

IMPACT NEWS

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www.gisnsw.org.au

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CLUBS CUT HELP FOR GAMBLERS

Stephanie Peatling SMH *October 23, 2011*

'TRYING TO REPRESENT PEOPLE WITH PROBLEMS'. KATE ROBERTS

A GROUP raising awareness about problem gambling says its funding from the clubs industry was halted after it spoke out in favour of the federal government's plans to introduce mandatory pre-commitment technology on gaming machines.

Kate Roberts, the chairwoman of the Gambling Impact Society, a registered charity, said the grants the society had received each year for the past 10 years stopped after she declared her support for the government's policy.

"If you speak out you're doomed," she said. "I strongly believe [local clubs] have been pressured not to support us. We are the only voice out there ... trying to represent people with problems."

For 10 years the society had received annual grants of \$2000 to \$9000 from local clubs in the Shoalhaven area of the south coast. The money was used to maintain the society's newsletter and promote responsible gambling awareness programs. Ms Roberts described her relationship with the local clubs as "reasonably good". "We would help them with people with problems," she said.

But this year Ms Roberts's funding applications were denied with no explanation. She believes the funding was stopped because of her support for the government's deal with Tasmanian independent Andrew Wilkie to introduce technology for mandatory pre-commitment.

Under the change, gamblers would be required to nominate how much they were prepared to lose in a set period. Ms Roberts said she supported mandatory pre-commitment "because of the reason

the clubs won't say, and that's because it's aimed at preventing people from becoming addicts".

A spokeswoman for ClubsNSW, Carissa Simons, rejected Ms Roberts's claims. Ms Simons said funding for the organisation had decreased "each year for a number of years now as council has recommended the funding be allocated to other needy groups".

"That would indicate that Kate's organisation is not meeting local community needs as determined by the local council," Ms Simons said.

Ms Simons said there was no link between Ms Roberts's views and her funding applications being rejected. She said individual clubs did not make the decisions on which community groups to support.

But Ms Roberts said this was incorrect. Shoalhaven City Council minutes had recorded the council's support for the society's work.

Rankings used by the funding committee and overseen by council and state government representatives had listed its projects as high priority.

Clubs Australia wrote to all government MPs on Friday telling them two independents, Mr Wilkie and Nick Xenophon, were "at odds" over mandatory pre-commitment. But Mr Wilkie and Senator Xenophon dismissed the letter as "dishonest". Mr Wilkie's support for the minority Labor government is dependent on passing of a pre-commitment law by next May.

See page 2—Council confirms GIS funding cut not their decision.

SOCIETY NEWS & VIEWS

In spite of the fact that we have been denied CDSE funding, due to the prevailing political climate, we have not been abandoned by our volunteers and we are indeed heartened to have the support of your renewal memberships.

Last month Kate Roberts, together with Ralph Bristow, participated in a teleconference, on internet and interactive gambling, at the invitation of, and conducted by the Ministerial Joint Select Gambling Reform Committee. Here, Kate emphasized our main concerns around the potential expansion and growth in the field of interactive and online gambling and the belief that the recommendations of the Productivity Commission to take a Public Health and Consumer protection approach, needs to be extended to this area of gambling. We are particularly concerned regarding the potential harm to children, teenagers and our youth all, of whom, are exploring technology at the blink of an eye and who, without federal regulation set in place, are exposed to possible extreme harm.

Speaking of which, we have had written complaints from parents who have been confronted, at local open-air events, with brochures promoting Bingo For Kids, 'with Prizes, Pop Stars, Giveaways to be Won' – 'Just six years of age and upwards'. These parents are upset and angry at what they describe as a 'Soft Sell for the Next Generation'. They say that they "do not want the club becoming the social centre for their children during school holidays, a place where they can so easily pick up on the subtle acceptability of their elders, and role models in choosing this type of activity as an acceptable pastime and a way of socializing

during the school holidays".

