans 3021 Tel: (03) 9364 3200 Fax: (03) 9364 3733 Email: gsyfs@mail.teksupport.net.au	Suite 5/22-28 Fitzroy Street St Kilda 3182 Tel: (03) 9537 1416 Fax: (03) 9525 4829
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Donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible

Unemployment in the area is higher than the state and national averages and is especially high amongst young people (Appendix 5). Many residents across the Shire experience varying degrees of disadvantage due to a lack of services, including welfare and support services, public transport, public/low cost housing and entertainment and recreational activities. High unemployment results in a number of social issues which are exacerbated by the distances between communities and support services. For residents without access to a car, access across the Shire is restricted: hourly buses in and out of towns such as Hastings; trains hours apart to Frankston; the train connection from Frankston to Stony Point is frequently under threat.

GAMBLING ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE SHIRE

Currently within the Mornington Peninsula Shire there are 784 poker machines located in 19 venues across the Shire. This represents 1 machine to every 145 residents. In comparison, the City of Frankston has 541 machines, which represents 1 machine to 199 residents (Appendix 6).

In a recent study by the Financial and Consumer Rights Council called "The Queen of Hearts : The Needs of Women with Gambling Problems, the report stated that "boredom, loneliness and isolation" were the most common reasons given for their gambling activities. Women experiencing financial difficulties as a major consequence of their out-of control gambling, stated that "gambling was initially seen to be a positive in their lives".

Others comments offered when asked why they gamble included: "There's not much to do in (a small country town)". "I'm very lonely and bored - gambling is freedom from home" "The attraction to win some money is very strong given the consumer focus in our society. Gambling offers a possible way to acquire what we can't afford". "Gambling venues provide someone to talk to. They're comfortable....relaxing. it's a meeting place , a sociable place". "There's also the thrill of winning - everyone is happy".

Based on the perceptions of service providers, business and retail people and concerned local residents it would seem that a considerable amount of money is being channelled into poker machines in the Shire by residents. One would imagine that the sentiments expressed by the women in the "Queen of Hearts" study would be echoed by many men and women in the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

There is a BreakEven service for people with gambling difficulties located in Good Shepherd weekly. This service and other similar services in Frankston and other major cities are very busy. G-Line also reports calls from around the state. Good Shepherd staff regularly refer people to these services. Other service providers at Good Shepherd, including financial counsellors, family counsellors, housing workers and consumer workers may sense that their are gambling issues confronting the person seeking assistance, but report that it is only after several visits when the person is at crisis point, that their gambling activities are revealed. Health workers and emergency relief workers have also reported that gambling is a growing problem and impacting on the level of assistance being sought (Appendix 6). Overall workers believe that the gambling is having an increasing negative impact on individuals, families and the social environment. Mr Grant Waters, a Peninsula Community Health Service counsellor, summed this up by saying "I am seeing more and more addicts. They're in crisis and the repercussions put pressure on their relationships, they lose their jobs" (Appendix 6).

Chamber of Commerce representatives from Hastings, Mornington and Rosebud have also been publicly expressed their growing concerns about the economic impact on local communities. "The types of purchases (at shops) have changed. People don't buy the bits and pieces they used to. Now it's buying from catalogues or sales. If it's cheap they'll buy" (Mr Allan Caton, real

estate agent and President of the Mornington Chamber of Commerce). He also said that while bingo has been played for many years, the bingo "phenomenon" could not be compared with poker machines. " Quite a few spent a lot of time but not much money (on bingo), now a few dollars quickly turn into a few hundred dollars (at poker machines)".

