

**IN THE MATTER OF A ROYAL COMMISSION INTO
THE PERTH CASINO**

WITNESS STATEMENT OF STEVEN MARK DOBSON

Date of Document: 14 May 2021

Filed on behalf of: The Gaming and Wagering Commission of
Western Australia

Prepared by:

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I, **STEVEN MARK DOBSON**, of **Contains sensitive information** say as follows:

1. This statement is provided in response to the witness summons to give evidence, dated 30 April 2021 and issued pursuant to section 9 of the *Royal Commissions Act 1968* (WA), which is directed to me by the Perth Royal Commission. This statement addresses the matters set out in Schedule 1 to the summons (**Topics**).
2. I am a member of the Gaming and Wagering Commission of Western Australia (**GWC**).
3. This statement is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. The views I express in this statement are from my own knowledge, except where I indicate otherwise.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

4. I hold a Master of Business Administration from Murdoch University and a Bachelor of Business (Financial Planning) with Distinction from RMIT.
5. I have completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors (**AICD**) Diploma, hold a Diploma of Public Safety (Policing), a Diploma of Public Safety (Police Investigations), an Advanced Diploma in Financial Services (Financial Planning) and hold other vocational and sector specific qualifications.
6. Between 2002 and 2008, I was a Police Officer with the rank of Detective First Class Constable with the Western Australia Police Force. I worked at various stations and with various squads during this period, including in Perth and Kalgoorlie.
7. In 2009, I was employed as the Acting Community Emergency Services Manager for City of Cockburn, at the Department of Fire & Emergency Services.
8. From 1998 to 1999, I worked as a Race Track Attendant at Gloucester Park, formerly titled the Western Australian Trotting Association.
9. Between 1999 to present, including periods of consultancy during my terms at the Western Australia Police Force and the Department of Fire & Emergency Services, I have been a Director and Senior Financial Planner at Mal Dobson & Associates. I initially started as a Paraplanner, obtaining my Authorised Representative licence with Australian Securities and Investment Commission (**ASIC**) in 2001. I have remained a licenced Financial Planner (as an Authorised Representative within the *Corporations Act 2001*) to this date. I am an Authorised Representative and a Registered Tax (financial) adviser.

10. In 2012, I was appointed to the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC). In 2018, I was appointed Chair of the SBDC by the Minister. The SBDC is a public sector agency, established under the *Small Business Development Corporation Act 1983*.
11. Since 2018, I have been a Trustee Board Member of the Association of Financial Advisers Investment Fund Pty Ltd . From the period 2017 to 2020 I was a Panel Member of the Financial Advisers Consultative Panel, of the Australian Securities and Investment Commission.
12. From the period 2000 to current, I have held a variety of board and committee roles within the not for profit, sporting clubs and emergency services sector.
13. On 1 July 2011 I was appointed a Justice of the Peace by the Western Australia Governor in Executive Council. I remain an active Justice of the Peace.
14. A copy of my curriculum vitae is annexed to my statement and marked [GWC.0003.0009.0001](#).

GAMING AND WAGERING COMMISSION

Appointment

15. I was appointed to the GWC on 1 July 2020 for a term from 1 July 2020 and expiring on 31 December 2021. I remain on the GWC. A copy of my appointment letter is annexed to my statement and marked [GWC.0003.0009.0003](#).
16. I have been interested in appointment on government boards since completing my Company Director Diploma. I have previously uploaded my CV and other professional details on the Western Australia Government's 'OnBoard' register for consideration for future government board vacancies. I do not recall the date I created the account with OnBoard, however, prior to that my CV was also in the previous database called the 'Interested Persons Register' since at least 2011.

17. On 6 May 2020 at 2:40 pm, I was contacted by email by Alannah Maurice, Senior Policy Adviser to the Minister for Racing and Gaming, the Honourable Paul Papalia. The email sought me to consider a position on the GWC.
18. I replied shortly thereafter on the phone and by email on 6 May 2020 confirming my intention to be considered by the Minister.
19. The phone conversation with Ms Maurice on 6 May 2020 was brief. She told me my skills were considered relevant with a background in law enforcement, small business ownership and my considerable board and governance experience. I told her I would accept the role.

