

# IMPACT NEWS

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## RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING AWARENESS WEEK

MAY 14 - 20th



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## Consumer Voices

### A Problem Gambling Peer Spokespeople Project

The GIS is pleased to announce their success in gaining FaHCSIA funding support to establish a twelve month pilot community education project for the Illawarra and Shoalhaven region.

The aims of this project are:

- To increase community awareness and education about problem gambling
- To create an informed and empathetic community to reduce stigma
- To reduce barriers to support for those affected by problem gambling
- To promote self-help and professional support to those affected.
- To value the experience and role of consumers (those affected by problem gambling) as peer leaders in individual recovery and community education.

Over 300,000 people in Australia are defined as a “problem gambler” or at “moderate risk”. For every problem gambler 5-10 other people are negatively affected including family, friends, employers (Productivity Commission Reports 1999 & 2010). In the Shoalhaven this means 10,000 people struggle with the impact of problem gambling in their lives.

The 2006 NSW problem gambling prevalence study found the Wollongong/Illawarra area had a high risk of gambling problems with three times the density of gaming machines than the national average.

Yet in many ways the community is generally unaware of the extent of problem gambling impacts or how to resolve them.

This new project will use the direct experience of consumers (those affected by PG) as peer leaders in individual recovery and community education. The power of the personal story to create awareness on health issues is well recognised (Mental Health Consumer Advocacy & Participation Programs, Health Dep’t. Programs, Carers Programs, Cancer Council, Alzheimer’s Australia etc).

The benefits of the inclusion of peer support and education in the field of problem gambling has also been well researched. In the 2004 study on barriers to help seeking the need for those who have been affected to hear from those in recovery has been specifically recommended (refer: Gambling Seeking Help for Gambling Problems: A View from the Inside Problems: A View from the Inside Chrystal Mansley, Steven A. Skitch, & David C. Hodgins. Insight Nova Scotia – International Problem Gambling Conference, October 4-6, 2004). Recent Australian research into help seeking behaviour recommended an increase in consumer voice programs (Gamblers at risk and their help seeking behaviour, Gambling Research Australia, 2012). The opportunity to create increased public awareness by the use of those with direct experiences of the issue has also been trialled successfully in both SA and Victoria both States now offer an established service.

Trained peer educators will be coordinated through the Gambling Impact Society (NSW) Inc. to provide over 60 sessions of education and training in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven over the next twelve months. Speakers will be available to provide education sessions to community groups, health and welfare services and other relevant forums .

(continued page 3...)

## Society Activities

There has been movement at the station!

On Friday 20<sup>th</sup> January, Kate Roberts and Ralph Bristow joined Rev. Tim Costello, Andrew Wilkie and Senator Nick Xenophon at Martin Place Sydney, for the official launch of 'Stop The Loss' Campaign. However, it was Julia Gillard's betrayal of her election promise that was so devastating to Wilkie and to the thousands of Australian families who have suffered so much from the impact of problem gambling and of whom Wilkie, with courage and endurance, represents.

These families are deeply hurt by this betrayal of trust and, for them, the knife cuts even more deeply when you consider the fact that they already live with the open wounds of betrayal and the broken promises of the problem gambler.

In February, Kate represented the GIS at the New Zealand Problem Gambling Foundation's International Conference in Auckland.

Then, on Friday March 9<sup>th</sup>, Kate, Ralph and I attended the Sydney Health Policy Network Forum at Sydney University where the opening address – 'Strengthening Prevention Policy' was given by the Minister for Health and Medical Research, the Hon. Jillian Skinner.



Some of the more significant points from the forum speakers resonated with us. For example:-

"People need to feel safe in their environment. We need to engage the Public in maintaining the strength of Prevention Policy

"Prevention is better than cure"

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

This Public Health Prevention Policy has worked to reduce harm caused through smoking and, not everyone smokes; the policy is in place for drugs and alcohol and not everyone imbibes; the same policy has minimized harm by using seat belts in cars yet not everyone is a driver. A similar policy needs to be applied to gambling for the safety of the families of the gambler. After all, the family is the nucleus of society. We have our running shoes on, working towards our Responsible Gambling Awareness Week – Public Seminar May 17<sup>th</sup> - when we will launch our Consumer Voice Project.

