

Julie Thompson

From: Sara Robinson <campaigns@good.do>
Sent: Monday, 7 November 2016 8:35 PM
To: fgm
Subject: Submission to the Joint Select Committee on Future Gaming Markets

Dear Members of the Committee,

As a registered psychologist working in the south of Tasmania – mainly New Town, Bridgewater and Huonville – I have seen clients struggle to ‘beat’ their addiction to poker machines and other forms of gambling. I have learnt that an individual’s problem with gambling has a ripple effect to his or her friends, partner, children and wider family and community. I have also learnt that a gambling problem might be one of the most difficult admissions a person can make. Some of my clients have not disclosed a gambling issue until near the end of therapy, due to their reported sense of shame.

Friends have struggled with the challenge of gambling addiction. It’s difficult and sometimes heartbreaking to witness this struggle. I can recollect spending time as a youth in the UK wasting hours on machines, losing my pennies, hardly ever winning, but having the urge to keep going. Not to win the ultimate financial prize, but to feel the adrenaline and buzz and sometimes communicate with others around me. Looking back, I realise we were all on the losing side.

I don't believe poker machines serve a useful purpose for the majority of individuals and no healthy function at all for families, the community or society as a whole. In my ideal world, there are no pokies in pubs, clubs and other community establishments, and casinos don't exist, either! More realistically, I would like pokies to be removed from pubs and clubs and all family venues and for casinos to engage in fair play. It might help for winnings to have a cap at, say, \$5. I also wonder whether gambling proceeds could contribute towards funding gambling addiction programs....

From an aesthetic perspective, gambling machines are noisy, unsightly and disruptive and take up space that could be utilised more productively. I avoid venues that contain them.

Please, Premier Hodgman and Members of the Committee, use this opportunity wisely to reflect on your values and to consider the right and most sensible response if you, your child, friend, parent or partner was struggling with this issue. We're all susceptible to the pull of the pokies.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Sara

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Please reply to Sara Robinson at sararobinson99@hotmail.com.

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