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| Mystery Shopper Information SummarySKYCITY AucklandDecember 2014 |
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Foreword

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| The following information is a summary of the data collected for SKYCITY Auckland 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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# 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 at 6.30am, and was approached once by a staff member at 4.30am to make friendly conversation after gambling for eight hours.
2. Casino daily log does not show any indication that shopper was noted for length of play.

## General details

Date: Saturday 5 July

Time & duration: 2020 – 0630; 10 hours 10 minutes

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

## Summary of shopper observations

* Staff monitoring of the gaming floor was estimated as less than 25 per cent of the time.
* There were four 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
	+ Jackpots or pay-outs: 3
	+ Machine Malfunctions: 3
	+ Other matters: 1 (indicated location of eftpos machine)
* The shopper observed two patrons showing problem gambling indicators, both showing emotional distress at machines; staff did not intervene with either of these patrons.
* Staff initiated one interaction with the shopper which was a friendly conversation. There were no interactions over shopper’s length of play
* Additional notable comments from shopper:
	+ Both patrons recorded as displaying problem gambling indicators were observed playing two machines at once.

# Scenario A plus indicators

## Scenario description

Visit begins 5.5-6 hours before a shift change, and carries on into the evening.

Player plays for 10-12 hours, displays general problem gambling indicators.

Player questions a staff member about the machine and says it hasn’t paid out, just before the shift change over.

Proposed Script (mystery shopper was allowed to modify based upon the situation): “This machine isn’t working – I’ve been playing for X hours and the machine hasn’t paid out the jackpot”.

Designed to test response to claim that the machine isn’t working, and explicit indication of length of play and indications of frustration.

## Focus areas

1. Shopper gambled continuously for 10 hours, departing at 12.15am, and was approached by a staff member once after four hours.
2. The shopper sat at the same machine for the duration of the visit.
3. During the interaction with the staff member, shopper expressed frustration/distress at machine, continued to display general problem gambling indicators for remaining six hours of the visit, and received no further interaction from casino staff.
4. The scripted scenario did not result in any comment or enquiry about the shopper’s behaviour. The staff member who attended to the shopper at the time had visited the area twice before.
5. Casino daily log does not show any indication that shopper was noted for length of play or problem gambling indicator behaviour.

## General details

Date: Wednesday 2 July

Time & duration: 1350 – 0015; 10 hours 25 minutes

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

## Summary of shopper observations

* Staff monitoring of the gaming floor was estimated as all of the time.
* There were 13 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: 1
	+ Jackpots or pay-outs: 4
	+ Machine Malfunctions: 6
* The shopper observed no patrons showing problem gambling indicators.
* Staff initiated one interaction with the shopper which was a friendly conversation. There were no interactions made about shopper’s gambling behaviour or length of play.
* Additional notable comments from shopper:
	+ The staff interaction with the shopper may have been an intervention as it appeared to be in response to the shopper’s problem gambling indicators – the staff member said “not going too well?” to which the shopper replied “no, this machine will not let me win more.” The staff member said “good luck” as she left.
	+ The shopper sat at the same machine for 10 hours without moving, situated at the end of two rows of machines, clearly visible to staff. Staff passed him on 14 occasions. He was acknowledged twice by eye contact but not engaged in conversation.

## Notes from follow-up conversation with shopper

* Not once did staff bother to ‘check him out’

# Scenario B

## Scenario description

Player arrives at casino and asks the customer service team for an anonymous card, and how to set up pre-commitment for their session. Player explains they only want to gamble $100 and play for no more than three hours.

Once the amount has run out, they continue to gamble un-carded with cash. Display general problem gambling indicators from three hours onwards.

Designed to test staff monitoring of patron who has explicitly stated gambling limits.

## Focus areas

1. Shopper indicated to staff that she wanted to gamble for a maximum of three hours and $100, as per scenario description[[5]](#footnote-5). Shopper was advised she could not get a temporary card. Shopper gambled for five and a half hours displaying general problem gambling indicators after three hours. No enquiry or comment was made about her gambling behaviour.
2. Shopper was approached three times by casino staff, once for a service offer and twice to advise her about security of her bag.
3. Shopper observed another patron expressing distress and frustration at the machines, and tray-surfing behaviour. Casino staff attended to the machine the patron was using on three occasions, but no enquiry or comment was made about the patron’s behaviour.
4. Casino daily log does not show any indication that shopper was noted for length of play or problem gambling indicator behaviour.