Mr Brian Stahl, the President of the Westernport Chamber of Commerce and Industry has called for the formation of a committee " to provide a Creditable Forum for discussion on issues of concern or initiatives which organisations may propose, which will improve the amenity and quality of life enjoyed in our district"(Appendix 9). This Chamber of Commerce were so concerned about the economic downturn in the Hastings community, that they have placed large billboards at each entrance to the shopping centre Calling for residents to " **HELP!!! SHOP LOCALLY SHOP HASTINGS" and "HELP LOCAL TRADERS NEED YOURR HELP TO SURVIVE...WE WILL COMPETE WITH ANY GENUINE PRICE!"** (Appendix 8 and see photos attached) It should be noted that there are a number of shops selling low cost clothing and merchandise to cater for low income people in the area. Also, there are two venues with poker machines in Hastings, one in walking distance of a large housing estate, with a significant number of low income people and the other in the main shopping centre. For people with limited resources, alternative recreation activities are restricted in this area.

Members of the Chamber of Commerce across the Shire, Councillors, Council staff, service providers and residents believe that money once spent in the shopping centre is now going into the poker machines .the economic and social impacts need to be documented and an action plan developed to confront these growing negative impacts.

THE RESEARCHER WORKERS

This application for funding is being made by Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service, involving staff at our Hastings branch and in particular Leanne Farnsworth, the agency's Consumer Advocacy worker and Valerie Ayres-Wearne, one of the agency's Social Policy and Research workers. Members of the Consumer Reference group involving residents living in the Mornington Peninsula will assist these workers. Local Councillors, Members of the Westernport Chamber of Commerce, staff from the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, service providers in the area , business people and retail staff and residents will also be involved in this project.

We envisage that a Project Reference Group will be formed, with representatives from these various groups being invited to participate. The project will encompass an action research methodology.

Good Shepherd staff have conducted a number of research projects, several of which are attached to this application. As a community services agency which has been based in the Hastings area for more than six years, we have gained the respect of residents, service providers and the Shire Council. More recently, we have liased with Members of the Chamber of Commerce in Hastings about their concerns for the ongoing viability of the local shopping area as well as making initial contact with similar representatives in Rosebud and Mornington. We believe we have the credibility, the expertise and the contacts to conduct an impact study of the social and economic effects of gambling within the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

THE PROJECT

The proposed project intends to conduct a formal community consultation to begin to document the economic and social impacts of gambling in the Mornington Peninsula Shire and in particular in the local communities of Hastings, Rosebud and Mornington.

This would involve a number of data gathering processes including:

- * a questionnaire to be filled out by residents. 5 questions regarding their views about poker machines, their position, their impact, suggestion for other recreational activities and such.
- * structured interviews with retailers, service provider, Council staff, Councillors, members of the Chamber of Commerce, police and legal aid lawyers
- * focus groups with community members, service providers, retailers etc.
- * observation of venues after seeking approval by owners
- * consultation with Economic Planning Manager at the Council and the Human Resources Manager
- * focus groups with senior high school students and discussions with teachers and welfare co-ordinators
- * document recreational activities available in the area and discuss these and other options with the community
- * draw on other work done in the local area regarding community needs
- * literature review and identify other Cities where similar work is being done

In this initial study, the main objective would be to identify areas of concern and to document the wide variety of viewpoints and suggestion for action.

It would be anticipated that this project would be the first stage of a larger project which could involve further research, consultation with Council and the State Government about service provision and recreational activities, community education campaigns and increased information.

Funding would be sought from the Community Support Fund for further research.

Planning and an ongoing consultation process would involve the Shire and may be taken up by them in co-operation with others.

The recommendations in the "Queen of Hearts" project need to be considered as this project is formalised and further work is contemplated. The recommendations are included as Appendix 10.