How do you feel about this 'Soft Sell' ? Are the clubs saying 'Give us a child from the age of six and we've got them for life'? Ralph Bristow has told his story (SMH Oct 8) of how his gambling addiction was nurtured at the Bingo tables when he was 14 years old.

Alan Tudge MP for Aston (Vic) is committed to the Knox Youth Mental Health Campaign and he publicly states that "75% of all mental health problems emerge before 25 years of age". As Kate says, "We support pre-commitment because it's aimed at preventing people from becoming addicts"(SunH Oct 23). The Federal Government has shown strong leadership towards Gambling Reform; Social Leadership Australia has formed a Sydney group to which Kate has been invited and people like Ralph are leading the field in Gambling Awareness with, we have to say, a refreshing honesty, courage and humility which appears to be sadly lacking in some quarters of the prevailing political debate.

As Adults we are all on Notice. Key Words are Protection and Prevention!

Oddly enough, the clubs spokespeople never mention the latter. Neither have they ever indicated that they understand the devastating impact of problem gambling on families.

D.Webb

Gambling society funding cut not council endorsed

BY MARK WHITTAKER

Southcoast Register 26 Oct, 2011 08:58 AM

CLAIMS the Gambling Impact Society lost its funding from local clubs because Shoalhaven City Council downgraded its importance were "a load of codswallop", according to society chairperson Kate Roberts.

Council has confirmed that half of the gambling support group's funding applications had been given the highest level of priority by its community services staff.

Ms Roberts had earlier claimed that the Gambling Impact Society was being punished by the clubs because of its public support for the federal government's push for gamblers to make a mandatory precommitment to how much money they were prepared to lose.

On Sunday, ClubsNSW spokes-person Carissa Simons was reported saying the Gambling Impact Society's funding had been cut "each year for a number of years now as council has recommended the funding be allocated to other needy groups".

Ms Simons reportedly said the council made the decisions on who got funding from the clubs, not the clubs themselves.

Council's community development co-ordinator Alan Blackshaw said the council ranked the applications, then took those rankings to the clubs. "They often make decisions that are different from our recommendations. That's their choice. It's their decision," he said.

Continued page3

Cont. from page 2—Cuts Not Council Endorsed

“Sometimes one organisation will do quite well and another year they put in an application and do not get anything. It’s a competitive process.”

Clubs earning more than \$1 million a year in gambling revenue have to give 1.5 per cent of the income to community groups or pay the money in extra tax. This year, 11 local clubs paid a total of \$293,358 in grants.

Ms Roberts also disputed the ClubsNSW claim her funding had progressively decreased in recent years. “Well the year before last we received \$9000 and the year before that we got \$4000.”

Ms Roberts set up the Shoalhaven-based organisation in the 1990s when she had a family member with a gambling problem and found she couldn’t get information to help. “Our organisation was set up as a not-for-profit-voluntary group. We did all this work on the smell of an oily rag on top of our day jobs.”

She promised the loss of funding would not spell the end of the Gambling Impact Society. “This is not going to kill us. I think they hope it will.”

Bomaderry Bowling Club secretary Garry Wilbraham confirmed the clubs have the final say in who gets funding. He admitted that no other gambling support groups received funding.

“There were 150 applications and we looked at what was close to us and what was relevant,” he said.

Crunch the numbers, urges activist

“FOLLOW the data” is the message to anti-gambling groups from Vincentia activist Mark Corrigan.

Mr Corrigan, who has been an enthusiastic researcher in pursuit of politicians’ expenses and political donations, has started to look at licensed clubs.

He was surprised to learn that the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing kept no record of how much money licensed clubs put back into their communities.

He said the clubs use community donations as the primary justification for their gambling activities, yet those donations weren’t transparent.

“It’s difficult to trace,” Mr Corrigan said. “I went to sieve the clubs’ financial reports and found that the community donations are minimal compared to the profit and particularly the turnover. It’s overstated by clubs in justifying the benefits from gaming machines.”

He said Bomaderry Bowling Club, the largest in the area, made revenue of \$10.6 million from poker machines – the difference between money put in and money taken out. “All I could find in the report was sporting subsidies and donations of \$174,352.”

