

PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION REVISITS GAMBLING

GM GAMBLING MATTERS

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The Productivity Commission is once again preparing to undertake a national investigation of gambling. The process was set in motion earlier this year when a meeting of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) determined to arrange for an update on the 1999 public inquiry. Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs, Chris Bowen, made the formal request to the Commission on 24 November.

The last Productivity Commission inquiry, "Australia's Gambling Industries", explored the social and economic impacts of gambling across Australia. The new inquiry can revisit the range of issues covered then and is also likely to make an assessment of the harm minimisation measures introduced during the last decade.

Individuals and organisations who would like to be kept up to date about the inquiry, or to be involved, are invited to register their interest – either online or via email, fax or post. The levels of involvement available are:

- Being kept informed of the study's progress.
- Making a submission to the study.
- Discussing that submission at a public hearing.

Visit the Gambling Inquiry page (<http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/gambling-2009>) on the Productivity Commission website for more information.

Sources:

<http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/gambling-2009>

http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2008-07-03/index.cfm#gambling

What is the Productivity Commission?

"The Productivity Commission is the Australian Government's independent research and advisory body on a range of economic, social and environmental issues affecting the welfare of Australians. Its role, expressed simply, is to help governments make better policies in the long term interest of the Australian community."

Source:<http://www.pc.gov.au/about-us>

Key dates

- Issues paper - release December 2008
- Initial submissions - due end March 2009
- Draft report - release July/August 2009
- Public hearings - September/October 2009
- Final report - 24 November 2009

Source:<http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/gambling-2009>

Further reading:

- A National Snapshot of Harm Minimisation Strategies

Source:<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/about/facts/programs/gambling/default.htm>

- Gambling in Australia: are we balancing the equation?

This 2007 presentation by Gary Banks, the Chairman of the Productivity Commission, recaps the findings of the 1999 inquiry and gives his impressions of developments at 3 and 8 years on from that date.

Source:http://www.pc.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/67166/cs20070819.pdf



gambler'shelp
1800 858 858

www.problemgambling.vic.gov.au

www.ghsouthern.org.au

gambler'shelpsouthern
9575 5353

NAME CHANGE FOR POKIE MAKERS

The Australasian Gaming Machine Manufacturers Association (AGMMA) has been renamed the Gaming Technologies Association, or GTA. The change was announced in August by CEO, Ross Ferrars, who said: "Ever since the first 'Gaming Machine' appeared in the late 19th century, the technology of gaming has progressively evolved. Recent dramatic changes in computer technologies have turned this evolution into a revolution – delivering significant new benefits to players and venues alike."

"As a representative of some of the world's leading gaming technology suppliers in the Asia Pacific region, AGMMA recognises that it is time to change our name to one which best reflects the industry's future direction."

Since it's rebranding, the GTA has released a number of media statements and also the findings of a commissioned study:
September 2008

- "called for a new approach to the development of research and regulations controlling the gaming industry in Australia."

November 2008

- "welcomed the Inquiry Report of the Senate Community Affairs Committee, which recommended that consideration of recent Bills introduced by Senator Fielding not be passed at this time."

- released a briefing paper prepared by the Centre for International Economics which evaluated the economic impacts of removing gaming machines from clubs and pubs.

December 2008

- launched a "new online presentation of information about gaming machines."

Source: <http://www.agmma.com/index.html>; Home, Press Releases and Research pages.

VIC. Wagering & Betting Licence Up For Grabs

Companies hopeful of competing for the Victorian Wagering & Betting Licence have until 16 February 2009 to register their interest with the State Government. Shortlisted applicants will then be invited to apply for the licence, which will commence in 2012 and last for a period of 12 years. A similar registration of interest process has already been completed for the post-2012 Keno licence.

According to the Victorian Government Tenders System, the wagering and betting licence is intended to provide:

- "the authority to operate wagering and betting services (including the only authority to conduct wagering and betting via a Victorian retail network)
- the option to establish and operate a Betting Exchange to support account based betting (subject to the passing of a proposed legislative amendment)
- the authority to offer approved simulated racing games."

