

CLASS 1 LOCAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
PURSUANT TO SECTION 36 OF GAMING MACHINES ACT 2002

Premises: Rocksia Hotel, 299-307 Princes Highway, ARNCLIFFE

Licensee: Simon Edward JOHNSTON

Liquor licence number: LIQH400100175

LGA: Rockdale Council

Current gaming machine threshold: 27

Increase in gaming machine threshold: 3

Proposed gaming machine threshold: 30

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

Approval is sought pursuant to Section 36 of the Gaming Machines Act 2001, for a Class 1 Local Impact Assessment (Class 1 LIA) to allow a low range increase to the gaming machine threshold of the Rocksia Hotel by 3. The hotel presently has the benefit of a gaming machine threshold of 27. The Rocksia Hotel is located at 299-307 Princes Highway, Arncliffe and within the Rockdale Local Government Area which is categorised as a Band 2 for the purposes of the Gaming Machines Act.

The primary purpose of the business is the sale of liquor by retail. The Hotel has traded at its current location since November, 2008.

2. Responsible Gambling and Harm Minimisation

The Hotel is a member of the AHA (NSW) Gamecare Self Exclusion Program.

The hotel is a bona fide hotel and offers many other facilities which render gaming only but one component of a diverse operation catering to a broad cross section of leisure demands across the local community. Gaming is not a focus or dominant purpose of the operation.

The hotel complies with all regulatory requirements regarding the responsible conduct of gambling and exceeds these requirements via its policy as to responsible gambling.

3. Local Community

The local community for the purposes of the Act has been identified as the entire Rockdale Local Government Area.

4. Positive Contribution

The hotel proposes to donate the sum of \$15,000.00 by way of one off financial contributions to two organisations which provide services to the local community. The operators have targeted organisations that provide a specific focus on education and treatment relating to alcohol misuse and problem gambling.

This financial assistance will therefore be a positive contribution to the local community facilitating these services.

5. Conclusion

It is the applicant's belief that the content of the LIA complies with the requirements of the Act and Regulations and guidelines published by the Authority.

1. INTRODUCTION

Approval is sought for a low range increase of three (3) gaming machines to allow a maximum of 30 gaming machines as permitted by Section 11 of the Gaming Machines Act 2001.

The Rocksia Hotel is situated on the western side of the busy Princes Highway at Arncliffe. The Hotel began operation in November 2008, following approval by the (former) Licensing Court of NSW to remove the hotel licence of the Arncliffe Hotel a distance of approximately 640 metres.

The hotel was newly constructed and provides a high standard of amenity for its patrons, which are predominantly drawn from neighbouring suburbs within the Local Government Area, with some others treating the venue as a destination.

The keeping and operation of gaming machines at the Hotel does not detract unduly from the character of the Hotel or from the enjoyment of persons using the Hotel otherwise than for the purposes of gambling.

2. RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING AND HARM MINIMISATION

The hotel operates and is promoted as an all service modern hotel with facilities for all patrons of which but one element amongst many is gaming. It is not a gaming centric hotel but rather a well rounded leisure destination accommodating various activities including a lounge bar, sports bar, TAB, quality bistro, function room, children's play area, drive through take away bottle shop, multiple alfresco areas and large off street car parking.

The Hotel currently has 27 gaming machines. All gaming machines are located within a gaming room as prescribed by Clause 9 of the Gaming Machines Regulation 2002, in that:

- a. the gaming room is located in a bar area of the hotel;
- b. the gaming room is physically separated from the general bar area by walls and doors;
- c. patrons are not compelled to pass through the gaming room in order to enter or leave the hotel or in order to gain access to another part of the hotel;
- d. entry to the gaming room is free of charge;
- e. the gaming machines cannot be seen from any place outside the hotel that is used by the public or to which the public has access;
- f. all gaming machines are suitable spaced in order to facilitate access;
- g. the gaming room is supervised at all times by way of electronic means and physical present of the licensee or an employee;
- h. the gaming room has two (2) doorways that provide reasonable access to and from the gaming room to at least one operating bar and at least one toilet for each gender without the need for patrons to go on the a public street, or any area not forming part of the hotel when moving from the gaming room to the other facilities; and

- i. the gaming cannot be accessed directly from a public street.

The Hotel is closed during the mandatory shutdown period of 4.00 am to 10.00 am Monday to Sunday.

The Hotel's management and staff are supportive of and encourage responsible gaming practices and all staff engaged in the operation of gaming machines have completed the prescribed Responsible Gambling Course. A responsible gambling certificate for all staff are maintained in a register at the Hotel.

The Hotel is a current member of the AHA (NSW) and will continue to support its practices and procedures for gaming harm minimisation.

The Hotel has adopted the AHA's Gamecare self exclusion scheme. All management and staff are aware of the program and patrons are made aware of the program through the required notices on display.

Patrons of the hotel are made aware of the AHA's counselling services and of the government funded "gambling HELP" telephone counselling service by way of signage located within the gaming room.

All prescribed gaming related signage is on display on the gaming machines, ATM and throughout the hotel's gaming room advising of the chances of winning and the problems associated with excessive gambling.

