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| Mystery Shopper Information Summary  Christchurch Casino  December 2014 |
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Foreword

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| The following information is a summary of the data collected for Christchurch 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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# 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 and a half hours, departing at 6am.
2. Shopper was approached by a staff member once, after gambling for five hours, for a service offer; the shopper was not approached by a staff member again for the remainder of the visit.
3. Shopper noted staff continually walking past them but not acknowledging them.
4. Shopper observed two patrons talking to their machine and encouraging it to win for them, or being disgruntled when they did not win.
5. Casino daily summary report does not show any indication that shopper was noted for length of play.

## General details

Date: Saturday 5 July

Time: 1929 – 0603; 10 hours 30 minutes

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

## Summary of shopper observations

* Staff monitoring of the gaming floor was estimated as all of the time.
* There were 10 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 seven staff-initiated interactions with other patrons in the following categories:
  + Friendly conversation: 2
  + Jackpots or pay-outs: 4
  + Machine malfunctions: 1
* The shopper observed two patrons showing problem gambling indicators, both personalising machines, one being possessive of a machine and the other claiming machines were malfunctioning; staff did not intervene with either of these patrons.
* Staff initiated one interaction with the shopper which was a service offer. There were no interactions made in regard to a concern about shopper’s length of play.
* Additional notable comments from shopper:
  + Casino was extremely busy on arrival; as it became less busy staff spent more time around the gaming machines.
  + The shopper noted the same staff members passing regularly, but not interacting.

# 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[[4]](#footnote-4).

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 gambled for six hours and was not approached by a staff member at any time, including while displaying general problem gambling indicators for the final three hours of the visit, despite indicating a specified amount of money she wanted to gamble.
2. Shopper engaged with staff on arrival about pre-commitment options; an incident report was created by the casino about the interaction (ID24235). Shopper was told by a staff member at the end of this interaction that she would not be bothered any more that day.
3. Security incident report states incorrect time of incident as 2pm; shopper arrived at casino at 11.30am and approached staff on arrival.
4. Shopper observed another patron playing two machines, stating “Patron 1 had a row of machines to themselves. They were actively playing two machines at the one time, side by side. Patron 1 was moving frantically between the two machines, managing the money being fed into the machine, and using their Players Card between the two, making collects into the tray. Then Patron 1 would play one machine at a time, moving down the line of machines. All the while, moving very fast and erratic behaviour.” This behaviour received no intervention from staff.

## General details

Date: Thursday 10 July

Time: 1127 – 1736; 6 hours

Patronage on arrival/departure: Moderate/Busy[[5]](#footnote-5)

## 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 two staff-initiated interactions with other patrons in the following categories:
  + Friendly conversation: 2
* The shopper observed three patrons showing problem gambling indicators, patron 1 showing emotional distress and being possessive of a machine, patron 2 personalising the machine, and patron 3 making multiple withdrawals and personalising the machine; staff did not intervene with any of these patrons.
* Staff did not initiate any interactions with the shopper.
* Additional notable comments from shopper:
  + Staff member reaction to the scenario (request for an anonymous card) was very stern and provided a lot of information, including problem gambling brochures. The shopper felt pressured to join the loyalty programme. It seems the staff member was more suspicious of the shopper’s motivations as opposed to a gambling problem.

## Notes from follow-up conversation with shopper

* Patron 1 was observed frantically playing two machines with two loyalty cards; her behaviour was frantic and erratic; she played consistently like this over a few hours.
* Patron 2 - the lady observed was very passionate, not caring about what people said, was putting her palm across the machine. The shopper didn't see anything visible to indicate whether staff saw this behaviour but said she would be very surprised if they didn't notice as they were walking around continuously and had plenty of opportunity for interaction, and the casino was not busy.
* Shopper doesn't think staff would have seen Patron 3's behaviour as it was quite noisy in the casino and the boxing was on. The patron was talking loudly about the cocktail waiter and his cocktail-making skills; the staff member came over and asked the patron if they wanted a cocktail.
* The shopper felt publicly shamed when setting up the loyalty card. Shopper explained to staff that she just wanted to limit their spend to $100, and was asked why she had $100 that day, told her a story about another lady who had been in and stated she needed to turn $500 into $3,000. Questioned about why she didn't want to be tracked. The Campbell Live scenario was mentioned and they seemed to brag about it and how they need to take care of people. She said she just wanted to play her money, and staff stated that she either filled in the loyalty card form or it wasn't going to happen. After showing her how to load the card, they offered her free drinks (any drink on the house, anything she wanted, she asked for a coffee) then said they wouldn't bother her again.
* Shopper set limit of $100; fed $240 using the card the whole time but did not technically breach pre-commitment limit due to maintaining credit above $100.
* No staff showed any signs that they had noticed the general problem gambling indicators that the shopper was displaying, but the shopper thinks it would have been hard not to see if they were looking. She was visible from the front, back, and a side angle on the end of a bank of machines. Staff walked past the shopper every time they served a drink.

# 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 five hours and was not approached by a staff member at any time, including while displaying general problem gambling indicators.
2. Shopper did not observe staff interact with any other patrons playing gambling machines for the duration of the visit.
3. The cashier who served the shopper did not make any comment about the card declining, and had served her for two cash withdrawals prior.
4. Casino daily summary report does not show any indication that shopper was noted for length of play or problem gambling indicator behaviour.

## General details

Date: Friday 25 July

Time: 1130 – 1630; 5 hours

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

## Summary of shopper observations

* Staff monitoring of the gaming floor was estimated as 25-49 per cent of the time.
* There were “few” (shopper has not recorded number) sweeps that appeared to be genuine checks of patrons, and were not motivated by other factors (such as refilling a hopper).
* The shopper observed no staff-initiated interactions with other patrons.
* 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 noted that the staff in general seemed disinterested in what was happening around them and always in a rush.
  + The shopper’s empty glass and plate were not collected for over an hour after they were finished with them.
  + The same cashier served the shopper three times including when the card declined.

## Notes from follow-up conversation with shopper

* The same cashier served her three times out of the five cash withdrawals, her facial expressions indicated that she recognised her.

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. It would appear that the shopper neglected to set the time limit, as this would have alerted casino staff and there is no record of this. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Moderate = some table games and some pokies occupied; Busy = more than half tables and more than half pokies occupied, additional patrons dining/drinking. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Quiet = few tables or pokies occupied; Moderate (pokies) = some pokies but few table games occupied. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)