“The clubs’ story that poker machines are a reasonable way to make money and entertain the community is wrong in my view because of the pain it produces in the community.

“It ignores the Productivity Commission findings of 2010 that 40 per cent of income from gambling comes from problem gamblers.”

Mr Corrigan will address the Gambling Impact Society’s annual general meeting next month, telling the audience that data is crucial in any public debate – particularly in an area like gambling where the government has a vested interest in the taxes generated.

This year, Bomaderry Bowling Club funded:

Australian Red Cross Society in Berry, \$1400; Bomaderry Public School breakfasts for underprivileged kids, \$5000; Gilmore Youth Leadership courses for year 12 students, \$3500; Access Community Group for Shoalhaven year 12 indigenous graduation, \$3000; Berry Computers for Seniors, \$1640; Shoalhaven Lantern Club which supports deaf and blind children, \$2900; Shoalhaven Excellence in Vocational Education and Training Awards, \$3000; St Vincent de Paul Society, Berry, \$2500; Shoalhaven Basketball Association; \$3000; CWA combined choir, \$3000; Shoalhaven Rural Fire Service, \$1086; Friends of the Curtis Park Arboretum, \$3700; University of Wollongong Scholarships, \$3000; Shoalhaven Community Development Computer Courses, \$1300; Australian Relief and Mercy Services for meals for people who could not afford to feed themselves, \$3700.

**Phone
Gambling Help NSW
for information on
your local Problem
Gambling Service
1800 858 858**



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Poker machine reform debate needs cold facts not hot air: Churches

Posted on [October 26, 2011](#) by [ACGT](#) [ACGT Media Release](#) (Australian Churches Gambling Taskforce)

Rev Tim Costello, Chair of the Australian Churches Gambling Taskforce Chair said too many people have been caught by the poker machine lobby's propaganda and it's disappointing to see the Opposition supporting their campaign.

Rev Costello made the comments today following Clubs Australia's rally in Sydney last night which was addressed by Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbott and Member for Werriwa, Laurie Ferguson.

"The fact is that 40 per cent of clubs' profits come from people addicted to poker machines. "And because not all clubs profit equally, only those that rely on profits from problem gamblers will feel the pinch", Rev Costello said.

"It's these clubs that are operating an unsustainable business model and they should seek advice from Western Australia, where there are no poker machines outside the casino, yet communities and clubs thrive.

"Australians spend twelve billion dollars a year on pokies.

"Only 600,000 Australians play poker machines at least weekly, and of those 95,000 are poker machine addicts. "This group of people loses on average up to \$21,000 a year. Some lose a lot more. Another 95,000 are at risk of becoming problem gamblers. This second group loses on average up to \$8,000 a year.

"So poker machines are a problem for around a third of regular players. It's a very unsafe product for some. Church agencies help individuals, families, friends and colleagues deal with the impact of poker machine addiction.

" Problems include relationship breakdown, mental health problems, unemployment, debt, financial hardship, theft and other crime, social isolation and all too often, suicide.

"The social cost to the country is around \$4.7 billion annually.

"Mandatory pre commitment will require all poker machine players to determine ahead of time how much they are prepared to lose in any sitting. This, as part of a range of measures, will help problem gamblers who are ready to help themselves and help protect a significant number of at risk players from becoming problem gamblers.

"It's mandatory to wear a seatbelt, to wear a helmet on a bike. It's illegal to serve alcohol to someone who is already drunk and there are limits on where people can smoke, to prevent the impact of passive smoking.

"This is not the nanny state in action. It's good public policy that has lead to healthier communities. Australia's churches call on all people of goodwill to support the reforms," Rev Costello said.

Members of the Australian Churches Gambling Taskforce include the heads of Australian Christian Churches and the heads of their social services agencies nationally, united by a commitment to make poker machine gambling safer.

