

[No Subject]

From: Stuart McDonald **Confidential**
To: Contact (RCCOL) <contact@rccol.vic.gov.au>
Date: Mon, 26 Apr 2021 10:47:31 +1000
Attachments: Submission- cover-sheet_4.pdf (711.6 kB)

My name is Stuart McDonald. I am someone who has experienced harm from pokies over a number of years.

I first started gambling at Crown around fifteen years ago, around the time when I first discovered pokies. Back then I had a circle of hard drinking, drug taking friends. We would use substances and drink until the early hours of the morning, then set off into the city. Knowing that we were likely to be turned away from other venues, we would invariably end up in Crown.

There are several bars adjacent to the pokies where you can get a drink any time of the day or night. I hadn't set out to play the pokies, just drink and hang out with my mates. But the proximity of the pokies next to the bar soon lured me in & I gambled away, losing hundreds of dollars. Soon I started gambling alone, going into Crown drunk and under the influence of drugs.

Despite my intoxicated state, I was always served at one of the many bars on the pokies floor. I question Crown's responsible serving of alcohol credentials, as I saw many clearly inebriated patrons in the venue.

I'm a keen football fan and after games at the MCG I would walk to Southbank, intending to have a drink or get a bite to eat, but ending up at the Casino losing money on the pokies. There are countless fast food joints along the river which attract hordes of casual diners, many of them young people. Is it responsible to have an all-ages dining and entertainment precinct smack bang next to a harmful casino?

I also question Crown's self-exclusion policy and their much vaunted facial recognition technology. Last year, I signed up to Crown's exclusion scheme. and then entered the venue. In the words of an article later published by The Age '..... on an evening in early October Mr McDonald strolled past cameras and security at the entrance of Crown's main gaming room. He spoke to staff, changed money and played poker machines for almost half an hour without detection.' I approached Crown for comment about this breach but haven't had a reply.

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/it-s-just-spin-gamblers-experts-say-pokie-self-exclusion-not-working-20191025-p534do.html>

Regards,

Stuart McDonald.