

Central Coast Gambling Service

CHANCE..NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2010

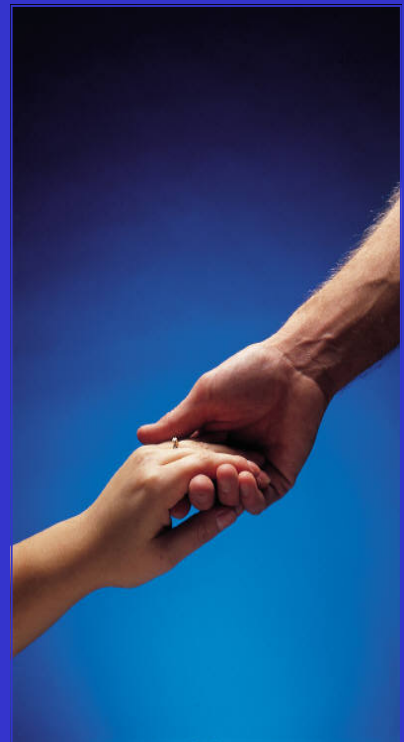
'GAMBLING DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A PROBLEM'

Take a CHANCE and create the life you want:

- Gambling Free
- Health and Wellbeing
- Strong Relationships
- Elevated Self Esteem
- Fulfillment
- Bright Future
- Happiness and Inner Peace.
- Self Worth

Come and explore the possibilities:

- Gambling Check Up
- Self Exclusion
- 1-1 Counselling
- Treatment Plan
- Strategies for Change
- Group work for gamblers & family/friends.
- Continued Support
- Education



We are here to assist you now.....43 447992'

Funded through the Responsible Gambling Fund

You have brains in your head, you have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself
in any direction you choose. Dr Seuss.



“Look To This Day”

**Look to this Day
For it is life -
The very life of life.**

**In its brief course lie all
the realities and truths of existence
the joy of growth
the glory of action
the splendor of beauty.**

**For yesterday is already a memory
and tomorrow is only a vision
but today well lived makes every
yesterday a memory of happiness
and every tomorrow a vision of hope.**

Look well, therefore to this day.

**Ancient Sanskrit Poem
by Kalidasa.**

‘Look to this Day,
.....again’.

I was searching for inspiration and this poem jumped to mind. I first heard it 17 years ago and I felt inspired then, so now I googled it and found the complete version. I remember my mother had passed away not long before, at the age of 62, this event catapulting me into a place deep within; my attention becoming honed to how precious time is and how little control I had over its passing. Feeling helpless and very mortal, with all the why's speeding through my mind I began searching for meaning for all the why's. I went here and there sprouting my new mantra 'seize the day' to anyone who would listen. Living each day became important, still full of struggle and questions. I felt empowered to say, 'seize the day' as if I had hold of something solid and could control its outcome, until the night grew dark.

Taking the journey inwards *'in the real dark night of the soul it is always three o'clock in the morning', day after day'*, F. Scott Fitzgerald stated in his book *'The Dark Night of the Soul'*. Still, dark and quiet, where the only voice you hear is your own, a peaceful place for contemplation and connection and facing fears. Time appears to stand still, minutes become hours. Eventually dawn comes, warmth returns bringing clarity and awareness. How long I had been within the dark night, I could not remember only that it seemed long. I emerged clean and filled with knowledge, precious battle wounds becoming the holders of memory and new understanding,

Why did I tell you this story? It is true for all of us no matter who we are or what we do, that we will and do endure many dark nights, but the truth is that we can and do emerge renewed. If we allow experiences such as grief, sadness, rejection, disregard to become teachers in our lives, we can grow stronger for the experience. Having new knowledge empowers us to make different choices, to act in a new way or connect with others on a deeper level, leaving dysfunctional experiences behind and seeking out positive new stories to rewrite our lives.

All I could remember were the words 'look to this day', and these were enough to send me back through my story in search of the inspiration that touched me deeply and gave me hope in one of my darkest times.

I have decided that I will use these words to inspire myself, also to share them with others as they are indeed powerful and can act as a guiding light, or a ray of hope. Invite the dark night to call and follow the pathway within, allow all teachers to emerge and begin to heal and move forward.

