

Additional information for the Independent Gambling Authority From organisations concerned about gambling harm

The following summarises responses to the three requests for additional comment made by the IGA during hearings on 21st November 2006. these being:

1. Additional legal opinion concerning interpretation of section 11 of the Independent Gambling Authority Act 1995 (amended) dealing with Functions and Powers of the Authority
2. Levels of demand for community services in South Australia
3. Demand for gambling help services, including demand for services from young people

1. Additional legal opinion re Section 11, IGA Act

This has been prepared by Mr Garth Blake SC and forwarded to the Authority separately. If this has not been received, please contact Mark Henley.

2. Demand For Community Services

The following information has been prepared by SACOSS and is based on Community Service Surveys conducted by ACOSS over the last 3 years. The survey has been conducted over the last decade and was initially known as "Australians Living on the Edge"

"There are distinct personal, economic and social consequences associated with problem gambling that are felt by individuals, families and society. The financial difficulties experienced by problem gamblers can often lead to a loss of work, increasing risk of homelessness and an increasing reliance upon community services (Department for Families and Communities 2005: 6).

Within the ACOSS Community Sector Surveys¹ that were undertaken over the last 3 years increases in demand for community services in South Australia has been consistently demonstrated.

2004

- There was a 17% increase in the number of people assisted by respondent South Australian agencies in the 2000-02 and 2002-03 financial years, rising from 396,532 to 462,529 people.
- There was a 22% increase in the numbers of people seeking but not receiving service(s) in the 2001-02 and 2002-03 financial years, rising from 13,829 to 16,931 people.

¹ The ACOSS Community Sector Survey examines changes in the operating environment of community organisations, and how the community services sector is responding. This survey also provides an overall picture of the demand for community services and an indication of how low-income and disadvantaged Australians are faring.

- During this period, South Australian community sector organisations were found to be working under increasing pressure, with only 2% of agencies reporting no increase in pressure. The main reasons given for the increase in pressure were increased operating costs (19%), increased numbers of clients seeking services (18%), and the increasingly complex needs of clients (18%).

2005

- During 2004/2005, South Australian services experienced an increase in the number of people being assisted and in the intensity of the work.
- In 2003-4 respondent agencies provided services to 228,435 people, which is 8,614 (or 3.9%) more than the 219,821 people who received a service in 2002-03.
- When looking at the *number of times* a service was provided, respondent agencies provided 24,020 more services in 2003-4 compared with 2002-3, which represents a 10.6% increase.
- It is possible to calculate the number of people seeking services in 2002-3 and 2003-4 by adding together the number of people who received services and the number of times people have been turned away from a service. This shows that the number of people seeking services has increased by 9,091 between 2002-3 and 2003-4.

2006

- In 2004-5 respondent agencies provided services to 584,563 people, which is 80,625 people (or 16%) more than the 504,938 people who received a service in 2003-4.
- In 2004-5 respondent agencies turned away 33,934 people, which is 8,940 people (36%) more than the 24,994 people turned away in 2003-4.
- Waiting lists are also used by respondent agencies to ration their services. 89% of respondents reported that their waiting list had stayed the same or worsened between 2003-4 and 2004-5.
- While it is useful to see where priorities lie in terms of individual types of service, many agencies report that it is the increasing complexity of client needs that is the real problem. With sixty-four per cent of respondents agreed that their clients in 2004-5 had more complex needs than in 2003-4.

SACOSS asserts the need to consider the broader context of our community when considering the impacts that gambling has on our society. Problem gambling has dire implications for physical, psychological, financial and social wellbeing and can have lasting effects on individuals, families and communities.

SACOSS would be pleased to provide any further information that you may require as part of the community sector's submission into the Independent Gambling Authorities' 2004 Amendments Inquiry."

3. Demand for Gambling Help Services

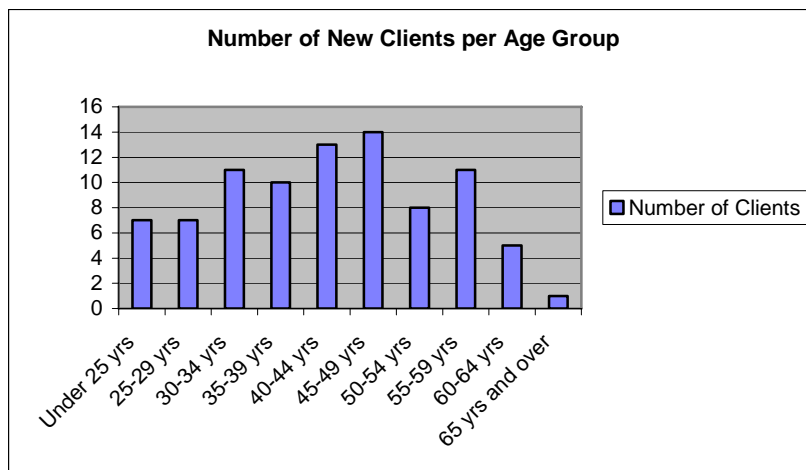
During the Hearings, Garry Raymond, gambling counsellor with the Salvation Army Break even service presented from the perspective of a counsellor. He commented on the increase in 'New Clients' seen by the Salvation Army service and commented on requests for gambling counselling assistance from young people. He has provided the following:

"The following is an extract from the drafted 2005 - 2006 Annual Report of The Salvation Army's Break Even Service to the Office for Problem Gambling:

...start of extract...

Youth:

After a substantial period of several months in the 2004-2005 year it was noted that no new referrals were coming in for people under 25 years of age (see recommendation 4 from 2004-2005)*. The needs of youth were given additional attention in The Salvation Army's Break Even Service late in the 2004-2005 year from the point of view of Community Education. The first new referral of someone under 25 was made towards the end of the 2004-2005 year and it can be seen from the chart below that seven registrations of youth were made in the 2005-2006 year.



Out of the seven registrations of youth in the 2005-2006 year, five of the clients were gambling clients and the remaining two clients were youth affected by the gambling of someone significant in their life. In the 2004-2005 year a total of just over 6.17 staff contact hours were spent on the 2 gambling clients that were registered in that year. In the 2005-2006 year a total of 34.05 staff contact hours were spent on 5 gambling clients. This amounts to an increase of approximately 450% in staff time directly associated with youth gambling clients. Even with this substantial increase in activity, youth appear to remain under-represented in our client group.

...end of extract..."

Statewide data regarding demand for gambling help services from young people

Since the IGA Public Hearing on 21st November 2006, a request was made by e-mail to Helen Christopher at the Office for Problem Gambling (OPG) for data across all agencies (without identifying agencies) with respect to youth gambling registrations over the last 2-3 years. This request was made by Garry Raymond. Helen Christopher later advised by telephone that such a

request would need to be put to Leanne Head, the Director of the OPG. In a telephone call made to the OPG on Friday 1st December, Leanne Head said that the OPG was already working on a document that looked at youth registrations/youth gambling and she would discuss the request further when that document was completed, at that time her estimate of completion of this report was 'possibly in about another 2 weeks.'

The OPG was contacted again on 3rd January, by Mark Henley, to request data about young people and gambling help service useage. A response is anticipated during the week commencing 8th January 2007.

Mark Henley
For the Presenting Group
5th January 2007