

To the Royal Commission

I am a teacher with knowledge and experience in teaching both children and adults with disabilities. I specialise in behaviour problems.

Also, I spent 4 years working with the Office of the Public Advocate with people with psychiatric disabilities on a volunteer basis, as a Community Visitor, drafting reports for the Government on the care of residents in Supported Residential Settings. I have also studied and passed 8 subjects for a Certificate IV in Mental Health and AOD.

The casino needs to have appropriate policies and procedures on the exclusion of its members, and these should not discriminate based on a disability.

They also need to have policies and procedures on disabilities and train staff not to discriminate based on a disability. Furthermore, they need policies about sexual harassment, harassment, and bullying patrons.

On ^{Confidential} July, I was giving a WOL (withdrawal of licence) by Crown, when I made a complaint about harassment by a croupier in the Teak room.

First of all ^{Confidential} from the Mahogany room, assured me that the croupier would be held accountable for his behaviour and said I would be issued with a \$100 dinner voucher as a good will gesture which I accepted.

Shortly thereafter, in my opinion, I was harassed in the Mahogany room by ^{Confidential} Casino Operations Manager, who spoke with me, and he had responsible gaming employees and at least 5 other people speak to me to obtain information from me to have me excluded from the premises.

I was interrogated by from Responsible gaming on my way to play the machines, I told the responsible gaming representative that I like to visit Crown as I am socially isolated at home by myself, and I have suffered anxiety from my accident and a head on car collision last year for which I sustained a neck and back injury.

The Withdrawal of License was given on the basis that I am taking painkillers for an injury sustained in my workplace nearly two years ago. I also had an invasive hand operation 2 months ago and I am disabled and unable to use my left hand. I have now developed Carpal Tunnel on my right hand.

On another occasion, I wanted to change my hotel reservation 2 weeks ago from the Metropol to the Promenade as the casino floor was shut due to COVID and I couldn't get from the Metropol to Silks for dinner, followed by my invitation to the Mahogany room to play the pokies, as I have a chronic back injury.

After phoning back on numerous occasions, the night before my hotel and dinner experience, to alter the booking, I finally was connected to ^{Confidential} at the Crown Metropol Hotel, who simply changed the booking for me from the Metropol to the Crown Promenade Hotel, so I could walk across the road to my dinner appointment and play the pokies afterwards in the Mahogany room.

When I rang Crown on ^{Confidential} July, about the reasons for the WOL, I was told by ^{Confidential} in Responsible Gaming that it was because I was taking pain killers and the fact that I made numerous calls to Crown concerning my hotel booking.

They have no policies and procedures in place to cater for people with disabilities.

I believe the reason why responsible gaming have approached me on numerous occasions, is because they want to show the Royal Commission that they are talking to previously excluded or banned members in an effort to show that they are being responsible.

The last time I made a complaint about sexual harassment from a patron, who wanted to go to my car and pay me money to give me a massage, responsible gaming members interrogated me on that occasion too, in the Teak room, about two months ago.

Whenever you make a complaint, they send RG attendants over. These are not fair and equitable responsible gaming practices.

I am taking my complaint to the Equal Opportunities Commission. I am prepared to appear as a witness for the Royal Commission to vouch that Crowns current practices are improper, unprofessional, and lack proper guidelines, policies, procedures and codes of conduct.

Apparently, I have been banned indefinitely until I am 'well'.

The Withdrawal of License (for Welfare reasons) was given to me verbally on ^{Conf}6/21. It is now ^{Conf}7/21 and I still have not received written notification. I contacted the legal department 3 days ago and they still have not contacted me back.

I do not have any observable problem behaviours which would indicate that I am at risk of harm from gambling, so there is no proper justification for the WOL for welfare reasons.

I have self-excluded on 2 occasions over the past 10 years, as I was spending too much money there, at that point in time.

Quite simply, the way I feel is 'victimised.' Crown's policies and practices in relation to the detection of patrons with observable problem behaviours which indicate an element of risk are reactive and punitive.

It is obvious that due to COVID, Crown Casino has been quiet, and business has been affected. Therefore, there are few people whom you would keep under the radar and scrutinise as being at risk.

It is Crown's practice to keep a dossier on patrons they consider to be at risk of harm. These are formally self-excluded patrons and those who have formally had a WOL.

I believe I have been labelled as one of those patrons. Every time I visit Crown, I am accosted by either a gaming room manager or responsible gaming, who ask me a range of questions to ascertain whether I am at risk of harm from problem gambling.

