

International Think Tank on Presenting Gambling Populations and First Contact Services

Newsletter Number 4: December 2005

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Think Tank newsletter. This year end edition details the dates for the next full meeting of the Think Tank, an update from the recent Clinical Trials Network working group meeting, information regarding a social marketing/health promotion/public education Think Tank working group, an introduction to the Gambling Helpline's new Chief Executive and a welcome to two new members.

Third annual Think Tank meeting

The third annual meeting of the Think Tank on Presenting Gambling Populations and First Contact Services will be held on 11-12 September 2006 in Auckland, New Zealand.
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Put this date in your diaries now! More details regarding the event will be circulated as they become available. If you have any ideas that you would particularly like to be discussed, or would like to share, at the Think Tank meeting please let Maria Bellringer know (maria.bellringer@aut.ac.nz).

The event has been moved from May to September, as feedback from participants attending the last meeting indicated that May was not a particularly convenient time of year for some people to be travelling to New Zealand. September is the start of Spring in the Southern hemisphere and can be a lovely time of year; the weather is warming up here as Autumn starts in the Northern parts of the world.

Auckland has again been chosen as the location as 95% of participants giving feedback on last year's event stated that they would be happy to return to Auckland for the next Think Tank meeting. However, subsequent locations will be considered for future meetings.

The September 2006 Think Tank meeting will immediately proceed the *International Conference on Gambling: Gambling and its impacts - policy, practice and research perspectives* (13-15 September 2006) which is jointly being organised and hosted by the Gambling Research Centre and the Problem Gambling Foundation. This conference will also be in Auckland. Details will be available on both the Gambling Research Centre (www.aut-grc.ac.nz) and Problem Gambling Foundation (www.pgfnz.org.nz) websites.

Clinical Trials Network meeting

Unfortunately, there was not enough interest from members regarding the proposed Treatment and Services sub-group meeting of the Think Tank which was planned for 9 November this year in Alice Springs, Australia, immediately prior to the 15th annual NAGS conference. Thus that event was cancelled.

Instead, the Clinical Trials Network working group of the Think Tank met on that day. Present were Max Abbott, Maria Bellringer and Krista Ferguson from New Zealand, Malcolm Battersby and Kristin McLaughlin from Australia, and Barry Tolchard from the UK. Jim Westphal (USA) was present for part of the time via teleconference. Apologies were received from Eric Tyssen (Australia) who was not able to attend, at the last minute.

The group spent the day workshopping extensively around the issues of conducting a multi-site clinical trial. A recent proposal submitted to a UK funding body was discussed as were two proposals currently being written for the New Zealand context. It is hoped that other sites for the clinical trials will include Australia and North America.

Social marketing/health promotion/public education Think Tank working group

A social marketing/health promotion/public education working group of the Think Tank has recently been established. The aims of the group are as follows:

- Examine all aspects of social marketing, health promotion and public education, relevant to the gambling field
- Undertake reviews
- Promote research
- Encourage whole of sector communication strategies and affirmative marketing approaches
- Advance consumer protection
- Limit risks to players and society
- Develop and apply new products and approaches for global benefit
- Examine the application of new technologies and communication systems
- Hold and conduct seminars, workshops and conferences in conjunction with the Think Tank and separately
- Generate an international interest to advance more effective marketing and communication with key stakeholders
- Contribute to the knowledge base through presentations and publications

Leading and chairing this working group is Professor Alun Jackson, University of Melbourne.

Several people have already indicated their interest in being part of this working group. If your expertise would allow you to usefully contribute to this group and you would like to be involved, please express your interest to the secretary of the group, Ralph Gerdelan at rvg@rgs.net.nz.

New Chief Executive Gambling Helpline

As a co-host of the Think Tank, many of you will have had the opportunity to meet Gary Clifford at previous meetings. Gary has left the helpline and moved on to other things, though we expect him to continue to be involved in the area of problem gambling.

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce Krista Ferguson, whom some of you will already know. Krista took over as Chief Executive earlier this year and is pleased that the Gambling Helpline New Zealand will continue to have the opportunity to co-host and work with AUT and other Think Tank participants during the coming year.

New Think Tank members

The Think Tank secretariat welcomes back Leigh Barrett, Responsible Gaming Manager, TabCorp, Victoria and Rhonda Turley, Hotels Association of Australia, Adelaide.

And Finally.....

..... to end this newsletter - AUT and the Gambling Helpline wish you the season's greetings and all the best for the coming year. We also look forward to welcoming many of you back to Auckland in September 2006.