

Further submission on application by SkyCity Queenstown Limited for renewal of casino venue licence under Section 134 of the Gambling Act 2003

To: The Gambling Commission

From: SkyCity Queenstown Limited (**SkyCity**)

Introduction

1. All submissions published in respect of SkyCity's application to renew its casino venue licence have been reviewed and considered. This brief submission in reply is filed on behalf of SkyCity.
2. SkyCity is grateful for submitters¹ taking the time to participate in the process, and for the community's support for its application.
3. It wishes to acknowledge and summarise, for the assistance of the Commission, the substantive themes that emerged from them, particularly that:
 - (a) Many submitters held SkyCity's efforts to provide a safe environment and to minimise harm in high regard;
 - (b) Submitters saw the various economic and community contributions of SkyCity as valuable to Queenstown;
 - (c) As an important subset of economic contributions, the employment opportunities SkyCity provides to Queenstown residents were regarded as important; and
 - (d) A large number of submitters shared personal, positive sentiments about the opportunities for entertainment/socialising at SkyCity in Queenstown.
4. Without repeating the submissions themselves or necessarily citing all of them, further details follow to illustrate each of those points.

Safe gambling - Safe environment and harm prevention

5. Submitters recognised the safe environment provided by the SkyCity venue:²
 - (a) Rhys Owen: *"SkyCity Casino is a responsible host who offers good entertainment for locals and visitors to Queenstown in a safe and controlled environment"*
 - (b) Hayley Matthews observed that the scale of the operation *"enables the staff to maintain high standards of service and oversight, ensuring that responsible gaming practices are upheld and that all guests are treated with care and attention."*
6. Some who identified themselves as older patrons in particular noted that they felt it was a safe environment:
 - (a) Raewyn Crack: *"As an older patron of the Casino, I appreciate the right for myself to partake of gambling pursuits that interest me in a supportive, safe environment."*

¹ Several submissions were made by SkyCity staff

² See also submissions of Dilton Dos-Santos Dultra; Justine Mason; Seth Maynard; Hayley Matthews; Noel McRandle; Ron Gilkison; Wayne Rogers; DeAnne Jones; Angalene Whipp; Rachael Monks; Glen Hallam; Lucie Smilie; Anya Smith.

- (b) Susan Helson: *"It is a well managed place where we as older folks feel very safe...I am a visitor who loves the environment and the friendly staff". "...wonderful safe place that they provide and we are always treated well by all staff".*
- 7. As staff-members who submitted noted, the recent introduction of mandatory carded play reflects a step change in improving protection of patrons from gambling harm.³
- 8. Christchurch Casinos Limited highlighted the collaborative approach to responsible hosting between the two venues, such as multi-venue exclusion orders.⁴

Economic contributions and community involvement

- 9. Submitters noted the local initiatives that SkyCity Queenstown contributes to.⁵ Specific initiatives supported by SkyCity that submitters highlighted as valuable include:
 - (a) Mark Williams: *"the Queenstown Trails network, which consists of 150km of recreational walking and cycling trails throughout the Whakatipu Basin. These trails provide a significant recreational benefit to locals and visitors, and bring opportunities for active transport, health and wellbeing and conservation initiatives to our district."*
 - (b) Andrew Gray, another staff member, noted the *"major events like Queenstown Winterfestival, Winterpride, Luma, and [SkyCity Queenstown] is one of the principle sponsors of The Skycity Stampede Ice Hockey Team."*
- 10. Many submitters noted the importance of having an entertainment venue such as the casino for tourism purposes,⁶ observing that it "... adds to the full tourism offering in Queenstown"⁷ and "enhances the vibrancy of Queenstown's hospitality sector".⁸
 - (a) Dilton Dos-Santos Dultra noted that it *"contributes positively to local tourism" and "[p]lays a role in enhancing the town's reputation as a destination for both New Zealanders and international visitors"*
- 11. Submitters also recognised the wider economic benefit brought by SkyCity.⁹ For example:
 - (a) Queenstown Chamber of Commerce: *"They are an active, valued and long standing member of the Queenstown Business Chamber of Commerce and our business community, and support various local community initiatives through grants and other CSG initiatives"*.

³ Submissions of Angela Stephens and Justine Mason.

⁴ Submission of Christchurch Casinos Ltd.

⁵ Submissions of Queenstown Chamber of Commerce; Lee Summer; Melanie Salonga; James Ho; Robert Nicholls; Daniel Ashbolt; Rachael Monks; Phillip Wilson; Michael Vellacott.

⁶ Submissions of Joshua Smith; Lee Summer; Zali Salleh; Geunryeong Ryu; Nirat Lukkul; Mike Frawley; Lynn Stove.

⁷ Submission of Glen Hallam.

⁸ Submission of Hayley Matthews.

⁹ Submissions of Emma Nand; Hayley Matthews.

Employment

12. Employees value their employment¹⁰ and other members of the community recognise the employment benefits brought by having the SkyCity casino in Queenstown.¹¹

Entertainment and social value

13. Submitters valued the entertainment opportunities the casino provides for them and the community.¹² One submitter stated that it is *“a really vibrant and fun addition to the city”*.¹³ Visitors from out of town also noted the entertainment benefit.¹⁴
14. A number of submitters noted that they used the casino as a place to socialise with others:
- (a) Lynda Hodge: *“I enjoy visiting the casino to play the machines, engage with like minded people and interacting with the staff”*.
 - (b) Brendon Marsden: *“The Casino provides a warm friendly establishment to socialise with friends & family”*.
15. The value of entertainment for tourism purposes (described above) is also relevant for the local community’s entertainment and options to socialise.

¹⁰ Submissions of Geunryeong Ryu; Gerrit Heezen; Bridget Rainsford.

¹¹ Michael Vellacott; Katie Clothier; Jonathan Douglas; Belinda Moffat; James Ho; Ian Alldred; Anya Smith.

¹² Submissions of Melanie Salonga; Megan Harper; Seth Maynard; Repeka Terei; Anya Smith; Ann Sutherland; John Hamilton; Gyrth Sturley; Kelli McGowan; Mick Butler; Brook Chambers.

¹³ Submission of Joshua Smith.

¹⁴ Submissions of Helen Miller; Celeste Barcham; Wendy True.