



MEDIA RELEASE

TUESDAY 13 JULY 2016

New Responsible Gambling Support Centre part of market leading package of initiatives proposed for casino redevelopment.

Aquis Entertainment (ASX:AQS) has announced details of a significant package of responsible gambling measures that form part of its bid for the development of a new entertainment precinct in Canberra's CBD. The proposal includes the establishment of a new Responsible Gambling Support Centre within the redeveloped casino – a first for the ACT – along with a wide-ranging package of initiatives aimed at delivering a broad based market-leading response to the issue.

The centre will be staffed by a dedicated team of responsible gambling support officers and counselors and will provide a proactive and accessible service to customers needing assistance or support. The centre will include an extensive range of resources and private counseling rooms. Staff will provide referrals to a range of specialist gambling support services. The centre will also incorporate a chaplaincy support service – only the second of its kind in an Australian casino.

The Responsible Gambling Support Centre would form the basis of the most comprehensive dedicated harm minimisation facility in any gaming venue in the ACT.

Aquis Entertainment Executive Director Jessica Mellor said that the package proposed by Aquis represented the most significant investment ever in tangible problem gambling support services by a gaming operator in the ACT.

“Building a culture of responsible gambling within our properties is a key priority for Aquis and this is evidenced by the significant investment we are announcing today.”

“Casinos have always led the gaming sector when it comes to responsible gambling support and our plans for the redevelopment in Canberra will set a new benchmark”.

“Importantly, the support centre will not only seek to drive a responsible gambling culture across the new casino but also the ACT more broadly. For example, professional development may also be provided to encourage skills growth and engagement of counsellors, social workers and others involved in problem gambling support across the Territory.”

“Our approach recognises that whilst the vast majority of patrons do not experience gambling related harm, the minority who do are best served by direct access to support and resources while in crisis – generally within the venue.”

“We know from research that this kind of crisis support can help patrons experiencing gambling harm by building motivation to change, and when combined with appropriate referrals, can give problem gamblers immediate help to cope with the crisis.”

Ms Mellor said that with any increase in gaming product at the casino comes a responsibility to also ensure that harm minimisation measures are enhanced. “This significant commitment recognises the responsibility we have to take proactive steps to provide additional support to the ‘at risk’ segment of the community.”



The responsible gambling package proposed by Aquis Entertainment is in line with its bid to develop a new entertainment precinct in the CBD including an expanded casino and up to 200 poker machines. Ms Mellor said that the proposed responsible gambling measures represent a significant investment given that the development is not anticipated to increase the incidence of gambling harm in the ACT.

“The 2010 Productivity Commission report into Gambling noted that there is no policy rationale for the current prohibition on the Canberra casino from operating EGMs, and further made the point that ‘permitting the Canberra casino to operate gaming machines, without expanding the number of gaming machines in the ACT, and subject to the application of appropriate regulatory harm minimisation measures, would be unlikely to increase accessibility or increase gambling harms’” she said.

The full package of responsible gambling initiatives build on the investments already made at the current Casino Canberra and include:

- The establishment of a new Responsible Gambling Support Centre within the redeveloped casino. Located on the mezzanine level, close to the gaming floor, the centre will be staffed by dedicated support officers and include a resource centre along with private counselling rooms.
- Employment of additional dedicated and specially trained staff as responsible gambling contact officers.
- Commitment to extensive responsible gaming training for all staff employed at Casino Canberra.
- The establishment of a new Board Committee dedicated to overseeing responsible gaming policy across all Aquis properties.
- The continued operation of a robust self-exclusion program.
- Access to a wide range of information and resources.
- Time awareness measures.
- The ongoing operation of an Exclusion Review Committee
- Active use of the ACT Gambling Exclusion Database.
- Commitment to advertising and promotions supporting Responsible Gambling awareness.
- Partnerships with Gambling Help Online and the ACT Gambling Counselling and Support Service along with other community organisations including Lifeline Canberra, who play a critical role in providing assistance to those members of the community who are affected by problem gambling.

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