It can be circumstances such as this that can trigger the gambling cycle. Not knowing how to deal with feelings or thinking this is too overwhelming can result in putting up barriers, withdrawing communication, retreating from family and friends and spending more time gambling. It can be isolating and lonely.

There is support and hope. Organisations who specialize in gambling treatment such as Central Coast Problem Gambling Service understand how isolating and destructive the gambling cycle can be.

By ringing 43 447992 and making an appoint to speak with a counsellor is an important first step in ending the dark night and releasing yourself from the cycle. We are available to see you at Woy Woy, Gosford, Wyoming and Kincumber now.

Bronwyn Schwetz.

Consumer Corner....



Hi welcome to our first consumer column. Here you will meet people from all walks of life who will share some of their ideas, knowledge, story or day to day events that may inspire or bring and smile.

Our service has been involved with many wonderful people and over time we hope to share some of them with you.

Let me introduce you to an Aboriginal woman who is an inspiration and tireless community worker, giving with joy, her time and energy to many causes. This is her speech for Welcome to Country for education week.

“Woy Woy Public School has asked me to do Welcome to Country morning. It is Education Week and I have accepted the invitation. An example of the Welcome to Country: My name is Aunty Robyn, I would like to begin by paying my respect to the local indigenous people, especially the Darkinjung tribe past and present, the traditional custodians of this land, where we are meeting upon today; and recognize the strength, resilience and capacity of Aboriginal people in this land. I would also acknowledge our students, teachers and mentors of Woy Woy Public School, who are our future. On behalf of the Darkinjung Tribe past and present I welcome you all.”

Robyn is a delightful woman, with a keen sense of humor and beaming smile. She has great respect for the aboriginal community and seeks to assist and support where she can, especially with the children. She is very active within toastmasters and the political scene. Her first love is her family. Friends and mentors are important and she has a positive outlook and relishes life.

I would like to thank her for sharing a small part of her world with us.

How to meet the Aboriginal Community.

- **Attend NAIDOC week celebrations at Mt Penang Parklands in July each year.**
- **Attend Flag Raising Ceremonies at Gosford and Wyong councils in celebration of aboriginal events.**
 - **Get involved in Reconciliation Week events in May each year.**
- **Contact Mingaletta Aboriginal Corporation based on Woy Woy peninsula.**
- **Take some of your service brochures to Darkinjung Aboriginal land Council and meet the people there.**

Investing in a guaranteed loss

Although we have assisted many people with the harmful affects of excessive gambling, some people are surprised to hear that we at CCPGS are not “anti-gambling”. Rather we advocate for *responsible* gambling. We realise that gambling is a part of our culture and a favourite pastime for most Australians. Gambling can be dangerous and harmful for some people, however is gambling itself a problem, or is it something that some people have a problem with?

At CCPGS our intention is to empower our clients to get beyond their compulsivity, to be strong enough to take responsibility and make positive life choices. A part of doing this work requires educating people on the hidden dangers and misconceptions around gambling. This article was written to help the reader consider of the illogic's of long term gaming machine playing. Gaming machines in this state are set to provide an 87% return to player dividend over the life of the machine, and many venues have a higher return to player ratio. Now that sounds pretty good doesn't it! Well, let's take a closer look.

87% return translates to an average of \$87 given back to the player when they spend \$100. Or putting it another way, an average of \$13 is lost by the player for every \$100 spent. Remembering that the machine is a computer, it is set - programmed so it can't lose. The average poker machine makes around \$65,000 a year, and some as much as \$200,000 a year. About \$5.7 billion is made from gambling in NSW each year - most of it from pokies. There are around 26,000 people employed in the gaming industry in this state. All of these people are being paid a wage, so it's only fair that the industry makes a profit. It's proper for the odds to be in favour of the house. After all gambling is just a form of entertainment and like all things we should pay for the privilege. But what if you have allowed gambling to become more than just entertainment? What are you really risking when you continually bet against a computer that is set to take your money at a rate of 13% - guaranteed!

