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| Mystery Shopper Information Summary  Dunedin Casino  December 2014 |
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Foreword

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| The following information is a summary of the data collected for Dunedin Casino in the Safer Gambling Venues Mystery Shopper Project, conducted by Gambling Compliance in July 2014.  The background, purpose, and detailed methodology of this project are explained in Mystery Shopper 2014: Project Summary. This is located on the Department’s website and can be accessed at the following link:  <http://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Services-Casino-and-Non-Casino-Gaming-Mystery-Shopper-campaign>  The data collected for the project and included in the following document is subject to caveats detailed in the above named document. |
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| **Stefan Pishief**  Manager Sector Initiatives |

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# Introduction

The Department initiated the mystery shopper research exercise to test host responsibility practice in casinos and class 4 venues and to gain an accurate indication of actual practice in harm prevention and minimisation (HPM), and to identify any areas of risk where further improvements need to be made.

The research observed the HPM and host responsibility practice of venue staff and casino staff.

All casinos were visited during the research. The number of visits to each casino was based on the size of the casino, given that larger casinos have a higher number of patrons who may experience problem gambling.

All visit scenarios focused on behavioural indicators of potential problem gambling through gaming machine play in the public access areas of the casinos. Gaming machines are associated with the highest prevalence of problem gambling and the identification of behavioural indicators requires on-going vigilance by casino staff.

# Scenario A control

## Scenario description

Visit begins half an hour into the night time shift.

Player plays for up to 10 hours, shows no general problem gambling indicators.

Designed to mimic the Campbell Live test[[1]](#footnote-1); looking for intervention from the casino based purely on the number of hours the person has been playing.

## Focus areas

1. Shopper gambled for 10 hours, departing upon closing time at 3am.
2. Shopper was approached by a staff member once, after gambling for seven and a half hours, for a service offer; the shopper was approached again by two staff members to advise it was closing time, and to wait while she finished gambling.
3. A staff member stood by the shopper at closing time, and did not comment on her length of play.
4. Shopper observed a patron being rude to staff and complaining about the time taken to change hoppers and get coins out when they could be using another machine and adding to their total; a staff member was present attending to a machine and did not make any comment about the patron’s behaviour.
5. Shopper observed a patron making multiple cash withdrawals, claiming that a machine ‘owed wins’, and changing machines multiple times; a staff member interacted with the patron while this was occurring, nothing recorded in casino daily log to indicate the staff member had noted their behaviour.
6. Shopper noted that staff were “vigilant and kept a careful eye on all patrons including myself”.
7. Casino daily log does not show any indication that shopper was noted for length of play.

## General details

Date: Saturday 5 July

Time: 1700 – 0300; 10 hours

Patronage on arrival/departure: Busy/Quiet[[2]](#footnote-2)

## Summary of shopper observations

* Staff monitoring of the gaming floor was estimated as more than 75 per cent of the time.
* There were 25 sweeps[[3]](#footnote-3) that appeared to be genuine checks of patrons, and were not motivated by other factors (such as refilling a hopper).
* The shopper observed 10+ staff-initiated interactions with other patrons in the following categories:
  + Friendly conversation: 2
  + Alcohol consumption concern: 1
  + Service offer: 4
  + Jackpots or pay-outs: 3
  + Machine Malfunctions: 2
* The shopper observed four patrons showing problem gambling indicators, patron 1 showing rudeness or complaining to staff and irritation at interruption, patron 2 personalising the machine and showing emotional distress, patron 3 making multiple withdrawals and not celebrating wins, and patron 4 not celebrating wins and being possessive of a machine; staff intervened with two of these patrons, though it is difficult to differentiate whether this was to address machine issues or a genuine concern about problem gambling.
* Staff initiated three interactions with the shopper, one service offer; one to advise it was closing time, and one friendly conversation by a different staff member at closing time. There were no interactions made in regard to a concern about shopper’s length of play.
* Additional notable comments from shopper:
  + Shopper noted that almost all of the sweeps appeared genuine; there was always an attendant close at hand with the clip board and slips, pager and keys, walking among the patrons.
  + The shopper continued to gamble when it was nearing closing time, and staff stood by while she finished. The staff member engaged in pleasant conversation while she finished her play, but made no comment about her length of play.

