



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

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Wahine O Aotearoa

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**Submission to the Advertising Standards Authority Inc. on the
Proposed Code for Advertising of Gaming and Gambling**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 43 nationally organised societies. It has 34 branches spread throughout the country to which women from some 150 societies are affiliated.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Proposed Code. This submission has been written by the Social Issues Committee of the National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ). The committee has commented on several reviews and legislation regarding gaming and gambling since 1995 and is extremely concerned at the detrimental effect these activities have on New Zealand society.

Since gambling per se has no social value and has many adverse social consequences, ideally NCWNZ would like to see all advertising of gaming and gambling activities prohibited. However, since that is unrealistic, we accept that a Code is necessary.

We support the spirit and intention of the three principles in the Proposed Code but note the very general nature of the wording and wonder if it will make any difference to current practices.

The letter accompanying the Proposed Code refers in point 3 to the imposition of a "high standard of social responsibility" and refers to the standard in the Code of Ethics, a "due sense of social responsibility." We would like clarification of the difference between a "high standard" and a "due sense" of social responsibility.

Principle 1. "Advertisements should comply with the laws of New Zealand."

Guideline 1(a). "Advertisements should comply with the restriction on the sale of various gaming products and particularly age restrictions."

If advertisements are to comply with the laws regarding minors, then the relevant law should be stated in the advertisement. These laws are not widely known and gambling outlets do not appear to have to display them.

Principle 2. "Advertisements should observe a high standard of social responsibility."

The letter accompanying the Proposed Code related the "high standards of social responsibility" required by the code to those used in the Therapeutic Code and others. This is not reassuring, since the standards set for advertising prescription-only drugs are not socially responsible. Information in these advertisements is either lacking or not in an easily readable form. We would





expect the Advertising Standards Authority to enforce high standards actively, by penalising not only the advertiser who does not comply, but also the medium that carries the advertisement.

Guideline 2(c). "Advertisements should not encourage consumers to participate excessively or beyond their means."

This is so general as to be meaningless. Any participation would be beyond the means of some people. This is an issue that cannot be ignored. One of our members who represents the Maori Women's Welfare League, reports that spending on gambling has increased and the League is alarmed at the social consequences.

Guideline 2(d). "Advertisements should not state or imply a promise of winning."

This should not need to be said. Rather, the advertisement should be required to state the actual possibility of winning, even if it is in the form of "You may be the one in a million."

Principle 3. "Advertisements should not by implication, omission, ambiguity or exaggerated claim mislead or deceive or be likely to mislead or deceive consumers, abuse the trust of or exploit the lack of knowledge of consumers, exploit the superstitious or without justifiable reason play on fear."

Guideline 3(a). "Winning claims should be factual and able to be proven. The chances of winning or the size of the prize should not be exaggerated."

The gambling industry's profits rely on people's gullibility, lack of knowledge and unrealistic hopes. Any advertising, if it is to be successful, will exploit these. The code may help to reduce excessive claims.

Lotto television advertisements are an example. They give the impression that if you spend your money on Lotto, life will be a rosy glow, all will be well, and you will be happy ever after. It is a concern that children are included in the dancing and singing. The promoters would doubtless argue that these advertisements are not intended to "mislead or deceive or be likely to mislead or deceive consumers...", but we think they do and we know the possibility of a high return encourages people of low socio-economic status to spend money they can ill afford. We wonder whether the Proposed Code will make a difference to such advertisements.

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Convener
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