GWC Training

20. I have not received any formal training about to my ongoing responsibility as a GWC member.
21. On 25 June 2020, Emily Howell sent an email welcoming me to the GWC and attaching HR induction forms. A copy of that email and attachments is annexed to this statement and marked [GWC.0003.0009.0004](#), [GWC.0003.0009.0005](#), [GWC.0003.0009.0006](#), [GWC.0003.0009.0007](#), [GWC.0003.0009.0008](#) and [GWC.0003.0009.0009](#).
22. I carefully read all of the materials, including the statutes, regulations and annual reports and also went onto the Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor's (Department) website and read the pages and links including <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/racing-gaming-and-liquor/racing-gaming-and-wagering>.
23. On 14 July 2020, I attended the GWC offices for an induction with Emily Howell and Jocelynn Stephens. I was provided with an iPad which Emily informed me I could

use to view board papers. They generally showed me how to login to the iPad, get onto the Department's website and portal and how to use the iPad.

24. By email dated 16 July 2020, I emailed Emily Howell, a Regulatory Officer at the Department, enquiring whether I could have a conversation with the Chair or Deputy Chair of the GWC to get their perspective on how the board runs and expectations from a governance perspective. Emily responded on the same day providing me with Michael Connolly's (**Mr Connolly**) contact details and stating that he would be available between 8:30 am to 12 pm the next day. A copy of that chain of emails is annexed to this statement and marked [GWC.0003.0009.0016](#).

25. On 16 July 2020, I phoned Mr Connolly. We discussed the format of board meetings because at the time, we were coming out of COVID. During that call Mr Connolly also explained:

25.1 that the GWC provides funding to the Department for co-opting staff and that the official staff employed by the GWC was zero but there were departmental resources available;

25.2 the role the GWC played and the areas it regulates, such as the Crown Casino, bookmakers, community gambling such as bingo and other more uncommon gambling licences.

26. I had skimmed the annual reports for the last 10 years, so I asked him some questions about those topics.

ROLE ON THE COMMISSION

27. I do not have any specific areas of responsibility on the GWC other than my role as a member of the GWC as set out in the *Gaming and Wagering Act 1987* and other relevant legislation.

28. As a member of the GWC, my role is to have oversight of the GWC with regard to maintaining corporate governance of the agency. Generally, the executive will come to us with their corporate plan, and the GWC will provide the governance to ensure the agency is resourced and structured properly.

Remuneration

29. My remuneration for the GWC is an annual fee of \$16,600 plus 9.5% superannuation approximately \$1,577 pa.
30. I have not received any additional payments, incentives or reimbursements.

Time Commitment

31. The amount of my time taken in performing my role as a member of the GWC varies depending on the workload and agenda. Since my appointment in July 2020, I estimate the hours required to include on average each month:
- 31.1 3 to 6 hours for board meetings held once a month; and
- 31.2 8 hours for review and reading of board papers provided prior to board meetings.
32. Since my appointment, I estimate approximately 50 percent of the time within meetings is dedicated to Perth Crown Casino based on the time I have been on the GWC.

POWERS, DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF COMMISSION

33. I set out above at paragraphs 20 to 25 the information I was provided at the time of appointment. Other than those documents, I believe I signed a conflict of interest form, but I do not have a copy of it.

34. By email dated 9 March 2021, I received a copy of the Code of Conduct. A copy of that email is annexed to this statement and marked [GWC.0003.0009.0020](#) and [GWC.0003.0009.0021](#) (attachment).
35. Generally, when we were asked to make decisions at board meetings, the board pack includes a briefing on our powers to make the decision.
36. On 26 October 2020, the members of the GWC were given a 1 page paper which included all of the powers the GWC has. That was the first time I had received a document with that information. A copy of that document is annexed to this statement and marked [GWC.0003.0009.0017](#) and [GWC.0003.0009.0018](#) (attachment).

EXERCISE OF POWERS

37. Since I have been a member of the GWC, I have not seen it obstructed in the exercise of its powers and discharge of its responsibilities.
38. Usually, the board papers provide sufficient information; however, there are three recent occasions where I consider insufficient information has been provided to me:
- 38.1 I asked on the 8 March 2021 for a copy of the current policy with RiskCover for the GWC professional indemnity and Directors and Officers insurance. This was subsequently answered in the board meeting held on 28 April 2021.
- 38.2 In late 2020, the GWC approved a review by Ernst & Young. The scope we approved was to provide assurance to the GWC that its legislative responsibilities in respect of gaming are being fulfilled and that GWC officers have appropriate processes and practices in place to meet all the GWC's legislative responsibilities. We received the draft scope back and the terms were broader than the GWC had approved and there was no scope of payment. Annexed to this statement and marked [GWC.0003.0009.0019](#) is a

copy of an email chain between myself and Ms Nina Hewson, Manager Corporate Governance, at the Department.

