

NETBALL goal is responsible gambling

GM GAMBLING MATTERS

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Netball Victoria and the Victorian Government have embarked on a partnership to address the important social issues relating to gambling. Through a variety of activities being held across the State, Netball Victoria is playing an important role in educating young people about responsible gambling and the impact of problem gambling on people's lives.

This partnership is an opportunity to communicate the 'Think of what you're really gambling with' message and create awareness of the help and support available to people impacted by problem gambling.

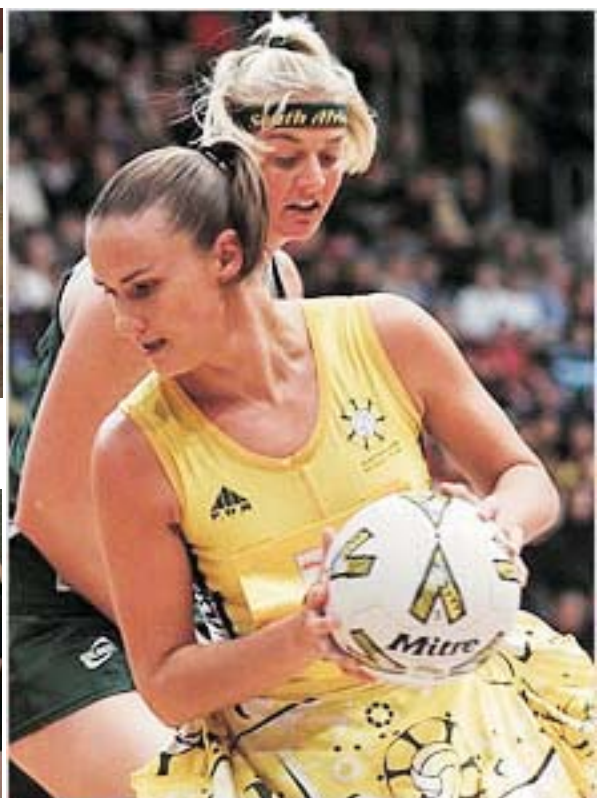
In the Southern Metropolitan Region thus far, 4 netball skills development clinics have been conducted at schools in Rosebud, Parkdale and Springvale South. Over 150 students have received messages regarding gambling responsibly, increasing involvement in alternative recreational activities and knowing where to go for assistance if required.

As the target group for the clinics and the Gambler's Help presentation was high school students, it was important to remind students of the resources they can readily access, for example, teachers or school student welfare officers. Information regarding Gambler's Helpline: 1800 156 789 and the website was also provided.

Gambler's Help Southern Community Educator, Michelle Brown spoke with the students before they embarked on their netball clinic with either Sharelle McMahon (Phoenix) or Rebecca Strachan (Kestrels).



Sharelle McMahon leads one of the netball skills development clinics in Southern Region



Australian Netball Captain at the 2006 Commonwealth Games, Sharelle McMahon



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GAMBLER'S HELP™ 1800 156 789

SOUTHERN

Self-Help Pilot: Phase 2 Success

The cover story in the July 05 edition of GM was about the encouraging results of the Gambler's Help Southern Self-Help Pilot Project. Nearly one year on, the Community Education Team is excited to report on the great success of Phase 2 of the project.

The target group throughout the project has been people who may be experiencing gambling-related harm or may want to change their gambling behaviour but who, for various reasons, do not access counselling services. Phase 1 trialled two advertising messages promoting the "free Action Pack" and Phase 2 ran with the more effective of the two messages

Have you spent more money on gambling than you intended? Take a free Action Pack to help you do something about it Also available online at www.ghsouthern.org.au

The key difference between the phases was the method of distributing the Action Pack, which is essentially a plain envelope containing self-help material. In Phase 1, local newspaper advertisements were placed and people could either telephone for an Action Pack or access it online. Phase 2 took hard copies of the Action Pack out into the community for trials of four weeks duration.

Seventeen "self-service" display stands were tested in thirteen locations in the southern metropolitan region. The host organisations were diverse - local government offices, gaming venues, a health service, a pharmacy, a neighbourhood centre, an ethno-specific agency and a video rental shop.

159 hard copies of the Action Pack were taken from the display stands during the trial period, equating to 72% of the total number of packs supplied to the host organisations. 11 people noted the display stand reference to online availability and accessed the Action Pack via the GHS website.

A small number of Action Pack recipients returned the reply-paid response forms. They provided positive feedback about the content of the resource and changes to their gambling it had prompted. One person commented that the information had "changed my life".