A broken promise will not deter Andrew Wilkie, neither will it deter the thousands of Australian families in support of 'Stop The Loss Campaign'. We are not going away – and – We will make a difference!

D. Webb

**FROM THE CHAIRPERSON:** This has been an interesting year in the field of problem gambling and from the Society's point of view we have had to be a vocal group in contributing to the gambling reform debate. Unfortunately in NSW there are a few opportunities for the community to be consulted on gambling and problem gambling issues. Yet we have seen the lobbying strength of NSW vested interests using funds primarily provided by problem gamblers to provide a \$40 million "war chest" to support an anti-reform campaign often containing misinformation and lack of facts.

As a society representing those who have been affected by problem gambling we have maintained a focus on the damage to the community and the product safety issues related to poker machine gambling particularly here in NSW where we have over half the Country's machines. Whilst recognising the legitimacy of an industry to maximise its marketing opportunities it is important that the community has enough facts to weigh up the cost vs benefits of gambling and poker machine gambling in particular. The GIS is often labelled anti-gambling by the gambling industry, yet in fact, we believe in informed choice, consumer protection and promote a public health approach to gambling similar to that employed for other products of dangerous consumption -drugs, alcohol and tobacco. We are not prohibitionists. We do believe that there is a need to provide increased public education about the risks of gambling, and change the technology of poker machines to make them safer and truly become a product of entertainment rather than the current situation which allows the potential to take \$1200 an hour from users. We believe in prevention as well as support for those who have been affected and better services for families.

This edition of Impact News heralds the beginning of Responsible Gambling Awareness Week-a time to reflect on gambling issues, hear from those who have been affected and get to know the facts. This is an important year for potential reform and the draft National Gambling Reform Bills 2012 is undergoing further revision before its pathway through government commencing in May. It is time for our community to increase its understanding about all aspect of problem gambling not just about those who have fallen into the river requiring our support to get out, but how to put the fences at the top the cliff to prevent the fall. **We invite you to join us at our public seminar in Wollongong on May 17th to find out more.**

*Continued from page 1*

## Consumer Voices Project

The service will work in partnership with the existing RGF funded Problem Gambling Counselling services in the region (Mission Australia). It is anticipated that both a counsellor and peer educator will work collaboratively to provide the education session.

The benefits of providing a well trained group of people to provide such a service is recognised both for the benefit of community education process but also the growth of those peers participating in the program.

The opportunity to provide trained role models will assist to reduce community shame whilst as the same time promoting a more aware and empathetic community response. It is hoped that in areas of high CALD (Wollongong/Illawarra) and Indigenous populations (Nowra/Shoalhaven) volunteer spokespeople will be recruited from these communities.

Training spokespeople will allow for professional support to those who have felt able to tell their story. The benefit of training will assist spokespeople to create safe boundaries for themselves in the presentations whilst also providing a professional service to the community. They will be able to provide positive role models to the community and to those who may be currently affected by problem gambling.

### Consumer Voices Project Philosophy

The philosophy behind the Consumer Voices project comes from a number of rationales:

- The Gambling Impact Society recognizes that people overcoming the effects of problem gambling have, through their pain and personal growth, acquired considerable expertise on the issue and that this expertise is of value to others.
- Many of these people express a desire to contribute their experiences to the cause of helping others. In sharing their story they want to lend hope and inspiration to others and bring the private and often hidden experience of problem gambling more into the open.
- People struggling with the consequences of problem gambling want to hear these personal stories. They want to hear from those who describe the same difficulties, yet have achieved what they aspire to achieve.

- Community and welfare services who may be indirectly working with people affected by problem gambling may benefit from increased understanding of the problem gambling experience by exposure to the personal narrative.
- Lack of knowledge in the community at large can create barriers to support for those affected by problem gambling. By increasing community knowledge such barriers can be reduced.
- The Gambling Impact Society takes a public health and consumer protection approach to gambling in the community and as such aims to reduce the pathologising and victimizing of those affected.
- The Gambling Impact Society as a health promotion charity actively promotes consumer participation in its programs and embraces participatory decision making in their management.

The project fulfills an important community education role. It also empowers those individuals who participate, increasing their confidence, self worth and self esteem.

