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| Mystery Shopper Information Summary  SKYCITY Hamilton  December 2014 |
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Foreword

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| The following information is a summary of the data collected for SKYCITY Hamilton 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; gaining 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 continuously for 10 hours, departing at 6.25am, and was not approached by a staff member at any time.
2. Shopper sat at the same machine, did not take any breaks.
3. Shopper observed another patron nearby who also gambled for 10 hours while they were there, and was also not approached by a staff member at any time.
4. Casino daily log does not show any indication that shopper was noted for length of play.

## General details

Date: Saturday 19 July

Time: 2020 – 0625; 10 hours 5 minutes

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

## Summary of shopper observations

* Staff monitoring of the gaming floor was estimated as 50-74 per cent of the time.
* There were 49 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: 1
  + Jackpots or pay-outs: 4
  + Machine Malfunctions: 2
  + Other matters: 3 (1 to give change and 2 to fill hoppers).
* The shopper observed one patron showing problem gambling indicators, being possessive of a machine and not celebrating wins. The patron also gambled at the same machine the whole time the shopper was in the casino; staff did not intervene with this patron.
* Staff did not initiate any interactions with the shopper.
* Additional notable comments from shopper:
  + On arrival the shopper saw 10 staff on the floor, and none when they left.
  + The shopper was passed by staff 39 times as they moved down the main corridor between the pokies and the table games.

## Notes from follow-up conversation with shopper

* Regarding the shopper who was present for the whole visit: she wasn't noticed by staff and they did not seem aware of her or how long she'd been there.

# 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 continuously for six hours, departing at 6.35pm, and was not approached by a staff member at any time, including for the final three hours whilst the shopper displayed general problem gambling indicators.
2. Shopper sat at the same machine, did not take any breaks.
3. The cashier who served the shopper made no comment in response to the shopper’s card declining. The first two transactions were with a different cashier who appeared to finish their shift.
4. Nothing recorded in casino daily logs to suggest either patron was monitored by casino staff.

## General details

Date: Tuesday 8 July

Time: 1233 – 1835; 6 hours

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

## Summary of shopper observations

* Staff monitoring of the gaming floor was estimated as all of the time.
* There were 16 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:
  + Other matters: 4 x hopper refills, 2 x hand payments
* The shopper observed one patron showing problem gambling indicators, showing emotional distress and being possessive of a machine; staff did not intervene with this patron.
* Staff did not initiate any interactions with the shopper.

1. Campbell Live conducted a ‘sting’ operation in January 2014, which involved a 76-year-old man visiting the 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. Quiet = few tables or pokies occupied. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)