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From: Jim Stewart [jimstewart@one.net.au]
Sent: 21 October 1999 14:55
To: gambling@pc.gov.au
Subject: FEWER PROBLEM GAMBLERS AND FEWER REGULATORS by more encouragement for community and voluntary groups

This is being sent after reflecting on the Commission's Brisbane hearing last month, and reading 'Gambling revenue sought for treatment' in the Weekend Australian, plus the following in a recent on-line edition of 'The Economist'.

"Japanese investors will be able to play the market from the comfort of their armchairs. Owners of Dreamcast videogames consoles equipped for Internet access will be offered online share-trading after a deal between Sega, the consoles' manufacturer, and Nomura Securities."

However well-intentioned, any establishment of (involuntary) tax-funded treatment of compulsive gamblers can lead to essentially the same problem we see with the 'treatment' of aboriginals. After 30 years, it took Noel Pearson to identify the 'poison' still being administered to countless people labelled and wrongly treated as inherently unable to 'grow up'.

A real factor in these failures is that it relieves those most directly involved in exploiting and recruiting compulsive drinkers/gamblers etc of their 'Duty of Care'. As I said at the Brisbane hearing this is potentially a very potent motivator for gambling 'industry' operators (particularly since recent successful tobacco claims). Please ensure these lessons are applied to any recommendations to solve 'gambling addiction'.

'The Economist' story supports concerns about online gambling and online 'trading' as long term cause of serious 'gambling addiction'. The best defence is to prepare young people while still at school, and I'd like to add the Sydney Futures Exchange (www.sfe.com.au) as a potential party to support and facilitate projects for evaluation by networking groups formed from participants in the inquiry.

Finally is it possible to get contact details of other participants before the final report?

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