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Mr Jason Cremona  
Manager, Licence Management & Audit  
Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation  
Level 3, 12 Shelley Street  
RICHMOND VIC 3121

**By Email**

Dear Mr Cremona

**Sixth Review of the Casino Operator and Licence (Sixth Review) - Recommendation 10 Follow-up Queries**

I refer to your letter of 15 January 2020, requesting further information in relation to Recommendation 10 of the Sixth Review. Following and appended, please find Crown Melbourne Limited's (**Crown Melbourne's**) responses to those further queries.

The Reporting Period is 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2020 (**Reporting Period**), noting that for the period 23 March 2020 onwards, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing federal and state government requirements, Crown Melbourne ceased gaming trading.

During the Reporting Period, Crown Melbourne has successfully issued 18 Time Out Program Agreements (**TOPAs**) as part of the three or six month TOPA trial (commencing 1 July 2019). Following, we reply to each of your queries in turn.

1. Number of self-exclusion conversations in the first instance, including details of the outcomes of the conversations (self-exclusion, TOPA or no action).

The following table (Table 1) reflects the number of persons who discussed Self Exclusion with Crown during the Reporting Period and the outcome of that discussion.

**Table 1**

	<b>Self-Exclusion</b>	<b>TOPA</b>	<b>No Action</b>	<b>Total</b>
01/01/2020 – 30/06/2020	117 (67.2%)	18 (10.3%)	39 <sup>1</sup> (22.4%)	174

2. Number of active TOPAs and self-exclusions at start and end of the Reporting Period.

**Table 2**

	<b>Active Self-Exclusions</b>	<b>Active TOPAs</b>	<b>Total</b>
At 01/01/2020	5480	26	5506
At 30/06/2020	5580 (99.8%)	12 (0.2%)	5592

3. Number of three-month TOPAs extended for a further three months.

As at 30 June 2020, no customers have extended their TOPA within the Reporting Period.

4. Number of TOPAs which extended to self-exclusion.

As at 30 June 2020, one customer returned to the Responsible Gaming Centre (RGC) and proceeded with a self-exclusion 41 days before their TOPA expired.

Three customers returned to the RGC to proceed with self-exclusion after their TOPA expired (six days, seven days and 133 days). For all three customers there was no recorded gaming activity between the conclusion of their TOPA and the commencement of their self-exclusion.

5. Number of players detected and interviewed by Crown after returning to gambling post the conclusion of the TOPA, including the outcome of the interview (permitted to return to gambling or a further TOPA/self-exclusion imposed).

Within the Reporting Period, twelve customers who were issued a TOPA, returned and were interviewed<sup>2</sup> by Crown post the conclusion of their TOPA. The following table sets out their responses:

<sup>1</sup> These customers were referred to external government funded support services, provided with the option to have any promotional material suspended, advised about the 100-day challenge, offered in-house counselling/chaplaincy support etc.

<sup>2</sup> Crown asks at the initiation of the TOPA that if the customer returns to Crown, that they attend the RGC to participate in a Gambling Resumption Information Program (GRIP), however each person is tagged on the Responsible Gaming Advisor pager, so that we are informed when they return. Patrons are permitted to return to gaming when their TOPA expires; there is no requirement to seek permission.

Table 3

TOPA Date	GRIP Date	Interview outcomes		
		How was the program helpful?	Would you consider Self Exclusion?	Why do you want to come back?
9/07/2019	12/01/2020	Found Time Out extremely helpful.	Not at this point	The social aspect as his friends come here.
8/10/2019	15/01/2020	Good to have a rest.	No.	Just have fun with my friends.
19/07/2019	20/01/2020	It was very helpful.	Not at this stage.	To socialise.
23/08/2019	20/01/2020	It was helpful.	Not at this stage.	To enjoy myself.
24/10/2019	24/01/2020	Yes, it was good.	I probably would.	I wanted to see if I still have the interest in gambling.
24/10/2019	26/01/2020	Good, I am unable to think about coming to casino due to Time Out.	At the moment, I would not consider self exclusion.	I come with my mates.
22/10/2019	30/01/2020	Yes it was good.	No.	I am relaxed now.
7/08/2019	7/02/2020	It was helpful.	Did not answer	Did not answer
28/10/2019	10/02/2020	Very Good. Stop me to come.	No. I am still alright.	I can control myself. Even during the 3 months my friends came for dinner. I did not come.
2/11/2019	19/02/2020	Yes, I'm ok.	No.	Just come with friends sometimes and chill around. Refresh myself.
22/08/2019	23/02/2020	I was able to focus on other areas of my life.	Not at the moment but I know it is an option in the future.	To socialise and play and a bit of poker.
17/08/2019	27/02/2020	Was very helpful.	Not at the moment and in the future too. Considered to apply to work at Crown.	Just get my freedom back.