Source : Australian Bureau of Statistics (Appendix 1.)
 1991 Census Sheet1

PROJECTED POPULATION BY ABS POSTCODE DISTRICT, AS AT 30 JUNE 1996.					
Locality	Postcode	Males	Females	Total	
Baxter	3911	1,408	1,392	2,800	
Somerville	3912	4,824	4,856	9,680	
Tyabb	3913	795	814	1,609	
Hastings	3915	3,301	3,351	6,652	
Merricks, Point Leo, Shoreham	3916	708	754	1,462	
Bittern	3918	2,101	1,922	4,023	
Crib Point	3919	983	955	1,938	
HMAS Cerberus	3920	830	293	1,123	
Balnarring	3926	1,091	1,128	2,212	
Somers	3927	496	476	972	
Main Ridge	3928	445	444	889	
Flinders	3929	444	445	889	
Mount Eliza	3930	4,060	4,133	8,193	
Mornington	3931	7,613	8,490	16,103	
Moorooduc	3933	762	743	1,505	
Mount Martha	3934	8,386	8,549	16,935	
Dromana, Safety Beach	3936	3,078	3,328	6,406	
Red Hill	3937	504	470	974	
McCrae	3938	768	816	1,584	
Rosebud	3939	5,324	5,886	11,210	
Rosebud West	3940	1,409	1,782	3,191	
Rye	3941	4,882	5,131	10,013	
Blairgowrie	3942	1,172	1,233	2,405	
Sorrento	3943	712	789	1,501	
Portsea	3944	445	466	911	
Mornington Peninsula Shire	Total	####	58,646	#####	

1444

(Appendix 5)

BRIEFING PAPER

PREPARED FOR THE MINISTER FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS THE HONOURABLE DENNIS NAPTHINE.

4 SEPTEMBER 1996

- More than half the houses on the Southern Peninsula are unoccupied.
- Average income on the Southern Peninsula is less than \$14,000.00.
- 60% of students at the major secondary schools are being supported by funds supplied by the government.
- More than half the students at several local primary schools are in receipt of education maintenance allowance: 680 out of 1180 at Rosebud High School.
- In excess of 70% of all moneys coming onto the Southern Peninsula are in the form of pensions, social security or other benefits.
- In this "tourist" area less than 6% of jobs are directly related to the tourism industry.
- If you are aged between 18 to 25 and are not at school you have about a 50/50 chance of being unemployed.
- In the Rye/Rosebud/Tootgarook area there exist ever increasing numbers of third generation unemployed.
- Public transport to work and education centres (post secondary school) is not an option for most young people.
- Low cost but inappropriate private sector housing attracts those living on social security benefits to this region, especially if they have dependent children.
- In this region if you do not have a full time job by the time you are twenty and do not intend studying full time, then it is unlikely you will be employed full time for an extended period, ever.
- There is no major industry that employs significant numbers of young people on the Southern Mornington Peninsula.
- Low cost housing allied with significant local agency and philanthropic support mechanisms have meant increasing numbers of intellectually disabled persons being relocated to this region. Many of these are expected to self manage their domiciles without assistance from their home agency. No one has a statutory responsibility to assist

Briefpaper

15

- Peninsula wide figures do not reflect the true position on the Southern Mornington Peninsula where the general unemployment rate is nearly twice that of more northerly neighbours. The unemployment rate on the Southern Peninsula approaches 12.5% whereas at Hastings it is at 7.3% (ABS). There is a hidden 3-4% bringing the Southern Peninsula figure close to 18%.
- In the West Rosebud/Tootgarook/Rye areas there are significant percentages of vacant shops. At West Rosebud over 50% of shops are shut. There are 18 empty shops at Rye.
- Since 1988 housing prices have dropped on average 20% on the Southern Peninsula. Some land prices have plummeted 80% on the '88 figure. Many people locally are trapped here as they cannot sell their homes on the current market and owe more than the home is worth to the bank. Nor can they accumulate moneys needed to pay a bond to rent a property where employment prospects exist.
- Police recognise a huge problem with lack of monitoring of homeless/or inappropriately placed young people. Thirteen and fourteen year olds are able to rent and live locally supported by welfare and often theft.
- There is a group of thirteen to fourteen year olds numbering 25-26 that are basically out of control in a culture of sex, drugs and alcohol. They are drifting out of the system, attempts to get them back into schools are met with extreme resistance. There has not been a truancy officer in this region for over twenty years.
- Rosebud Secondary College has an ongoing problem with intruders on the campus. Two or three adult males commonly enter the grounds and have to be requested to leave. Often police are called. School administration remains powerless to stop these incursions.
- In terms of youth employment strategies this region appears to have been put well down the list. 40% is not unrealistic as a youth unemployment figure overall.

