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| Mystery Shopper Information Summary  SKYCITY Wharf  December 2014 |
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Foreword

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| The following information is a summary of the data collected for SKYCITY Wharf (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 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 nine hours. Staff initiated three interactions with the shopper, the first within the first five minutes of arriving.
2. Shopper observed a patron showing signs of problem gambling with agitated behaviour and frequently changing machines. A staff member interacted with the patron multiple times, on one occasion asked if something was wrong, but no comment or enquiry made about the patron’s behaviour, and also used encouraging language to the patron.
3. Casino daily log does not show any indication that shopper was noted for length of play.

## General details

Date: Saturday 19 July

Time: 1600 – 0100; 9 hours

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

## Summary of shopper observations

* Staff monitoring of the gaming floor was estimated as all of the time.
* There were 40 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 eight staff-initiated interactions with other patrons in the following categories:
  + Friendly conversation: 3
  + Service offer: 2
  + Jackpots or pay-outs: 3
* The shopper observed one patron showing problem gambling indicators, personalising machines and showing emotional distress; a staff member intervened and asked the patron if something was wrong, in addition to other interactions, no comment or enquiry about the patron’s behaviour was made. A staff member did congratulate this patron when they won something.
* Staff initiated three interactions with the shopper, one to ask about credit on another machine and two service offers. There were no interactions made in regard to a concern about shopper’s length of play.
* Additional notable comments from shopper:
  + Staff were vigilant with sweeps, and were visible even when not walking around the floor.

## Notes from follow-up conversation with shopper

* Regarding the staff member who encouraged the patron: staff member said 'gonna give it another go?' and 'oh that's awesome that you won', every 10-15 minutes was coming back and forth encouraging the patron to win.

# 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, staff initiated four interactions with the shopper over the duration of the visit, including one after approximately three hours gambling, to ask if the shopper was okay.
2. The shopper sat near to the cashiers and was served by two staff members when making withdrawals; no comment or enquiry made about the shopper’s card declining.
3. Shopper observed a patron win $1500 and continue to gamble.
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 11 July

Time: 1130 – 1730; 6 hours

Patronage on arrival/departure: Quiet/Moderate[[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 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 eight staff-initiated interactions with other patrons in the following categories:
  + Friendly conversation: 3
  + Service offer: 3
  + Jackpots or pay-outs: 2
* The shopper observed one patron showing problem gambling indicators, not celebrating wins.
* Staff initiated four interactions with the mystery shopper, two service offers, one friendly conversation and one ‘other’ about machine credit*.* The friendly conversation appears to be a problem gambling concern, as the staff member asked the shopper if they were okay.

## Notes from follow-up conversation with shopper

* The patron who won $1500: it was difficult to tell whether the patron left with any of their winnings. They took the winnings and immediately started feeding them into the machine. The shopper had not seen the patron before they won the money. A staff member asked the patron if they were okay. This was after the patron had collected the win and continued gambling.
* Most people the shopper observed kept their winnings and collected them on the way out.

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. Quiet = few tables or 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)