

19.05.2012

Lyn Beverley
Committee Secretary
Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Beverley

Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform –Inquiry into the Prevention and Treatment of Problem Gambling - Supplementary Submission

This supplementary submission relates to the main thrust of my original submission and expands upon the possibilities for implementing effective crisis intervention where and when it is most needed.

The main thrust of my submission was to employ Crisis intervention teams made up of suitably trained recovered gamblers of long standing. These workers could be deployed in pairs at and around venues where their services would be made available to troubled gamblers.

This proposed measure directly relates to the following items in the terms of reference.

- (a) Measures to prevent problem gambling
- (iii) Ease of access to assistance for problem gambling
- (c) Early intervention strategies and training of staff.

The powerful arguments for the CIT initiative and how it could mesh with existing services are as follows:

At the hour when a Gambler is at his/her most vulnerable there is no help close at hand which might reasonably be expected to have a high degree of success at effective intervention. Possible adverse outcomes at this dark hour include things such as domestic violence, crime and suicide.

“Timely intervention” is a watchword phrase within the Mental Health industry and **an ideal which is professed by all Organizations working at delivery of Mental Health services worldwide.** They know **“Timely interventions” get results.**

Gamblers feel much more comfortable with people who have travelled the same road and understand the pain; consequently they will talk much more freely to CIT people.

While clearly there is a very important place to be filled by graduate psychologists and social workers; I believe that this particular role requires the sensitivities and knowledge gained only by having travelling the gamblers road.

Currently available on line and telephone services could also direct CIT teams to crisis situations which have been phoned in to Gamblers Help, Turning Point , Lifeline and 000 services and the like **where appropriate and or where other emergency services people cannot attend.**

(CIT Workers should also be required to have done the highly regarded Lifeline training as well as a certificate (IV) course which would be made up of Mental Health and AOD competencies as well as specific gambling related subjects.) **Currently there are many Certificate (IV) Dual Diagnosis qualified people available who would not need much additional training to qualify.**

Once contact has been made and the initial crisis averted; referrals could also be made by team members to appropriate counselling and community services organizations thus **saving many hours of work normally done by intake officers** of organizations such as Turning Point and Gamblers help.

The comparative cost of employing Certificate (IV) or Diploma qualified people who have experienced a gambling problem compared to the cost of Graduate Psychologists and Social workers is **very favourable.**

Adopting this initiative would also demonstrate tangible action on the part of government in implementing the ***Mental Health Standard which states that "...Consumers and Carers should be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of Mental Health Services."*** I may stand corrected but do not see this as happening to any large extent in the gambling sector at the present moment.

Follow Up: I would like to see follow up by organizations such as Gamblers Help and Turning Point include in their options **group therapy sessions** one night each month along the lines of the group which I attended in my road to recovery. I refer the reader to my initial submission.

I can only speak from my own personal experience; in that I found this experience to play a pivotal role in my road to recovery.

I thank the government of Australia and all those who have played a part affording me an opportunity to input into this very worthwhile committee.
Let us all make sure this opportunity is not wasted.

Yours Faithfully

Ian