

**IN THE MATTER** of the Gambling Act 2003

**AND** of an application by **SKYCITY HAMILTON LIMITED** for approval to introduce electronic card shufflers on Poker games and for an additional table game mix

**BEFORE THE GAMBLING COMMISSION**

Members: P Chin (Chief Gambling Commissioner)  
K M Ford  
M M Lythe  
P J Stanley  
G L Reeves

Date of Application: 8 June 2006

Date of Decision: 21 July 2006

Date of Notification  
of Decision: 2 August 2006

**DECISION**

**ON AN APPLICATION BY SKYCITY HAMILTON LIMITED  
FOR APPROVAL TO INTRODUCE ELECTRONIC CARD SHUFFLERS  
ON POKER GAMES AND FOR AN ADDITIONAL TABLE GAME MIX**

**Application**

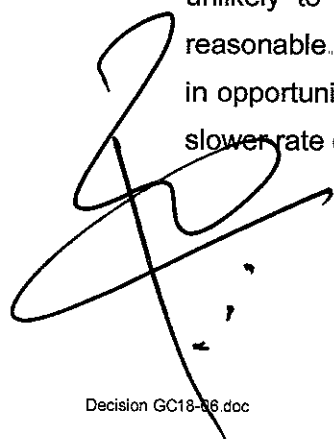
1. SKYCITY Hamilton casino currently has three alternative table game mixes, approved by the Gambling Commission (the "**Commission**") in decisions GC26/05 and GC12/06. The table game mixes approved in decision GC26/05 referred to game mixes C and D. For ease, these game mixes are referred to as table game mixes A and B in this decision, and henceforward. The table game mix approved in decision GC12/06 is referred to as game mix C.
2. SKYCITY Hamilton Limited ("**SHL**") applied to the Commission for approval of an additional table game mix, called game mix D by the Commission, and to deploy electronic card shufflers on the two Poker games in approved game mixes B and C and proposed game mix D.
3. Table game mix D is identical to game mix C, except that game mix D substitutes a Caribbean Stud Poker game for Rapid Roulette.

### **Submissions by SHL**

4. SHL noted that recently approved game mix C allowed for the introduction of Rapid Roulette and a Money Wheel. SHL stated that it cannot install Rapid Roulette as soon as it had hoped and sought approval for game mix D to allow it to deploy the Money Wheel, but not Rapid Roulette.
5. SHL submitted that proposed table game mix D and the introduction of automatic shufflers on the Poker games in game mixes B, C and D would not increase opportunities for casino gambling. This was because the total number of player spaces associated with game mixes B, C, and D is less than that presently permitted under game mix A – game mix B has 13 less player spaces, game mix C has 17 less and proposed game mix D has 22 less player spaces.
6. SHL submitted that while automatic shufflers would increase the rate of play by approximately two additional rounds per hour on each Poker game, the overall rate of play for game mixes B, C, and D would still be less than under game mix A. SHL based this submission on data from a study conducted at the Christchurch casino. The study involved a review of the average number of games conducted per hour for each of the table games played at the casino. From this data, SHL estimated the number of rounds per hour conducted for each of the game mixes A, B, C and D, and made an assessment of whether rates of play were increased or decreased compared to table game mix A.
7. The Applicant's calculations indicated that overall, table game mix B would produce 59 less rounds per hour compared with game mix A, game mix C producing 45 less rounds per hour compared with game mix A, and game mix D producing 94 less rounds per hour compared with game mix A. It was submitted, on this basis, that notwithstanding the introduction of automatic shufflers, rates of play for game mixes B, C and D were less than for game mix A.

### **Submissions by the Secretary**

8. The Secretary indicated that he had no objection to the alternative game mix, or the introduction of automatic shufflers on the Poker games. The Secretary stated that the introduction of electronic shufflers on the two Poker tables in game mixes B, C and D is unlikely to increase the rate of play based on the Applicant's data, which seemed reasonable. Similarly, he stated that proposed game mix D will not result in an increase in opportunities for casino gambling, given the reduction in player spaces and the overall slower rate of play compared with game mix A.



### Analysis

9. In assessing whether the proposed game mix would increase opportunities for casino gambling the Commission considered first, player spaces, and then rates of play.
10. In relation to player spaces, SHL calculated Poker as having 10 player spaces rather than 11, which is the maximum provided under the Game Rules. SHL did so on the basis that the Poker tables at the Hamilton casino accommodate a maximum of 10 players. SHL has not, however, sought to impose a restriction on the number of player spaces for Poker and there would appear to be no compelling reason to do so, given the overall reduction in player spaces associated with table game mixes B, C and D. In these circumstances (and as the Commission determined in decision GC12/06) the Commission considered the proper approach is to calculate player spaces for Poker at 11 player spaces, the maximum number of player spaces provided in Game Rules.
11. With this adjustment, proposed table game mix D is calculated by the Commission to have 20 less player spaces than table game mix A.
12. The Commission noted the data provided by the Applicant comparing rates of play, and the Secretary's submission that the calculations appeared reasonable.
13. The Commission was satisfied, given the reduction in player spaces and rate of play, that approval of the proposed game mix D and deployment of automatic shufflers on the two Poker games for each of game mixes B, C and D would not increase opportunities for casino gambling.

### Decision of the Commission

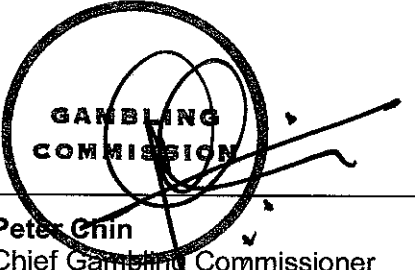
14. The Commission decided unanimously that the proposal was consistent with the Act and approved game mix D subject to the following conditions and requirements, as follows:

#### Table Game Mix D

Black Jack	10
Roulette	5
Midi Baccarat	3
Caribbean Stud Poker	2
Money Wheel (single sided)	1
Poker	2

**Notes**

1. The Licence Holder is permitted to change between approved table game mixes subject to providing the Commission and the Inspectorate with a minimum of 5 working days notice in writing of its intention to do so.
  2. The Licence Holder is permitted to operate automatic shufflers on the Poker tables specified.
  3. The foregoing list refers to manual versions and does not extend to or permit the introduction of any electronic versions or new electronic aids or enhancements. If electronic versions, aids or enhancements are sought to be introduced, an application is required by the Licence Holder for approval of a revised floor layout.
15. The Commission approved the use of automatic shufflers on Poker tables for game mixes B (approved in decision GC26/05), C (approved in decision GC12/06) and D.



**Peter Chin**  
Chief Gambling Commissioner

for and on behalf of the  
Gambling Commission

2 August 2006