

request to make a submission

From: Confidential
To: Contact (RCCOL) <contact@rccol.vic.gov.au>
Date: Thu, 03 Jun 2021 14:43:06 +1000

Confidential

Dear Commissioner Finkelstein,

While reading an article in the news online, I became aware that some information and opinions I have might be relevant to your investigation and so I apologise for the lateness of this request to make a submission but nevertheless would like to request that you accept my submission which I am happy if you would like to make it public apart from my address and phone number or my father's name and address included here.

Referral to the Terms of Reference

I do not believe Crown Melbourne is a suitable person to continue to hold the casino licence under the Casino Control Act 1991. I will outline what action would be required for Crown Melbourne to be a suitable person below as well as introducing my (indirect) connexion to Crown Melbourne through my gambling father.

BACKGROUND

My father had manic-depression (bi-polar disorder) and a very bad gambling problem which was somewhat curtailed by the help and presence of my mother. When my mother unexpectedly and suddenly passed away in Confidential 2000 at the age of Confidential my father's gambling got much worse and he expressed suicidal thoughts. I applied to VCAT around 2002 to have a caveat put on his house and for a trustee to manage his pension as he had expressed the wish to sell his house, then to gamble the whole lot away, then to commit suicide. He had also mentioned this to his psychiatrist. The psychiatrist's records were subpoenaed during the VCAT hearing. After that he did not trust his psychiatrist and lied to him about his gambling problems. When he appealed the decision (which he did almost every 6 months), at some point (I think around 2006?) the caveat was removed from the house (thanks to 'new information' from the psychiatrist that he could manage his own affairs although my father had actually manipulated his psychiatrist so that his appeal would be successful) and he no longer had his money managed by a trustee.

In late 2006, he sold the house and assured me and my sisters that he was not going to gamble the money away but rather would buy a smaller and more manageable residence. I was fooled by his lies thinking that after talking about killing himself for 7 years, it was all talk and that needing a place to live was just something he would actually want. But by mid-2007, he had gambled everything away and was renting his old house from the property developer he sold it to for an exorbitant amount - more than his pension. I found some old transcripts of TAB accounts that showed he had gone through \$200,000 in about one week! One night he went to Crown Casino and gambled till he had nothing left, then threw himself in the Yarra River - an attempt to kill himself but witnesses helped him out so that time he did not succeed. He later did succeed by Confidential 2007. It is possible that Crown still has some records of my father's gambling habits and I provide his name and address at the time if this is something the commission would like to follow up although I would not want this published: Confidential

Personally I do not see any purpose or need for any type of gambling industry. Yet if it is a legal activity, there are some regulations I would suggest and some in particular for Crown Melbourne, possibly Crown Resorts and definitely the TAB (although the TAB is not in your terms of reference.)

OUTLINE OF ACTION

There should be a financial literacy course that gamblers are required to complete to be allowed to gamble anywhere, including with Crown Melbourne to demonstrate that they understand the basics of accounting and budgeting - the purpose of income and the purpose of assets. Then, a gambler should disclose to Crown Melbourne (or the TAB etc) their own personal income and expenditure statement as well as their balance sheet and show how much disposable income they have. Then, they could be given a licence by Crown Melbourne to gamble based on this information and commensurate to their disposable income. Crown Melbourne has shown that they cannot properly ascertain whether someone is gambling for a healthy length of time let alone whether the amount they are gambling is even a healthy amount (which is very individual and could be gambled away in a few seconds and shows that the length of time is not the pertinent question but actually the proportion of money being gambled compared to their resources is what matters and this cannot be ascertained from looking at a person - it requires a certain level of disclosure.)

Gambling is a scourge on society and part of its root is in a lack of financial literacy. No-one should leave school not having an understanding of basic finances. That is another way that this problem could be alleviated (through the education system). But this needs to be taught by people who are practising good financial literacy. By which I mean someone who is running their own business rather than someone who knows about the principles of finance and is collecting a wage and so doesn't really know what is necessary to be truly independent.

So in summary, I would say a solution specific to Crown Melbourne would be to require gamblers to hold a licence to gamble based on their income and a method to alleviate part of the problem would be to include financial literacy as part

of the national curriculum to be taught by year 10 (yet still have licences to gamble even with appropriate education).

yours sincerely,

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