

This Community Education Project of the Gambling Impact Society (GIS) aims to:

- Increase community awareness and education about problem gambling
- Create an informed and empathetic community to reduce stigma
- Reduce barriers to support for those affected by problem gambling
- Promote self-help and professional support to those affected
- Value the experience and role of consumers (those affected by PG) in being peer leaders in individual recovery and community education.

To achieve these aims the project trains peer educators (those who have been affected by problem gambling) to raise community awareness of the issues of problem gambling. Once trained, peer educators become part of our Consumer Voices team and are then supported by the GIS to conduct community education sessions across the South West Sydney and Hunter/ Newcastle regions. These are conducted in partnership with the local NSW Government's Gambling Help Services in each region. The target audiences for these presentations include community welfare services, community groups, health services and gambling venue staff.

The philosophy behind the Consumer Voices project is that:

- Lack of knowledge in the community at large can create barriers to support for those affected by problem gambling. By increasing community knowledge such barriers can be reduced.
- GIS recognises that people overcoming the effects of problem gambling have, through their pain and personal growth, acquired considerable expertise on the issue and that this expertise is of value to others.
- Many of these people express a desire to contribute their experiences to the cause of helping others. In sharing their story they want to lend hope and inspiration to others and bring the private and often hidden experience of problem gambling more into the open.
- People struggling with the consequences of problem gambling want to hear these personal stories. They want to hear from those who describe the same difficulties, yet have achieved what they aspire to achieve.
- Community and welfare services who may be indirectly working with people experiencing gambling harms may benefit from increased understanding of problem gambling by exposure to the personal narrative.

People who become spokespeople for the project will be given professional training, skills and support to create safe boundaries for themselves in the presentations. They will become part of a team providing positive role models to the community and to those who may be currently struggling with the affects of problem gambling. Consumer Voices spokespeople are paid a nominal fee and travel expenses in recognition of their contribution.

**The project would like to hear from anyone who has had experiences with gambling problems. This includes people who have experienced gambling problems themselves and/or family members who have been affected. We are looking for people who are working on their own recovery and once trained to 'tell a personal story' safely and professionally, would be willing to share their experiences.**

Should you be interested in participating in this project, or if you would like to chat with us first to find out more, **please contact:** GIS Executive Officer and project coordinator: Kate Roberts – 0401 370 042 [info@gisnsw.org.au](mailto:info@gisnsw.org.au). You can find out more about the GIS at [www.gisnsw.org.au](http://www.gisnsw.org.au)