

IMPACT NEWS

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www.gisnsw.org.au

**RESPONSIBLE
GAMBLING
AWARENESS WEEK
MAY 26– 31, 2014**



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GIS Calls For A National Alliance As Government Plans to Repeal Gambling Reforms

On the 9th December GIS Executive Officer, Kate Roberts, along with two consumer representatives attended (at invitation) a brief inquiry conducted at our Australian Parliament conducted by the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs, Social Services.

This was a hearing into the Social Services and Other Legislative Amendments Bill 2013, where buried amongst a number of unrelated issues the government was seeking to repeal the Gambling Reform Acts 2012. It was a brief and very unsatisfactory process as the “division bell” kept ringing and most of the committee would leave the meeting to return later.

The hearing was a last minute affair, had minimal public promotion and therefore few opportunities for the public to have input.

The GIS was given three days notice, there were few journalists in the gallery and basically only Rev. Tim Costello, the Salvation Army, Family First (by phone) and ourselves, to talk to the issues from a social welfare or public perspective. In the word of one of the parties - “bundled legislation and a bungled process”.

Due to the challenges with presenting in such a disjointed climate, Kate chose to table her opening address to ensure consumers had an opportunity to contribute and respond to questions in the limited time available. The address is appended as additional information in the Hansard record. In the interest of public information, it is also included in this issue of Impact News for your consideration (see pp.3 –5).

The GIS is particularly concerned at the lack of community consultation by the Government in using this “bundling legislation” strategy to repeal these modest gambling reforms supported by 83% of the Community.

The past two years have been a watershed in seriously looking at the issue of problem gambling and the recognition that State governments are too conflicted to take any real stand, particularly in relation to poker machine gambling. The Federal reforms sought to redress that imbalance by bringing problem gambling to the National Government's agenda. These repeals seek to push that back to the States and Territories who we know are compromised. In addition the repeals will to dismantle the foundation of National research by the Productivity Commission who have conducted two major inquiries into gambling in Australia (1999 & 2010) and have developed a strong body of knowledge on the impacts of problem gambling in our community and clear recommendations for meaningful reform.

Those affected by problem gambling are outraged. Whilst those supporting them are being kept in the dark about how these repeals will once again fail the community and fail to address the harms from gambling, particularly voracious poker machines.

The GIS is now calling for a National Alliance on Gambling to ensure this issue remains on the National Agenda and maintain the pressure for meaningful reform.

Anyone interested in supporting this endeavour is encouraged to contact Kate Roberts at info@gisnsw.org.au

Society Activities

Happy New Year to all our members and readers!

Many of us need several weeks to get over the jet lag of the festive season but not so our ExO. Kate Roberts has had to hit the ground running and as she has the happy knack of scooping us all up and taking us with her, so have we also, we being her committee, consumer voice participants, film director, and publisher.

Having just returned from her well earned holiday Kate was called to attend an urgent Senate Committee Hearing in Canberra. In Kate's words, this was a "last ditch effort to stop the repeal" of the Gambling Reform Legislation (2012) by our new government. Kate had been in this position so many times, that is to address the Senate, always arguing in support of Gambling Reform, again, to those who would listen. So, after thirteen years of hearing the resounding silence of negation she knew what she was up against yet, true to form and, putting aside her academic text, Kate provided an outstanding address expressing in plain and simple language, in full measure and in no uncertain terms, the frustrations of these past thirteen years of fighting for a public health approach for the prevention of human misery caused by problem gambling. It is a huge effort to try to get the Senate to block the Liberals' proposed repeal of the Gambling Reform Acts of 2012, which they were wanting to sneak

through and, at this sitting, she was ably supported by team members, Gary and Kelilah who raised their own voices on this momentous occasion. Disappointingly the Acts are being repealed. It was a very bad day, after all the hard work of so many, for so many years. There of course powerful business lobbies behind these government policies. But we will continue to pressure for meaningful reform. We invite you to read Kate's address in this edition and online at www.gisnsw.org.au.

Following our Consumer Voice presentations at the National Association of Gambling Studies Conference in November, we were greatly encouraged that the session proved to be very popular with lots of good feedback. The session, introduced by Kate, showed the segment of our Consumer Voices DVD that speaks of peoples experiences of the CV Project. The real impact followed when the same CV speakers presented themselves in person and shared the time for feedback about the program over all. We are so very proud of all our CV participants who have volunteered so much of their time to tell of their experiences with problem gambling in order to bring about a positive awareness, to those who will listen, of the grim reality of the impact this has had on their lives and that of their families.

The GIS and Consumer Voices team invite you to join us on Wednesday 21st



At a public awareness seminar in Wollongong. This is a great opportunity to share ideas and gain some valuable education and information

Further training workshops and seminars are being developed for mid-year including a two day skills based workshop in July to support for those working with family members affected by another's gambling behaviour.

