

To Whom it May Concern,

I am 41 years old and I have a massive gambling problem with pokies. I am also in debt where my commitments from this debt are quite high, I find it near impossible to pay bills and living expenses on a weekly basis, I am always, almost broke the day after pay day.

I am paid fortnightly and am on a pretty good wage, my take home pay is \$2806 per fortnight, now you would think that I would have a house, car and be able to afford to go on holidays, I don't own a house, don't own a car and don't go away on holidays because of gambling on pokies. As I am not married and have no dependants, its very easy for me to do this. Living in a new city (Brisbane) I like to go out and have a drink, but when I do, I'm always drawn to the pokies, sometimes leaving a venue flat broke and not paying my bills.

I believe that someone like myself would benefit greatly from having a pre commitment card on the pokies and I would be able to manage my life and self better, I would have money at all times. I come from a big family, I have 6 older brothers and 1 sister, I have approx. 35 nieces and nephews and heaps of great nieces and nephews, they all know I gamble, but they don't know how much.

I have had this problem for a while and whilst sometimes I do win, that does not make up for the hundreds of thousands of dollars I have put through these horrible, addictive, demonic machines. I have been extremely depressed at times from this and whilst I can say that I would never do anything to myself, there are times I have thought about throwing myself in front of a train or bus and ending it all from the sheer frustration of not having money.

With regards to the pre commitment cards, I would like to propose that people who participate in this scheme would do so voluntarily. I am thinking that if they walk into any venue with the card, that it would have some sort of chip or something in it where the pokies would recognise that this person has entered a venue and would automatically pick up how much of their pre commitment is left, like for example, if I made a pre commitment of \$250 to gamble in a 24 hour time frame, then it would only allow me to play up to that amount and if I left to attend another venue and if I had \$60 left on my pre commitment, then I would only be allowed to play that amount. Of course people have to take responsibility for their own actions and there would be ways around it, but if I was to have access to something like this, this would make me more responsible for my own actions and make me conscious of the fact that I have my own destiny in my own hands and make me think about what I am doing. If I walked into a venue without making a prior commitment with the card in my wallet, then the machines should not allow me to play any poker machines within the venue.

Gambling is like a drug, the more you do it, the harder it is to stop...I get on highs when I am playing and winning, then get on lows, I sweat like I'm coming down from drugs or alcohol and it feels like I need a hit of something to make me feel better. I know its wrong to gamble everything, but if you can understand the feeling of it, you will know what I am talking about. I don't bet on horses, I hardly ever play keno or lotto etc, so this is my only one bad addiction.

I am an Aboriginal person and I know that this problem seems more prevalent in my community than any other, and I know that our community needs more positive role models. I work in a position where I can make a difference in my peoples lives, but because of this addiction, I feel like such a hypocrite as the industry I work in is Drug and Alcohol free work place. I don't do drugs and I drink mostly only on weekends and for me to preach to potential employees about addiction is what I feel like a hypocrite about, as my addiction is just as bad as drugs or alcohol, if not even worse.

I am in the process of seeking help from a company called debt care to help me to manage my debts, I am also seeking counselling to help with my addiction. I need to help myself and no one can do that for me, it's only up to me. I love having a flutter and I love the social atmosphere of when I am in a club or pub and meeting new people, or just having a night out with the boys and I think that if I were to have a pre commitment card, this would help me greatly to manage the addiction, and to get my life back in order. There are so many things I want to do and places I want to go, but I can't because of the pokies.

I hope that this letter can help in the plight of having the pre commitment cards implemented across the country and I will be keeping a close eye on things. I am also happy for the contents of this letter to be made public if it will help, but I would like to remain anonymous at this particular stage.

Thanks so much for your time.

Regards,

Name withheld

P.S. This letter is the first step to the healing process for me. I haven't had the guts to do it before, and I have never admitted it, but I am now at a point in life where I need to heal myself and grow up.