Up to 3pc have a gambling problem: report

Age 30.8-97

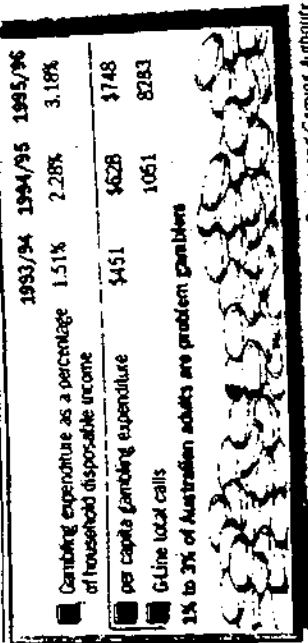
M. WINKLER, American system of reducing the incidence of problem gambling, called the South Oaks Gambling Screen, was inadequate.

A new screening system designed for Victorians should be introduced to increase protection for those at risk and the definition of problem gamblers should be widened, the report said.

"Problem gambling" refers to the situation when a person's gambling activity gives rise to harm to the individual player and/or to his or her family and may extend into the community," the report said.

Research indicated a correlation between growth in per capita gambling spending and growth in problem gambling. Because the per capita gambling spending of Victorians

THE VICTORIAN GAMBLING SCENE



Source: Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority

had more than doubled, problem gambling was likely to have increased over the past three years, the report said.

Ms Webster said churches had been calling for a wider definition of problem gambling for two years.

The Opposition's gaming spokesman, Mr Rob Hulls, said the fact Victoria had more problem gamblers than the US was disturbing.

"In Victoria we have an unlettered promotion of the industry by the Government; so much so that you're made to

feel unvictorian if you don't gamble and that's why the rate is as high as it is," he said.

Mr Hulls and Ms Webster both said the report added further weight to the need to retain the cap of 27,500 electronic gaming machines in the state.

A Government spokesman said the gaming machine cap would be reviewed towards the end of the year, in the light of a range of research, including this report.

He said it was difficult to draw comparisons between countries, but the Government had always maintained problem gamblers were a very small percentage of the population.

The Government had spent \$35 million on programs to help problem gamblers since 1992, he said.

An anti-gaming group said

people addicted to gambling should take advantage of a section in the Casino Control Act that allows them to ban themselves from the casino.

Under the act, people can ask Crown to ban them from the casino. Anyone breaching their own signed undertaking to be excluded risks prosecution and fines of up to \$2000.

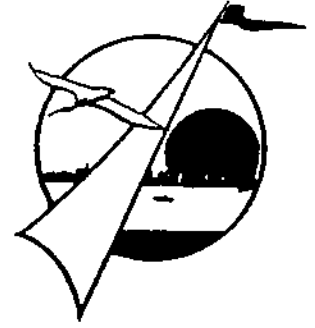
The Crown Casino Action Group recently launched a self-exclusion kit for problem gamblers. It includes a request form seeking a ban from Crown.

The group's supervisor, Mr Adrian Evans, criticised Crown for not making the clause more widely known. But a spokesman for Crown, Mr Gary O'Neill, said it was not true the casino did not advertise self-exclusion. Information about the clause was available in Crown literature.

(Appendix 7)

(Appendix 9)

WESTERNPORT Chamber of Commerce & Industry Inc.



P.O. Box 7, Hastings Victoria 3915
7.5.97

Dear

On behalf of WesternPort Chamber of Commerce and Industry, we write to seek your comment on and support for the establishment of a WesternPort Community Alliance.

