

Anzac Day gaming exemption sought

The Association has called on the Premier, Mr Carr, to reconsider the government's opposition to granting services clubs an exemption to the gaming machine shutdown on Anzac Day.

State Cabinet has rejected the exemption based on issues surrounding the significance of Anzac Day as a day of remembrance. The Minister for Gaming & Racing, Mr Face, had foreshadowed the exemption in State Parliament in June last year.

The Association agreed with the Minister's view to Parliament that an argument had been made that these clubs should not be forced to close down their gaming machines on the morning of Anzac Day when people who have been participating in dawn services may wish to return to their clubs and access its full facilities.

The foreshadowed exemption was also supported by the Shadow Minister for Gaming who had received similar submissions expressing concern about the shutdown.

The Association, in keeping with the Government's recently introduced harm minimisation measures for gaming, has put forward the view that the exemption should be granted only to those services clubs which are hosting Dawn Services or unit reunion functions which are an integral part of the Anzac Day commemorations. In locations where there is no services club an exemption could be granted to clubs or hotels providing a similar benefit.

The Association has pointed out that the exemption should not present an

'excuse' for all clubs or hotels to open their doors as a means of taking advantage of the gaming exemption simply because it is Anzac Day.

It was pointed out that the majority of member clubs surveyed by the Association following last year's Anzac Day rejected the notion that the operation of gaming machines detracted from the solemnity of the day's celebrations on the basis that it is considered an integral part of the enjoyment of the reunions.

The vast majority of Directors of these clubs are ex-service people fully aware of the significance of the day. For many former diggers Anzac Day is not just about ceremony – it is also about sharing memories with mates over a beer or perhaps "having a flutter" on the poker machines.

The Association has pointed out that like 'Two-up' gambling has been institutionalised as part of the Anzac Day culture since the 1930s and it would be in keeping with those traditions to allow an exemption from the gaming shutdown on these days.

2003 Conference date announced

The Services Clubs Association's 2003 annual conference will be staged in Canberra from 6th-9th November 2003.

The return to Canberra follows overwhelming support from delegates to last year's highly successful event.

The conference will again be held at the Hyatt Hotel and work on the program has already commenced.

The SCA would like to acknowledge the following sponsors and encourage your support:



From the CEO

Graeme Carroll

New Members

Member numbers of the Association are continuing to grow and have now reached 45 with several new members joining recently.

North Ryde RSL, Club Willoughby, Katoomba RSL All Services Club, Coonamble District RSL, and Maclean Lower Clarence Services Clubs are the newest members of the Association.

The member numbers now total 20 in Category 1, 16 in Category 2 and 9 in Category 3.

Reciprocal rights

Almost twenty member clubs have expressed an interest in commencing a reciprocal rights program for members.

Under the program it is envisaged that members of participating clubs would be offered, for instance, the same discounts on food and beverage that they receive as a member of their own club. The aim of the program is to encourage members of clubs to patronise Association member clubs when travelling or visiting nearby locations and provide Association member clubs with a marketing edge.

The Association is now developing a plan with those clubs to facilitate the implementation of the reciprocal rights program.

Marketing plan

More than 10 member clubs have expressed an initial interest in pursuing the Association's proposed marketing campaign aimed at attracting the next generation of members into services clubs.

The "brand power" type television campaign is to target the 25-50 age demographic and aims to overcome the perception that services clubs are for 'old people'.

The marketing campaign proposes to capitalise on the collective buying power of the industry sector to substantially reduce costs for commercial production and airtime.

The clubs will meet early in February to further develop the campaign.

Advisory panels established

The Association has established Industry Advisory Panels to assist member clubs with advice on a range of club operations.

The Advisory Panels are not designed to provide definitive advice, but are designed to assist member clubs in focusing a club quickly on either addressing or identifying particular problem areas. The fact that the panel members operate 'like' clubs is seen as an advantage in assisting other member clubs.

The Association has established a database of industry representatives who have volunteered to assist fellow member clubs in a range of areas including administration, gaming, occupational health and safety, licensing, food and beverage, finance, amalgamations, information technology, training, entertainment, legal, marketing and asset valuations.

Those members participating in the panels will only be assigned to deal with requests for assistance from clubs in non-competitive situations.

RAR Foundation

The Royal Australian Regiment Foundation is seeking the support of current and former members and other donors to further its work.

Formed in 1992, the Foundation provides the supporting structure to finance regimental projects and to help alleviate hardship experienced by some soldiers and their families arising from the exigencies of military services.

Further information can be found at the Foundation's website on www.rarfoundation.org.au.

New Food Safety Laws: how will they affect the club industry?

*By Isobel Kidd**

A recently released Federal report into the implementation of new food safety regulations estimated the cost of food-borne illnesses directly attributed to the catering industry at \$540 million. This amounts to about 50 cents for every meal produced by a club's self-service eatery, bistro or at functions. Eating establishments such as restaurants and cafés had far lower figures, with the cost estimated at \$169 million p.a, or about 6 cents per meal.

