

Julie Thompson

From: Stuart Foster <stuart.foster@aus.salvationarmy.org>
Sent: Friday, 9 December 2016 4:48 PM
To: fgm
Subject: Submission from The Salvation Army to Joint Select Committee on Future Gaming Markets
Attachments: The Salvation Army Gambling Submission 201612.pdf

Please find the submission to the Joint Select Committee on Future Gaming Markets from The Salvation Army Tasmania Division.

Any questions can be directed to myself with the contact details listed below.

Thank you for the opportunity to be involved in this process.

regards
Stuart Foster



Stuart Foster

Social Program Secretary | Tasmania Division
The Salvation Army | Australia Southern Territory
115 Central Avenue, Derwent Park, TAS, 7009 | PO Box 50, New Town, Tasmania, 7008
T 03 6228 8409 | **F** 03 6278 7198 | **M** 0419 326 865
stuart.foster@aus.salvationarmy.org | salvationarmy.org.au



CAUTION - This message may contain privileged and confidential information intended only for the use of the addressee named above. If you are not the intended recipient of this message you are hereby notified that any use, dissemination, distribution or reproduction of this message is prohibited. If you have received this message in error please delete it and notify the sender immediately. Any views expressed in this message are those of the individual sender and may not necessarily reflect the views of The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territory. E-mail transmission cannot be guaranteed to be secure or error-free as information could be intercepted, corrupted, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses. The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territory accepts no liability for any damage caused by any virus transmitted by this email.



The Salvation Army *Tasmanian Division*

Gambling **Submission 2016**

Submission sent to:
The Secretary
Joint Select Committee on Future Gaming Markets
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Hobart 7000
Email: fgm@parliament.tas.gov.au
Phone: 6212 2250



Submitted to Government
9th December 2016

The Salvation Army

Core Values



Human Dignity



Justice



Hope



Compassion



Community

Contact

Dr. Jed Donoghue & DSPS Stuart Foster

The Salvation Army (Tasmania)

PO Box 50 New Town

Tasmania 7008

Phone: (03) 6228 8409

Fax (03) 6278 7198

Mobile: 0419 326 865

Email: stuart.foster@aus.salvationarmy.org



The Salvation Army

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Background	5
Western Australia Model	6
Recovery Services	7
Recommendations	9
Conclusion	9
References	10



Introduction

This Gambling Submission reflects The Salvation Army's (TSA) desire to engage in meaningful discussion with the State Government in order to address the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable people in Tasmania. TSA strives to help marginalised people fulfill their potential and contribute positively to the State economy and community. The Salvation Army annually invests human and financial resources to provide community services to disadvantaged people. Funds raised through the Red Shield appeal are used to address unmet need or gaps in existing social services.

Gambling is not victimless. It has the capacity to ruin the gambler, their spouse and children and wider family. The consequences can include divorce, domestic violence, and neglect in families with a gambling parent or partner. The gambler hides many aspects of gambling addiction and often lies to cover up their behavior and lack of money. The Salvation Army's experience with people who have gambling addictions is that they are unable to address or identify their addiction until they have lost everything – they have gambled away their own and their family's resources.

The Salvation Army suggests that the current 'harm minimisation' approach to poker machines has not worked. It hasn't worked because the poker machines go too fast and take too much money, too quickly off vulnerable people. In the long run, people will always lose and the machine will always win. The poker machine is programmed to win and to make a profit out of people who play them.

The gambling industry and the Government advise the general public to 'gamble responsibly'. However, if people gamble regularly on a poker machine, you can't be gambling responsibly. The machine will hypnotize the player and take their money.

The license to operate pokies ends soon. Organisations involved in the gambling industry will position themselves to be the holder of 'next' license to run poker machines in Tasmania. The industry wants to continue making profits at public expense. This is why over 42 Tasmanian organisations have joined together to recommend to the State Government to remove poker machines from pubs and clubs. The Salvation Army has been an active member of the "Community Voice on Pokies Reform" and also supports the submission made by this group to the Joint Select Committee.

The Salvation Army would also encourage the State Government to look at the West Australian poker machine model. We agree and strongly support the public campaign at the moment being focused on removing pokies from Tasmania's pubs and clubs, but even if these 'addictive' machines were pushed back into the casinos, there will still be serious and avoidable harm to the general public.

The Salvation Army recommends that **not** another license for pokies in pubs and clubs is issued without the careful consideration of the effects of gaming on vulnerable Tasmanians and whether the West Australian system provides any lessons and learnings for Tasmanian responses. Even as this submission period is

open, there are businesses applying for additional poker machines to be installed in their premises in suburbs already overburdened with the effects of existing levels of poker machine.

