



## Inner South Canberra Community Council

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### **Inner South Canberra Community Council response to proposed changes to Community Contributions Scheme**

Given the very short time provided for feedback on the Options Paper, the Inner South Canberra Community Council will only provide brief comments.

The ISCCC shares the concerns of many community organisations, and Canberrans generally, about problem gambling. We would like to see Canberra Clubs' reliance on this source of revenue decline in future.

The ISCCC does not have a detailed understanding of the financial situation of the various ACT clubs and of how possible changes proposed in the Options Paper would affect their viability.

For this reason, we will focus on a few issues in the Options paper in which the ISCCC has some experience through direct interaction with ACT clubs.

#### **Should contributions to the “community” under the Scheme be limited to the ACT or an area near a club, or support projects outside the ACT?**

The ISCCC considers that contributions to the community contributions scheme should be limited to the ACT. Given that they take money from local gamblers, clubs should reinvest that money back into the ACT, including in areas near Clubs.

A club that develops good relationships with its local community and community organisations, and that provides dining, recreation and other activities of interest to its members and other Canberrans, should be in a better position to reduce its future reliance on gambling revenue.

#### **What impact would removing or limiting the amount of in-kind contributions that can be claimed by clubs have on the beneficiaries of these contributions (e.g. community organisations)?**

Removing the amount of in-kind contributions that can be claimed by clubs may have an impact on the Clubs' willingness to provide Community Councils with free access to function/meeting rooms.

The ISCCC is very dependent on gaining regular, repeated access to facilities for meetings. The ACT Government provides annual funding of about \$12,800 to each Community Council and expects the volunteer-run Councils to act as conduits between communities and the Government. However, no regular, easily accessible and cost effective venues were made available to these Councils. Precious time is lost organising meetings, venues etc. If Community Councils have to use a large component of

grant funding for hall/room hire, it would reduce significantly the amount of funding available for communications and other activities to engage with our community.

The ISCCC currently receives, and appreciates, the Eastlake Football Club's provision of function rooms at no cost for ISCCC public forums and committee meetings. The Harmonie German Club also provided the ISCCC with some in-kind support in the past year by providing access to a function room for public meetings. The ISCCC receives no cash funding from ACT Clubs.

The Old Narrabundah Community Council, a member group of the ISCCC, has received in-kind support from the Harmonie-German Club. The Yarralumla Residents Association, also an ISCCC member group, has been pledged \$1000 in sponsorship for the "Yarralumla Does Christmas" event this year by the Canberra Southern Cross Club, and has been provided with access to some free storage space at the Club's Woden premises.

### **Options for Structural Scheme Reform**

The options paper identifies three options for Structural Scheme reform, all of which propose transfer of some or all of the Clubs' community contributions, derived from gaming revenue, to a centrally administered fund.

What exactly is the objective being sought, and could it be achieved more effectively by other means?

Media reports suggest the ACT Government may ask the not-for-profit organization *Hands Across Canberra* to run the centrally administered fund. Does this indicate that there will not be a competitive process to decide on the fund manager? Would grants be decided on by a centralized fund on a competitive basis or on a discretionary basis?

Clearly, a major risk with a centrally administered fund is that clubs would lose the ability to support directly a range of community activities in their local area.

What is the likely match between the kinds of activities currently supported by clubs, especially sporting activities, and the kinds of activities that would be supported by a centralized fund? Would we see funding for such local activities, especially sport, dry up? What would be the implications for local groups that currently rely on such funding from clubs?

Many questions still need to be answered about how, and if, the proposed reform would work, and whether it is the right approach or will have significant adverse consequences.

Given the lack of full information, and the short time frame made available for consideration, the ISCCC calls on the ACT Government to provide further information on its proposed approach. In particular there is a need for evidence showing how a new system would improve the allocation of funding compared to the current system and how it would improve the wellbeing of the Canberra community. Community consultation in the absence of such information cannot be considered to have been properly informed.



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