

	<p>NEW ZEALAND FEDERATION OF FAMILY BUDGETING SERVICES (INC.) TE RŌPŪ PENAPENA PŪTEA WHĀNAU O AOTEAROA</p>	<p>P O Box 24382, Manners St Wellington Ph:(04) 471-1420 Fax:(04) 471-1490 enquiries@familybudgeting.org.nz www.familybudgeting.org.nz</p>
---	--	--

12 October 2007

Clerk of the Committee
Government Administration Committee
Select Committee Office
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

SUBMISSION: Gambling Amendment Bill (No. 2)

Background

The Federation is a collective of community organisations that share a common code of ethics, philosophy, and commitment to delivering quality, free budgeting advice to families/whanau and individuals. The current membership comprises 139 budget services throughout New Zealand that employ over 1300 predominantly volunteer staff and represent more than 30,000 clients annually.

Snapshot

The Federation comprises 146 members in various categories nation-wide; member services provide budget advice from Kaitiāia to Invercargill, including the West Coast, Great Barrier, and Waiheke Islands. In the year to 30 July 2006, the Federation personnel included 706 certificated budget advisers, 173 service coordinators and staff, 307 other volunteers, 36 Federation tutors, and 104 community educators. During this time, Federation services fielded 244,825 enquiries, worked with 30,748 client families, and delivered almost 700 education programmes in the community.

It is from this depth of community knowledge and experience in the consumer finance sector that the Federation makes the following submission.

Client Endorsement of a NZFFBS Inc Budget Adviser

"I believe her inspiration gave me strength to end a long, devastating battle with gambling addiction. W.I.N.Z case managers, W.I.N.Z budget adviser, Gambling addiction counsellors, social workers, family doctor, family members, and friends were unable to achieve the results of this extremely talented lady." (*Name Withheld*, 2006)

Introduction

The Bill contains several small policy amendments and many technical amendments to allow the Act to operate as originally intended

We *do not* support the intent of this bill because we believe that more significant legislative reforms are needed to allow the Act to achieve its purposes of:

- Controlling the growth of gambling ;
- Preventing and minimising the harm caused by gambling, including problem gambling;

- Authorise some gambling and prohibit the rest;
- Facilitating responsible gambling;
- Ensuring the integrity and fairness of games;
- Limiting opportunities for crime or dishonesty associated with gambling;
- Ensuring that money from gambling benefits the community;
- Facilitating community involvement in decisions about the provision of gambling.

In recognising that our services are dealing daily with clients who need assistance with budgeting advice as a result of gambling in the household, the Federation has established a collaborative working relationship with the Problem Gambling Foundation. The purpose of this relationship is to ensure that budget service staff have access to training in problem gambling and also to expand our capacity to receive referrals and refer on those clients needing help for problem gambling issues.

As with many community groups and organisations we have been entirely overlooked under the current Ministry of Health based funding system, despite dealing directly with problem gamblers. We believe that the Act must address this inequity in funding through the following changes:

Subpart 4 Section 317 – 318 refers to Problem Gambling levy and the integrated problem gambling strategy

- The only data currently being gathered by the government in relation to gambling harm is from problem gambling treatment providers
- The government is not recognising the number of other social services in communities who are dealing with the flow-on effect of gambling harm.
- Until comprehensive data is gathered from all agencies dealing with gambling harm an integrated strategy cannot be introduced.
- The government must make every attempt to gather data that accurately reflects the extent of the problem by including services such as those run by the Federation.
- Once an accurate reflection of the extent of the problem is established only then can the government develop an integrated strategy.
- That integrated strategy must include funding to all agencies that deal with gambling harm, such as those run by Federation members.

Furthermore, for the many agencies that have to access discretionary funding through gaming societies because they are unable to prove that they deal directly with gamblers and their families the following action must be taken.

- Making pokie machines safer by using technology such as player pre-commit systems and player tracking systems. This would ensure safety features are applied to ensure those who are more vulnerable are provided with a safer environment.
- The same industries that make millions of dollars every year from pokie machines should not be allowed to distribute the grants money from them due to a conflict of interest. This is a blatant anomaly under the current system which has seen millions of dollars in community funding given to for-profit ventures such as horse racing and sports stadiums.
- Pokie grants money should go back to the community that it came from. Further, the gaming trusts should be made to account for positive community outcomes relating directly to the distributed funds.
- Independent trusts with elected people representing the community sector should take responsibility for ensuring the grants money is equally distributed.

- Complete disclosure on how the grants money is distributed must be available to the general public in a timely and accountable manner.

Call to Action

The New Zealand Federation of Family Budgeting Services Inc thanks the Government Administration Select Committee for offering us the opportunity to make this submission. The Federation, on behalf of its membership, requests the following feedback from the Committee:

- 1) When will secondary and tertiary gambling intervention services in the community be identified, categorised, and included in all further consultation processes?
- 2) When will these providers be recognised under the current funding system and supported financially?
- 3) If the current system is unable to provide this level of funding will a new system be considered?

Yours sincerely

Jarrod Rendle
Information & Policy Officer
NZFFBS Inc.