It seems that the higher concentrations of poker machines are in suburbs where people in the local communities are more exposed to financial disadvantage. People living in these communities are then more likely to come into contact with poker machines in their local area. It is obvious that people on a Commonwealth benefit or pension find it very difficult to manage on their meagre income and regularly go without food or heating in order to pay rent. For these people, even if not they do not become addicted, spending a small amount on poker machines out of their weekly household income means that some other area of their family life goes without. If they become addicted to poker machines they are also more likely to become homeless.

Background

1. Poker machines are addictive and dangerous

Poker machines are designed by gambling industry psychologists and computer programmers to use sounds and lights and 'free games' to trick people into thinking they can win. One in five people who regularly use pokies will become addicted. More than 2,500 Tasmanians are hooked on poker machines and many more are at risk. Families, friends and workplaces suffer too. About a third of us know someone who is addicted to poker machines.

2. Tasmanians do not want poker machines in their pubs and clubs

Pokies have operated in hotels and clubs for less than 20 years. They are not deeply 'embedded' in our culture. Every poll since the government put pokies into pubs and clubs has shown that 80 per cent of Tasmanians do not see any benefits from them. The polls also show that 80 per cent of Tasmanians want fewer or no poker machines in our pubs and clubs.

3. Government needs to protect the public from addictive machines

The State Government's 'harm minimisation' measures have not offered effective protection for people from poker machines. The industry tells people to 'gamble responsibly' but how can people gamble responsibly when the machines are programmed to win? 'Harm minimisation' has not worked. Despite a number of new measures the Government has introduced – such as venue smoking bans, \$5 bet limits, 30 maximum betting lines, 'enhanced' staff training and a mandatory 'code of practice' – poker machines are still taking the same amount of money from Tasmanians as they did ten years ago.

4. The Salvation Army supports people who experience disadvantage

The Salvation Army is very concerned about the most disadvantaged people in our communities and about addressing the root causes of disadvantage. Our staff in "Doorways" centres located across the state provide support over 6,500 people each year in a variety of different ways. Removing poker machines from communities

would be an effective way to prevent the harm caused by poker machines and associated addiction and disadvantage. Their removal would effectively put money back into the pockets of people who would in turn spend these funds in businesses in their local communities.

The Western Australia Model

The Salvation Army would encourage the State Government to look at the Western Australia poker machine model. We appreciate the public campaign at the moment is focussed on getting pokies out of the small pubs and clubs, but even if the modern machines were pushed back into the casinos, there will still be serious and avoidable harm to the general public.

Smart card technology and bet limits are important, but as the government knows these issues have been pushed for years without much success. All the technical requirements and regulations around the machines are done nationally, and our assessment is that Tasmania is unlikely to ever go it alone on these matters. We feel that the state government would support national reform but this is unlikely to happen in the short to medium term given the political power of Clubs NSW.

What has been largely ignored to date is that there is another way of working and a proven package of regulation that we could adopt in Tasmania. Rather than follow the eastern states we could follow the liberal government in Western Australia. We had some contact with the gambling regulators there years ago and they were very happy for Tasmania to take up their model. The situation there is that the only machines allowed in the casino are those that require player interaction and choice - that is they have to be actually played. Many European countries have similar restrictions, such as the UK pub fruit machines.

What most people do not realise or appreciate is that the 1993 Gaming Control Act in Tasmania that sanctioned poker machines in pubs and clubs also ended the previous restrictions on the types of machines that could be played. Up to that time, Tasmania only had machines that simulated casino games. We are not suggesting that those machines are totally safe - they are not. Many people in West Australia and the UK still have problems as did many Tasmanians before 1993. But these machines are a lot safer than the deliberately addictive single press of the button machines that we have now.

It is the single press machine that was featured in the Ka-Ching! Pokie Nation (2015) documentary shown on the ABC- they were designed in Australia and are known as the 'Australian machine' in Las Vegas. There is nothing worse and they should be banned in Tasmania as they are in most of the western world:

The pokies. They're rigged, they're addictive, and they're everywhere. And most of the machines are in the poorest postcodes across the nation. They've

got almost half a million Australians hooked. And that's exactly what they're designed to do (Lawrence & Goldman 20 October 2015).

The Salvation Army is uniquely placed given our national reach to call for the Western Australian system to be considered in Tasmania. The possibility of this proposal should be considered by government. Our understanding is that this model is proven to be safer, and will still allow recreational players to 'play' in casinos.

Perhaps our community and policy responses have been reactive to the gambling industry and cautious in our understanding of what is 'realistic' to achieve. We now feel that the time to abandon caution and push for what is right.

