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| Mystery Shopper Information Summary  SKYCITY Queenstown  December 2014 |
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Foreword

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| The following information is a summary of the data collected for SKYCITY Queenstown 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[[1]](#footnote-1) test; 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. Staff offered the shopper a drink after two hours; there were three other interactions from staff for the remainder of the visit.
2. The shopper won a small prize at 2.38am, and was assisted by a staff member to make the pay-out. The shopper had been gambling for nine hours at this point. There was no comment or enquiry from the staff member about the shopper’s length of play.
3. Casino daily log does not show any indication that shopper was noted for length of play.

## General details

Date: Saturday 12 July

Time: 1749 – 0346; 9 hours 50 minutes

Patronage on arrival/departure: Moderate/Moderate (tables)[[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 eight 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: 4
  + Service offer: 3
  + Jackpots or pay-outs: 3
  + Machine Malfunctions: 1
* The shopper observed no patrons showing problem gambling indicators.
* Staff initiated four interactions with the shopper, two service offers, one friendly conversation, and once to comment about the shopper winning a mini-jackpot. There were no interactions made about shopper’s length of play.

## Notes from follow-up conversation with shopper

* There was a patron who won around $8,000 who was an Australian tourist and was leaving first thing the next morning. There was an issue about how to pay out the money (cheque invalid in Australia, casino didn't have AUD and the casino couldn't give that much cash). There was a bit of discussion about how to rectify this, the staff were very attentive and diligent that the transaction was above board.

# 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 six hours. Received offer of a complimentary drink offer in the first 10 minutes, and one other service offer for the remainder of the visit.
2. The shopper had to visit two cashiers, but went to the same cashier three times. No comment was made when the shopper’s card declined.
3. On one occasion, the shopper waited for 10-15 minutes for a staff member to respond to pressing the call-attendant button. The staff member told the shopper the pager was in the office, and that was why they weren’t responding.
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: Friday 18 July

Time: 1325 – 1925; 6 hours

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

## Summary of shopper observations

* Staff monitoring of the gaming floor was estimated as 25-49 per cent of the time.
* There were 10 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: 2
  + Service offer: 1
  + Jackpots or pay-outs: 1
* The shopper observed no patrons showing problem gambling indicators.
* Staff initiated two interactions with mystery shoppers, both service offers. There were no interactions made in regard to a concern about shopper’s gambling behaviour or length of play.
* Additional notable comments from shopper:
  + The staff generally appeared lackadaisical.
  + The call attendant button on the machine was ignored three times when the shopper pressed it.

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. Moderate = some table games and some pokies occupied; Moderate (tables) = some table games but few 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; Moderate = some table games and some pokies occupied [↑](#footnote-ref-4)