

# Gambling Impact Society (NSW) Inc.



C/- Nowra Neighbourhood Centre  
134 Kinghorne Street  
Nowra NSW 2541  
Phone: 02 44 215 077  
Fax: 02 44 216 872  
Email: [info@gisusw.org.au](mailto:info@gisusw.org.au)  
[www.gisnsw.org.au](http://www.gisnsw.org.au)

6th October 2008

Committee Secretary  
Community Affairs Committee  
Australian Senate  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator Humphery

## ATMs and Cash Facilities in Licensed Venues Bill 2008

I do apologise for not having this on your desk on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> as you directed but, due to my absence this past month, I am hoping that, as it is a long week-end, Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> will not be too late for this further submission to be received

Our previous submissions to the Senate Affairs Committee as well as our evidence given at the Inquiry on September 12<sup>th</sup>, have clearly been in support of Senator Xenophon's Bill - to remove ATMs and Cash Facilities from licensed venues ie hotels/ clubs.

To emphasise the need for this Bill to be passed and to add weight to the evidence of words only, I have faxed, to you, 'Judy's Story' which was placed in our letter box – unposted – addressed to 'Kate Roberts'. The latter has us deeply concerned. We have no way of tracing Judy to know if she is still alive. We and our members feel that if we cannot find her then the least we can do is to point her own compassion for those suffering a gambling addiction, like herself, towards the government that has allowed the ETM drug of 'Entertainment' (Ross Ferrar for Poker Machine Industry Sept 12<sup>th</sup>) burgeon in our society without having due respect for the lives of individuals – regardless of age, background, intelligence – and their families who are supported by Centrelink and welfare agencies. This was underlined by Mr Ross Ferrar (Sept12) when, following Senator Fielding's persistent questioning, he was unable to relate to any relative experience with person or persons whose lives had been affected by the impact of gambling.

This story is indicative of the stark reality of the impact of problem gambling on the individual, their families and on the community. To remove ATMs and Cash Facilities from Licensed Venues is, and has to be, a positive move towards minimising the potential harm to the people in our communities as outlined by Judy.

Gambling becomes a problem when the player of the ETM lapses into a feeling of numbness, or a trance-like state, and is oblivious to his/her surrounds. The attachment to the ETM becomes all consuming. ATMs within the player's venue, and only a few steps away from the ETM, will not interrupt this state of mind when approached and so will not prevent him



from withdrawing more and more cash. Whereas if the player has to terminate play through lack of money, an enforced walk into the real world, outside the venue, will be met with oxygen to clear the mind and restore rational thinking.

Again, for the same reasons, it is of particular importance to ban ATMs to protect workers at the venues. With relaxed surroundings and available food / refreshments for their off time breaks, the potential for harm is very real indeed.

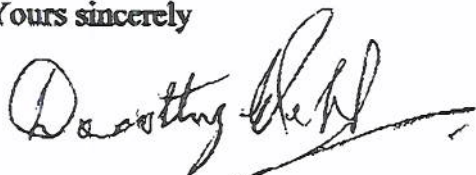
Research has evidenced that the primary users of ATMs within licensed venues are those who gamble problematically (AC Nielson, 2006). Whilst the removal of ATMs from venues may be a minor inconvenience for some non-gambling patrons, the GIS maintains that there is substantial evidence to suggest that their removal would give significant effect to reducing problem gambling behaviour and so limit the direct impact on third parties being families, employers etc. We understand that the state of Victoria has already undertaken such measures and that the National Australia Bank has already removed all ATMs / cash facilities from gambling venues in NSW in appreciation of their significant contribution to problem gambling.

The problem gambling issue in Australia has become a National issue for the Commonwealth Government simply because the NSW State Government has a clear conflict of interests in relation to gambling policy when it relies so heavily on gambling revenue. An example is its policy on treatment for gambling whereby those afflicted are not accorded the same choice and level of professional medical care as that offered and given to those suffering with drug and/or alcohol addiction and smoking addiction. Because of this neglect the condition of depression, which is common to each one of the afore said, remains untreated along with the related conditions that would be clinically assessed in a qualified medical / mental health environment. As community health professionals we find this extremely disturbing as it not only discriminates one addiction from the other, but also it shows a disregard for the families affected by the impact of problem gambling. They also need treatment for depression and related conditions!

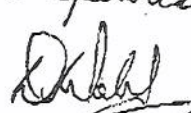
The removal of ATMs and cash facilities from venues would be a positive move towards alleviating and preventing community distressed health issues compounded by problem gambling. It is the Federal Government that is clearly in the best position to put in place a framework that incorporates public health ideals, consumer protection and social and corporate responsibility from which a strategic national approach can be developed. It is the Federal Government that is in a better position to address the public health issues (cost of gambling) more objectively and to introduce measures to tackle them. (Marshall, 2004).

We simply cannot ignore Judy's story. Her key words are 'depression' and 'nothing has worked for me to stop'. We hope we find her.

Yours sincerely



Secretary for and on behalf of the Gambling Impact Society (NSW) Inc.

P.S. In answer to my phone call yesterday, I thank you for your patience. 





X machines on in the clubs to have addicted people play and even get some more people addicted to poker machines. It's like they say to the people addicted to poker machines 'come and leave your money in the poker machines for us'.

Yours Sincerely,

Name:  
Judy  
Address:

Gambling Impact Society (NSW)  
C/- 134 Kinghorne St  
Nowra 2541  
Ph: 44218077

19th June 08  
DHL