



# Review of Crown Melbourne

# **Review of Crown Melbourne**

**Prepared for Minter Ellison**

**by**

**Peter Cohen  
The Agenda Group**

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Confidential

## Your instructions

You have asked that I attend Crown Melbourne to carry out a visual inspection of the property and the activities being carried on at Crown.

You have also instructed that I prepare a report on any issue that may require a more detailed review in the context of regulatory, compliance, reputational or commercial considerations. Such a report is to be limited to factual circumstances and should not contain details of opinion.

## Preliminary comments

I visited Crown Melbourne on 11, 24 and 25 May. The visit on 11 May was unannounced and with no advance warning to anyone at Crown. The visit on 24 and 25 May was arranged with the assistance of Mark Mackay, Executive General Manager Gaming Machines. His assistance was necessary as the purpose of that particular visit was to review private areas of the casino to which I would not otherwise have access.

In my visits to Crown Melbourne I observed many things. However, this review is not a formal audit and as such it does not purport to identify every potential breach of compliance which might exist. Apart from anything else, some potential breaches are "moment-in-time" events, such as a minor entering the casino while others might be ongoing (for example, inadequate lighting levels) but which may nevertheless not be observed. The review should be considered more as a "sense check" which might be colloquially described as "seeing if Crown passes the pub test".

The review tested a number of areas which will be briefly referred to below. Overall, Crown Melbourne "passes the pub test" but a number of specific matters are brought to your attention for consideration.

## The advice

My review of activities at Crown Melbourne observed the following:

- The gaming host I met on 24 May (Carena) provided a professional introduction and assisted me to set up a YourPlay account. I had no concerns with the appropriateness of anything I was told.
- The YourPlay/Crown Rewards account provided appropriate assistance including:
  - Regular reminders "popping up" on the left of the gaming machine screen every 10 minutes to advise me of the time I had spent gambling,
  - Simple display showing me the amount of time I had spent gambling on gaming machines in that day and the amount I had won or lost,
  - When I reduced the daily limit using a VIK kiosk, the new limit was recognised when I played a gaming machine immediately afterwards,
  - The YourPlay system settings are a little hard to use (perhaps just for a first-time user), but this is likely to be the design of the Government-approved system. I found it difficult to navigate to find how to reset my daily limit. The product tells me I can do it, but finding the method to do so was difficult. However, a Crown Rewards staff member was able to assist me to change my daily limit and helped me immediately upon request



- No minors<sup>1</sup> were observed on the floor at any time. Security guards were vigilant in requesting ID from any individual who looked under the age of about 25. While I monitored every entrance to the gaming floor during my visits to the casino, I did not see a minor turned away.
- Generally speaking, lighting levels in gaming machine areas appeared adequate<sup>2</sup>. However, see further comment below.
- Posters were displayed properly throughout the casino<sup>3</sup>. This assessment did not count every poster to ensure the requisite number was being displayed (ie, one poster for every 15 gaming machines). However, where the three-sided displays had one side up against a wall, posters were not affixed on that blind side.
- "Talkers" could be found on every gaming machine<sup>4</sup>. However, see further comment below.
- Gaming machines accurately showed the time of day<sup>5</sup>.
- Gaming machines had game information and player tracking capability<sup>6</sup>.
- Gaming machines which were not part of the 1,000 allowed in the defined "specified area" did not accept \$100 notes. Gaming machines which are part of the 1,000 allowed in the defined "specified area" accepted \$100 notes but only when YourPlay was being used<sup>7</sup>.
- Gaming machines which were not part of the 1,000 allowed in the defined "specified area" did not allow autoplay. Gaming machines which are part of the 1,000 allowed in the defined "specified area" allowed autoplay but only when YourPlay was being used<sup>8</sup>. (See also separate comment below regarding button hypersensitivity).
- Gaming machines which were not part of the 1,000 allowed in the defined "specified area" did not allow a game spin to be curtailed (shortened) by re-pressing the Play button while the reels were still spinning. Gaming machines which are part of the 1,000 allowed in the defined "specified area" did allow a game spin to be curtailed but only when YourPlay was being used<sup>9</sup>.
- Apart from some button hypersensitivity, there were no obviously faulty gaming machines (for example, with inaccurate or blurry monitors, or with buttons not properly lit or working properly). (See separate comment below regarding button hypersensitivity).
- Notices were displayed showing where game rules (approved under section 60 of the Casino Control Act) could be found<sup>10</sup>. The notice, which was displayed electronically, was observed at the Cashiers' station, the Crown Rewards desk and at other strategic locations and stated "RULES FOR THE CONDUCT OF GAMING ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST FROM THE CASHIER, CROWN REWARDS DESKS OR BY SCANNING THE QR CODE AT A TABLE GAME".

<sup>1</sup> Of course, I did not independently verify that every individual on the floor was 18 years or older. This comment is intended to mean that no individuals who were clearly under age were present.