6. Number of resumptions of TOPAs (i.e. patrons whose TOPA has expired, resumed gambling, and then requested a further TOPA).

Within the Reporting Period no customers have had their TOPA expire, resumed gambling and then requested a further TOPA.

7. Number of TOPA breaches detected.

**Table 4**

TOPA Breaches	7
Unique Persons	6

8. Any other data that Crown captures that would assist the Commission.

Please refer to the dashboard attached at Appendix A.

I also provide the following in relation to the Commission's qualitative data requirements in relation to the TOPA trial:

1. An indication of the gambling profile of patrons agreeing to TOPAs, if available.

Attached at Appendix A, please find a dashboard illustrating the gambling profile of the participants, inclusive of the following information:

- a) Gender;
- b) Average age;
- c) Years of Membership;
- d) Win vs loss (yearly break down over the past 4 years<sup>3</sup>, 2016-2019);
- e) Known to RG prior to TOPA; and
- f) Whether they had self-excluded prior to TOPA.

2. Any useful information gathered during the initial interview with patrons where the TOPA was offered and accepted, in particular the reasons for patrons agreeing to TOPAs, instead of self-exclusion.

As with the first reporting period from 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2019, participants in the Time Out Program are asked how they became aware of the Time Out Program and why they declined Self Exclusion (and chose Time Out). Respondents learned about the Time Out Program primarily via a Responsible Gaming Advisor or a friend.

During the Reporting Period from 1 January to 30 June 2020, responses to the following were similar to those in the first reporting period:

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<sup>3</sup> Four years was thought to provide a sufficient prior period overview of the applicant's gambling behaviour, prior to entering into their TOPA.

Why they agreed to enter a TOPA

- a) To save money;
- b) Trying to stay away/break gambling habit;
- c) Relax and recover; and
- d) To focus on study.

Why they chose TOPA over Self Exclusion

- a) Wanted a break; or
- b) Want to stay out for three or six months only.

As has been previously reported, the Time Out Program was initiated in response to anecdotal evidence from the Responsible Gaming Advisers to capture a population of customers who did not want to self-exclude, but wanted to make a commitment to stay away from the casino.

### 3. Available feedback from patrons in relation to TOPA service delivery and outcomes.

I refer to question 2 above, where qualitative information is provided about the TOPAs.

### 4. Results from the periodic monitoring of randomly selected persons who returned from a TOPA, as far as any observable signs and data can allow.

This component was difficult to achieve due to the very low return rate of customers from their TOPA and lower attendance rates, making an interaction difficult. Those who did return underwent the return to gambling sessions, which are noted in Table 3.

### 5. A report on Crown's own assessments of its TOPA trial.

As has been previously discussed and communicated, Crown introduced the Time Out Program some years ago to provide an alternative form of break from gaming. This option was and is put to a customer where the formalities associated with a self-exclusion order are a deterrent for taking any type of break from gaming, or when a shorter time period is preferred for their circumstances. A further observation is that it appears that a TOPA is of use to customers as a 'trial' before entering into a longer and formal self-exclusion period.

The quantitative and qualitative information collected for the purpose of this trial and evaluation indicates a high level of support to continue with the Time Out Program. It is a positive opportunity to continue to engage customers in providing options to respond to them taking control of their gaming behaviours and affording a level of flexibility to assist with the potential for helpful outcomes.

Notwithstanding the shortened evaluation period due to the COVID-19 pandemic and required closure of the gaming floor at Crown, Crown continues to consider that Time Out is a useful addition to the suite of assistance and responsible gaming tools offered to Crown's patrons.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely



**Michelle Fielding**

Group General Manager – Regulatory and Compliance

Encl.