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Contact: Judith Tokley 0408 824 306 / 02 6249 6717
www.gamblingreform.org

Reformed gambler sees merit in pre-set limit on poker machines

Malcolm Brown
September 27, 2011 - 12:29AM

RALPH BRISTOW, 71, who had his first bet at the age of eight and has gambled for much of his life, believes that a pre-set limit on poker machine gambling would have helped him in all the years he blew away a fortune.

Mr Bristow, who lives in Nowra, gambled heavily on horses and greyhounds but also took to the poker machines, playing in clubs and later hotels, as he became an addict.

As rugby league and AFL clubs stepped up their campaign against the government's plans to limit losses on poker machines, Mr Bristow said people needed to know the damage poker machines caused in the community.

He first began using them when his home renovating job took him across the country in the late 1950s and he gambled as an escape because he was away from his family so much.

The effect on his finances and social behaviour contributed to the breakdown of two marriages.....*Cont. page 5*

CONSUMER VOICE

Pokie Business Model Warped

The following view appeared in the 'Letters to the Editor' sections of the South coast register 19 Oct. 2011.

By M. Corrigan, Vincentia.

Mr Corrigan has subsequently been kind enough to accepted our invitation to speak at the GIS AGM on 21 Nov. 2011.

THE multi-million dollar development proposed by Bomaderry Bowling Club highlights the distorted business model that supports many of Shoalhaven's registered clubs.

Despite the club insisting it is committed to responsible gambling, the reality is that 40 per cent of Bomaderry's \$5.4 million annual poker machine income is likely to come from problem gamblers. According to the Productivity Commission, a further 20 per cent would be from gamblers at moderate risk of negative social consequences. That's \$3.2 million of negative impact – a third of the club's total revenue.

This insidious extraction of wealth is from a community that can least afford it. Down the road, Bomaderry Public School requires additional funding from state and federal governments to address educational disadvantage associated with low socioeconomic circumstances. These children are from the same families as problem gamblers who feed Bomaderry Bowling Club.

And how much is returned to the Bomaderry community? Sporting subsidies and donations from the club were just \$174,352 last year.

This pattern is repeated in clubs across the Shoalhaven. According to a recent report by The Sydney Morning Herald, there are 1400 poker machines in Shoalhaven's registered clubs. This is the same number per resident as Sydney's poker machine capital, Fairfield.

The total turnover through Shoalhaven's machines is an astronomical \$550 million per year, \$50 million of which ends up in club coffers as profit. It is estimated that \$20 million of that profit comes from gamblers with addiction problems.

Lawn bowls, golf and support for armed forces personnel are all worthwhile pursuits. However, ever more elaborate club facilities and cheap food should not continue to be enjoyed to the detriment of our community's most financially vulnerable.

Pre-commitment technology? Maximum bet ceilings? Prize limits? If Shoalhaven clubs cannot resist this bitter-sweet river of gold and hardship, the federal government must intervene in whatever way necessary. Last year's Productivity Commission recommendations are a good start.

M. Corrigan,

Continued from page 4

"Sometimes I put my whole pay through the machines," he recalled. "Sometimes I had a win on the horses and that went through the machines. Sometimes I had wins there, but I am the sort of person where one win is not enough and losses I chase.

"You become antisocial. I could not go to a function on a Saturday because I would have to go to the horse races down the road," he said.

Mr Bristow normally had enough to buy food but sometimes went hungry. Ten years ago he asked for help, turning to the Wesley Gambling Counselling Service.

"I have had some relapses since then," he said. "But I have been clean for 3½ years."

Mr Bristow, who now belongs to the welfare group the Gambling Impact Society and serves on its management committee, believes that the pre-set limit would have helped him. "When I first heard about it, I thought it wouldn't work," he said. "But now I see it would have made me much more aware.

"I think it would restrict people. It is a good idea in that people would be able to say, 'OK, I am going to just gamble that and that will be the limit!'"

This story was found at: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/reformed-gambler-sees-merit-in-preset-limit-on-poker-machines-20110926-1ktq2.html>

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How do you know if someone close to you has an issue with gambling?

