

Public feedback points regulator to breaches

A MAN tipped off the Casino Regulatory Authority (CRA) when his mother was offered freebies by Resorts World Sentosa (RWS) to renew her annual entry levy.

Singaporeans and permanent residents are levied a daily \$100 charge for entering casinos here, or they can pay an annual fee of \$2,000.

That tip-off, plus another from another person, eventually led to RWS being fined \$600,000 in September for partially reimbursing the entry levy of thousands of patrons between February and May last year.

Relating that case, the head of the CRA, Mr Lau Peet Meng, highlighted to *The Straits Times* the important role the public can play in reporting questionable practices to help the authorities ensure casinos toe the line regarding rules.

The RWS case involved about 3,400 patrons who had their annual levies partially reimbursed.

Mr Lau said the man had written to the CRA in May about how his mother had been promised Universal Studios Singapore tickets if she renewed the annual levy. As CRA officers were looking into the matter, a casino patron also made a similar report.

CRA contacted more than 20 gamblers who had renewed annual levies with RWS and established that there was a programme to entice patrons to continue to gamble at RWS.

Entry levies are not transferrable and patrons can use them only at the casino where they had made payment.

RWS staff had approached thousands of patrons offering concert tickets, hotel stays and gifts such as wallets.

RWS was found by the CRA to be responsible for the marketing programme and ordered to pay \$600,000 in penalty.

CRA also discovered that some documents related to the case could have been forged and that RWS employees were allegedly giving misleading or false information.

Three RWS staff have been charged – two for giving false information and a third with abetting another to commit forgery.

“Public feedback is very critical for our work and we take it seriously,” said Mr Lau. “They can lead to substantial investigations, and in this case, it clearly led to a big case for us.”

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