



NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL SERVICES

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SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE GAMBLING AMENDMENT BILL (NO 2) 2007

Introduction

1. The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) represents six denominations: the Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, and Presbyterian social services agencies, as well as the Methodist and the Salvation Army churches.

NZCCSS works for a just and compassionate society in Aotearoa New Zealand. We see this as a continuation of the mission of Jesus Christ. In seeking to fulfil this mission, we are committed to giving priority to poor and vulnerable members of our society and Te Tiriti O Waitangi.

2. Collectively, our six members are responsible for over 500 social service delivery sites in their networks throughout New Zealand.

Our members deliver a wide range of services that cover such areas as child and family services, services for older people, foodbank and emergency services, housing, budgeting, disability, addictions, community development and employment services. Further details on NZCCSS can be found in Appendix 1.

3. NZCCSS would welcome the opportunity to speak to this submission, and would be represented by Ross Kendrew (President) and Trevor McGlinchey (Executive Officer), both of whom can be contacted through the NZCCSS Secretariat on 04 473 2627 or via admin@nzccss.org.nz.
4. The current Bill makes several technical amendments to give better control over gambling machine operators, how the funds raised from pokie machine funds are used and requiring gambling operators to have policies for dealing with problem gamblers. This submission does not seek to address all the issues raised in this Bill or to cover all clauses contained in the Bill. Our submission focuses on major areas

of interest. A lack of comment on any particular clause/issue should not be seen as implied agreement or support.

5. In our submissions on the original legislation NZCCSS indicated its support for the intention of the Gambling Act to improve the regulation of gambling in our society. In those submissions we raised concerns about the Act and subsequent experience has shown that the Act is not effective enough in minimizing gambling harm in our communities.
6. NZCCSS does not believe that the current amendments go far enough to address the continuing issues. NZCCSS member agencies confront on a daily basis the consequences of gambling and particularly the way pokie machines proliferate in areas of greatest social need. There is evidence of exploitative practices of gambling operators, not enough is being done by many gambling operators to help minimize gambling harm or support the self-help initiatives of problem gamblers. The way the proceeds from gambling are being utilised does not appear to be achieving the goal of genuinely returning resources to the community.
7. The Gambling Act has now been in force for over three years and NZCCSS calls for an urgent and comprehensive review of the Act to assess its progress in achieving the aims of the Act. These include the prevention and minimisation of harm from gambling, facilitating responsible gambling, ensuring that proceeds from gambling benefit the community and facilitating community involvement in decisions about gambling provision.
8. NZCCSS believes that while the Act has brought some improvement in the regulation and control of gambling, it has not made sufficient progress in reducing the social harm caused by gambling and urgent action is required to deal with this.

Recommendations

NZCCSS recommends that amendments be made to the Gambling Act that:

- **ensure profits from gambling are distributed in the communities from which the funds were generated.**
- **require greater transparency in the process of deciding how funding is distributed (along the lines of the Lotteries Grants Board).**

- **require greatly enhanced consumer protection procedures particularly through host responsibility and support for self-exclusion orders.**
- **Give Local Authorities the ability to review all gaming consents in their areas (including those before 2001).**

NZCCSS also recommends that a full review of the legislation take place as soon as possible to comprehensively review its impact in achieving the Gambling Act aims.

Appendix I – Overview of NZCCSS

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) represents six denominations: the Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, and Presbyterian social services agencies, as well as the Methodist and the Salvation Army churches.

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Our members deliver a wide range of services that cover such areas as child and family services, services for older people, foodbank and emergency services, housing, budgeting, disability, addictions, community development and employment services.

This size and diversity in services are amongst the many reasons for NZCCSS to celebrate its membership and the work that they do to meet people's needs throughout New Zealand.

NZCCSS Mission and Role

NZCCSS works for a just and compassionate society in Aotearoa New Zealand. We see this as a continuation of the mission of Jesus Christ. In seeking to fulfil this mission, we are committed to:

- giving priority to poor and vulnerable members of our society
- Te Tiriti O Waitangi

The key roles of NZCCSS are to represent the common interests and vision of our members at the national level; to supply information and networking opportunities to support members provide quality services; and to develop, critique and advocate for policies that will assist poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society.

A national Council, made up of two representatives from each denomination, governs NZCCSS.

A small Secretariat team carries out the day-to-day work of the Council. This includes gathering and distributing information, research on social policy issues, and building relationships with government officials and others working in the community sector.

A Policy Group oversees the policy and research work that NZCCSS does in three key areas: child and family, housing and poverty and services for older people. Each Policy Group is made up of at least two council representatives plus social services managers, academics or others with particular expertise in that area. This means that the work that NZCCSS does is well informed by what is happening in our members' communities.

www.nzccss.org.nz