People gamble for many reasons - for excitement, the thrill of winning, to be social or to escape from emotional pain. Gambling becomes an issue when it causes harm to the gambler and those close to them. Usually this means they are spending more money or time on gambling than they can afford.

Here are some signs to look out for:

Money related signs

- * Unexplained debt or borrowing
- * Money/assets disappearing
- * Numerous loans
- * Unpaid bills/disconnection notices
- * Lack of food in the house
- * Losing wallets/money regularly
- * Missing financial statements
- * Secret bank accounts/loans/credit cards

Interpersonal issues

- * Moodiness, unexplained anger
- * Depression
- * Decreased contact with friends
- * Family complaints about being emotionally shut out
- * Avoidance of social events
- * Control and/or manipulation
- * Secretiveness about activities
- * Manipulation by threat, lies or charm

Time related signs

- * Disappearing for amounts of time that they cannot account for
- * No time for everyday activities
- * Overuse of sick days and days off
- * Use increasing amounts of time to study gambling
- * Taking an unusual amount of time for tasks (eg taking two hours to get milk from the corner store)

Control and/or manipulation

- * Secretiveness about activities

- * Secret bank accounts/loans/ credit cards
- * Manipulation by threat, lies or charm

How you can help: TALK ABOUT IT

The best way to find out if someone has a gambling problem is to ask. You cannot predict how they will react, but you can let them know you are asking because you care about them. Try to discuss this in an honest and non-confrontational way.

It may help to talk about what you have noticed: "You seem worried and you are spending a lot of time at the club"; and how you feel: "I am worried that you may be having a problem with gambling". Some people may be relieved to talk about their gambling; others may feel so ashamed and guilty, that they are unable to talk about it. Some may get very angry or deny that they have a problem with gambling.

Say NO to problem gambling and lying and YES, I care about you.

Even if they deny they have a problem you can provide them with information about where to get help.

It is important to protect yourself financially and emotionally from any harm that may arise from problem gambling.

Try to keep the lines of communication open and focused on the problem.

If you find the discussions aggressive, circular or hurtful take a break and agree on another time to resume the discussion.

You can call the Gambler's Help line (1800 858 858), or go to www.gamblinghelponline.org.au to talk about how you plan to approach your family member or friend. The Gambler's Help line and Gambling Help Online are staffed by professional counsellors and can provide immediate, free and confidential help 24 hours a day.

UPCOMING EVENTS

23 - 25 **November 2011** NAGS - National Association for Gambling Studies Australia - Crown Convention Centre **Melbourne** www.nags.org.au

22 - 24 **February 2012** Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand's **4th International Gambling Conference Auckland**, New Zealand www.pgfnz.org.nz

USEFUL RESOURCES

Don't Leave It to Chance: A guide for families of problem gamblers—Edward Federman, Charles Drebing & Christopher Krebs (self-help book)

Adolescent gambling—Mark Griffiths

Teenage Gambling—Carol Silverman Saunders

Losing Your Shirt—Mary Heineman (self-help book)

Behind The 8-Ball—A Guide for families of Gamblers—Linda Berman & Mary –Ellen Siegel (self-help book)

Overcoming Compulsive Gambling: A Self-Help Guide - Prof. Alex Blaszczynski

Stop Gambling—A Self-Help Manual For Giving Up Gambling - Simon Milton

Wanna Bet—Winners And Losers In Gambling's Luck myth - Tim Costello & Royce Miller

Stop Gambling Start Living - Laraine Rasmussen.

House of Cards: Hope for gamblers and their families - Tom Raabe.

The Addictive Personality—Craig Nakken

Creating Self Esteem—Lynda Field

Practical Financial Strategies Booklet: A Self Help Guide for Problem Gamblers By Gerri Coleman (Contact Central Coast Problem Gambling Service, 02 4344 7992).

