

**Submission
No 14**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF GAMBLING

Organisation: CatholicCare

Date received: 7/03/2014



Submission to the Select Committee on the Impact of Gambling

March 2014

Contact: Mr Bernard Boerma
Chief Executive Officer

CatholicCare
Level 10/133 Liverpool Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Ph:
Mobile:

Email:

Contents

Introduction	3
e) The role and capacity of gambling industry staff to address problems caused by gambling	5
i) Gambling education including school based programs and measures to reduce the exposure of children and young people to gambling activity.....	9
j) The adequacy and effectiveness of problem gambling help services and programs, including service standards, qualifications and funding of chaplaincy, counselling and treatment services.....	10
m) Other relevant matters	14
Summary.....	15

The Director
Select Committee on the Impact of Gambling
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

To the Director,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Legislative Council Select Committee Inquiry on Gambling. **This submission is made on behalf of CatholicCare as the official welfare agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney.**

Introduction

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney provides ministry, welfare services and pastoral care throughout much of greater Sydney – from the Eastern Suburbs to Mosman, from Ryde to Austral, and from Concord to Sutherland.

The teaching of the Catholic Church emphasises respect for persons and their goods, justice in relationships, solidarity between people, the sharing of resources, and generosity in responding to the needs of others. Individuals are free to make choices for their economic and social life in keeping with these values. Gambling and games of chance are not in and of themselves contrary to justice or to the right use of one's material and financial goods. However, the Church is concerned when the passion for gambling becomes an enslavement that undermines a person's freedom, and when it results in the inability of someone to

provide for their needs and the needs of others as is economically, socially and morally required.

In this context the Archdiocese, and CatholicCare as an Agency of the Archdiocese, have supported reforms in the area of gambling regulation including the removal of ATMS from near poker machines and the introduction of natural light and clocks.

CatholicCare is the official welfare agency of Archdiocese of Sydney and contributes to the Church's Mission and commitment to social justice through the delivery of over 120 programs that seek to enable the social and emotional wellbeing of communities, families and individuals. **CatholicCare operates a breadth of programs and has over 70 years' experience in working with vulnerable individuals and families to support dignity and human worth and to enable sustainable outcomes and change.** In particular, this submission is informed by a number of professional programs operated by CatholicCare that directly assist problem gamblers and their families including:

- Financial Counselling programs - operating for approximately 25 years.
- Holyoake services for families of people affected by alcohol or drug misuse and problem gambling - operating for approximately 25 years.
- GAINS (Gambling Awareness and Intervention Support) - an innovative pilot partnership between CatholicCare and a consortium of five Catholic Clubs to explore more comprehensive and accessible supports for problem gamblers, their family members and Club staff – operating since 2012.

- GIFT (Gambling Interventions Family Team - funded by RGF) providing problem gambling counselling for gamblers and their family members - operating since July 2013.

This submission addresses the following terms of reference:

e) The role and capacity of gambling industry staff to address problems caused by gambling.

i) Gambling education including school based programs and measures to reduce the exposure of children and young people to gambling activity.

j) The adequacy and effectiveness of problem gambling help services and programs, including service standards, qualifications and funding of chaplaincy, counselling and treatment services.

m) Other relevant matters.

The below response to the terms of reference identifies key elements that in CatholicCare's experience will provide more robust and effective supports to people experiencing problem gambling, and those affected by another person's problem gambling.

e) The role and capacity of gambling industry staff to address problems caused by gambling

While the role of business in recognising and responding to social problems is contested there is a growing recognition in international and national academic literature and government policy that gaming venues hold a responsibility to proactively identify, engage with and assist patrons who are experiencing problem gambling. In this context, it may

increasingly be the role of gaming industry staff, as well as venue management, to address problems caused by gambling and to extend the nature of their duty of care to patrons. South Australia, through the Club Safe initiative, have recognised this and are resourcing the gambling industry to provide better identification and intervention strategies for patrons experiencing problem gambling.

The current Responsible Conduct of Gambling (RCG) course is mandatory in New South Wales for Secretaries of registered Clubs with gaming machines, Hoteliers with gaming machines and employees of registered Clubs and Hotels whose duties include gaming machine activities. This course provides the current standard platform of knowledge for gambling industry staff in dealing with people exhibiting signs of problem gambling. While the RCG course manual states that if patrons approach staff seeking assistance they should be offered appropriate help in a timely manner, and indicates a proactive approach is preferable, there is currently no guideline or mandate to offer strategic interactions with patrons in the context of an increasing perception of the responsibilities of venues. This level of response requires a higher level of resources, training and support for staff to proactively observe and respond to indicators of problem gambling issues. In CatholicCare's experience, gambling industry staff have expressed both an interest in learning how to respond more effectively to indicators of gambling issues in the Club and/or feel ambivalent and lack confidence in providing better identification and intervention strategies to patrons and family members without appropriate training, clear protocols and support from Club management.

Gambling industry staff, in particular the floor staff, are in a critical “first to know” position in understanding problem gambling behaviour of patrons. Staff may be the first to be asked for help, the first to notice a problem, or the first to be able to say to someone “can we help you with anything” and to start an informal strategic conversation. Not all patrons will be willing or able to directly approach staff and ask for assistance in unambiguous language.