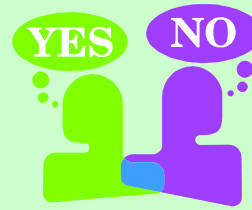
Well, what if you were offered an investment with a guaranteed 13% profit. Most shrewd investors would jump at this. They would reinvest their profit again and again so that it compounded to give them a huge return. They'd be willing to ride out any short term losses knowing the long term gains will be more than worth it. On the other hand it would seem madness to invest, and then reinvest, in something that was intended to randomly take your money at an overall rate of 13%. Common sense tells you the longer you invest the greater amount you'll lose. Long term poker machine playing is the exact opposite of a good investment strategy. A good investment plan means putting up with the inevitable short term loses for the benefit of overall gain. Problem gambling is about celebrating short term gains to suffer the consequences of the inevitable overall loss. It defies logic. When people do things that defy logic, it could be said they're acting primarily on emotions. If this is so for you, you might ask yourself, “Am I depending on gambling to ease my stress, loneliness, depression, anxiety..?” or “What am I unconsciously avoiding or trying to fix by gambling compulsively?”

Central Coast Problem Gambling Service is available to provide free professional assistance – all you need to do is call 4344 7992. Our staff are qualified professionals specialising in compulsive gambling. We offer assistance that is specifically tailored for your unique situation. Without judgement, we can help you in deciding on, and realising, your own goals.

Chris Davidson.



TALKING POINT



Recently I was reading the Sun Herald's Sport Sunday section, when I read an article on Ray Warren. Ray Warren is a famous Australian Rugby League commentator. The article's headline stated "A childhood bet on a horse race exposed Ray Warren to the world of commenting. But it also sparked a keen- and costly –interest in gambling," (Sygall, 2010, p 70). In the article Ray states he was only six when his father let him bet on a horse in the 1949 AJC Derby. Ray is quoted as saying "unfortunately the bloody thing won- and my father gave me the winnings". Ray candidly goes on to say that this incident was the catalyst of a 60 year link to gambling which, has cost him the financial prosperity that could have been expected after 44 years in broadcasting.

Ray states his childhood gambling began at the time of his first bet. His father allowed him to gamble each Saturday after that first bet. Ray states he gambled "on a Saturday but then it followed me through life. I'd bet on the Saturday, but also on the Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday". Ray also states that he would like to get the message across to people that Gambling can have serious financial and emotional costs and 'there is no future in it' "(Sygall 2010, p. 70).

Ray's story is one that is repeated many times in counselling. How a gambling 'win' has been the catalyst for a person to move from recreational to problematic gambling. Studies suggest that 24%-40% of adolescents gamble weekly, 10%-14% are at risk for gambling problems, and 2%-9% meet diagnostic criteria for pathological gambling' (National Research Council, 1999). Ray's candid comments regarding his life experiences being the 'catalyst' for a life time of pathological gambling correlate with gambling research which propose that 'early gambling experience around the age of 9 or 10 years appear to predict adult gambling problems (Dell, Ruzicka, Palisi, Griffiths et al). Likewise, research suggests that youth who gamble excessively typically begin gambling at home with parents or other relatives (Gambino, Fitzgerald, Shaffer, Renner et al).

I feel that with statistics such as these, stories such as Rays really need to be heard within communities. Central Coast Problem Gambling Service assist with educating young people about the associated risks of gambling through their High Schools Gambling Awareness Programme which has been run in many Central Coast Schools over the last two years. Like Ray we feel that it is important for the message to get across to people that 'gambling can have serious financial and emotional costs and there is no future in it'.

Deborah Rhoades.



Before Withdrawing Money.

STOP

TAKE A BREAK

ORGANISE PRIORITIES

PUT INTO ACTION.

Central Coast Problem Gambling Service

www.problemgambling.net.au

Phone: 43 447992 Fax: 43 424947

Email: ccpgs@bigpong.com.

**gambling HELP
1800 858 858**

www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au

Phone - Face to Face -Online

**Multicultural Problem
Gambling Service**

1800 856 800

Lifeline

13 11 14

**Mental Health
Central Intake**

43 2203500