By placing problem gambling in the context of a public health approach to gambling, the project aims to “normalise” the person affected by problem gambling for those hearing the story.

Key principles underpinning the project include:

- Consumers should be paid a nominal fee for their time, and reimbursed their travel costs.
- Engagements should be provided free of charge.
- Consumers should be continually supported to move through the project into other activities and goals.
- Relapse support and referral should be provided to ensure the ongoing health and safety of participants.

### Want To Find Out More?

Should you or someone you know be interested in working with this project or should you be interested in arranging a Consumer Voices presentation please contact the project officer:

Reina French- 0450 940 474 or [pbrf2010@gmail.com](mailto:pbrf2010@gmail.com)  
or

Gambling Impact Society chairperson and project coordinator:

Kate Roberts – 0401370042 or [info@gisnsw.org.au](mailto:info@gisnsw.org.au)

## Consumer Voices – personal narratives of the lived experience of problem gambling

The following stories have been generously shared by our members for this Responsible Gambling Awareness Week edition of Impact News. We hope it increases your awareness and encourages you to find out more about this silent addiction spreading through our Country.

### Waking From The Nightmare

It lasted for a long time. A few years have passed, since we, our addicted son and our other children emerged from a long, dark tunnel.

Over the previous years – nearly 20 – it was a roller-coaster ride. First came shock, then disbelief, when we first became aware of the extent of our son's gambling addiction. Then followed anger, frustration, lack of sympathy and fear; a fear that his debts and depression would lead to something terrible.

He had no savings and no other assets and marriage was only a remote possibility. To feed his addiction, he stole money from his employer and was consequently sacked. Hopes were raised when he soon acquired a new job but they were again dashed as he lived a lifestyle he could not afford. He was in the grip of depression. Loss of friends (he didn't pay back money lent), changes in accommodation, withdrawal from family, lack of communication with us and knowledge of his occasional drunken behaviour caused us to be suspicious and angry. How could this happen to our son? He was a contradiction of his former self. We were at a loss to find help for him, let alone interested in the problem of gambling addiction.

It was only when we became involved with Gam-anon, and then with the Gambling Impact Society, that we began to feel a real sympathy for him; his inability to control his urge to gamble; to gamble till it hurt. The friends we made, and still have, all victims of out-of-control gambling in one way or another, helped us tremendously; they gave us strength and helped us to understand, forgive and love our son, unreservedly, again.

We had never doubted that, at times, he did try to rid himself of the urge to gamble but, overwhelmed by the desire to play the pokies (loneliness was always there), and having no one for support and not believing anyone could step in and help him, it was all downhill into further difficulties. His siblings wanted to help him to get back on his feet; first his sister, then his brother. This worked well at first but then promises of rent were continually broken which greatly impacted on the financial commitments of his siblings who had mortgages to pay. We could not stand by and watch our daughter's life ruined and we supported her in her having to tell him 'to go'. Tough love! Things went well for a time but the gambling hadn't stopped (albeit less so), as we later found out, and soon a real crisis developed – a more critical one.

Living so far away from him; he in Sydney and we in the Shoalhaven and lack of access to professional help, disempowered us, completely, or so we thought.

Then, despite all the hurdles, red lights and brick walls, a light appeared unexpectedly at the end of the dark tunnel. While living in his brother's house he managed to cope, somehow, for a while, but then he was unable to pay the rates and electricity bills. Added to this, the car that he was using to get to and from work and to do his job, belonged to his boss who was about to sell it. Without a car – the means to look for a job and get to work – and unable to pay his debts, our son faced this crisis: unemployment, mounting debt, deeper depression and, dare I say it, possibly the gutter and even worse.

This was not only a crisis point for our son; it was a crisis for us, too. He was our loved son, after all, and we did not want his problem to further impact on our family. We had told him previously that we wouldn't give him any further money but, nevertheless, he rang (a rare event) and told us of his problems, hoping we would change our minds.

Giving him money was not an option. After much soul searching however, we told him what we would like to do to help; he was to send to us his household bills, which we would personally pay by cheque, and then we would arrange to buy his boss's car which he had been using. He was overwhelmed. He couldn't believe what we were about to do. We felt great relief and satisfaction in the belief that we might be responsible for "slaying the monster", at last.