On the strength of the Phase 2 results, GHS will seek to expand the Action Pack displays into an ongoing program across the region.

The report on the Self-Help Pilot Project - Phase 2 details and discusses the project process and results. It is available from the Gambler's Help Southern website at www.ghsouthern.org.au, under Portals - Projects Portal.

GHS sincerely thanks all of the organisations who contributed time, resources and display space to this project (see report for details). Organisations in the southern metropolitan region who are interested in hosting an Action Pack display stand in the future can contact Tracey Collins on 9575 5311 or at t.collins@ghsouthern.org.au

VCGR UPDATE

Gambler's Help Southern was represented at two VCGR hearings regarding applications for new venues in the City of Casey this month.

Gambler's Help Southern opposed both applications, for venues at Lynbrook and Cranbourne East, due to the high number of machines already in and around Cranbourne and the issues that gaming machines continue to cause for the local community.

These applications are being carefully assessed by the Commission with both adjourned for additional hearing dates beyond the proceedings that have already occurred in each case.

Gambling Matters will report on the outcomes when they are announced.

Gaming Venue Applications

June 2006

Lynbrook Tavern
New Venue - 80 machines
Hearing Adjourned

**Springvale Football Club - Casey Fields
Cranbourne East**
New Venue - 95 Machines
Hearing Adjourned

"Life after Gambling" DVD

On 22 June the Council of Gambler's Help Services (COGHS) launched "Life after Gambling". The DVD is the end product of a year long video project and includes 5 short stories from Gambler's Help clients about their experience of gambling, getting help and recovery. GHS counsellor, Zoi Penoglou, also talks about counselling and what can be expected when visiting a Gambler's Help service.

For a free copy of the DVD, contact COGHS on lifeaftergambling@gamblershelp.org

MOYRA'S REAL LIFE STORY

Moyra took part in the GHS Client Participation Project.

Gambling Matters thanks Moyra for sharing this part of her Real Life Story.

For the full text version go to <http://www.ghsouthern.org.au/mos/content/view/318/28/>

On what made her keen to be involved in this project...

I really think I got pretty angry - at myself, firstly, then with the situation with the bank that I got involved with. I've never owed money, never - I've always paid cash. I just couldn't believe that it was so easy - it was unbelievably easy!

On things going bad...

I think when I saw my doctor and I realised it wasn't right. I wasn't feeling happy about it, but I wasn't stopping. It was like a vicious circle and it was making me more depressed...I just think I should have reached out, but sometimes you can't. I was sitting in one of the pokie venues and I had a bit of dinner and thought, "My God...I've done a hundred bucks. I'm just pressing a machine. What the hell am I doing?" I contacted my doctor the next morning.

On debt...

I was pretty lucky in some ways - well I'm not, because I've got a debt, but I'll take care of that - I didn't spend all the money that I owe on pokies.

I would go to an ATM occasionally, towards the end...that's how stupid I got to the end because I put my purse in the car, where I was leaving it at home...I had this credit card, but of course...the statements are not with you all the time, so you don't think about it, you just use it. And I got hooked into so much, and I thought, "Oh yeah, I'll just go and grab it, and I'll pay that with the card", forgetting that eventually I had to pay this back. I was doing the minimum and then I got sick. And of course I couldn't pay a minimum, so this was about a month after I saw my GP and had come here.

On financial counselling and dealing with the bank...

What was I weighing up? To get rid of this debt which I owed...a way out. In a lot of ways it was very good with your financial counsellor...because she gave me options and gave me some books. And the next time I saw her I said, "I haven't read them"... It's too much...I had to accept that "Hello! You've got yourself in this situation, now how're you going to get out of it? Because they were harassing me, this particular bank - at work, at home - I had already rung them and explained to them my situation. That only seemed to make it worse, so I was quite pleased when I got here and the financial counsellor said, "Would you like me to phone them?" And I said, "That would be wonderful", because that pressure was not helping me clear-think...

We discussed a lot of other things about bankruptcy or doing this option or the other option and I said, "How about we do a payment plan with them?" ...We balanced up what I had to pay out to live on and all that sort of stuff

- and that was a shock. ...But she helped me to get through that...You do feel so lonely and I don't know about a lot of people, but I know how I felt - disgusted with myself. I've brought up two children on my own. It was a real shock for me to accept. And then the bank decided, "No" - and came back with another offer...I said "Well, I may as well go bankrupt." Then I thought, "No, I don't want to do that. I do want to pay it back, but I just can't do it the way they want me to do it." I understand I borrowed - I'm not stupid...So we finally got to an agreement with them. They offered for me to get a personal loan from them...I cut my card up...I have my little debit card and I don't carry it with me - my little ATM one - so I don't carry it with me now. I plan my shopping again...

