

Letter to Crown – in response to the Royal Commission**25/04/2021**

Recovering from a poker machine addiction is a long and extremely challenging journey, considering playing them is looked upon as a safe and entertaining activity. Crown casino has failed in so many ways to intervene with patrons where their ‘entertainment statement’ has been surpassed by a serious and dangerous addiction for many patrons. This is clearly evidenced by watching patrons spend far more than what they can afford and often spending day after day trapped in the evil web of the entrancement of the machines. The machines are not safe, they are in fact extremely dangerous. Personally I can’t believe we have such a dangerous product on the market. They are perfectly and insidiously designed to addict, designed to siphon your money and designed to destroy lives.

Since 2002 I have been listening to stories of devastation through gambling harm related groups, hearing stories of destruction and ruin. I joined my own group for recovery in 2002 and it was through the sharing of stories that my recovery was able to happen. I realized I wasn’t the only one and I wasn’t alone. There is a huge problem around shame and stigma that keeps a lot of people silent and there lies a huge problem in itself, because we are yet to hear all the stories as they are still buried in the deep silence of shame out there in the community.

Through all the stories I have witnessed in regards to Crown, what really stands out to me is the lack of **duty of care**. A total disregard to the extent of damage that these machines cause to people’s livelihoods. I heard of a young girl in her 30’s where her mother would go to the casino to rescue her daughter from the Mahogany room only to be turned away by security guards, yet inside everyone was well aware of the thousands of dollars this particular woman was spending. Completely out of control, everyone inside turned a blind eye, made her feel like she was important and valued. The more you spend the more Crown will keep you under their power with offers of enticement. The particular girl is now in goal.

It’s now 20 years later, I still listen to the stories of gambling related harm and little has changed, if anything it’s got worse. There is nothing entertaining and fun about having your life ruined by an institution who clearly doesn’t give a damn about the wellbeing of their patrons and only cares about destroying lives and building funds for their own gain.

The shame shouldn’t lie with the patrons but with Crown for preying on the vulnerable. The individual person is left to pick up the pieces with Crown wiping their hands clean. It really is deplorable.