Our plan, hopefully, would not only save his job, but help with his mental well-being and, perhaps, save his life. We could only hope that our plan would work.

Since then, 2003, the gambling has stopped, he's always had a job, he's regained some self-esteem and confidence, he is happy and part of the family again and takes great pleasure in being with his niece – a five-year old. I think she sees him as a grandfather! However, our son still lives his life for today; tomorrow is not to worry about (except for us) and he has virtually no assets. We, being old, worry about what the future holds for him. At least, the scourge of pokies, and the pain, is a thing of the past, we hope.

To survive from the gambling labyrinth, with its lures, enticements and gimmicks, has taken its toll, and the Clubs Industry is to be condemned for the misery it inflicts on society.

Survivors; a Father and Mother, and a Beloved Son

## Fooling Yourself

As recovery begins, focus should be on the self, for many character changes need to take place. "Filling the void" or replacing those many hours/years of gambling need to be filled with new challenges and activities, including the simple things such as walking. The aim of these changes is to replace old thinking habits with new and positive thoughts. Need to nurture the physical, mental and spiritual self is of paramount importance.

The impact of how gambling affects the gambler can vary from loss of self-respect, shame, possibly physical illness, depression, impact on family and financial matters all can be devastating. The final goal is to become a healthy productive person to be able to live without gambling being part of life.

In my fifth year of recovery, I awoke one morning completely exhausted, finding that overnight I had fallen into the black pit of despair. Depression had moved in bringing with it that ugly voice saying "you may as well end it all". Where this came from I had no idea, all I knew was what a mess I was in and I needed to fight for my life.

There were a number of things that I didn't need to concentrate on first. Having no appetite or bathing was not a priority. Feeling sick and off balance was not a big concern. The first thing I needed to do was to get rid of that voice and to recall all of my life experiences to prove what was happening to me at the time, compared to the rest of my life was no biggie.

The need not to give this thing, the power that it was demanding took every ounce of what I had left in me and that was so little. It would have been easier to just sit there and die. But I knew I was a survivor, so with my minuscule tool bag I fought back to gain control.

After 6 weeks of pure battle I started to live normally. Bathing and eating began to be a priority. The TV and people's voices started to make sense again, for that time I believe my brain blanketed the skill of making sense of other's speech in order for me to focus on my choices. I had been to the doctor a couple of times and my extreme high blood pressure was returning to normal.

Here was a hidden pitfall for me on my journey of recovery I had continued my old ways.

I started to look at what had brought me to this event. It was easy to see one of the main problems I had, was the amount of self-nurturing I was doing - which amounted to nearly zero.

*For me "there is Life after gambling" it isn't something I need to be tied to. What is vital though is do your homework, watch out for pitfalls and take back life and live it.*

In fact, I could not stop from running from point A to B at work or at home .

I had become compulsively obsessed. In those past 5 years I had changed so many things about myself and was doing a great job. I had received counselling (but looking back, I needed far more), read countless self-help books and was well aware of replacing one addiction for another.

I had fooled myself. I thought I had it nearly altogether. My job and private life became the new addiction, swapping one unhealthy way of life for another, still

abusing myself, still gaining great highs and adrenalin rushes, the only difference between it was I wasn't gambling. Once again I needed to change my behaviour and thinking, which I have, and am still doing.

Life isn't easy, so often its' cruel, but I love the way that you are given choice and opportunity to change. I have had an invaluable experience to learn from. I have proven that I can rise above what comes my way. It simply takes understanding of the part you play in it. After years of recovery the roller coaster has slowed down and I feel very healthy. I will never escape the urge to gamble, but that urge lessens as you learn to cope with it.

For me "there is Life after gambling" it isn't something I need to be tied to. What is vital though is do your homework, watch out for pitfalls and take back life and live it.

Lorraine.

**Free Gambling Help is available  
online or by phone 24hrs a day.**

**For further information**

**[www.gamblinghelponline.org.au](http://www.gamblinghelponline.org.au)**

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



## A Problem Gambler

The dogs' name was "Smart Alick" out of box 8. I placed a bet on it with an 'sp' bookmaker. It was 1948. I was 8. This was my first gamble. This would not be my last!

