

**Julie Thompson**

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**From:** Renate Hughes <campaigns@good.do>  
**Sent:** Monday, 7 November 2016 11:41 AM  
**To:** fgm  
**Subject:** Submission to the Joint Select Committee on Future Gaming Markets

Dear Members of the Committee,

As a resident of Glenorchy, mother of 4, grandmother of 6 and as a community worker with over 38 years experience in the non government sector I have witnessed first hand the harm caused by poker machines (automated gaming machines) in pubs and clubs in our LGA.

The Glenorchy LGA suffers one of the greatest burdens of harm from use of poker machines by our community members and those that live with them, care for them and work with them in our community.

A gambler can easily walk to each of the (around 10) pubs or clubs in Glenorchy who have poker machines and gamble along the way (so even if excluded from one venue, or refused extra cash withdraw to continue gambling – an individual can just walk to the next club, often less than 1 km away). I have often talked with gamblers who have blown a weeks wages in one day or evening by moving from one venue to another).

Indeed we have 5 venues in Glenorchy that are extremely close to each other – all with poker machines! A new pub has just opened in close proximity to 3 others who already have up to 15 poker machines and this new venue also want these machines. Why? because they guarantee income with no effort by the pub or club licensee (so what licensee would not want them). We simply don't need this kind of access to these machines in my LGA – given that the 'gambler' cannot win. These machines are designed to addict and rigged to win for the house (margin).

I have seen once functioning people drown in their addiction to these machines and lose everything – and still they cannot stop. This is the addictive nature of poker machines. I regularly see individuals sitting at these machines all day. No staff at the venue intervene or provide even basic information to these gamblers beyond the 'must have' signs in toilets etc. Given the close proximity of venues in the Glenorchy LGA if there are any issues, the gambler just moves a few paces to the next venue.

With regard to information on problem gambling and self exclusion, I have noted that the impact of these signs and pamphlets etc. has diminished over time – as they don't change and the support follow through is not given in a timely and truly helpful manner.

Who are these people sitting alone and gambling? – they are older people, socially isolated people, people living with mental health issues or a disability, mums, dads, young people (particularly young males). They are essentially lonely and disconnected. What our community needs is social connection and social engagement. We need to provide contact and support right here in our local community.

We need a lot more information on the harms arising from gambling and the statement that the gambler cannot win (over time) on these machines. This information needs to be targeted, draw attention and be backed up by real support services.

The harms caused by regular use of poker machines includes both social and economic harms (direct losses per \$ spent on gambling via poker machines and social impact via family breakdown, financial issues and mental health issues as examples).

I have also observed and would like to comment – that when individuals impacted by gambling do seek help, the available support services in Glenorchy do not reflect community need and this burden of harm in our LGA. There is little commitment to real support for our community, despite the revenue being gained from gambling in my LGA.

In addition the community grants program is not resourced enough nor is it strategic enough in providing core staffing (for research, data collection, community education and outreach) and funding projects, events, activities and other actions that will have a real, lasting impact on problem gambling in my LGA. There should be a full strategic review of the gambling support program – DHHS, that includes community input and ideas as to how this program could operate effectively to support communities and how the program could have a real focus on those LGA's most affected by gambling and its related harms. In particular those associated with poker machines.

In summary I would like to see fair and proper regulation of poker machines, more direct support services to the LGA's most affected by the harms that can arise from gambling (particularly poker machines) and no more poker machines in Glenorchy. I would also like a strategic review of gambling support programs (DHHS). I thank you for accepting my submission as a community member.

Yours sincerely, Renate Hughes

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Please reply to Renate Hughes at [Renatemhughes56@outlook.com](mailto:Renatemhughes56@outlook.com).

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