



AUSTRALIAN HUMAN SERVICE PROFESSIONALS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE OBLIGATIONS IN REGARD TO GAMBLING-RELATED THEFT

RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET

BACKGROUND TO RESEARCH: I am a senior lecturer at the University of Tasmania in the School of Sociology and Social Work. I am currently investigating how different professional service providers construe their legal and ethical obligations in regard to gambling-related theft. Preliminary web and literature searches indicate that professionals' responses to crimes such as theft have rarely been documented. As a consequence, those who experience quandaries in regard to the management of gambling-related theft have few points of reference to turn to. My study aims to fill this knowledge gap. It is funded by the National Association of Gambling Studies (NAGS).

PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH: For the purposes of this research, I am interested to recruit professionals such as psychologists, social workers, lawyers, financial counselors and personal counselors who either deal with, or could potentially deal with, gamblers and/or people affected by another person's gambling. I believe that these professionals are well-placed to comment on the dilemmas created by gambling-related theft, and that participation in the study will be helpful in terms of encouraging further reflection on legal and ethical issues. Individuals who become research participants will be asked to complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire needs to be completed in full, so that the data is useable. This normally takes around 15 minutes. There are no clear-cut right answers. It is anticipated that participants will not only have diverse views, but personal views that may differ from those expressed in formal Codes of Ethics. To capture this diversity, participants are requested to complete the questionnaire individually before discussing their responses with others.

Please be aware that participation in this study is entirely voluntary. It is possible to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and also to withdraw any data supplied to date. As a token of thanks, a postal note of \$15 will be forwarded to the first 100 social workers who complete the questionnaire.

QUERIES: If you wish to participate in the study and have questions about it, please phone me at the University of Tasmania: [03] 63 243 664 or contact me by email: J.Patford@utas.edu.au. This study has been approved by the Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Tasmania. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study you should contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. You will need to quote H10872. It is not expected that participants in this study will be adversely affected in any way; however, individuals who do experience personal difficulties or stress are encouraged to contact Lifeline on 13 1114 or to approach a local counseling agency.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY: All data will be kept in locked filing cabinets or on a password protected computer while the study is in progress. The filing cabinets will be accessible only to myself and my research assistant. Personal details will be stored separately from questionnaire responses. The final report will include group findings only and will be written up in such a way that no participant or employing agency can be individually identified. It is expected that the report will be published in an international journal with online access. Study findings should thus be readily available to professional practitioners in a range of disciplines. After the study is completed, all tapes and documents will be kept in secure storage at the University of Tasmania for 5 years. They will then be destroyed.

REQUEST FOR SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: Participants who wish to receive a summary of study findings should request this and supply contact details as indicated below. The study is expected to be completed at the end of 2010.

IN SUMMARY: Findings from the present study will provide useful information for professional practitioners dealing with crimes such as theft and bodies providing undergraduate and/or ongoing professional training. Sincere thanks are extended to the professional practitioners and practitioners in training who read this information sheet and choose to participate. The link to the survey is below. Please click or copy and paste.

WEB LINK TO SURVEY: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GH5HC6C>

Dr. Janet Patford