

Date: 16/3/2020

HOTEL NAME: Claremont Hotel

Licensee: Mark Bester

RESPONSE TO THE TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT'S CONSULTATION PAPER ON THE *FUTURE OF GAMING IN TASMANIA*

The Claremont Hotel has been in operation since 1959. In this time, it has been a meeting place for many customers; from people meeting in the bar for a drink, to groups, organisations and families meeting for a meal or special occasion. We even had a lady come in for her 100th birthday who has celebrated her birthday here since she was 75 and said she wouldn't eat anywhere else. The hotel employs 36 staff. There is a mix of full time, part time and casual employees. We have a 110-seat bistro opening for breakfast, lunch and dinner seven days a week, a busy bar, 20 rooms of accommodation, a 30 EGM gaming room and a 9/11 Bottleshop. The hotel offers a range of activities to entertain the locals, including Taskeno, meat raffles, footy tipping and a punters club. We support a hotel darts team and eight ball team. We have contributed donations to many community interests over the years, including local volunteer fire brigades, Relay for Life, Ugly Bartender, Tasmania Police Social Club, White Lion, The Dessert Challenge through the Beacon Foundation and bistro vouchers to many school raffles.

I am broadly supportive of the Government's policy on the *Future of Gaming in Tasmania*, particularly in its stated intention to create a sustainable gaming industry. Tasmania's gaming sector has been an important driver of jobs, regional economic activity and investment across the state.

The Government's intention to individually licence venues is welcomed by gaming venue operators. To safeguard the sustainability of the gaming industry, I encourage the Government to provide a competitive regulatory environment that allows Tasmanian venues to offer gaming products that are comparable to other jurisdictions.

The success of the proposed model will be heavily reliant on the appointment of a Licenced Monitoring Operator with a strong understanding of the local market and established relationships with individual venues. The LMO must have flexibility to provide a range of services that support the individual needs of venues.

It is important that pubs and clubs are given significant time to prepare for and transition to an individual venue licence model. The experience in other jurisdictions, such as Victoria, shows the transition can be challenging and costly to businesses. We are seeking certainty about the future operating model and a commitment to provide the industry with adequate time to transition to the new arrangements.

We recognise the importance of the Community Support Levy in providing funds for a range of charitable and community organisations. The gaming industry is proud to support the community in this way. The Government's proposal to increase CSL funds provides scope to assist a greater number of clubs, sports groups and community events. The gaming industry should receive greater acknowledgement when funds are allocated, and consideration should be given to ways that the industry can be more involved in the distribution of funds.

Mark Bester

Licensee, Claremont Hotel

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