



DEVONPORT COMMUNITY HOUSE

10 Morris Avenue, P.O. Box 1102, Devonport 7310 Ph: (03) 6424 7060

Email: devhouse@internode.on.net Website: devonportcommunityhouse.com.au

7 December 2016

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

RE: Submission to the Joint Select Committee on Future Gaming Markets

Devonport Community House is a non-profit organisation funded in part by DHHS to provide community facilities, programs and services for Devonport residents. Through a community development model, we offer the local community a place to meet, socialise, learn and share ideas to improve their quality of life. We work with many disadvantaged people, providing opportunities to participate in House activities, Men's Shed, Community Garden, The Playhouse drop-in playgroup centre and the Food Shed offering fresh fruit/veg.

The Devonport area is among the most disadvantaged regions of Tasmania. We have high levels of unemployment, especially youth unemployment, high levels of public housing, low Year 12 retention, high disability and low average wages. Devonport Community House sees many people who struggle financially. Often they suffer with poor health, have addictions and lack positive social connections. None can afford to lose money on poker machines.

Yet the average poker machine loss per adult per year in Devonport is \$645, the highest in Tasmania. With a population of around 30,000 in the area, does that mean half the population are playing and losing nearly \$1300 each? Or a quarter of the population are playing and losing over \$2500 each? This is not a small amount out of a low income. It is money that could be spent on car repairs, dental treatment or a laptop for a school student instead of spent in the hope of winning. It is hours of time that could be spent making meals, helping with homework or doing something beneficial in the community. The only people who gain from this are the owners and operators of the poker machines.

Poker machine gambling is attractive to some. It is done in warm rooms, requires little literacy or physical ability, and offers the prospect of winning money for the next power bill. However, poker machines are programmed to ensure that over time the house always wins. Players find themselves in a kind of trance in which they temporarily forget their worries. Up to one in three

will go on to develop a problem with gambling. They will find it hard to control how much and how long they gamble, prioritise gambling over everything else in their lives, and continue despite serious negative consequences.

We have seen the harm problem gambling is causing in the Devonport community. Families going without power, gas and food, and children being kept home from school because there is no food for their lunch. Many drive unregistered vehicles and accrue a mountain of fines, payment of which seems insurmountable for people with nothing left over after fortnightly "payday". Often the only hope seems to be from winning money and due to the immediate need, poker machines are the easy and obvious choice.

With 230 machines over nine venues, operating poker machines in Devonport is clearly a popular business. But many popular businesses have closed because the product they sell is dangerous, such as tobacconists (now much less common) and firework vendors. Poker machines do too much damage to the community to be so readily available and with long opening hours.

Devonport Community House has joined the Community Voice coalition of organisations to call for poker machines to be removed from pubs and clubs in Tasmania. We welcome the chance to make our views known to the Committee. We believe this would be a positive and popular step forward for Tasmania and for the North West Coast.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Beer'.

Kate Beer
Manager
Devonport Community House

Julie Thompson

From: Devonport Community House <devhouse@internode.on.net>
Sent: Wednesday, 7 December 2016 4:31 PM
To: fgm
Subject: Pokies submission
Attachments: Pokies submission DCH 2016.pdf

Attached please find my submission to the enquiry.

Thanking you,

Kate Beer

Manager

Devonport Community House

10 Morris Ave, Devonport, T310

Ph: 6424 7060

Email: devhouse@internode.on.net

Website: devonportcommunityhouse.com.au

DISCLAIMER:

This e-mail and any files transmitted with it contain confidential information intended for the use of the individual or entity named above.

If you are not the intended recipient you are hereby notified that you must not disseminate, copy or take action in reliance upon it.

Whilst virus-scanning software is utilised by us, no responsibility is taken for virus damage that may originate from this transmission.

If you receive this communication in error, please contact the sender immediately and delete this e-mail and associated material from any computer.