The Hotel does not offer prizes associated with the use of its gaming machines and the Hotel has a policy of not cashing cheques.

In addition to meeting its statutory obligations and adopting the practices and policies of its industry association with regards to the responsible conduct of gaming, the operator of the hotel refrains from conducting promotions involving gaming at the hotel.

3. LOCAL COMMUNITY

The hotel is located at 299-307 Princes Highway, Arncliffe, in close proximity to the Rockdale city centre and is positioned relatively central to the Rockdale Local Government area. For this reason, and given the nature of the busy Princes Highway which intersects the suburb of Arncliffe and Banksia and causes a significant amount of connection between the suburbs which front the Princes Highway, it can be reasonably submitted that the local community of Arncliffe/Banksia incorporates the entire Rockdale Local Government Area.

The hotel catchment area for local patrons includes suburbs such as Arncliffe, Banksia, Rockdale and Bardwell Park, the patrons of the premises are predominately residents of the Rockdale Local Government Area.

For the purposes of this Local Impact Assessment, the applicant has considered the local community to be the entire Rockdale Local Government Area, and has focused its efforts towards achieving a positive contribution to that particularly identified community.

The Rockdale LGA covers an area of approximately 30 square kilometres and encompasses 21 whole or part thereof suburbs. The suburbs of Arncliffe/Banksia are located at the northern edge of the local government area. Appendix 1 is a map of the Rockdale LGA.

The Rockdale LGA has a SEIFA (2006 Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage) score of 576 with a decile range of 9 showing that the percentage of the population of approximately 92,000 persons is more advantaged than disadvantaged.

4. POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION

The applicant seeks only a very small increase to the gaming machine threshold of 3. The hotel currently supports many worthwhile local and broader community charities and sporting organisations which benefit the community by way of financial contributions and in kind support. The applicant intends to continue to provide its existing support, however proposes to provide additional specific financial support to local community organisations as set out below, in the event that it achieves approval for the proposed threshold increase.

The applicant considers the most effective manner in which to provide a positive contribution to the local community is by way of direct funding of community projects and funding to organisations that support local community members.

Whilst the operators of the hotel are responsible hosts and community citizens with respect to the management of the risks sometimes associated with the supply of alcohol and gambling, it acknowledges that some community members suffer from problems resulting from alcohol and gambling. Accordingly the operators have sought where possible to target direct funding of locally based organisations established to support and treat community members with alcohol and/or gambling problems. The intention being not only provide a clear positive contribution to community members suffering from such problems and the community as a whole, but also help to offset any potential or perceived risks of operation of licensed premises in the area.

Whilst there is no specific problem gambling treatment or support organisations operating within the Rockdale Local Government Area, there are general charity organisations which conduct gambling and alcohol treatment programs, which operate in the area. Such organisations also provide support to disadvantaged community members. Further, the operators have identified a community organisation which is providing general services to the community, also focuses on young people in the local community with some focus on alcohol treatment and education.

The operators propose to commit a one off total amount of \$15,000.00 to be donated to two organisations servicing members of the community in the Rockdale Local Government Area. This amount will be paid, subject to approval of the subject application for an increase to the gaming machine threshold of three, within three (3) months of the date of approval.

It is proposed that funds be distributed as follows:

- a. a contribution of \$10,000.00 to be made to St George Youth Services (SYS) to support the READY project and St George Responsible Drinking Campaign. Appendix 2 is a brochure of the services and facilities provided by SYS.
- b. a contribution of \$5,000.00 to the Wesley Gambling Counselling Services St George/Sutherland. An organisation which currently receives funding from the Responsible Gambling Fund.


This financial commitment corresponds to an amount of \$5,000.00 for each additional poker machine entitlement that may be transferred to the hotel licence if the gaming machine threshold of the hotel is increased as sought.

5. CONCLUSION

It is submitted that the foregoing information complies with the guidelines for a Class 1 Local Impact Assessment attaching to an application for an increase in the gaming machine threshold of the Hotel by addressing the responsible gambling and harm minimisation measures taken by the Hotel; identifies the local community of the hotel; and provides information to show that a positive contribution will be made to the local community if the LIA and increase application are approved.

The operators are of the view that the financial contribution will allow SYS to continue and expand the current programs and see great merit for the community in educating young people about the risks and potential negative consequences of the misuse of alcohol. Ultimately, this is expected to lead to a shift in culture and create a safer environment for all persons within the community, including those resorting to licensed premises, ensuring that all people are able to enjoy their recreational pursuits while not impacting upon the community or doing harm to themselves.

Whilst Wesley Gambling Counselling Services St. George/Sutherland is based outside of the Rockdale LGA, it does provide support services to community members within the Rockdale LGA, and the local community is part of its service catchment. Further, the operators are unaware of any formal organisation which provides the level of services to problem gamblers within the local community and have considered that a contribution to such an organisation is appropriate having regard to the nature of the proposed increase to the gaming machine threshold of the hotel.



Simon Johnston
Licensee

Dated: 31st August, 2010