Realising the importance of the need for a recognised Body, Representative of the Community at large in the WesternPort Area. The Chamber has called a Public Meeting to be held in the Senior Citizens Hall, Herring St, at 7.30PM on Wednesday 21st May 1997.

It is the express desire of the Chamber that such a committee will provide a Creditable Forum for discussion on issues of concern or initiatives which you or your organisation may propose which will improve the amenity and quality of life enjoyed in our district.

Too often individual efforts are met with mixed results due to a view at all levels of Government that only a "Personal Barrow" is being pushed.

We believe the time is ripe for our local Community to Pool its resources and intellect and to properly Harness our energies to improve our "Lot". Equally we believe the Community has to divest itself of any Political Persuasions or Single Minded interests if it is to gain respect for its Initiatives.

The Establishment of this Community Alliance in no way can be expected to provide a Vehicle for a "Quick Fix".

Enclosed is a copy of the Structure of a Group which has been Formed in another area. It will provide Food for Thought only and we seek your comments and suggestions.

The Meeting on the 21st May will provide you with the opportunity to Publicly Comment or Propose any alternative Structure you may initiate. In the event you would like to take the opportunity to present your Ideas, Please give us prior knowledge so an Orderly and Productive meeting can be arranged.

We Thank you in anticipation for taking the time to read this Letter and its enclosure and Trust you will see merit in our initiative and contribute in a positive manner to help us to achieve our goal on behalf of the WesternPort Community.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian L. Stahl".

Brian L. Stahl
President W.C.C.I.

(Appendix 10)

Summary of Recommendations

A summary of the recommendations is presented here. More detailed information about each is contained in the previous section.

1. That the ceiling of 30,000 electronic gaming machines (EGMs) across Victoria be maintained. Further, that EGMs currently located in shopping centres be removed, through relocation of EGMs away from shopping centres or non-renewal of gaming licences to the relevant parties, whichever is earlier.
2. That the Victorian State Government, as a matter of urgency, produce a comprehensive and integrated policy on gaming and problem gambling, which is based on harm minimisation principles such as adopted with the alcohol and tobacco industries.
3. That providers of support services to women who have experienced problems with gambling be better informed about complementary services in order to facilitate cross referral processes and that such services be collocated wherever possible.
4. That the Victorian State Government commit to a sustained and integrated community education campaign which is specifically sensitive to the needs of women who gamble. Such a campaign should be designed to inform the community of the potential negative impacts of gambling and advise how assistance may be accessed.
5. That the current review of the Victorian Gaming Industry's Codes of Practice be continued, incorporating the input of government, consumer and industry representatives, until such time as the Codes meet all benchmarks of fair trading codes of conduct as proposed by the Commonwealth of Australia (October 1996) and the Independent Complaints Resolution Process meets the benchmarks for industry-based customer dispute resolution schemes (November 1996).
6. That the Victorian State Government set aside funds for a series of pilot projects to:
 - a. conduct extensive analyses of the recreational and social needs of women living in those areas with the highest per capita ratio of EGMs.
 - b. establish alternative recreational programs/services in accordance with these needs.
7. That financial institutions review their lending practices with a view to increasing staff awareness and sensitivity to gambling-related issues, and minimising the incidence of inappropriate credit provision to women with gambling problems.
8. That processes for data collection and analysis of Victorian State Government funded problem gambling support and financial counselling services, be immediately reviewed by the Department of Human Services and that such data be made available annually, commencing in October, 1997 to problem gambling field workers and researchers to raise their awareness and facilitate best practice in community education and research.
9. That further research be undertaken to determine definitions and the incidence of problem gambling in non-English speaking communities, and to identify, and find strategies for overcoming, any barriers to accessing support for problem gambling which may be experienced by women from a non-English speaking background.
10. That further research be undertaken to identify the nature and extent of inducements and subsidies to gamble and other bounties used by the gaming industry, and their effect on women who gamble. Further, that strategies be developed that minimise and/or regulate their use.