The capacity of gambling industry staff to be more effective in the role of identifying and proactively engaging in assisting patrons experiencing problem gambling can be significantly strengthened. The Gambling, Intervention and Support Programs (GAINS) is a five year pilot running in partnership between CatholicCare and a Consortium of five Catholic Clubs. GAINS explicitly aims to equip and empower gambling industry staff with the skills and confidence to enable more effective assistance to patrons experiencing problem gambling. GAINS is an initiative devised, developed and delivered in consultation with staff teams and management from CatholicCare and a consortium of five Catholic Clubs. It is informed by professional experience and best practice information from international and local initiatives such as South Australia’s Club Safe program. It also includes elements not trialled elsewhere. The project is designed to foster an exemplary culture of responsible gambling, support and associated behaviour within the Club environments of the Consortia members. It does this through:

- Resources and training provided to gambling industry staff to assist them in identifying the signs of problem gambling (physical, behavioural, verbal).
- Training provided to gambling industry staff in how to approach people displaying the signs of problem gambling and start an informal strategic conversation.

- Empowering staff in initial identification, monitoring, brief screening assessment and facilitated referrals to services that can assist patrons displaying the indicators of problem gambling and related issues.
- Professional support for the Club staff's assessment and referral activities through consultation with the GAINS coordinator.
- Capacity for CatholicCare professional staff to conduct assessment and provide appropriate referral.
- Follow up with patrons who have been linked with support services.
- Mapping, connecting and networking with local services that provide support to people experiencing problem gambling and the issues commonly associated with problem gambling (such as drug and alcohol use, financial issues, family breakdown).
- Promotion of GAINS approach to patrons and staff through internal Club initiatives and marketing collateral.
- Reduction of the stigma of problem gambling through leveraging off the community roots of Clubs as places of networking, support and belonging.
- Evaluation of all GAINS activities to determine effectiveness.

In addition to training and support to floor staff the venue management needs to actively and consistently support staff by providing clarity around protocols for engagement and intervention and offer opportunities for regular de-briefing and consultation with industry professionals. While the Catholic Clubs within the consortium are extending their notion of service, systemic improvements across the industry as a whole are rooted in cultural change. Venues need to be supported in this extension of responsibility, including clarity around the issue of patron privacy. Central to the GAINS strategy is to build on the unique

history, community roots, imagination and initiatives of the consortium Clubs to re-invigorate a culture of compassion.

i) Gambling education including school based programs and measures to reduce the exposure of children and young people to gambling activity.

There are currently no standardised or specific programs within Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney that address issues related to gambling. According to CatholicCare's networks, equally there is nothing standardised or specific in public schools across NSW. In CatholicCare's experience if issues related to gambling are identified they are referred to school counsellors, who address the issues or provide connections to appropriate external services.

CatholicCare provides 39 school counsellors working across 96 primary and secondary schools within the Archdiocese of Sydney. In the past year these counsellors have seen both students who have presented with problem gambling themselves and students who live in a family with someone experiencing problem gambling. The types of gambling have included online cards, sports betting, general online betting, betting on board games, casino gambling and the TAB.

CatholicCare also delivers, through St Patrick's Institute of Education (a Registered Training Organisation) Responsible Conduct of Gambling courses for school students and the general community. As stated in the previous section, this recognised course does contain components in relation to problem gambling and its consequences.

International and national academic evidence indicates that gambling, and in particular online gambling, is an increasing issue for young people. It also indicates that gaming (computer or other platforms such as Xbox) addiction is an increasing problem and that there may be connections between problem gaming behaviour and problem gambling later in life.

CatholicCare operates the Holyoake program which provides professional help for families impacted by alcoholism, drug use, problem gambling and other types of addiction. It does this through group education, therapy and support programs. CatholicCare, through the Holyoake program, is interested in the development of an evidence based modular program addressing a range of “addictions” and compulsions that can be delivered directly in schools as a part of the school curriculum. Such a program would provide support to students in families where there is an addiction issue as well as build the capacity of students to understand the components, warning signs and dangers of addiction. Such a program would be evidence based and build on the excellent work being done in this field nationally and internationally, such as through the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (University of NSW) in developing a school based drug and alcohol addiction program and the Centre for Internet Addiction (USA) who are developing validated screening tools and treatment programs for internet addiction.

j) The adequacy and effectiveness of problem gambling help services and programs, including service standards, qualifications and funding of chaplaincy, counselling and treatment services.

While CatholicCare is not in a position to evaluate meta level outcome data in relation to the effectiveness of problem gambling help services in NSW, anecdotally and in our

professional experience these services provide effective assistance to people who seek help and support.

The evidence is clear, however, that there are deficiencies in the effectiveness and overall accessibility of the current pathways available for people to get the support they need. Put simply, not enough people are getting through the doors of help services. This is the first critical issue for the current service system in terms of effective support to problem gamblers.

