

# Gambling safeguards receive public support

Positive feedback on proposal to limit visits to curb problem gambling, says govt

**By Grace Leong**  
gleong@sph.com.sg  
Singapore

THE government has received feedback on its proposals to beef up casino regulations – the majority of which were in the area of social safeguards.

“Many members of the public supported the proposal to impose a limit on the number of visits that financially vulnerable patrons can make to the casinos,” said the government in a statement yesterday.

“They appreciated that the visit limit system offers an intermediate option, in circumstances where an entry ban under casino exclusion may seem overly harsh.”

The feedback was collated in a four-week public consultation exercise that ended on Aug 6.

“In total, we received close to 40 letters on the Reach portal,” said the statement. “Besides these, the government also consolidated suggestions and views reported in the media and feed-

back sent directly to the various government agencies.

“During the public consultation period, the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) convened four closed-door consultation sessions with stakeholders from various community, grassroots, religious and social service groups. Apart from these, the government also held consultation sessions with the integrated resort (IR) operators.

“Based on the feedback received, we found the public to be generally in favour of the government’s proposed amendments to sharpen our casino regulations and to ensure that the IRs continue to contribute to Singapore’s

tourism industry. The majority of the feedback supported the government’s move to protect financially vulnerable Singaporeans from the harm of casino gambling.”

Proposals to allow family exclusion orders to be issued even if the gambler is absent or uncooperative, and mandatory counselling for those who apply to revoke an exclusion order also received general public support.

Opinions were mixed on the issue of entry levies. While some called for an increase, others said that may push people to go abroad to gamble or turn to other forms of gambling. While there are no plans to change the

entry levy for now, the government said that it would continue to review and, if necessary, enhance social safeguards against gambling.

There were also mixed views on proposals to impose substantially higher penalties against casino operators by raising the limit to 10 per cent of the casino’s total gross gaming revenues, from \$1 million now, should they be subject to disciplinary action by the Casino Regulatory Authority (CRA).

CRA said there would be proper due process in place before it proceeded with disciplinary actions and before it made a decision on penalties.