The wagering and betting licence will no longer be linked with a gaming licence, as is the case under the current system.

Sources:

<http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/minister-for-gaming/call-for-interest-in-wagering-and-betting-licence.html>

http://www.tenders.vic.gov.au/domino/web_notes/etenders/etdrpublishing.nsf?OpenDOJ FACT SHEET: Wagering Licence Arrangements Post 2012

<http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/minister-for-gaming/registrations-for-keno-licence-commence.html>



Victorian Commission
for Gambling Regulation

UPDATE

Gaming Venue Applications

Tooraddin & District Sports Club Tooraddin

Increase from 42 to 54 machines

**Hearing adjourned at the
request of the applicant,
to a date to be fixed**

Frankston RSL Club Frankston

Increase from 77 to 90 machines

**Granted in part
- 5 machines approved**

Gambling and Alcohol

According to research by the Victorian Problem Gambling Research and Treatment Centre, 50% of people with a gambling problem are also engaged in "likely hazardous alcohol use". In relative terms, they are 4.3 times more likely to do so than non-problem gamblers.

(The screens involved were the Canadian Problem Gambling Index and the WHO AUDIT alcohol use tool.)

Source:

Shane A. Thomas & Alun C. Jackson, 2008, "Risk and Protective Factors, Depression and Comorbidities in Problem Gambling"

Gambling and drinking have lots in common...legal, socially accepted, readily available (often together), enjoyed by many. Both can also significantly alter the way individuals think, feel or behave – and lead to problems which jeopardise health, finances and relationships.

Take care with both gambling and drinking - especially over the Christmas season, when emotions can be high. Be alert to signs of using them to cope with stress & plan for other ways of "chilling out".



The longest serving Gambler's Help staff member is leaving us this year. Chris Freethy has resigned from his position as General Manager - Corporate at Bentleigh Bayside Community Health Service. This role is responsible for Gambler's Help Southern. He will take up the position of Executive Officer at the Council of Gambler's Help Services. Chris has been acting in this role on a part time basis since March 2008. Originally employed as a psychologist in the community health counselling team in 1987, Chris has successfully led the southern region problem gambling service

since the inaugural submission for Break Even Southern in 1994. He has held the position of General Manager for the past three years and has acted as BBCHS Chief Executive Officer on many occasions. Chris is highly regarded by the government, gaming industry and service sector. This is a sad loss for our program but an enormous gain for the Gambler's Help sector which will benefit from his expertise, skills and extensive knowledge of the field. We wish him every success and know he'll continue to have involvement with the program.

Where's the Magic?



**“Cross my fingers, buckle my toe,
Use the right finger and up come the rows...”**

Most of us have been involved with ritual at some time in our lives – whether it was within a religious context or some other form of festive celebration or ceremony.

Rituals have been part of humanity for many hundreds of years. They involve an action, or series of actions, which are repeated in a particular way in certain situations. Objects, too, can be a part of ritual. Ritual, and the symbology that accompanies it, can provide meaning to life and also contribute to us feeling a sense of belonging and being a part of a wider community or belief.

Now superstition is another matter. Although it also involves repetition and patterns of behaviour, it's often aimed at attracting good luck and avoiding bad luck. Superstition can mean, for example, that we avoid stepping on the cracks in a footpath - not good for your mother's back! Don't walk under a ladder – it's bad luck too. Does that mean if we walk on the road to avoid a ladder which has been placed on the footpath, we can consider ourselves luckier? Or how about the one where we have to avoid black cats crossing our path? What other superstitions are you aware of?

Many people engage in superstitious behaviour in the hope of bringing themselves luck - such as having a win on the pokies, or bringing in their favourite horse or greyhound. Is this something you have done?

Has it worked?

