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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**NATIONAL COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING SEEKS  
PUBLIC VIEWS ON CASINO EXCLUSION MEASURES**

***Public Opinions to help make Operational Procedures Simple and Effective***

The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) announced today the commencement of its public consultation exercise to seek views on draft casino exclusion procedures.

Casino exclusion measures are provided for under the Casino Control Act that was passed by the Parliament in February 2006. These measures will be implemented by the NCPG and they will prevent problem gamblers and the financially vulnerable from gambling at the casinos when the Integrated Resorts commence operations in 2009.

Public views are sought on the operational procedures of the three types of exclusion measures, namely voluntary self-exclusion, family exclusion and third party exclusion; as well as the panel of assessors. Voluntary self-exclusion allows for an individual to bar himself from entering the casinos. The family exclusion provides for family members to prevent a problem gambler from entering the casinos. The third party exclusion is applicable to the financially vulnerable groups, such as those on social assistance, bankrupt, or have poor credit records.

When the NCPG receives an application for exclusion, it will form a Committee of Assessors (COA) comprising an NCPG member and two other persons from a Panel of Assessors. The COA is responsible for investigating and issuing the exclusion orders.

The public can view the draft procedures at the REACH (formerly the Feedback Unit) website at [www.reach.gov.sg](http://www.reach.gov.sg) or the NCPG website at [www.ncpg.org.sg](http://www.ncpg.org.sg). They can give their views either through the websites or email at [admin@ncpg.org.sg](mailto:admin@ncpg.org.sg). They can give their views until 31 January 2007, Wednesday.

### **Stakeholders' Views Sought Earlier**

The public consultation exercise is the second phase of the consultation held by the NCPG. It had recently concluded the first phase of stakeholder consultation with over 80 representatives from various social service, religious, community, grassroots and corporate organisations. These stakeholders provided many suggestions which the Council has incorporated into its draft casino exclusion procedures.

Some of the suggestions include making the process for exclusion simple and accessible, as well as involving social work professionals in the family exclusion process. Stakeholders also raised the importance of having a mix of both professionals (e.g. social workers, counsellors, psychiatrists) and persons of high social standing to be on the panel of assessors to decide on cases of exclusions, so that decisions would be more balanced.

Mr. Lim Hock San, Chairman of the NCPG said: "Exclusion measures are not the only strategy to help those who might be affected by problem gambling or vulnerable to developing problems. However, it is an important tool to empower and protect families and individuals, and we welcome views on how best to make it work. The Council would like to thank those who took part in the earlier stakeholder consultation for their invaluable feedback."

### **Public and Stakeholders Views' will be Incorporated When Procedures are Finalised Next Year**

With the combined contributions from both the public and the various stakeholders, the Council hopes to develop procedures that are simple, effective and would best serve the needs of problem gamblers and their families. The Council will present the finalised procedures to the Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports by early 2007.

**Issued by:**  
**National Council on Problem Gambling**

Attachments:

Annex 1 provides an English-Chinese glossary of relevant terms and names.

Annex 2 contains the online consultation documents.

Annex 3 summarises a list of the social safeguards in place for the casinos.



**About the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG)**

*The NCPG was appointed in August 2005 as part of Singapore's national framework to address problem gambling. It is a council comprising 15 members with expertise and experience in public communications, psychiatry and psychology, social work, counselling and rehabilitative services. The Council's main roles are to provide advice and feedback to the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) on public education programmes to promote public awareness on problem gambling; to decide on funding applications for preventive and rehabilitative programmes; to assess and advise the Government on the effectiveness of treatment, counselling and rehabilitative programmes; and to decide on the applications for exclusion of persons from casinos. For more information, please see [www.ncpg.org.sg](http://www.ncpg.org.sg).*

**For media queries, please contact:**

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**ANNEX 1**

**ENGLISH-CHINESE GLOSSARY**

National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG)	<全国预防嗜赌理事会>
Casino Control Act	场管制法
Self-Exclusion Measures	赌场隔离措施 ( 个人管制令 )
Family Exclusion Measures	赌场隔离措施 ( 家庭保护令 )
Third Party Exclusion Measures	赌场隔离措施 ( 第三人管制令 )
Panel of Assessors	专业鉴定团
Committee of Assessors	专业鉴定委员会
Social Safeguards	社会保护网
Public Consultation	公众咨询
Mr. Lim Hock San	林福山先生
Problem Gambling	嗜赌
Gamblers	赌徒
Problem Gambler	病态赌徒
Gambling Addiction	赌瘾
Addiction	瘾癖症