- In 2012 there were 39, 840 problem gamblers in NSW (Prevalence of Gambling and Problem Gambling in NSW, Ogilvy Illumination, 2012).
- In 2012 there were 144,420 adults who were moderate risk problem gamblers in NSW (Prevalence of Gambling and Problem Gambling in NSW, Ogilvy Illumination, 2012).
- Between July 2012 and July 2013 4,255 people who attended Responsible Gambling Fund (RGF) funded services consented to their data being collected, and 758 did not consent. In total 5,270 people attended RGF funded services (Responsible Gambling Fund Client Data Set July 2012-July2013).
- 74.5% of those who attended were problem gamblers and 17.9% identified as partner/ex-partner or family members of someone who experienced problem gambling (Responsible Gambling Fund Client Data Set July 2012-July2013).

The data above demonstrates that 13% of problem gamblers in NSW sought help through RGF funded services. This percentage will in fact be lower if the figures for moderate risk

problem gamblers, or family members/partners, are included in the calculation. **Therefore 87% or more of problem gamblers in NSW did not seek help from RGF funded services.**

The Gambling Awareness Intervention and Support (GAINS) initiative attempts to increase the chances of people seeking assistance through the formulation of a marketing campaign aimed at reducing stigma and improving the capacity of staff to provide more proactive and comprehensive support within the Club environment.

The second critical issue for the service support system is to increase the supports available, and community awareness of these supports, to the families and friends of problem gamblers.

- 5-10 other people, including partners, family members and friends, are negatively impacted by each problem gambler (Gambling, Productivity Commission Inquiry Report, N° 50, 26th February 2010).
- The above equates to between 199,200 and 398,400 people affected by another person's problem gambling in 2012.
- Between July 2012 and July 2013 only 697 family members/partners/ex-partners sought help through RGF funded services (Responsible Gambling Fund Client Data Set July 2012-July2013).

Research supports the critical value of family involvement in the treatment for problem gambling, noting that even without the problem gambler themselves being involved there are better outcomes for families and children if the people involved in a problem gamblers life seek help. These people learn greater coping skills, experience decreased distress and

improved relationships and have a greater capacity to assist their family member who is experiencing problem gambling.

Not enough family members, partners and friends are currently seeking help. **According to the above statistics the percentage of family members, partners and friends accessing RGF funded services is less than 1%.** When access to services does occur, it is often prompted by a significant crisis thereby negating the benefits of early intervention.

To improve the community and government response to problem gambling in NSW the following could be considered as a part of an integrated approach:

- A targeted campaign to create awareness of how to identify problem gamblers early.
- A targeted campaign to break down stigma and shame associated with problem gambling to motivate problem gamblers, family members and partners to attend services.
- Increase awareness in mainstream and other service providers of the signs of problem gambling and encourage shared responsibility in the identification of problem gambling.
- Raise the awareness within the community that family members and partners of problem gamblers can get assistance that will improve their lives through RGF funded services.
- RGF services develop and increase programs targeted at family members and partners of problem gamblers. Such programs would provide information on

problem gambling and related issues, assist in developing skills and strategies in reducing problem gambling behaviour and offer support in a confidential and safe environment.

- Support pilot initiatives such as GAINS in increasing the capacity of gambling industry staff to leverage their relationships with patrons to provide for better identification, proactive assistance and more effective transitions to support services.
- Genuine and ongoing linkages between gambling assistance services, and between gambling assistance services and gaming venues, are critical to improving the pathways and options for people experiencing problem gambling. Greater linkages and knowledge of service strengths allows for appropriate referrals and assistance the first time somebody seeks help.

m) Other relevant matters

If substantive reform and an extension of assistance to people exhibiting the signs of problem gambling is to occur within the gaming venue environment the venues require support. Venues have genuine concerns regarding their legal liabilities in relation to duty of care and privacy laws.

To facilitate more proactive and effective approaches in the venues Club and Hotel owners and management require clarity on:

- Their legal duty of care obligations should their approach within the venues evolve to become more proactive
- Their legal duties in regards to privacy, particularly in terms of approaching patrons or keeping records to facilitate the accurate identification of the signs of problem gambling, connecting people with help and following up with patrons.

Summary

In summary we wish to highlight the following points:

- Current services to assist people experiencing problem gambling deliver effective outcomes.
- A relatively small percentage of people experiencing problem gambling, and their family/partners/friends, seek assistance.
- More effective and increased pathways are needed to facilitate assistance for people affected by problem gambling.
- There should be a specific focus on raising awareness within the community that family members and partners of problem gamblers can get assistance that will improve their lives through RGF funded services.
- Pilot initiatives such as GAINS build on examples of best practice nationally and internationally to leverage off the relationships built within gaming venues and reinvigorate a culture of compassion.

- Venues need to be better equipped and supported if they are to extend the notion of duty of care and proactively and strategically engage with patrons who are displaying indicators of problem gambling.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide a submission to this inquiry. CatholicCare would welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee to discuss our experiences or expand on any aspect of our submission. We also extend an invitation to the Committee to visit our CatholicCare sites and speak with our professional gambling counsellors and financial counsellors regarding their experiences in this area.

Mr Bernard Boerma

Chief Executive Officer

CatholicCare