Free Yourself—Self-help Guide and Audio Tape kit - cost \$49.95 (Contact Gabriela Byrne, 0414 844 387)

My Passionate Affair with Poker Machines (video) - \$49.95 (Contact Gabriela Byrne, 0414 844 387)

Free Yourself (video) - \$49.95 (Contact Gabriela Byrne, 0414 844 387)

You Figure It Out— Resource Kit (including video, CD and training notes for Community Education with High School Students— Know The Odds, Tel: 0417107440)

Overcoming Compulsive Gambling - desensitisation/relaxation audio tapes (Contact Prof. Alex Blaszczynski, - Westmead Hospital, Sydney)

Illawarra Health Gambling Recovery Program - group treatment manual for counsellors - (Contact Responsible Gambling Fund Unit, Dept. Gaming & Racing for info. on reprints)

Women & Gambling Information Kit—Karen Richardson & Kate Roberts- contact GISW(NSW) 02 4421 5077

Less than Even: The Hidden Cost of Gambling—video. Contact GISW(NSW) 02 4421 5077

Against the Odds—Youth & Gambling—Discussion CD. Contact GISW(NSW) 02 44215 077

No More Bets Please - video. Contact monkeysee@monkeysee.com.au or sales@livingsolutionsbookshop.com.au



General Interest Websites

www.socialwork.unimelb.edu.au

www.nags.org.au

www.unsw.edu.au

www.afm.mb.ca

www.knowodds.org

www.societystudygambling.co.uk

www.camh.net

www.pgfnz.co.nz

Do you know any interesting websites relating to problem gambling?

Let us know and we'll include them in our next edition

Email: info@gisnsw.org.au

Resources from NEW ZEALAND

P G COUNSELLING
MANUAL

P G EDUCATION

IN HIGH SCHOOLS -
MANUAL AND VIDEO

POW POKIES
T-SHIRTS

FACTS SHEETS
ON GAMBLING

CONTACT:

www.pgfnz.org.nz

Shoalhaven Gambling Resource Library—

GIS (NSW) has developed a community library with reports, books, self-help literature & videos for loan to GIS (NSW) groups and others in the

Shoalhaven locality. We can supply a resource list and are always looking for ideas for additions. Contact: GIS (NSW)
02 44215077

**Do you have any other suggestions?
Please send them to us so we can share your ideas with others.**

Self-Help Websites

www.gisnsw.org.au

www.nrgs.org.au

www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au

wwwsvh.stvincents.com.au/

www.education.mcgill.ca

www.gamblersanonymous.org.au

www.miph.org/gambling/

www.freeyourself.com.au

www.responsiblegambling.org

www.responsiblegambling.qld.gov.au

www.gamblingproblem.co.nz

www.femalegamblers.org/suggestedreading.htm

Do you know any interesting self-help websites relating to problem gambling? Let us know by email info@gis.nsw.org.au



RETURN ADDRESS

Nowra Neighbourhood Centre
134 Kinghorne Street
Nowra NSW 2541



Phone 02 4421 5077
Fax 02 4421 6872
Email info@gisnsw.org.au

Print Post Approved:
PP255003-05346

WHY NOT JOIN & RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER QUARTERLY?

The Gambling Impact Society (NSW) Inc. looks forward to providing you with regular information and education on gambling and related subjects. The Society aims to increase public awareness through the newsletter, and provide a forum for support and information for those directly affected by problem gambling, community service providers and the gambling industry. We welcome your contributions to this newsletter and in joining we hope to provide you with an outlet for discussion, support & information. Your membership will contribute to the ongoing work in this field and help us achieve our goals.

Your membership fee will go to resource the publication of this newsletter and the further development of the society, which is a non-profit organization developed and run by volunteers. Membership to 30 June 2012 is as follows:

- Organisations \$50
- Individuals \$25
- Concessions/Students \$10

Additional donations welcome.
Additional donations welcome.

Name.....

Organization.....

Address.....

.....

Telephone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Please circle:

Organisations \$50

Individuals \$25

Concessions/Students \$10

Cheques payable to: Gambling Impact Society (NSW) Inc

Mail to: Gambling Impact Society (NSW) Inc.

c/o Nowra Neighbourhood Centre

134 Kinghorne St,

Nowra NSW 2541