Sometimes we busy ourselves in this sort of behaviour when we feel anxious, or feel that life may be getting a little out of control. With superstition we may have beliefs around a particular gesture or habit that we think will bring us a win.

But in the scheme of things, superstition has little to do with the actual event and it doesn't really give us a sense of belonging. It only has to do with the way we think about something. What we are actually doing is engaging in “magical thinking”.

So it is useful to challenge this magical thinking. Where is the evidence that if we “cross our fingers” our numbers will come up or our favourite horse will win. Does “crossing our fingers” really have control over the event? When we find ourselves using this magical thinking it is useful to examine it - to question the reality of an outcome and to ascertain whether the position of our fingers will really bring the desired result.

A great way of checking this is to use a gambling diary, like the one shown below. Fill in the columns about how you were thinking and feeling at the time and whether you won or lost. Think about the times you may have muttered a verse, crossed your fingers, or engaged in some other form of activity at the machine, track or TAB – has the magical thinking really influenced the outcome? Over time, the diary will reveal all.

Gambling Diary - draw up the table below in a notebook and record the times when you have gambled or thought about it. What were you thinking/feeling? What had happened before? What happened afterwards?

<i>Day</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Gambled (G) or Tempted to gamble (T)</i>	<i>Thoughts/ feelings about gambling</i>	<i>What has been happening in hours/ day before?</i>	<i>Other observations</i>

Pokies post-2012 Govt. plans revealed

The State Government has released details of its proposed regulatory framework for gaming machines post-2012, via the "Gambling Regulation Exposure Draft Bill".

Earlier this year, following the Gaming Machine Licence Review, the Government announced a new-look structure for the gaming industry. Hotels and clubs would bid for 10 year gaming machine entitlements, owning and operating pokies directly. The role of "machine operator" (currently held by Tatts Group and Tabcorp) would vanish.

At the time of this announcement, the detail of how this approach would be operationalised was in the "to be determined" basket. A companion document to the Exposure Draft Bill, the "Exposure Draft Bill Explanatory Statement", fills in most of the detail. It outlines the provisions in the draft in plain language and is intended to assist a public comment process. Sections in the Explanatory Statement include:

- What is a Gaming Machine Entitlement?
- Bidder Requirements (Eligibility to bid)
- Payment for Entitlements
- Entitlement Ownership Restrictions
- Tax
- Independent Monitoring

Feedback is being sought from both industry and community stakeholders by 13 January 2009.

Interested parties may elect to comment on specific provisions of the bill – gaming machine arrangements, monitoring arrangements and responsible gambling. Information on how to participate in the feedback process is included in the Explanatory Statement.

Sources:

<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/DOJ+Internat/resources/file/ebcd3e423d02df5/ExposureDraftBillExplanatoryStatement.pdf>

<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/DOJ+Internat/Home/Gambling+and+Racing/Gaming/JUSTICE++Gambling+Regulation+Exposure+Draft+Bill>



Clinical Research Partnership Program

A new Victorian problem gambling research partnership was launched on 10 December by Gaming Minister, Tony Robinson. The program will see the Problem Gambling Research and Treatment Centre, itself a partnership between Melbourne and Monash universities, join with metropolitan Gambler's Help Services in the City, Eastern, Northern, Southern and Western regions.

"The Clinical Research Partnerships program will provide a platform for developing collaborative research projects and will support clinicians undertaking advanced training in problem gambling treatment," Mr. Robinson said.

Source:

<http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/minister-for-gaming/universities-and-help-services-partner-to-tackle-problem-gambling.html>

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
- Community Education & Development
- Professional Development
- Multicultural Services

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

- Self-help guides
- Materials for families & friends
- Brochures, posters & other display materials
- Personal stories
- Statistics & research
- Materials in community languages

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 am and 4.30 pm on 9575 5353 or the Gambler's Helpline which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 1800 858 858.

**WANTED - FEEDBACK
ON GM: GAMBLING MATTERS
Go to www.ghsouthern.org.au
and follow the FEEDBACK link**

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