Bringing down the house

How the gambling industry conspires with the treatment industry, academics and government agencies to destroy a Public Health approach to gambling harm
What is Gambling?

“There is no universal definition of gambling”

(Goldsmiths 2014)
“The new world of gambling is orientated around continuous and rapid mass consumption focussed primarily on individual betting in increasingly socially dislocated environments”

Adams, Raeburn and Da Silva, 2008
ADDICTIONS
The bastard child of abnormal psychology and psychiatry with the locus on concern on the person harmed after the harm has happened.
“Psy disciplines, Psychology, Psycho analysis which focus on individual deficiencies pathologies and deviations”

(Goldsmiths 2014)
Responsible gambling is a politically constructed idea that individual consumers should be responsible for managing their own excessive behaviours

(Goldsmiths 2014)
“Public Health approaches are proactive and emphasise prevention”

(Shaffer 2003)
Evidence led from dodgy evidence

“Gambling research is a political activity”
Purpose of the Act

- Charitable purposes
- Community input
- No casino expansion
- Prevention and public health
Outcome

- Curbing of excesses, sport is the winner; deeply regressive
- Only if it doesn’t upset the industry
- Traded for convention centre
- Very limited input and no $$ resources for

Of the $5 MILLION lost by the people of Manurewa playing the pokies in The Jokers Bar in 2006, $1.8Million was paid out in grants, not one dollar of which made it back to the community
The last minute amendments won and lost

- $ note acceptors
- Lotteries by internet

- Annual report to parliament
- Universal coverage of licensing

Decreasing the funding
Independence in the Act

- Minister of Health
- Minister of Internal Affairs
- Ex Minister of Revenue
- Lotteries Commission
- Gambling Commission
Real Prevention

- Pre commitment
- Player tracking
- Cancelling the licences of criminal support services
Who are the Problem Gambling Foundation of NZ?

- Largest agency of its type in the world
- Public Health champions
- 22 dedicated public health staff

“Our mission is to build health communities free from gambling harm”
The case against PGF

- Value for $
- Political neutrality
- Better offer
The threat to democracy

- Loss of the independent voice
- The gamblers
- Our laws for sale
What’s wrong with this picture?

- Independent Arbiter?
- Expert Partners in Harm?
- Regulating Blind?
- Pretend it’s not Political
- Partners in Casino Expansion
How to destroy a Public Health approach?

- Start with Addiction
- Close the Brain
- Lose your History
- Devalue experience
- Be industry’s lapdog
- Get advice from Accountants
“Pathology based treatment providers are likely to actively deny the existence of wider economic and social problems as they compete for scarce resources”

(Bunkle and Lepper 2004)
What smells?

- The retrospective audit you buy before you start
  - The better offer you had to solicit
  - The business model with substantial mathematical errors
- An untested procurement model whose results did not prevail
  - An amateur panel
- And $3m to shut PGF up until after the election
Political Guarantee

"There's just not one shred of truth in this allegation. It's shameful, it reflects on the integrity of the people making these allegations and it detracts from a process which has been robust, independent, it's been peer reviewed and it's probably one of the better processes that has been undertaken in this area for a very long time."

Hon Peter Dunne rnz 21/3/2014
What the judgement said

Changed the ground-rules as to how the contracts would be awarded after organisations had bid for them;

So wrongly assessed the PGF's application that the apparent result couldn't be trusted; and

Used people to assess who should get the contract who were at least apparently biased in favour of some applicants over others.
John Stansfield

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