Playing the pokies is no longer fun.

Recovery

The Salvation Army is Australia's largest non-governmental provider of addiction and recovery services. The Salvation Army has also made a significant investment in a range of rehabilitation programs that it operates in Tasmania addressing alcohol, drug and other addictive behaviours. Anecdotally, and without any research evidence, our AOD services see that gambling addiction can also parallel an alcohol and drug addiction. There are certainly connections between the addictive behaviours associated with gambling and alcohol and drug and the treatment processes are similar.

The Salvation Army have invested significant resources into the development of addiction best practice, in order to provide a quality assessment and case management framework to meet the complex needs of clients. These programs include needle exchange, sobering-up units, counselling and referral services, home-based support programs, residential treatment services, programs for prisoners, support groups, and programs specifically designed to meet the needs of discrete populations (i.e. correctional clients, women, families of those affected by addiction, and young people).

It is the policy of The Salvation Army to look at the needs of the individual in a holistic manner, working to address the underlying aspects of misuse, as well as linking people into the range of treatment services to achieve lasting outcomes. The rehabilitation programs work with clients to achieve negotiated goals, which are based on life enhancement principles.

Program workers follow up clients in their own environment in an effort to provide after care and ensure prevention strategies are in place. Support is also provided to the families and friends of people who are dealing with addiction. The need for appropriate resourcing of the sector is reinforced by continued public concern about community safety, fear of crime and the general impact of gambling on Tasmanians. Addressing the needs of the people experiencing significant addiction issues helps to reduce health, housing, crime and community safety issues.

We believe that addressing these issues is critical for the organisation to respond to the challenges which addiction workers and many people in our community grapple with on a daily basis. These issues are fundamental to the general health, safety and well-being of all Tasmanians.

Recommendations

1. Gambling Response:

- 1.1 Remove poker machines from pubs and clubs.
Responsibility: Treasury
- 1.2 Investigate the West Australian poker machine model.
Responsibility: Treasury

Conclusion

The Salvation Army's (TSA) Gambling Submission reflects our work as one of Australia's largest non-government providers of alcohol and other drug, Emergency Relief, Family Violence and Homelessness services.

This campaign is important because Tasmanians lost \$113.9 million last year betting on poker machines in pubs and clubs, and another \$70 million was lost in the casino. It is also worth noting that poker machine losses were higher in Glenorchy than any other area, at \$21.3 million last year compared to \$20.1 million the previous year.

About 2,500 Tasmanians have a serious problem with gambling on poker machines, and they account for approximately a third of annual poker machine losses. We believe this number to be an underestimation given the significant stigma associated with disclosing an addiction to poker machine gambling.

For each person who is harmed by gambling, there are likely to be 5 to 10 other people in their lives who are affected. Poker machine addiction damages the health of those affected particularly through stress; it causes family breakdown, financial pressure, poverty, job loss and homelessness.

The ripple effect of poker machine harm is such that one in three Tasmanians identifies as knowing someone experiencing serious problems with poker machine gambling. We are also aware that even as this Inquiry is being conducted, that there are applications being submitted for an additional 60 poker machines in the Glenorchy area.

TSA will continue to utilise organisational resources to meet the needs of addicted and disadvantaged people. We work to address the immediate impact of addiction, as well as linking clients into appropriate support and recovery services to achieve successful accommodation and health outcomes via our Bridge and homeless programs.

We acknowledge that State Government funding to address a range of addiction issues is a valuable and important investment in the lives of ordinary Tasmanians. However, the prevention of gambling addiction needs to be the focus of future

government investment and legislation so that we prevent more people becoming addicted to single press poker machines, and avoid the subsequent slide into family breakdown, homelessness and depression.

References

Baldry, E., Dowse, L., McCausland, R., and Clarence, M. (2012) Life course institutional costs of homelessness for vulnerable groups. University of New South Wales, Australian Government, Department of Families Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Dalziel, J. (2003) A Salvo View of Homelessness and Gambling, *PARITY*, 16(40): 8.

Donoghue, J and Tranter, B, (2012) "Social Capital, Interpersonal Trust, and Public Housing", *Australian Social Work*, 63 (3) pp. 413-430.

Michaleas, T. (2003) Gambling ...a Hidden Problem, *PARITY*, 16(4): 17.

Richards, B. (2016) Fines and censures for gaming law breaches, *The Saturday Mercury*, November 26, 2016 p. 11.

<https://sarc.good.do/getthepokiesoutoftasmaniaspubsandclubs/pages/why-the-pokies-need-to-go/>