The new Shoalhaven Gambling Accord is moving along. This has been initiated by two Club Managers who aim to develop more proactive Responsible Gambling measures in their own clubs. The GIS is very happy to support this strategy.

The GIS will be represented by Kate at the bi-annual PG Conference in New Zealand on Feb 18th where she will present on the Consumer Voices program and also attend a pre-conference workshop on Public Health and Gambling.

The GIS is developing a Consumer Voices -Talking Heads DVD, this is currently being produced by Way Ward Films. We are busy putting more stories on film ready for completion by March. This will become a valuable tool for using in seminar presentation, group discussions and a valuable part of our educational tool kit.

So lots going on and plenty of opportunities to get involved in making a difference.

D. Webb

GAMBLING IMPACTS TODAY

A Public Awareness Seminar MAY 21st Wollongong

Plans are well underway for our regular Problem Gambling Awareness Seminar to be hosted once more at the Innovation Campus, Wollongong University. This is a great venue with sea views, ample parking, close access to Fairy Meadow train station and located less than an hour from Sydney airport.

We are working on a good line up of guest speakers which this year will consider amongst other topics: the Proliferation of Gambling in the Community, Concepts of Responsible Gambling, Shame and Barriers to Help Seeking, Duty of Care and the Criminal Justice system, ideas for a National Alliance on Gambling. We will also be launching some major new educational resources including: Problem Gambling: A Guide for Helping Professionals, Problem Gambling: A Guide for Financial Counsellors and a 5-Step Approach training package for Counsellors and Community Services working with families affected by problem gambling. **Registrations will open in early April** so keep in touch via www.gisnsw.org.au

Disclaimer: The views and opinions contained in this newsletter are not necessarily the views and (opinions of GIS NSW) Inc.

GIS Address to Senate Standing Committee Community Affairs

Gambling Impact Society (NSW) opening address to the Senate hearing into Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013, on Monday 9th December 2013, delivered by GIS Executive Officer –Kate Roberts.

Most “Responsible Gambling” literature opens with the normalisation of gambling in Australia and then goes on to identify the difference between perceptions of “recreational gamblers” (implied-“normal people”) who gamble in an un-quantifiable “responsible” manner and others who apparently fail to maintain personal control and recklessly damage both themselves and others close to them. To quote a section of a recent paper by Professor Linda Hancock:

“With mounting evidence on the harms caused by gambling, many jurisdictions have responded by emphasizing —harm minimization and —responsible gambling; but frequently frame this in terms of Individual responsibility (—take control of your gambling); rather than industry/government/regulatory responsibility for prevention of avoidable harms.” (Hancock December, 2013) <http://regulation.huji.ac.il/papers/jp%2059.pdf>

<http://regulation.huji.ac.il/papers/jp%2059.pdf>

The original concept of RG was according to Professor Jan McMillen:

Responsible gambling is the provision of gambling services in a way that seeks to minimise the harm to customers and the community associated with gambling. (http://www.aic.gov.au/media_library/conferences/gambling00/mcmillen2.pdf)

However, the term Responsible Gambling, as used today, is stigmatising, leads to victimising and not only fails to support those affected but actively works against them reaching out for assistance (see latest ANU Research Report into Gambling and Stigma, Annie Carrol, 2013)

“It puts all the onus on the person to gamble responsibly rather than admitting that gambling products, like alcohol and drugs, are innately risky products to use,” Dr Carroll said. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-11-18/fear-of-stigma-stops-problem-gamblers-seeking-help/5098624>

We are here to challenge that RG concept and place the “irresponsible provision” of gambling services firmly back in its place as a case of regulatory failure.

The ongoing depiction of ourselves – people affected by problem gambling (by both governments and the gambling industry) as irresponsible “sick individuals” serves only to disguise the facts, and protect the vested interests who ultimately benefit from our demise. The concept of a gambling sickness goes deep into the belly of the institution of community gambling in Australia particularly poker machine gambling. This is an area where conflicted State/territory governments have consistently failed the population and failed to protect those most vulnerable to gambling harm.

We are here today to provide a voice on behalf of those 5 million Australians affected by problem gambling. These are people hidden by stigma, shame and stereotyping, who are facing yet another betrayal. We are here to tell you about our view on this “sickness” in an effort to stop what we see as the door to meaningful National social, structural and regulatory reform slamming in our face once again.

(Continued page 4...)

NSW Inquiry into Gambling – NOW Have Your Say!

