



To Whom it my concern,

Twenty-five years ago, when Crown Casino arrived, it installed itself in building of World Trade Centre which was its temporary location. That's when my experience with gambling began.

I remember how management tried very hard to lure the punters in anyway they could. Of course, it's a business, and as everyone else would expect, they too had to market it. The difference however lied in how they did it and what rules of ethics they broke in the process.

My experience was not as dramatic as thousands who either lost all material possessions, trust of their families or sometimes dear lives, but my own share of pain and struggles followed.

Gambling itself is not responsible for people losing their livelihood, just as alcohol is not responsible for people become addicted to it. It is however the way it is marketed to us and methods and hidden tricks which are not visible and clearly definable to people which create false hopes thanks to which the addiction is created.

In my opinion the Crown used all the tricks they had and it was clear that advertising and promotion of gambling become very aggressive, so no wonder that millions believed that it was nothing wrong with little bit of gambling. Today we know that this is simply not true.

I believe, it was a start of psychological campaign against public which had only one goal in mind – to get money from decent, unsuspected Aussies. In other words- greed oriented goals.

Australians were never before exposed to such obvious and false campaign. The false hope and promising to solve of your problems once you come in and likely win the jackpot. Suddenly the Crown logo was everywhere. The hope arrived, and slogan seemed to be – “There's nothing wrong with little bit of gamble” or to that effect.

Crown management knowingly introduced things such as free parking, free snacks and drinks while you were play pokies, as well as many special deals, staying in hotel for half price which seemed to be almost free.

All those deals we paid in full, ten times over by all of us without realising it.

Exploiting human weaknesses by marketing to all and letting everyone to come and spend their hard-earned money despite of their weaknesses is never the right thing to do. It is false and indecent practice and I don't care which country or in what system it is under.

Once the addiction kicked in I started gambling in Pokie venues which sprung all over the town like mushrooms after the rain. I met and talked to dozens of people who lost it all thanks to unfair tactics and gambling promotion. That however didn't stop me. It was too late then.

I become addicted to Pokie machines in 1998-9 and visits to casino became more and more frequent. I have to admit that I was a drinker at that time and access to cheap alcohol in the venues as well as encouragement from the staff, despite of clear signs of being under influence helped in losing much more money than otherwise.

Also, with assumed free drinks punters get drunk quicker and inhibitions go out the window. Adding a purposely designed pattern on the carpet which resembles coins, free snacks and drinks while you play on machine every twenty minutes or so and the picture is complete. Today I wonder how I couldn't see the sign since during studying for a diploma of business marketing we were taught about all the marketing tricks when comes to unfair and false promotions of products.

Thanks to all those tricks, thousands of us got hooked and many still are. I did try to stop. Either in the Crown or Pokie venues, it was always met with laughter treating it as joke. Staff was saying things like "Oh yes, they used to have some business cards in here ...sorry we just run out. Come in later on ...I'll ask the manager".

In other words, have another drink and hopefully keep playing so we can keep our jobs or just go home and come back next week. Training of staff in my opinion was deliberately confusing.

My experience ended up on losing close to hundred thousand dollars over fifteen years until I finally stopped first time in 2010, and then few years later when I stopped all my addictions and opened my practice.

I remember when I went to get help and used the self-exclusion program for the first time. I did it twice and it never worked. They took my photograph, my details and my testimony to make sure that I won't be allowed to enter Crown or other venues but few days later I walked in just to test the system, and nothing happened.

I stayed for hours losing money, and seeing that it has no sense of trying I kept gambling for years afterwards. Until today, I don't know why this program exists since no one controls it and it has no effect. Clearly, Crown has no interest in stopping people from coming in until this day, but what hope do we have if such initiatives as self-exclusion program designed to stop people from the harm of gambling does nothing?

Years ago when I become a counsellor I started specialising in addictions, and I helped people in overcome addiction to gambling, alcohol and smoking and more. Recently, I also become a Clinical Hypnotherapist because this approach seems to be even more successful.

Thanks to hypnosis, the change takes place in subconscious mind and it takes place within weeks instead of years of traditional counselling.

I believe that such strong addiction as gambling which works on principle of giving people the false hope of resolving their daily problems, should be regulated and controlled much better than it is today.

Because of my lived experience I help people with offering free counselling at my practice – Eastern Melbourne Psychotherapy and Hypnotherapy.

I provide my services without leaving any kind of record in the Medicare file which as we know stops many people from asking for help (Mental Health Program) as it can limit the future job prospects of the individual.

The government's role is certainly to look after our economy and collecting taxes. That's a given.

However, it is not supposed to be supported by doing harm to the very same people who are being governed.

The rules ought to change to stop thousands of desperate vulnerable punters from losing their property, families and sometimes even their lives.

Sincerely yours,

Peter Jankowski

Dip.AIPC Dip.AAH Pm.ACA