On managing gambling...

I've (only) had two days, but I've stopped. I actually went in and got myself a drink and went, like I usually used to do, straight to a machine. Didn't even have a cigarette or relax after work or anything. I realised - I'm sitting there once again and I'm thinking to myself, "What are you doing here? You haven't been here." And people were saying to me, "Haven't seen you for a long time - where have you been?" That hit me - it was like a real awakening...

And the second time that I went - I didn't handle work really well. My boss can be a bit difficult - he has a bit of a sting...I thought, "I'm not taking this **** from you anymore! ...So anyway, I didn't decide that then of course, I was just really upset. So off I went to get a drink. I wasn't thinking of the pokies, actually, when I left...just that I wanted to relax and think how I'm going to handle the situation with him because it's been going on for too many years. So off I went, grabbed a drink and "Boom!"...in I went, straight into the pokies. Before I knew it I'd done, probably, 150. Then once again it was just like a lightning bolt, "Hello, what are you doing here! This is not sorting anything out!"

...So they're the two times I've been back, but I've become more aware now of what is triggering me in some way - with the depression - and help from my doctor, who's been excellent and here, it's really helped. I've discussed it with one of my sons...

And have you got a "word from the wise"?

That's a hard one because it affects everyone differently, doesn't it? I think, don't judge yourself, do something about it. When you're at that point and you're starting to question yourself, don't do what I did - lock yourself in and think that you're the worst person in the world...and getting yourself down. All I can say is, just grab it by the ****, if I'm allowed to say that, shake 'em and do something straight away. Write it down and keep writing it down for yourself...It's hard to do, on one hand, but it's not that hard if you're starting to query yourself. Stop!

A big thanks to Frankston Dolphins Football Club.

When Gambler's Help Southern was unable to continue as a sponsor for the 2006 season, FDFC offered to retain our signage at no cost. This will help to keep "Gambler's Help" in the minds of both spectators and television audiences.



GAMBLER'S HELP SOUTHERN STARTS SATURDAY MORNING SERVICE AT EAST BENTLEIGH

Gambler's Help Southern is extending its existing after hours service by providing both counselling and financial counselling sessions on Saturday mornings at Bentleigh Bayside Community Health Service. Session times will be from 9am until 1 pm each Saturday.

Bentleigh and Springvale hold a group program on Monday and Tuesday night respectively, there are some individual counselling sessions available at Parkdale and Frankston has a late financial counselling session each week.

As is the case with all service provisions, the after hours service will be managed by Gambler's Health Southern central intake. To make an appointment, please call our intake worker on 9575 5353.

Financial Counselling Advice:

New income support rules start 1 July 2006

The new income support rules may apply to anyone receiving a Disability Support Pension from Centrelink. Most clients would have received a letter by now explaining the changes.

You are not affected by the new rules if your Disability Support Pension was granted on or before 10 May 2005 so your payment stays unchanged.

But if your Disability Support Pension was granted after 10 May 2005, your capacity to work will be reviewed, usually two years after you were granted a pension. At this review, your capacity to work will be assessed under the new rules and, if you are able to work, Centrelink will determine the right support services to assist you.

People with disabilities applying for income support on or after 1 July 2006, who are unable to work 15 or more hours a week may be eligible for a Disability Support Pension. If you can work 15 or more hours a week, you may be eligible for a different payment, usually Newstart or Youth Allowance.

Centrelink can give you more information or contact your local Financial Counselling Agency to discuss further.

Gambler's Help Southern provides free, confidential, professional support for gamblers, their families and others affected by gambling.

Services available include:

- Counselling for gambling related issues
- Financial Counselling
- Multicultural Services
- Community Education
- Professional Development

We can also provide a wide range of resources and information such as:

- Self-help guides
- Information Sessions
- Training Sessions
- Brochures and Cards
- Posters
- Advice on gambling and gaming issues

All staff are qualified professionals in their area of expertise and have experience dealing with gambling issues.

If you have concerns about your gambling, or the gambling of a family member or friend, call Gambler's Help Southern Intake between 9.30 and 4.30 on 9575 5353 or the Gambler's Helpline which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 1800 156 789.

GAMBLER'S HELP™ 1800 156 789

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