The NSW Legislative Council has established a Select Committee to inquire into Gambling in New South Wales. A copy of the terms of reference can be found on the website . **The closing date for submissions is 7 March 2014.**

The Committee intends to hold public hearings following the closing date for submissions. Hearing details will be published on the website as they become available. Submissions can be lodged via the Committee’s website at www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/gambling, emailed to gamblinginquiry@parliament.nsw.gov.au, faxed to 02 9230 2981, or hard copies can be mailed to: The Director, Select Committee on Gambling, Legislative Council, Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000. Background information about Legislative Council committees and information about making a submission is also available on the website.

GIS Senate Address Cont...Consumers Speak Out

- We are sick of being labeled as aberrant irresponsible deviants by both governments and industries who ultimately gain from our so called recklessness.
- We are sick of the term Responsible Gambling when no-one can define the dose parameters and hence it becomes a pejorative weapon to further disempower us.
- We are sick of having our concerns silenced by powerful lobby groups with vested interests who seek to minimise our existence and discredit our right to be heard.
- We are sick of being used as political footballs between government parties and the “big business” and taxes they seek to protect.
- We are sick of supporting over a decade of research, prevalence studies and public enquiries which are ultimately ignored and thus fail to contribute to meaningful prevention of gambling problems or effective policies on this issue.
- We are sick of the lack of clear Federal leadership on this issue, when States and Territories are so overtly compromised.
- We are sick of witnessing poor governance structures set up to regulate this industry, who with their massive conflicts of interest, fail to provide effective public policy.
- We are sick of witnessing a well resourced (with our money) industry game plan similar to that used by the Tobacco industry to maintain profits at all costs to the health of the public.
- We are sick of being presented with arguments from those with massive vested interests suggesting we represent only 1% of the population when we are the industry’s most dependable customers according to their own 20/80 customer to product ratio guidelines.
- We are sick of having the damage to our families ignored and the social costs of “disordered gambling” outweighed by the so called social benefits of gambling venues in our communities.
- We are sick of the sight of poker machines on every street corner and the fact that our social clubs in NSW have become effectively local pokies casinos.
- We are sick of the sight and sound of Tom Waterhouse and his bookies bag.
- We are sick to our stomachs as to what is likely to happen with the next wave of new gambling products when as a Country we have failed to safely manage the old ones.
- We are sick of having to turn to marginalised services for support and not having our gambling problems recognised as a legitimate health disorder, placed on the National Health Outcomes agenda and serviced by our State Health institutions.
- We are sick of hearing that self-exclusion, individual counselling and education should be the primary focus to address these problems in preference to technological change.
- We are sick of seeing \$19 billion each year come into industry and government coffers from gambling and such pitiful amounts go out to address its harms.
- We are sick of yet again standing here today fighting for what we consider a basic right for a duty of care, consumer protection and a comprehensive public health framework along with an effective national regulatory response to prevent and reduce problem gambling in Australia.
- We are sick to death (literally) of regulatory failure in the face of these products of Dangerous Consumption.

So yes, we are pretty sick of this latest move to undermine effective change.

(Continued page 5...)

GIS Senate Address Cont...

This hearing has come at a time of major loss for the world as we say goodbye to a great statesman - Nelson Mandela. I only wish I had his eloquence in raising the voices of those oppressed by powerful institutions. But in reverence to his legacy I will share some of his words that came to mind in preparing for today's appearance:

What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead

We from the GIS are here today to entreat you to make a significant difference to our lives and the lives of our future generations....

What we want to see at a national level is:

- A National Public Health framework on gambling and problem gambling.
- Enhanced consumer protection as recommended by the PC 2010 including \$1 bets and lowering jackpots.
- National Health and Safety/Harm Reduction standards with regards Poker machine technology and other internet/computer/mobile phone gambling products.
- National Health Outcomes for Problem Gambling to guide States and Territories.
- A National Peak Body on Problem Gambling for consumer information, education, training, support and advocacy.
- A National Public Health Summit on problem gambling to guide new directions on addressing gambling harms.

Consistent with these aims, we ask you to demonstrate your leadership on this issue by:

- Rejecting the proposed repeal of the National Gambling Reform Acts.
- Rejecting the Government's proposal to introduce so called "responsible gambling measures" with its primary focus upon individual interventions to the exclusion of any meaningful prevention.
- Recommend a strengthening of National prevention, consumer protection and population-based, public health strategies on gambling and problem gambling in Australia.
- Rejecting this current process of "bundling" gambling legislative changes in order to achieve political goals. This process denies the issue full and considered judgment by our elected members and prevents the opportunity for public debate. It hides important legislative change amongst other non- gambling related issues, thereby diminishing its importance. In doing so it fails the people of Australia and maintains an ongoing betrayal of those affected by problem gambling and their families. It is fundamentally un-democratic and poor governance.

In summary we entreat the Senate to deliver social justice for over five million Australians affected by problem gambling.