## General details

Date: Monday 7 July

Time: 1325 – 1855; 5 hours 30 minutes

Patronage on arrival/departure: Quiet/Moderate[[6]](#footnote-6)

## Summary of shopper observations

* Staff monitoring of the gaming floor was estimated as 50-74 per cent of the time.
* There were 14 sweeps that appeared to be genuine checks of patrons, and were not motivated by other factors (such as refilling a hopper).
* The shopper observed six staff-initiated interactions with other patrons in the following categories:
	+ Jackpots or pay-outs: 3
	+ Machine Malfunctions: 3
* The shopper observed one patron showing problem gambling indicators, showing emotional distress at machines and irritation at interruption; staff did not intervene with this patron.
* Staff initiated three interactions with the mystery shopper, one as a service offer, two were friendly conversation. There were no interactions about shopper’s gambling behaviour or length of play.
* Additional notable comments from shopper:
	+ The patron recorded as displaying problem gambling indicators did so over a couple of hours, and was helped with their jammed machines three times.

## Notes from follow-up conversation with shopper

* Regarding whether staff directly witnessed the behaviour of the person displaying problem gambling indicators: staff would have and should have seen the way she was behaving - when the staff person was called they fixed the machine and walked off with no direct interaction.

# 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 2 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 six hours, departing at 6.40pm, and was not approached by a staff member at any time (the shopper initiated an interaction for a hand payment).
2. Shopper used the same machine for the duration of the visit.
3. During the scripted scenario, the cashier made no enquiry about the shopper’s card declining.
4. Shopper observed few other patrons, sometimes none, in the area he was located in.
5. Shopper displayed general problem gambling indicators after three hours.
6. Casino daily log does not show any indication that shopper was noted for length of play or problem gambling indicator behaviour.

## General details

Date: Wednesday 9 July

Time: 1240 – 1840; 6 hours

Patronage on arrival/departure: Moderate (pokies)/Moderate (pokies)[[7]](#footnote-7)

## Summary of shopper observations

* Staff monitoring of the gaming floor was estimated as 24-49 per cent of the time.
* There were six sweeps that appeared to be genuine checks of patrons, and were not motivated by other factors (such as refilling a hopper).
* The shopper observed four staff-initiated interactions with other patrons in the following categories:
	+ Friendly conversation: 4
* The shopper observed no patrons showing problem gambling indicators.
* Staff did not initiate any interactions with the shopper.
* Additional notable comments from shopper:
	+ The shopper played the same machine for the whole six hours.
	+ When the shopper’s card declined, the cashier made a comment about their account having no money left in it.
	+ The shopper was passed by staff members eight times in total.

## Notes from follow-up conversation with shopper

* There were two cashiers on duty; he went to one but their shift finished after three transactions, so he had to change. He made a point of identifying himself with chit chat. The staff member was aware that his card declined but made no reaction.

# Scenario D

## Scenario description

Visit begins towards the beginning of the security officer’s shift.

The player goes to the ATM after 30 minutes, one hour, 1.5 hours, two hours, and for the remainder of the duration at one hour intervals. Display general problem gambling indicators from three hours onwards.

Designed to test whether security guards are aware of patrons passing to and from the ATMs making frequent withdrawals.

## Focus areas

1. Shopper gambled for six hours, departing at 1.30am, and was not approached by a staff member at any time, including when general problem gambling indicators were displayed.
2. Shopper went to the ATM machines and returned to the same machine seven times in the duration of the visit.
3. Shopper complained to a staff member that another machine was luckier and that her machine didn’t give as many free games, (while the staff member attended to a pay-out for another patron); the staff member did not make any comment or enquiry to the shopper.
4. Casino daily log does not show any indication that shopper was noted for length of play or problem gambling indicator behaviour.

## General details

Date: Wednesday 16 July

Time: 1920 – 0130; 6 hours 10 minutes

Patronage on arrival/departure: Busy/Busy (tables)[[8]](#footnote-8)

## Summary of shopper observations

* Staff monitoring of the gaming floor was estimated as less than 25 per cent of the time.
* There were two sweeps that appeared to be genuine checks of patrons, and were not motivated by other factors (such as refilling a hopper).
* The shopper observed five staff-initiated interactions with other patrons in the following categories:
	+ Friendly conversation: 2
	+ Jackpots or pay-outs: 2
	+ Machine Malfunctions: 1
* The shopper observed no patrons showing problem gambling indicators.
* Staff did not initiate any interactions with the shopper.
* Additional notable comments from shopper:
	+ A woman next to the shopper won $400, the shopper said to the staff member who cleared the machine that it wasn’t fair that the other woman’s machine was luckier. The staff member smiled and said nothing.
	+ The winner of the $400 continued to gamble.
	+ When the shopper went to and from the ATM machines she saw a lot of different staff, and only saw the same staff twice in a row. Staff on the door took more notice of new people coming in.
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 = some table games and some pokies occupied. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Pre-commitment without signing up to the loyalty programme was not available. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Quiet = few tables or pokies occupied; Moderate = some table games and some pokies occupied. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Moderate (pokies) = some pokies but few table games occupied; [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Busy = more than half tables and more than half pokies occupied, additional patrons dining/drinking; Busy (tables) = more than half tables and some pokies occupied [↑](#footnote-ref-8)