

SELECT COMMITTEE ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE
IN THE COMMUNITY

DATE: 22 October 2002

TABLED: 22 October 2002

SUBMISSION NUMBER 0059

RECEIVED FROM:

Gunbang Action Group

*Copy letter to Jabiru Sports & Social
Club - Introduction of Keno*

Kakadu/West Arnhem Gunbang Action Group

*P O Box 346
Jabiru NT 0886*

*Ph. 89792230
Fax. 89792488*

18.10.02

Phil Devine
Chairperson
Jabiru Sports & Social Club
Jabiru NT 0886

cc. Marion Scrymgour- MLA
Syd Stirling – Minister Racing & Gaming
Peter Allen - Liquor Commission
Peter Cochrane - Parks Australia North
Bob Cleary - ERA

Introduction of Keno to the Kakadu Region

Dear Phil,

The Kakadu/West Arnhem Gunbang Action Group is committed to reducing alcohol related problems in this region. There is concern being expressed within the region regarding increases in alcohol consumption since the introduction of Keno at the Jabiru Sports & Social Club (USSC). As people are drawn to the USSC to gamble they are in the vicinity of alcohol and a drinking environment for extended periods of time and former safe drinkers are developing problems that they had previously been able to overcome.

The reality is that a number of reformed drinkers who have won the battle are lured to the USSC for Keno and are now back where they started, consuming alcohol in ever increasing amounts to their own detriment and that of the local community.

The Gunbang Action group has examined these concerns and finds that the community is effectively excluded from the processes that precede the introduction of a game such as KL-no into a community.

The arrangements that the provider of the game has with government departments, statutory authorities and the USSC appear to exclude consultation with the community that would scrutinize and anticipate any possible negative impacts of the game.

There is no formal process in place so that community concerns/ comment could be put to the organisations and departments involved prior to the commencement of Keno. As the JSSC is the organisation responsible for introducing this game locally the Gunbang Action Group request clarification on the following issues;

- 1) Did the JSSC management committee advise its membership that it was considering introducing Keno into the region?
- 2) Did the JSSC management committee advise the public that it was considering introducing Keno into the region?
- 3) Did the JSSC management committee conduct any social impact assessment or consider in any way the likely outcomes of the introduction of Keno?

It concerns the Gunbang Action Group that the negative consequences of gambling have not been considered. Money lost at the club is lost to the community [section 36 of the Gaming Machine Act notwithstanding]. It is interesting to note that Gunbalanya saw no benefit to the community when approached by MGM Grand to introduce Keno there and rejected the proposal outright.

The seeming lack consultation between all participant organisations associated with gaming and the community affected by their decisions is very disappointing.

The Gunbang Action Group request that when the JSSC Committee again finds itself in the position of making decisions that have far reaching negative consequences that it undertake consultation with the community so that concerns and alternative views are able to be expressed.

Phil, you would be aware that a large number of our community is affected either by alcohol or gambling, unfortunately while there is potential for an increasing number of your patrons to be devastated by both of these addictions, I am fearful that the Kakadu community could soon be in a state of crisis, if it is not already.

Recent deaths and an attempted suicide in Jabiru, domestic violence directly linked to alcohol, as well as resolutions passed by the Kakadu Board of Management regarding the availability and consumption of alcohol are an indication of the amount of high anxiety felt in the community, and clearly demonstrate a need for strong and urgent action.

You can be assured that the Gunbang Action Group takes very seriously our role in upholding the cultural values of the World Heritage area of Kakadu, not to mention community well being and social harmony. We will continue to not only promote the responsible consumption of alcohol in Kakadu but also monitor other contributing factors such as the root cause of alcoholism.. domestic violence issues, and community vehicle grog running. Regulation alone is not the answer, with education, rehabilitation and family support equally important.

The Gunbang Action Group welcome input from all licensees in the region and appreciate the recent attendance of the JSSC to Gunbang meetings after an absence of three years.

The JSSC, along with all liquor outlets in the region, needs to play an integral role in addressing not only immediate patron care issues on licensed premises, but also the far-reaching effects of social dysfunction in our communities caused by alcohol abuse.

We would also welcome the opportunity in assisting the JSSC in any community consultation process it considers in the future.

Andy Ralph

SIGNED

Chairman
Gunbang Action Group