- 38.3 In later 2020, Mr Connolly disclosed that he had a conflict of interest. On 23 March 2021, Duncan Ord, the Chair of the GWC informed the members of the GWC that he had commenced an enquiry into Mr Connolly's activities. Mr Ord stated that the matter had been resolved and did not require further action. He did not inform us of the outcome of the investigation or its nature.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

39. I understand that the GWC has a number of policies and procedures, including a Casino manual, however, I do not have copies of them. Generally, at GWC meetings since my appointment, if there is a board decision with a relevant policy, we are provided with a copy of the policy in the board pack.
40. I am not aware of any policies relevant to junket operations, money laundering, cash and electronic transactions at the Perth Casino and criminals infiltrating casino operations. However, we made a decision prohibiting the conduct of junkets, premium or privilege player activity in February 2021. We also considered the use of eftpos at gaming tables but the relevant policy we considered was a Perth Casino policy.
41. I understand based on the information provided in my short tenure at the GWC that money laundering investigation sits outside the GWC remit in terms of statutory responsibility and is a Commonwealth responsibility.

SUPPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT

42. The Department supports the GWC to execute its operational requirements by providing resources, staff and buildings. The Department provides officers who monitor and investigate the Crown and report to the GWC on those investigations.

Briefing papers

43. The briefing papers prepared by the Department and the Chief Casino Officer in relation to the Casino and provided to the GWC during my time on the GWC have been adequate. They generally include detailed briefing packs, with relevant policies, advice and research and generally where we are asked to make a decision, the board papers will include the relevant GWC power to make the decision.
44. The GWC papers are generally prepared and provided to us between 2 to 7 days before the GWC meetings by Department staff. GWC members also have the capacity to request a paper for a particular topic or comment prior to, during and after the papers are presented to the meeting.

Adequacy of Support

45. The support from the Department appears to be limited. The Department is a large structure, with many agencies represented that have vastly different objectives.
46. The staff supporting the GWC are competent at their roles.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

47. As explained above at paragraph 33 and 34, I signed a conflict of interest form when I commenced and on 9 March 2021, and I was emailed a document titled 'Code of Conduct' by Emily Howell.
48. Before my training as a public sector board member, I attended seminars with the Public Sector Commission, training and membership with the AICD and had a general

awareness of what constitutes a conflict or perception, which guided my future decision making.

49. In my business capacity as a professional Financial Planner, I am required to have a strong understanding of conflicts of interest management, identification, reduction and documentation. I have completed continuing professional development in this area including a Conflicts of Interest Exam in 2008 in the scope of Australian Financial Services Licence and Australian Securities and Investments Commission oversight of our profession.
50. I have declared several conflicts of interest to the GWC through the course of my tenure. These were noted at the time in the board minutes, and include:
 - 50.1 24 November 2020: “Mr Dobson is Vice-President of Bullcreek Leeming Junior Football Club of which Dentistry Plus is a long-term sponsor. Item 7.3 involved a determination on whether to issue a standard lottery permit to Dentistry Plus.” The assessment states this as a perceived conflict and pecuniary interest. The declaration was noted and the GWC agreed I would participate in discussion of item 7.3;
 - 50.2 23 February 2021: “In his role as a financial planner, Mr Dobson recommends super, pension and managed funds that invest into all markets including the Australian Stock Exchange. These managed funds may hold a variety of shares, which could include Crown shares. However, Mr Dobson does not recommend clients purchase, hold or sell Crown shares.” The

assessment states this a perceived conflict and pecuniary interest. The declaration was noted with no further action required.

50.3 2 March 2021; "Mr Dobson's son plays cricket for Willetton and football for Leeming clubs. One of his son's teammates is the grandson of Michael Egan (former Crown employee who retired in 2013), so Mr Dobson knows Mr Egan." The assessment states this as a perceived conflict and non-pecuniary interest. The declaration was noted with no further action required.

51. I am not aware of any current conflicts of interest policy for staff and other persons carrying out duties on behalf of the GWC.

Contains sensitive information



STEVEN MARK DOBSON