

To the Gaming micro-transactions for chance-based items inquiry committee,

I am a 24-year-old Melbournian who enjoyed playing video games in my teenage years and still enjoys playing them now, though less frequently.

Over the past five plus years I have become increasingly concerned by the increasing prevalence and now accepted existence of 'loot-boxes' and other chance-based gambling being available through micro transactions in video games. This was not present in the market when I first began playing video games.

It is plainly obvious to anyone who purchase and 'opens' one of these item, or simply watches the process, that it is simply gambling - as asked in terms of reference (a). Players purchase digital 'Keys' or 'credit' and then use them to open these loot boxes. There is no other way to open these loot boxes though game play or random chance, players are asked to pay money to open them. When opening the boxes, the possibilities of what may be ultimately draw for the player is scrolled across before them on their screen. This is identical to the way a slot machine scrolls around before ultimately stopping. As with the slot machine, the graphic display eventually stops on an item, which is given to the player – regardless of whether that is what they desired or not.

If that is not gambling, then I do not know what is. How we can say that slot machines are inappropriate for under 18-year-olds to play however those same children can have this identical type of gambling with them in their home in their living rooms, bedrooms and even with them all the time on their smartphones - it is beyond any reason.

I hope the committee finds that gambling is gambling regardless of whether it takes place in a video game or a physical location.

I hope the committee looks at the positive example set by the national government of Belgium regarding reference term (b). Australia must look to join other nations in setting a precedent that unregulated gambling is not permitted. Particularly in digitally globalised world it is important that there is a concerted global effort to ensure gaming companies do not profit for these practices under the pretence of operating from overseas, therefore pretending not to be subject to our laws.

Thanks and kind regards,

James Donnelly