# Scenario C

## Scenario description

Visit begins towards the beginning of a cashier’s shift.

The player withdraws $80 cash from the cashier at the outset of the session, $60 after half an hour, $40 after one hour, $40 after 1.5 hours; attempts to withdraw $30 after two hours, card declines so they try to withdraw $20 which succeeds. Player to go to the same cashier for each withdrawal, where possible.

Display general problem gambling indicators from three hours onwards.

Designed to test cashier’s response to frequent withdrawals, and indication that patron has consciously gambled the last of their money.

## Focus areas

1. Shopper gambled for just under six hours and was approached by staff after 78 minutes to make friendly conversation, and once more for a service offer.
2. No comments or enquiries made about shopper’s behaviour while displaying general problem gambling indicators.
3. Shopper served by two different cashiers for cash withdrawal scenarios; no comment was made in response to the shopper’s card declining.
4. Shopper observed a patron stating to a friend that they were “waiting for the big one”; a staff member was signing a credit note for the patron’s companion at the time but made no comment or enquiry to the patron.
5. Shopper noted this patron was present in casino on her previous visit to undertake scenario A.
6. Shopper noted that staff seemed to know some patrons by name.
7. Casino daily log does not show any indication that shopper was noted for length of play or problem gambling indicator behaviour.

## General details

Date: Tuesday 15 July

Time: 1225 – 1820; 5 hours 55 minutes

Patronage on arrival/departure: Moderate (pokies)/Quiet[[4]](#footnote-4)

## Summary of shopper observations

* Staff monitoring of the gaming floor was estimated as more than 75 per cent of the time.
* There were 12 sweeps that appeared to be genuine checks of patrons, and were not motivated by other factors (such as refilling a hopper).
* The shopper observed 10+ staff-initiated interactions with other patrons in the following categories:
  + Friendly conversation:2
  + Service offer: 2
  + Jackpots or pay-outs: 2
  + Machine Malfunctions: 2
  + Other matters: 2
* The shopper observed two patrons showing problem gambling indicators. The first patron claimed the machine was malfunctioning; multiple staff members were called over and interacted with the patron to discuss the amount the machine had paid out. This is recorded as an intervention; however, there is no indication that the staff members were commenting on the patron’s gambling behaviour. The second patron won a mini jackpot but stated they were waiting for “the big one”, and didn’t want to join their friend in taking a meal break.
* Staff initiated two interactions with the shopper, one friendly conversation, and one service offer. There were no interactions made in regard to a concern about shopper’s gambling behaviour or length of play.
* Additional notable comments from shopper:
  + Majority of patrons were retirees, appeared to be enjoying the company, some sharing holiday photos. One staff member appeared to know many of the patrons by name and greeted them warmly and asked how they were going.

## Notes from follow-up conversation with shopper

* The other matters recorded: one instance was when an attendant started their shift and went around and greeted everyone, checked/asked about how people were going and asked if anyone had won anything; patrons seemed to perk up and enjoy that attention.

1. Campbell Live conducted a ‘sting’ operation in January 2014, which involved a 76-year-old man visiting the Auckland casino and gambling for approximately 10 hours without any intervention from casino staff. SKYCITY Auckland has since introduced customer service ambassadors, who have enhanced HPM obligations. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Busy = more than half tables and more than half pokies occupied, additional patrons dining/drinking; Quiet = few tables or pokies occupied. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ‘Sweep’ is a term commonly used in class 4 venues to describe checking and monitoring of gambling patrons. The term is not commonly used by casinos, however was used throughout the project for ease of reference. It describes staff walking up and down between gambling machines, rather than simply passing by in a main corridor or observing patrons from afar. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Moderate (pokies) = some pokies but few table games occupied; Quiet = few tables or pokies occupied. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)