- **We ask you to deliver effective legislation and policy based on 14 years of consistent research which has evidenced the need for National gambling reform and the overwhelming public support for reforms to poker machine gambling.**
- **We call upon you to demonstrate what over 14 years ago the 1999 PC report recommended as "good governance" on this issue.**
- **We implore you to step up to your own Mandela moment in history.**



Gamblers “Blamed for Addiction”

The [Sydney Morning Herald](#) reports...

Australians tend to be sympathetic towards people with alcohol and other drug addictions who seek help but often view problem gambling as a "moral failing", according to new research.

Australian National University researchers say public health strategies, such as those used to tackle alcohol abuse and discourage smoking, should be adopted to help combat gambling addiction.

Centre for Gambling Research staff interviewed more than 100 health and welfare professionals, regular poker machine players and people who self-identified as having gambling problems.

The researchers found that high levels of social stigma were deterring people from seeking help for gambling problems.

Lead researcher Annie Carroll said society seemed to treat people with gambling addiction more harshly than those with substance abuse problems.

“While society has some sympathy for people with drug or alcohol problems because they have an addiction, people with gambling problems are more likely to be blamed by society for their problem,” Dr Carroll said.

Some of the people interviewed for the study had sought help for alcohol or other drug problems but had been too embarrassed to tell counsellors they were also addicted to gambling. Dr Carroll said people with gambling addictions should be encouraged to view seeking help as a “step of strength”.

Dr Carroll said counsellors interviewed for the study wanted to see greater restrictions on gambling advertising, particularly advertisements that would be seen by children.

She said while people were provided with guidelines on recommended safe levels of alcohol consumption, no such information was available on gambling.

Read the full ANU report at:

<http://www.gamblingandracing.act.gov.au/Documents/Recent%20Research/Stigma%20and%20help-seeking%20for%20gambling%20problems%20-%20Report-%20November%202013.pdf>



UPCOMING EVENTS

5th International Gambling Conference

Auckland, New Zealand, 19th - 21st February, 2014,

www.internationalgamblingconference.com

Gambling Impacts Today: At Work, Rest and Play – Public Seminar, May 21st, 2014

contact info@gisnsw.org.au or

www.gisnsw.org.au

Useful Websites :

www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au

www.problemgambling.gov.au/

Free problem gambling training provided by CCWT:

http://www.acwa.asn.au/Show_Found_CDs_by_Stream11.php?stream=Problem+Gambling

RGF Problem Gambling Conference presentations:

http://www.acwa.asn.au/RGF_resources12.html

<http://www.responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/resources/useful-links>

Free Gambling Help

is available online

at

www.gamblinghelponline.org.au

**Phone Gambling Help
NSW for information on
your local Gambling
Support Services**

1800 858 858

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 , University Sydney

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 <http://www.freeyourself.com.au/>

My Passionate Affair with Poker Machines (DVD) <http://www.freeyourself.com.au/>

Free Yourself (DVD) <http://www.freeyourself.com.au/>

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

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 * **PROBLEM GAMBLING—** *
 * **A Self Help Guide for** *
 * **Families** *
 * Developed by the GIS this *
 * 44 page publication is *
 * available as a FREE *
 * download at *
 * www.gisnsw.org.au or *
 * order a hard copy at *
 * [http://](http://www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au/GamblingHelp/SelfGuide.aspx) *
 * [www.gamblinghelp.nsw.g](http://www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au/GamblingHelp/SelfGuide.aspx) *
 * [ov.au/GamblingHelp/](http://www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au/GamblingHelp/SelfGuide.aspx) *
 * [SelfGuide.aspx](http://www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au/GamblingHelp/SelfGuide.aspx) *
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Help Online

www.gamblinghelponline.org.au

www.gisnsw.org.au

www.gansw.org.au

www.gansw.org.au/GamAnon

www.smartrecoveryaustralia.com.au

www.chrysalisinsight.org.au

www.freeyourself.com.au

www.nrgs.org.au

www.stvincents.com.au

<http://youthgambling.mcgill.ca/Gambling2/index.php>

www.gamblersanonymous.org.au

www.miph.org/gambling

www.responsiblegambling.org

www.femalegamblers.info/

www.pgfnz.org.nz/

www.gamblingwatchuk.org/

www.gamblinghelponline.org.au

www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au

General Interest Websites

www.socialwork.unimelb.edu.au

www.nags.org.au

www.unsw.edu.au

www.afm.mb.ca

www.societystudygambling.co.uk

www.camh.net

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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 organisation developed and run by volunteers. Membership to 30 June each year is:

Please circle:

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

Name.....

Organisation.....

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*Any news, personal stories, comments on articles, important information etc., please send correspondence to **The Editor** e-mail—info@gisnsw.org.au and mark in “subject” section - **for newsletter**, or mail to above address*