

THE SUNSHINE COAST COMMUNITY SERVICES COUNCIL INC
14 Maud St Nambour 4560 ph. 0754 760 660 fax 0754 760005

Gambling Inquiry
Productivity Commission
PO Box 80
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

10th September, 1999

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the members of the Sunshine Coast Community Services Council Inc. we wish to raise our concerns with the feminisation of gambling and its deleterious impact on families and the community in general here on the Sunshine Coast.

The Productivity Draft Report has shown that Queensland has the second highest percentage of problem gamblers per capita - more than 65,000 or 2.5% of the population. Here on the Sunshine Coast, most pubs and clubs have poker machines. The newspapers regularly carry features praising the worthy contributions the clubs make to the community and the employment they provide. Every club or pub that one enters exhorts you to gamble. Local radio and television advertise poker machines extensively. Children are used in the voiceovers for particular advertisements encouraging parents to come in and play the pokies while the kids are minded. Newspapers regularly feature various clubs and poker machine payouts and jackpots but never the takings. In the meantime, welfare agencies are faced with an increasing demand for food and financial assistance that they are often unable to provide and more often than not it is women seeking assistance.

There is limited information on the social cost to the community of the burgeoning problem of women and poker machine addiction. This Productivity Commission enquiry has partly revealed the extent of the problem:

"The feminisation of gambling has occurred through the widespread availability of gaming machines. In the past, problem gambling was usually a problem almost isolated to men...the male share of problem gamblers nationally has dropped to 50%" (Australia's Gambling Industries Draft Report 1999, 6.51).

One of our member organisations, Break Even Relationships Australia provides a counselling service for problem gamblers on the Sunshine Coast. Data collected over the last five years on problem gamblers shows a very clear trend emerging:

- In 1995, men outnumbered women problem gamblers 3:1
- By 1999 the ratio was 1:1
- In 1995, 31% of problem gamblers used poker machines.
- By 1999 the percentage had risen to 80%

Women now equal men as problem gamblers and a further reason for this sudden increase is the increased access and availability of poker machines. Why have women taken to gaming machines in such numbers?

Many women on the Sunshine Coast are isolated, having retired here or moved away from family or networks. Single parent families are particularly vulnerable as women seek companionship and social contact. Clubs promote themselves as family friendly venues, providing many non gambling related activities to attract customers. Free tea and coffee are often available at the poker machines. Alcoholic drinks are readily available with waiter service direct to your machine, a service not available elsewhere on the premises.

Regular, continuous play gambling has been identified as being a determinant of problem gambling. There is a link between continuous play combined with intermediate enforcement and problem gambling. The rhythmic nature of the gaming machines has been recognised by problem gamblers themselves as having a hypnotic effect, reducing their capacity to think clearly about what they are doing, or to stop.

There are numerous strategies that could be applied to alleviate this increasing social problem without penalising those who enjoy a flutter.

- Increased space around machines would allow people to interact more.
- Removal of alcohol service from the machine area.
- Detailing wins and losses in money stakes, not credits.
- Highlighting total monies waged alongside jackpots and other winnings.
- Removal of cash note acceptors and ATMs from gambling areas

The social impacts of widespread gambling are profound. The introduction of some consumer protection mechanisms are necessary to protect the more vulnerable members of the community. Gambling is now enshrined as a socially accepted practice and consumers need to be protected.

Yours sincerely



LOUISE PEACH
Chairperson

N.B. This submission was ratified by those present at the Sunshine Coast Community Services Council Inc September quarterly forum held at Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre on Tuesday 14th September 1999 (please see attached attendance list).