As it has been quiet, there are few patrons to target. However, I am continuously targeted so Crown can be seen as conforming to the regulations and their policies and procedures on harm minimisation.

Due to the current situation, in fact, I am being victimised by Crown employees who are constantly harassing me and asking me questions of a private and personal nature.

As I have already stated, the current practices are punitive and reactive instead of being positive and proactive.

I have personally looked at the gambling regulations and have documented 'positive behavioural practices' which I believe Crown should implement in lieu of current protocol.

I have also documented official practices which could be implemented to assist Crown in the prevention and intervention of problem gambling and the issues associated with such.

These have been formulated by reading and analysing the gambling regulations, the current policies and practices of Crown in the Sixth Report by Crown and the submissions by the public into the Royal Commission into Crown Casino.

I am prepared to now give information to the Royal Commission about the programs, policies and procedures Crown or a future Casino operator could implement to deal with problem gambling behaviour, both reactively and proactively and not discriminate against people with a disability.

Since the Bergin report a few years ago Crown has had ample time to make changes to the regulations governing the casino with respect to the following matters:

These matters are embedded into the projected aims outcomes and of the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulations from 2009-2010

- **Gambling Activities:** The conduct of gambling properly protects players and other stakeholders

The behaviour of both Croupiers, Crown Staff, Security and Responsible Gaming staff and gaming patrons will affect the gaming experience. Croupiers need to be trained in how to communicate with patrons.

There needs to be a Code of Conduct developed. Also policies and procedures need to be set out to deal with people with disabilities without bias and discrimination. Staff need training in this area and need further training in the development of both active and reflective listening and communication skills.

- **Gambling Participants:** Gambling is conducted honestly, is free from criminal influence and commercial licensees deliver on their obligations

With respect to entering the casino and gambling over a certain limit, patrons should have to provide details of their occupation and disclose their disclosable criminal outcomes (within the past ten years) to Crown in a statutory declaration. If found to be dishonest, this could be penalised through making a false statutory declaration.

It would also protect Crown from Criminal influence and would ensure that Crown commits to its licensing obligations.

- **Gambling Benefits:** The Victorian community receives the benefits arising from gambling

The benefits the community receives should be implementing programs to assist people with specific problems from gambling. For example, a person with gambling problems who has marriage issues should be given funding to see a marriage counsellor.

Schools should be funded so students can learn about gambling and the risks and associated problems in the curriculum, just as they do for drugs and alcohol as a part of their learning for Health.

- **Gambling Harm Minimisation:** The harm caused by problem gambling is minimised

Most of the public submissions from the Royal Commission in Gambling are related to the personal problems that have arisen from problem gambling behaviour including, mental illness, suicide, family problems, theft to support gambling habits etc.

In order to cater for harm minimisation, there need to be preventative strategies in place to stop these problems from occurring.

Advertising and marketing to the community to make them aware of the problems that can result from gambling needs to come from Crown to show that they are being responsible and proactive about recognising what can happen if gambling gets out of control in peoples' lives. Advertising could take the form of television commercials, pamphlets given to patrons as a requirement of entering the casino etc.

A great deal of the content of these advertisements should be gained by the public submissions by the Royal Commission to show that Crown values the feedback of others and has intentions of working proactively with the community through a marketing and advertising campaign, to prevent these problems from occurring in the first instance.

Similarly, an intervention program needs to be funded by Crown to offer services to people affected by gambling. I would suggest a charitable fund, not to offer financial reimbursement, but rather innovative educational programs that people can undergo who have experienced problem gambling. This may involve marriage counselling, bereavement counselling, financial management courses etc. The curriculum design of these courses should centre around the issues submitted to the Royal Commission by members of the public.

- **Crown should fulfill its Government and legislative responsibilities and achieves its service delivery objectives by innovative, effective and efficient use of resources.**

A mandatory online interactive video course should be devised so that members of Crown or prospective members can easily access it and print out or provide certification on their phone, that they have completed the educational course, prior to be given entry to the gaming floor at Crown. If Crown is to redeem itself in the eyes of the Royal Commission and the public image, it must overhaul its current practices to show genuine care, well-being and respect for its patrons and the families of people who have chosen to gamble.,

In this way people are able to make an informed, consented decision to play at Crown as a source of entertainment.

Crown needs to recognise the reasons why people gamble and educate those people who gamble in response to emotional distress.