This was 63 years ago. I was encouraged to gamble by my grandmother. A regular Saturday consisted of running her bets to the 'sp' bookmakers and this became a huge part of my life up until 11 years ago. 'Sp' bookmakers were virtually in every neighbourhood throughout Australia - they were illegal but accepted by most of the community much in the same way TAB's are today. I grew up in a gambling culture where horse racing, trots and greyhounds ruled supreme. Added to this was watching games of two-up in the bush of a Sunday afternoon. This was also illegal and I often witnessed police raids which could be quite humorous as the men came charging out of the bush with the police following. I also witnessed police raids at the 'sp' bookmakers venue with several men arrested - the gambling continued on regardless when the fines were paid by the bookmaker. Lastly, Poker machines were illegal prior to 1956 and I can remember playing my first poker machine at a charity fund raiser about 1955, I was still at school, one of my uncles provided the machines.

My first job was in 1975 in a government department which had an 'sp' bookmaker mostly operating on the Wednesday races but bets could also be laid on the Saturday races, trots, greyhounds and football. There were hundreds of young blokes working there plus many older people so there were always plenty of customers.

I did see many of my mates get into big debt and if they couldn't pay it wasn't pretty. Most received a warning and then a beating - not by the bookmaker personally but by an associate or stand over man.

I played rugby league from the late 1950's into the 1960's, clubs were fairly small back then compared to now, but they grew larger and this is due to poker machines being legalised in 1956. In 1965 the TAB (Totaliser Agency Board) was introduced and 'sp' bookmakers gradually went out of business. As the tab became more efficient hours of business increased and more people supported the outlets.

The introduction of the TAB into clubs and pubs plus televised racing was another big factor which increased my gambling. This new form of betting from every state day and night was called punters paradise or peril. Then on top of this the state government introduced poker machines into pubs. From this point I began to mix gambling on horses through the day to poker machines in the night. This proved to be a lethal mix.

I should have known that you cannot win in the long term with gambling, but I could not see that I had a problem. A win was just around the corner and everything would be okay. I am the classic problem gambler - "a win is not enough and a loss I will chase to win." I was nearly at rock bottom. I was losing large amounts of money and my relationship was falling apart.

Then one Sunday morning after a bad night on the pokies when I was feeling lousy and depressed and with my partner refusing to talk to me, I called the gambling helpline. After an hour discussion I organised to contact the Wesley gambling counselling service. That was 11 yrs ago and that phone call was the most important call I've ever made.

Today after several relapses it is 4 yrs since I last gambled. I am thankful for the assistance I have received over the 11 year recovery journey and I know that I am the only one who can change the habit.

Ralph



### PROBLEM GAMBLING REFLECTIONS

*"I know that there isn't a cure out there for this disease, but I also know now that by staying aware, being involved in helping others to achieve the same, creating awareness among others that are not yet in the midst of the addiction, staying true to myself and others—will help very much in keeping this monster at bay.....this cancer in remission. So, for anyone that is not sure about the future after gambling.....take it from me—THERE IS." (JOHN)*

*"Though over the past 25 years my life has been plagued by gambling, I now believe that it has come to an end. This is a great relief for me, and I suspect, one for my family and friends." (ANONYMOUS)*

*"For me "there is Life after gambling" it isn't something I need to be tied to. What is vital though is do your homework, watch out for pitfalls and take back life and live it." (Lorraine)*

## THE GAMBLER IN ME.....WHO ME?

If I hadn't been retrenched five years ago, I'd probably still be working. If I wasn't, working, I probably wouldn't be bored. If I wasn't bored, I probably wouldn't want to play the poker machines. My name not being Kipling, I doubt I'll ever become famous for doing an "IF" routine but somehow I need to find an explanation for my pokie playing. IF I find an explanation that is acceptable, I won't play them any more or at least not so as it is, or could be, a problem.

Do you believe that?

I have read many articles on compulsive gambling, the tragedies that can and often do result and I've even witnessed the tragic consequences in my own extended family. THEY play all the time or at least regularly. THEY lose the family home. THEY cause relationships to fall apart. THEY put all their pay in the pokies in one session. THEY use the bill or rent money to feed the pokies. THIS LITTLE BLACK DUCK doesn't do that, so she doesn't really have a problem.

Or does she?

