

The participation of Australians in online poker

My name is _____ and I am 32 year old construction worker, and a recreational poker player. Poker is a hobby and a passion for me. I have been an admirer of poker since I watched my home town hero Aussie Joseph Hachem win the World Series of poker on television back in 2005 and I fell in love with the game. I've played poker with friends on weekend catch ups and enjoyed playing online low stake poker from around \$1 to \$10 dollars, being able to play online poker I am able to come home after a long day of being on a construction site and unwind and relax for as little as \$1 and enjoy the game that I love from the comfort of my home, instead of going into a predatory casino where minimum buy in is \$60.

2. The nature and extent of any personal or social harms and benefits arising from participating in online poker

I have found modest success in the game of poker in terms of financial reward from winning small amounts of money to put towards holidays such as Europe to which we visit family to which would have not been possible without this extra money from poker. The financial side of poker is not the only prize, my passion for poker is as a source of personal development and growth. Poker has taught me patience, perseverance and the value of hard work. Poker has taught me more about the intricacies of probability and social dynamics than I could have ever hoped to have learned otherwise.

3. Whether the current regulatory approach, in particular, the recently amended Interactive Gambling Act 2001, is a reasonable and proportionate response to those harms and benefits.

I do not believe from any express or implied statement that online poker was a target of the recent amendment to the Interactive Gambling Act 2001.

Please do not allow online poker to become collateral damage in the attempt to control unruly offshore sports betting operations. I understand that the Australian government is attempting to curb problem gambling. I appreciate and applaud all efforts to protect vulnerable members of our society from falling into a trap that has victimised too many Australians, But banning online poker is not going to fix the issue, all it is going to do is push out the trusted and regulated poker sites and allow the other unregulated sites to flood the Australian market, they have already started to open up their services on news of the legit poker sites leaving Australia due to the ban. There is clear global precedent for the establishment of a regulatory framework that would allow industry leaders like

Pokerstars, 888 and Party poker to operate in Australia and provide access to a large international player pool, I would point to the UK as a shining example of a regulatory framework that permits the growth of poker while maintaining appropriate checks and balances to protect game integrity, secure player funds and protect potential problem gamblers.

Thank you for taking the time to reading my submission.