

It is clear to any fair-minded person that Crown are no longer suitable to continue holding a casino license in Victoria. It would be quite inconsistent for this commission to contradict the findings of the NSW and WA casino control authorities. There is little need to expand on the well publicised stories of money-laundering/failing to report large transactions, machine tampering, dodgy dealings with junket operators, criminal connections and placing employees in danger on foreign soil.

As a member of the public who has travelled to dozens of casino jurisdictions world-wide over the past 30 years, I have a good perspective on what constitutes the honest conducting of gaming and a fair go for a gambler. These two guiding principles do not exist today in the Victorian casino in part for one obvious reason.

There has never been a clear explanation made to the average punter as to why a casino monopoly exists in Melbourne. Crown Casino was handed this privilege over a quarter of a century ago and by wielding this unnatural power, has slowly become corrupted, pushing the limits of acting lawfully and becoming arrogant in the operation of the casino to the detriment of its own employees, customers and shareholders.

Where there are multiple casinos with different operators in one area, you invariably find a form of self-regulation emerging, where the stakeholders do not allow any dishonest competitive advantage to occur without it becoming known and acted upon by the casino authority. In addition, customers benefit from competition between casinos trying to attract their action.

As an example, in Victoria under the monopoly of Crown Casino, we have experienced a slow creep of detrimental rules changes over the years to casino games such as Blackjack and Roulette. The casino, being the only game in town, has been allowed to act unconscionably by pressuring the Victorian casino authority to allow pathetic payouts of 6/5 (supposed to be 3/2) on Blackjacks and having two 0's on Roulette. These house edges mean that Victorians are truly being ripped off with possibly the worst returns existing anywhere in the world.

I would encourage this commission to recommend changes to the Victorian Casino Control Act 1991, allowing for up to four licenses. The current premises could be leased from Crown and divided up accordingly. A greater choice for the customer and honesty and transparency in the gaming industry in what Victorians deserve.