While the club industry is responsible for only an estimated 1% of all food poisoning occurrences, club boards, directors and management cannot ignore the general risks involved in food and beverage operations.

The risks range from increasing public liability exposures, individual liabilities and penalties applicable to directors and managers (fines of up to \$125,000 are currently under consideration by the NSW parliament), poor public perceptions resulting in decreased catering revenues through to food spoilage and wastage costs.

While the majority of clubs in Australia have safe food handling practices in place, these are not generally well documented. It is of course in the interest of clubs not to provide club patrons and their guests with an excuse to eat elsewhere; eg. food handlers not wearing gloves, staff seen picking, poking and itching themselves, foods being held at barely warm temperatures, poor quality ingredients, and so on.

New Food Safety Laws

20th December 2002 marked the end of the Transition Period for the new Food Standards Code. All clubs involved in the sale or service of foods must now comply with a range of standards that form part of the Food Standards Code.

The relevant aspects of the code for clubs range from food safety standards through to allergen declarations and new labelling requirements.

In summary, the catering and food handling facilities at all clubs must now implement specific practices including:-

- Notification with either the local council or the health department;
- Specific food handling controls for receiving, storage, processing, display, packaging, disposal and recall of food;
- Cleaning & pest control procedures;
- Personal health and hygiene standards;
- Ensuring that all food handlers and management have food safety "skills and knowledge" commensurate with their responsibilities; and
- New labelling and identification requirements regarding the declaration of allergens, genetically modified foods, irradiated foods and ingredients and nutrition information.



One of the most controversial elements of the new code is a draft standard for the implementation of mandatory Food Safety Programs.

At this stage New South Wales is considering the implementation of mandatory Food Safety Programs for all high risk businesses – and is currently considering the definition of clubs which provide any form of "catering services", ie any time delay between preparation and consumption of food.

A number of clubs have already introduced Food Safety Programs as part of overall risk management practices. Evidence has shown

that any food business contributing to a major food poisoning incident has suffered irreparable damage to its reputation to the extent that they have gone out of business so it makes good business sense to introduce such a program.

A Food Safety Program is a documented risk-based system based on the internationally recognised "HACCP" standard (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points). HACCP involves the application of seven principles, which involves the identification, control and monitoring of potential food safety hazards. In clubs this will mostly involve the control of bacterial hazards as well as some physical and chemical hazards.

Bacteria are a microbiological hazard and may already be present on foods received by the club, if sourced from an unreliable or disreputable supplier, or may be introduced onto foods from food handlers, unclean equipment and utensils or from raw or unwashed meats and vegetables. Bacteria can also grow to dangerous levels when provided with the right conditions required for growth, - mainly through inadequate time and temperature controls.

What is a HACCP based Food Safety Program?

A Food Safety Program consists of two components. The first part of a Food Safety Program is a range of practices and procedures pertaining to creating a safe environment for the production and service of food (eg. supplier standards and specifications, cleaning schedules, food handling procedures, preventative pest management systems, induction programs, maintenance and calibration schedules etc.). The second part of a Food Safety Program is a food safety or "HACCP" plan which outlines the procedures to be followed during food receipt, production, holding and service.

In the next edition of the newsletter, Isobel Kidd will look at how a club can implement a Food Safety Program.

Details on the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code are available at www.foodstandards.gov.au. For hard copies of

the Code and user guides, phone Anstat on 03 9278 1144. Fact sheets are available from FSANZ's Information Officer on 02 6271 2241. Businesses may obtain specific advice on implementing the standards through the Industry Advice Helpline on 1300 652 166 or by emailing advice@foodstandards.gov.au

**Isobel Kidd is a catering and risk management consultant to the hospitality and retail industry and through her company, FISHER:KIDD & Associates (phone: 0413 739 683) provides complete business solutions to the club movement.*

Anzac trip offer

The Allways Travel group has offered members of member clubs of the Services Clubs Association an exclusive tour package to travel to either the 88th anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli on Anzac Day, or Singapore or Vietnam as part of its "Battlefields of the World" tours during 2003. An outline of the tours are contained in the attached 'flyer' and large posters and brochures with more detailed information for display at your club are available direct from the tour company by contacting Dennis Weatherall on (02) 9235 1022.

Southern region meeting

A meeting of member and prospective member clubs in the south of the state will be held at Corowa RSL on Tuesday, 4th March. Details of the meeting are being organised and will be sent to clubs in the near future.

IR Hotline reminder

Membership of the Services Clubs Association automatically entitles your Club to –

- Unlimited use of our special Telephone Advisory Service hotline provided by **ER Strategies** on any Employee Relations, Industrial Relations or Human Resource matter. Our special **SCA member hotline number is 02 8907 3848** (or you can dial 1300 55 66 37 for the cost of a local call anywhere in Australia*).