

# **ECM TECHNOLOGY**



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## **Submission to**

**INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL  
OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Review of Gambling Harm Minimisation Measures**

**Device developed to assist  
in the provision  
of  
responsible gaming and harm minimisation**

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## **Abstract**

ECM Technology has developed a plug in device to assist in the provision of harm minimisation, responsible gaming and improving Duty of Care. Functioning within EGM operation the device through real time player - machine interface provides significantly improved levels of 'Reality Basing Information' and 'Patron Informed Consent' on balance for social and problem gamblers.

## **Introduction**

Problem gambling is recognized as causing significant social difficulties. Problem gamblers can continue to gamble without necessarily being exposed to effective gaming harm minimisation mechanisms, measures and messages delivered by conventional methods.

Conventional methods include disposing passive signage at gaming venues and occasionally on gaming machines for the selective visual consumption of the harm minimisation message.

However, if a problem gambler chooses not to observe such messages or information, they can gamble in a cognitive interruption free environment.

## **Background**

To address this issue and submissions called for under the first determination for technical standards <sup>1</sup> - ECM Technology has developed an electronic device that is capable of "Plug and Play" insertion inside existing electronic gaming machines (EGM). This device is referred to as the AAPPS (Automated Assisted Patron Protection System).

AAPPS has the capability to operate independently and / or interactively with user identity or activity; AAPPS is fully programmable to be initialized by event or activity occurrence.

The device provides harm minimisation and assists in behavior identification at the key point of patron machine interface.

## **Summary**

By being incorporated directly into the gaming device operation, AAPPS effectively assists in the provision of harm minimisation at the most effective point –player machine interface.

The device provides the following key operational aspects:

- 1) Functions directly at the point of player - EGM interface and cognitive focus.
- 2) Interactive with parameters of patron behavior and EGM play
- 3) Integrated into EGM operation – Mechanism – Sound and Messaging
- 4) Real time - reality basing information

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<sup>1</sup> Matters identified in the Liquor Administration Board's Proposed Revision to the NSW Technical Standards Revision 2 for Gaming Machines and Subsidiary Equipment in NS W - Review - First Determination

- 5) Process of operation is integral to EGM operation and not peripheral
- 6) Programmable to create triggered and or random break point from uninterrupted player - EGM interface
- 7) Cost and time effective industry wide total implementation capability with minimal lead-time.
- 8) Implementation on existing technology platform to existing EGM operating in NSW.
- 9) Functioning within the operation of an EGM an improved effective mechanism is provided for each individual patron to exercise a rational and sensible choice.

An initial version of the AAPPS device has been fully demonstrated to NSW Regulatory Persons and Government Officials. The device has received favorable support including the NSW Council on problem gambling calling for the immediate insertion of the device into all EGM in NSW.

### **Device Function**

AAPPS provides an automated process to assist in the provision of player protection and harm minimisation in relation to the operation of an EGM.

Operation including message / information display is programmable to variable parameters of operation anytime during play in an interlaced or overlay display mode on the EGM screen.

The system is also capable of interrupting the continuous play of a gaming device at random intervals and/or on predetermined events eg - win amount, time since zero credits, turnover, win loss ratio.

In the interrupt period an array of messages can be displayed on the EGM monitor. These messages can be presented in a combination of visual and if required audio formats.

The AAPPS automated process is designed to assist in reducing the negative psychological effectiveness of an EGM referred to as the "Zone or Hypnotic state"<sup>2</sup>. This state has been commonly identified amongst problem gamblers.

### **Design Considerations**

Activation interval and period is fully programmable and variable as is the content and presentation of message - information display.

The device maintains levels of security and integrity of EGM and Technical Standards.

Cost effective, technically practicable – ease of implementation.

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<sup>2</sup> ABC 4Corners – "George's Millions" October 2003 – Reporter Jonathon Holmes

The device addresses the Regulator’s, Industry, Government and Community requirements in providing a solution that is timely, cost efficient and effective.

- **Timely** as the device can be readily deployed into existing machines with no time lag for industry wide staggered machine replacement.
- **Cost efficient** as the estimated cost of AAPPS, based on an entire statewide rollout is less than (five) 5% of the cost of a new gaming machine.
- **Effective** as AAPPS addresses the problem manufacturers would have in regard to re engineering and retro-fitting all the differing machines. As AAPPS is a 'plug in' device designed to be installed inside all machines the problems of reprogramming, re-engineering and difficult installation are removed.

AAPPS is designed for rapid installation roll-out process, and being independent of all manufacturers is not delayed by the slowest to develop and implement a solution. Additionally the existing high technical regulatory standards are maintained in the operation and installation of AAPPS.

All features of the AAPPS are optional and variable in regard to activation defined and determined operating parameters. AAPPS is fully programmable for any Jurisdictional - Industry determined requirements.

The Important issues of ‘Duty of Care’ - "Reality Basing" Information and patron “Informed Consent" are addressed by the AAPPS device as is the balance between social playing patrons and problem gambling providing an effective mechanism for the implementation of harm minimisation requirements in NSW.

<b>IPART Harm Minimisation Measures</b>	<b>AAPPS CAPABILITY</b>
“Circuit– Breakers”	Provide break in play Periodic interrupts Random interrupts Overlaid Image – Messaging
Information for gamblers	Reality Basing Information Patron specific – real time From Zero credits– time amount turnover win etc. Trigger on random or specific item – ie win amount
Liquidity Controls	Rate of play - Reality Based information on total spend – actual amount
Community Counseling Services	Messaging and behavior triggered information on screen at point of interface Awareness and Behavior awareness raising
Technical Measures	Sound & Visual display Operation

ECM Technology respectfully extends an invitation to IPART officials to view and inspect the device at an independent ATF (Accredited Technical Facility) or other suitable location.

### Attachments

Submitted with this document is a videocassette of a Channel 7 news item on the operation of the device. Duration 1.2 minutes.



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Please note that the Attachment videocassette (Channel 7 news item on the operation of the device) is available for public viewing at The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, Level 2, 44 Market Street, Sydney NSW 2000. To arrange viewing please notify Anna Burela on 02 9290 8472 or Matthew Pearce on 02 9290 8441.