If I liked drinking instead of poker machines, I guess I'd be a binge drinker. You know, you haven't got a problem if you don't drink every day. You can't be an alcoholic if you can go weeks or months without a drink. It doesn't matter that you can't have ONE drink, when you DO drink, that you have to have two, three, four and then stop counting. That's not problem drinking!

Or is it?

My Dad played the pokies, more than he should have and enough to worry the family budget but we never lost the house and he "gave it away" when he retired. Mum liked to "play socially", meaning with Dad or one of us who liked playing, once we were old enough to go to the club (twenty-one in those days).

Six kids in our family, three like the pokies, three wouldn't touch them. How did we get to be the ones who like to play? Is it some genetic lottery, a quirk of fate, someone else's FAULT that we like to gamble?

Are my answers here somewhere?

I am a very strong minded person, quite autocratic and partial to doing things MY WAY. I am not an ogre, not a major cynic and don't lack in compassion for others etc. etc. I've been known to be kind and considerate, understanding and non-judgmental through twenty five years of working in the community sector but I AM kinda hard on myself personally. What's that got to with the price of eggs, you ask?

I don't know, I'm just looking for answers, remember?

I really hate not working, the loss of independence and the whole Centrelink payment bit. Not that I'm ungrateful for the income, I just want to earn it. On top of that, I've lost my health and have had to accept that I will not (wanted to put a "probably" in there, in front of "not") ever work again. Boy, I REALLY HATE ADMITTING THAT!

Is gambling linked to life changes?

Poker machines were a social and occasional pastime most of my adult life, like having an each way bet at the TAB. I never played alone and found it boring if I played longer than half an hour. Betting was not a priority, a big deal, I could take it or leave it.

Why did that change?

Now I can sit alone, especially in front of MY machine, as long as the money holds out. Now it's not ten dollars, but hundreds of dollars or more of it in my purse. My rent comes directly out of my pension, most household payments are on direct debit from my bank account. My only problems are my phone and power accounts. I don't have credit cards, as I went bankrupt when I lost my job and have found out what a blessing it is NOT to have them. "Credit cards are a way of life, can't manage without them".

Oh yes you can!

Unfortunately, we nearly all have ATM or bank debit cards and heaven only knows why the "powers that be" allowed clubs and pubs to install automatic teller machines! A FULL-ON DISASTER!! I hit my bank account four times in one afternoon! I didn't even know it WAS four times until I came home and pulled out the ATM receipts!

No-one else has ever done that, have they?

If I find out WHY I play the pokies, will that help me to stop? I quit smoking after thirty-two years of doing it, didn't have patches and pills to help in those days either! "I am strong! I am invincible! I am a woman!"

Well, I'm a woman but I'm a woman who gambles and doesn't want to, want to again.

I have finally seen a gambling counsellor, a nice young woman who seems pretty cluey. She has lots of ideas and I have lots of "yes, but". Somehow I think she's probably heard them all before and she might just be able to help me.

Lord knows, I need help!

Meg

## **Gambling Reformers to learn from Public Health Campaigners**

Those who advocate gambling reform should take a lesson from tobacco control and other public health campaigns, was the message from a recent gathering of leading gambling researchers. Three concurrent workshop sessions – on research, advocacy and policy – provided an opportunity for participants to exchange ideas and unpack the issues associated with each topic, while finding new ways of progressing the issue. Deputy Head of the Department of Health Social Science at Monash University, Dr Charles Livingstone, delivered the conference keynote address and said the conference provided an opportunity to look at gambling from a public health perspective.

"The conference outlined the issue of gambling regulation in relation to pokie machines," Dr Livingstone said. "We considered and discussed how to apply lessons from successful public health reforms such as tobacco control, alcohol and road safety to the reform of gambling regulation." A number of leading public health researchers and gambling reform advocates participated in the conference and workshops, which focused academic, political and advocacy expertise on issues confronting gambling reform.

"Efforts to prevent or reduce harm from gambling have been fragmented and public understanding of the need for gambling reform may have been compromised by campaigns from gambling vested interests, who have run well-funded campaigns opposing proposed reforms," Dr Livingstone said.