<sup>2</sup> Consistent with regulation 8 of the *Gambling Regulations 2015*

<sup>3</sup> Consistent with regulation 12 of the *Gambling Regulations 2015*

<sup>4</sup> Consistent with regulation 13 of the *Gambling Regulations 2015*

<sup>5</sup> Consistent with regulation 19 of the *Gambling Regulations 2015*

<sup>6</sup> Consistent with regulation 20 of the *Gambling Regulations 2015*

<sup>7</sup> Consistent with section 62AB of the *Casino Control Act 1991*

<sup>8</sup> Consistent with section 62AB of the *Casino Control Act 1991*

<sup>9</sup> Consistent with section 62AB of the *Casino Control Act 1991*

<sup>10</sup> Consistent with section 66 of the *Casino Control Act 1991*



- Dealers of table games performed their duties courteously and correctly. In one instance, a roulette dealer called "no more bets" following which a player attempted to add another chip to the table. The dealer removed that chip and returned it to the player.
- An attempt to exchange a printed ticket (TITO) from a gaming machine for chips at a gaming table was rebuffed with the dealer politely advising that I needed to exchange the ticket at the Cashier's station<sup>11</sup>.
- Player information brochures were displayed at the Cashier's station.
- Smoking was only observed in those areas approved by the Minister for Health as areas exempt from the smoking ban<sup>12</sup>.
- No overt drunkenness or misbehaviour by patrons, either as players or otherwise in attendance, was observed<sup>13</sup>.
- ATMs were located at various sites within the complex with all at least 50 metres from an entrance to the gaming floor.<sup>14</sup>
- The commitment to responsible gambling was observed by:
  - Messaging on printed player statements issued from the VIK kiosk,
  - The "Responsible Gaming - Stay in Control" message printed on the back of tickets (ie, TITO),
  - Regular presentations of the "Responsible Gaming - Stay in Control" message on video screens used to promote Crown's products and services throughout the casino,
  - Responsible gaming collateral at the Cashier's station along with player information brochures,
  - Signage at the Responsible Gaming Service Centre which indicated that support could be provided 24 hours per day, seven days per week. The Centre was closed when I visited at 1.30 am but provided an opportunity to call for assistance if required.

Five matters deserve special comment.

1. The "talkers" affixed to a few gaming machines are too high to be read by players. Regulation 13 of the *Gambling Regulations 2015* states that a "talker" must be "*clearly visible from the front of the machine*". While the "talker" is clearly visible, at that height, the content is not. This report does not form a view as to whether the Regulation is properly met, but, it nevertheless might appear to be unhelpful to players. Examples can be found on some modern Aristocrat Lightning Link and Dragon Link games which are wider than the more traditional (older) machines and therefore appear closer together.<sup>15</sup> It may be that the physical closeness of these particular machines which is a consequence of their size has limited the options for placement of the "talkers".
2. The minimum lighting level around some gaming machines should be checked to confirm they meet the requirements of the minimum lighting levels required.<sup>16</sup> In particular, banks

<sup>11</sup> Consistent with section 64(1)(d) of the *Casino Control Act 1991*

<sup>12</sup> Consistent with section 3E of the *Tobacco Act 1987*

<sup>13</sup> Consistent with section 81AAC of the *Casino Control Act 1991*

<sup>14</sup> Consistent with section 81AAA of the *Casino Control Act 1991*

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, gaming machines at the eastern end of the casino, near the Atrium Bar.

<sup>16</sup> See regulation 8 of the *Gambling Regulations 2015*



#D1901 to D1905 on the main gaming floor and #J1401 to J1406 in the Level 1 casino should be checked, particularly at night time.

3. Food and beverage staff in the Mahogany Room, while attempting to please, need to be fully aware of Crown policies. When asked for a "pick" to use to hold down a button on a gaming machine with an autoplay facility, a food and beverage staff member (Mark) offered to get one for me but was subsequently stopped by a gaming machine attendant who explained the change in policy to the food and beverage staff member who then apologised and explained the change in policy to me.
4. Some gaming machines played in the defined "specified areas" in the mode that exempted them from the restriction on autoplay had hypersensitive buttons which resulted in multiple spins from what was intended to be a single button press. An example of such a game can be found on machine #B1201 in the Mahogany Room ("Mega Mariachi - Pink Panther Link"). Players may feel aggrieved that the game did not properly respond to the player's intentions.
5. Entry signage was observed at every entrance to the casino. While they address matters as would be expected including those required, they are not particularly easy to read because of the lack of contrast between the text and the background.

## Conclusion

I did not observe any confirmed breaches of regulatory requirements or any major issues which may lead to reputational concern. Conversely, I observed many instances of clear compliance with obligations. Nevertheless, a few matters have been identified and should be reviewed.

This is a single point-in-time assessment and it may be valuable for Crown Melbourne to consider undertaking similar "sense checks" on a regular basis.

I am available for discussion on the content of this report with you or anyone at Crown Melbourne.

### Prepared by:

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