Members

17 Sep 1999

NAME	ORGANISATION	Member
Lee Banheld	SCRHC	Yes
Louise Peach	Naren's Infolink	Yes
Elsie Franks	SASS	Yes
Belinda Hortle	LIONS EMERGENCY ACCOM. CENTRE	Yes.
Lyn Sandaugh	Sunshine Sanctuary	Yes.
Red Smith	MENDS	No
DEBILIS FOSTER	LIFELINE SUNSHINE COAST	YES
KERRIE HOUSSMAN	ST VINCENT DE PAUL MARCCOCHYDORÉ	YES
Linda Schoer	Caloundra Aboriginal Corp.	NO
Karol Battams	SCRHC	Absolutely
Mayolie Schouten	MNC.	" "
Jeanette Elliott	Multicultural - S/C based @ MNC	Yes
Lyn MAVER	MNC.	No Yes
Hurriet Babacan	USC	NO
ANDREA BINAS	DISCOVERY COMMUNITY FOCUS.	NO
Deb McANELLY	Community Focus	Yes
SARAH HOCKING	SUNSHINE COAST INFO. Sunrise + Indig Health Support	YES
MS Dale Scott	6 MAUD ST NAMBOUR (SCIA)	NO.
Sue Griffiths	Niassa Youth Service	Yes
Sharon Blaney	PO BOX 785 M'DOLE	Yes
Pam O'Brien	Relationships Aust. O.	Yes
Margaret Smith - student	Columbus Youth + Community Centre.	

calcomm.squirrel.com.au

1998/1999 ACHIEVEMENTS

Research Project and Policy Development on the Impact of Competitive Tendering on human services involving 80 individuals and groups from the Sunshine Coast.

Formal submission and evidence given at the Senate Select Enquiry into the Socio-Economic Impact of National Competition Policy on Community Services.

Public Transport Satisfaction Research Project.

Public Comment on Poverty, the GST and its effect on the unemployed and the financially disadvantaged.

I WOULD LIKE TO JOIN the Sunshine Coast Community Services Council Inc.

NAME :

ORGANISATION :

ADDRESS :

PHONE :

FAX :

EMAIL :

I enclose \$10 membership

Please forward to :

The Secretary
Sunshine Coast Community Services Council Inc.

C/- 14 Maud Street, NAMBOUR 4560

Ph : 07 54760555

Fax : 07 54760005

Email : sunhouse@babe.net.au

The Sunshine Coast Community Services Council

needs your

participation and involvement.

If you would like to work with us please join.

Membership \$10 per person per year.

This is a very small investment in the future of the many thousands of people who access and use community services on the Sunshine Coast.

SEND YOUR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION TODAY

DO NOT DELAY

Sunshine Coast Community Services Council
Inc

Sunshine Coast
Community
Services
Council
Inc.

Postal Address
c/- 14 Maud Street, Nambour, 4560

For further information contact :

• Louise Peach, Chairperson
Ph : 07 54443876

• Lee Banfield, Secretary
Ph : 07 54760555

The Sunshine Coast Community Services Council Inc is an independent incorporated organisation.

It aims to promote and encourage a planned and coordinated provision of community services and foster cooperation and support between community services.

General Issues

- HEALTH HOUSING
- POVERTY EDUCATION
- EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRY
- JUSTICE TRANSPORT

Priority Groups

Priority is given to socially or economically disadvantaged people and groups. This includes but is not limited to women, children, young people, indigenous Australians, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, people with mental health conditions, people with disabilities, and older people.

Functions

- *To facilitate and auspice emerging community organisations.
- *To lobby for appropriate and responsive action to meet identified community needs on the Sunshine Coast.
- *To advocate on community sector industry issues.
- *To facilitate and promote coordinated planning for service provision for the Sunshine Coast.
- *To act as a clearing house for information on local, regional, state or national issues.
- *To develop and implement strategies addressing local, regional, state or national issues that affect community services on the Sunshine Coast.
- *To acknowledge and promote the contribution of community services to the health and well being of the community.
- *To facilitate community education and awareness of issues affecting the community.
- *To act as a peak body for the community services sector on the Sunshine Coast.
- *To act as an information sharing and networking forum.

Priority issues identified for 1999/2000

HOUSING

Particularly around affordable housing options for short, medium & long term accommodation.

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

A continued commitment to the development of effective community services provision utilising collaborative planning and service development frameworks

TRANSPORT

To continue advocating for better public transport.

MEETINGS

The Management Committee meets monthly. Quarterly forums of all members are held on the second Tuesday of the month.