



Clubs Australia

11 September 2007

Mr Kevin Rudd MP  
Leader of the Opposition  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

By Facsimile: 02 6277 8495

Dear Mr Rudd

I am writing on behalf of the Australian Club Movement in response to comments attributed to you in today's edition of The Australian newspaper relating to the social impact of gambling addiction.

ClubsAustralia notes your longstanding policy interest in this matter, and would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you or your representative to provide our perspective.

Australian clubs have, for half a century, applied the proceeds of poker machines to social causes. Clubs do not exist for profit, or provide financial return to owners or shareholders. At the centre of club activity is the provision of local community and sporting infrastructure much of which would not otherwise exist. In addition, clubs contribute to the formation of social capital by mobilising volunteers, providing affordable services and goods, and acting as social and service centres. This contribution is significant and growing.

The Club Movement acknowledges that for some, gambling is a serious problem that can result in social harm. That is why we have devoted so much effort toward bringing about even more responsible gambling practice in clubs across the nation. Clubs have worked hard with State Governments and the Commonwealth to develop the right public policy settings and we believe that with industry leadership and encouragement from our political leaders, we can make a difference and reduce the prevalence of problem gambling.

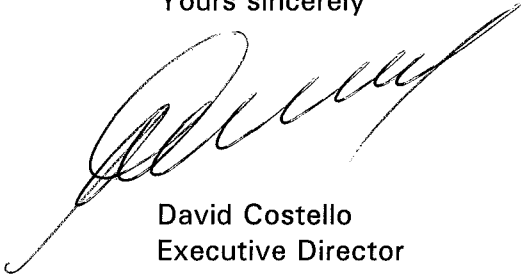
The evidence is that the prevalence of problem gambling is declining. Recent major studies in Queensland, Victoria, the Northern Territory and NSW show the rate is now below 1% of the adult population. This is down from a national average of 2.1%, measured by the Productivity Commission in 1999.

The most recent completed study was in NSW, which had the largest percentage of problem gamblers according to the Productivity Commission at 2.55%. The latest study, by ACNielsen in 2007, found this figure has dropped to 0.8%. While this downward trend is encouraging, we recognise there is more to do in cooperation with State and Federal Governments.

At the same time, we respect that many ordinary Australians like to play poker machines and that the vast majority do so responsibly and according to their means. For most, playing poker machines is a form of leisure that should be viewed as but one of a range of recreational pursuits available to them.

I would be more than happy to provide you with any additional information you may require.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Costello', written in a cursive style.

David Costello  
Executive Director