Through the conference, the Lonsdale Coalition of Independent Researchers was formed. The group of experts will not accept funding from the gambling industry or associated groups. "The Lonsdale Coalition aims to highlight the importance of independent research in formulating policy, and ensure that vested interests do not influence research outcomes," Dr Livingstone said. "The conference brought together professionals from a variety of public health fields, as well as people working in local government and community members. It couldn't have been possible without the hard work from Darshini Ayton, from the Department of Health Social Science and Angela Rintoul, from the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at Monash University."

Source: This article first appeared in the Monash University Medicine, Nursing and Health Science News, Feb. 2012

<http://www.med.monash.edu.au/news/2012/gambling.html>

Kate Roberts, Chairperson of the GIS, was a participant at this event held on 10/2/12.

## **Problem Gambling: Pokies, People and Public Policy – A Public Seminar May 17<sup>th</sup>, Wollongong**

The Gambling Impact Society (NSW) is pleased to announce their annual Responsible Gambling Awareness Week Seminar to be held at Wollongong University Innovation campus on May 17<sup>th</sup> (see [www.gisnsw.org.au](http://www.gisnsw.org.au) for program details and location map).

In a year of potential National Gambling Reform we invite you to come along and be part of the current debate. Guest Speakers include Senator Nick Xenophon, academic researchers from the University of Wollongong and Southern Cross University along with a range of interesting speakers on innovative programs addressing problem gambling.

The new GIS Consumer Voice Peer Spokespeople pilot program for the Illawarra and Shoalhaven - a first for NSW will be launched.

Please see website for full program details and location map [www.gisnsw.org.au](http://www.gisnsw.org.au)

This is a popular low cost community education event so register early and don't miss out (seminar flyer and registration form included in this issue).

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**3-4th APRIL/SYDNEY/ RGF GAMBLING**

**COUNSELLORS CONFERENCE " SHARING THE KNOWLEDGE"**

**17th MAY 2012/WOLLONGONG/ PUBLIC SEMINAR,**

**Problem Gambling: Pokies, People and Public Policy .**

**A GIS Responsible Gambling Awareness Week Event**

**The Innovation Campus Wollongong University-**

**Refer [www.gisnsw.org.au](http://www.gisnsw.org.au)**



# 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).

\* \* \* \* \*  
 \* **PROBLEM GAMBLING—** \*  
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 \* [SelfGuide.aspx](http://www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au/GamblingHelp/SelfGuide.aspx) \*  
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- 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)

# Useful Websites

## Self-Help Websites

- [www.gamblinghelponline.org.au](http://www.gamblinghelponline.org.au)
- [www.gisnsw.org.au](http://www.gisnsw.org.au)
- [www.gansw.org.au](http://www.gansw.org.au)
- [www.gansw.org.au/GamAnon](http://www.gansw.org.au/GamAnon)
- [www.smartrecoveryaustralia.com.au](http://www.smartrecoveryaustralia.com.au)
- [www.3rdplace.com.au](http://www.3rdplace.com.au)
- [www.freeyourself.com.au](http://www.freeyourself.com.au)
- [www.nrgs.org.au](http://www.nrgs.org.au)
- [www.stvincents.com.au](http://www.stvincents.com.au)
- [www.education.mcgill.ca](http://www.education.mcgill.ca)
- [www.gamblersanonymous.org.au](http://www.gamblersanonymous.org.au)
- [www.miph.org/gambling](http://www.miph.org/gambling)
- [www.freeyourself.com.au](http://www.freeyourself.com.au)
- [www.responsiblegambling.org](http://www.responsiblegambling.org)
- [www.responsiblegambling.qld.gov.au](http://www.responsiblegambling.qld.gov.au)
- [www.gamblingproblem.co.nz](http://www.gamblingproblem.co.nz)
- [www.femalegamblers.org/suggestedreading](http://www.femalegamblers.org/suggestedreading)

## General Interest Websites

- [www.socialwork.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.socialwork.unimelb.edu.au)
- [www.nags.org.au](http://www.nags.org.au)
- [www.unsw.edu.au](http://www.unsw.edu.au)
- [www.afm.mb.ca](http://www.afm.mb.ca)
- [www.societystudygambling.co.uk](http://www.societystudygambling.co.uk)
- [www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net)
- [www.pgfnz.co.nz](http://www.pgfnz.co.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)**

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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
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