

File Note

Sixth Review of the Casino Licence and Operator

Author:	Garry Ferris, Policy Officer	Date:	19 September 2017
Subject:	Meeting with Australian-Vietnamese Women's Association (AVWA)		
Date	19 September 2017		
Location	Richmond 3.03		
Attendees	AVWA—Cam Nguyen (CEO), Huy Luu (Operation's Manager). VCGLR—Robert Chappell, Director, Casino Licence Review Project (CLRP), Luisa Bianchin, Team Leader Probity (CLRP), Garry Ferris, Policy Officer (CLRP).		

The meeting commenced at approximately 2.03 am.

1. Robert gave an overview of the review process referring to the advertisement placed in the press and an email from Catherine Myers VCGLR (CEO) to interested stakeholders. This meeting is to follow up with your organisation to see if you are interested in making a submission. If the AVWA would like more time to make a submission it should send an email or a letter to requesting an extension of time.
2. Cam asked whether they needed to put in a submission or whether the notes from this meeting could be their submission.
3. Robert advised that CLRP could organise a meeting later where they could discuss casino-specific issues, observations and stories. He stated that the AVWA could send an email to the review advising that they want to make a submission or wait to use the notes from a meeting as a basis for a submission. Robert informed that the review was examining the operation of responsible gambling advice and support in the casino.
4. Huy said that when the temporary casino opened there were a lot of small businesses operated by Vietnamese community members went broke. This caused a lot of harm to the community.
5. Cam said that she went to the casino in 2013 and met with an officer who told her that the Melbourne casino is the only casino in the world to have a responsible gambling office. She advised that there is information about responsible gambling available in the casino in other languages including Vietnamese, but signs on the casino walls were only available in English.
6. She explained that gambling is part of Vietnamese culture. Gambling is a Vietnamese New Year tradition where a traditional dice game called Bau Cua is played. It is only played for three days of the Vietnamese New Year celebrations. When Cam visited the casino she noticed that approximately half of the patrons were of Asian appearance. This was particularly noticeable around the blackjack and roulette rooms where she could hear Vietnamese spoken.
7. The AVWA was established in 1983. Dame Phyllis Frost was their patron. Cam asked Dame Phyllis if there were any Vietnamese women in prison. From 1983 – 1995 there were no Vietnamese women in prison, only men. After the temporary casino opened in 1994, Cam suggested that the rate of incarceration for men was two or three times the state rate. The number

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of women in prison over the last 15 years has increased alarmingly. It is ten times the state average compared to the proportion of all Victorian women. Vietnamese women represent approximately 15-20 percent of all female prisoners. The major reason these women are there is because of gambling debts—mainly casino gambling.

8. Huy advised that Vietnamese people don't like playing machines, they prefer table games.
9. Cam said that casino staff treat patrons with low self-esteem well and make them feel good, make them feel respected.
10. The trend for the number of female prisoners was going up but peaked at approximately 17 percent now it is approximately 15-16 percent.
11. Cam suggested that all Vietnamese refugees have trauma, most of the men had to serve in the Vietnamese armed services for 15 years. Women stayed at home looking after the children whilst the men were away. A lot of the refugees had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This trauma has been passed onto the second generation. Cam reiterated that quite a number of Vietnamese men can't talk about what they went through in the war.
12. Robert suggested to Cam that the female incarceration figures are quite small if there are a few people finishing their sentences then this can impact on the volatility of the data.
13. Cam asked whether the casino is meeting its obligations regarding problem gambling. Cam suggested that the casino is a good place to buy drugs, sell stolen goods.
14. She suggested that it would be good to find out the ethnicity of players at the casino, and look at the losses of players from the Vietnamese community. Cam said it would be good if the casino could contribute funding for PTSD research and healthy lifestyles. It would be good to access funding to promote sports.
15. Huy advised that the AVWA tried to get funding from VicHealth for sports funding but VicHealth was not interested.
16. Cam advised that the AVWA funding for three years for gambling counselling and gambling prevention. The gambling prevention funding ended after three years.
17. Robert asked what was involved in the gambling prevention program. Huy advised that it was group work, publicity, newspaper advertisements, acting performances, other arts and sports related activities. Cam said at these activities people shared their experiences and talked about what they have.
18. Robert advised that the focus of the review is on Crown and the casino licence. The review would be interested in general observations about activity, such as the observation made that gaming tables are popular, but that the machines were not as appealing.
19. Robert asked what proportion of the Vietnamese community had no English language skills.
20. Cam advised that in the last census approximately 49% of Vietnamese women had little or no English language skills. Approximately ¼ of the Vietnamese community were born here and speak English, ¾ of the community (the older generation) don't speak English.
21. Robert asked if women played table games as much as men.
22. Huy advised that 80 percent of Vietnamese women who went to the casino played table games.

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23. Cam continued that the Vietnamese women don't know about the two big dangers at the casino: friendly staff and loan sharks. The loan sharks approach women with low self-esteem and offer them loans. When the loans are a few thousand dollars then the women become involved in criminal activity such as becoming drug mules or other crimes.
24. Robert asked if the AVWA clients knew that they wouldn't win at the casino. Cam stated that they are not mathematicians they believe in luck.
25. Luisa asked if the AVWA worked with self-excluded patrons. Cam stated that Crown let self-excluded patrons through if they had a lot of cash on them.
26. Robert advised that if we could establish that the casino operator let a self-excluded person into the casino if they were going to spend (lots) of money, then this would prove a breach of the self-exclusion rules. There is a difference between saying that something happens and proving it. If the AVWA is aware of clients that have been through this process it would be good to talk to them.
27. Huy ask why people are allowed to gamble continuously at the casino. He has heard stories of people urinating in gambling rooms.
28. Robert suggested that the AVWA send in an email advising if they are planning to make a submission.

The meeting closed at 2.55 pm.