## ANNEX 2

### CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS FOR NCPG ONLINE CONSULTATION ON CASINO EXCLUSION MEASURES

#### National Council on Problem Gambling Public Consultation on the Casino Exclusion Measures

1. The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) would like to invite members of the public to give your views on how to implement the casino exclusion measures well.
2. In February 2006, Parliament passed the Casino Control Act. Three types of casino exclusion orders to prevent problem gamblers and the financially vulnerable from gambling at the casinos have been provided for under the Act. The National Council on Problem Gambling has the authority to implement them.
3. The three types of exclusion measures are:
  - a. **Voluntary Self-exclusion.** Upon an individual's request, the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) may issue exclusion order for the individual.
  - b. **Family Exclusion.** The NCPG can exclude a person whose gambling has caused serious harm to his/her family upon application by a family member.
  - c. **Third Party Exclusion.** The NCPG may issue an exclusion order to a person who is on any social assistance programme funded by the Government or any statutory body, has a bankruptcy petition filed against him or is an undischarged bankrupt, or has a poor credit record.
4. When the NCPG receives an application for exclusion, it will form a Committee of Assessors (COA). The COA will comprise three persons: the chairman of the COA being an NCPG member and two other persons from a Panel of Assessors.
5. The investigation by the COA is not a legal proceeding, but is similar to the practice for the Tribunal for the Maintenance of Parents. The intention is to reduce the potential for animosity and contain the cost to families. The COA can summon witnesses to provide evidence, notwithstanding any laws relating to the confidentiality of medical information or practice relating to client confidentiality. To protect the parties, all proceedings of hearings are secret. In coming to a



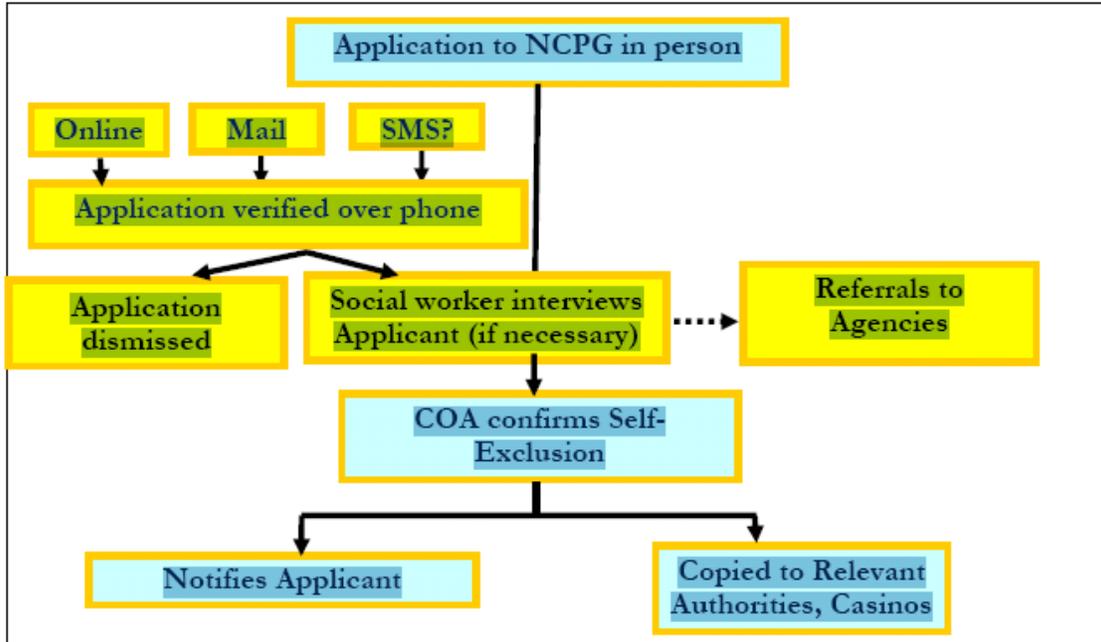
decision, the COA will decide questions of facts on a “balance of probabilities”, and is not bound by strict rules of evidence.

6. The COA will issue an exclusion order if it is satisfied that there is harm and it is in the best interest of the person involved. The draft procedures below are based on consultation with stakeholders from the family, social service, religious and community sectors. The NCPG thanks the stakeholders for their active participation and insights.

7. Interested parties may provide their comments on the following topics:

- Draft Procedures for Voluntary Self-Exclusion
- Draft Procedures for Family Exclusion
- Draft Procedures for Third Party Exclusion
- Panel of Assessors

**DRAFT PROCEDURE FOR VOLUNTARY SELF-EXCLUSION**



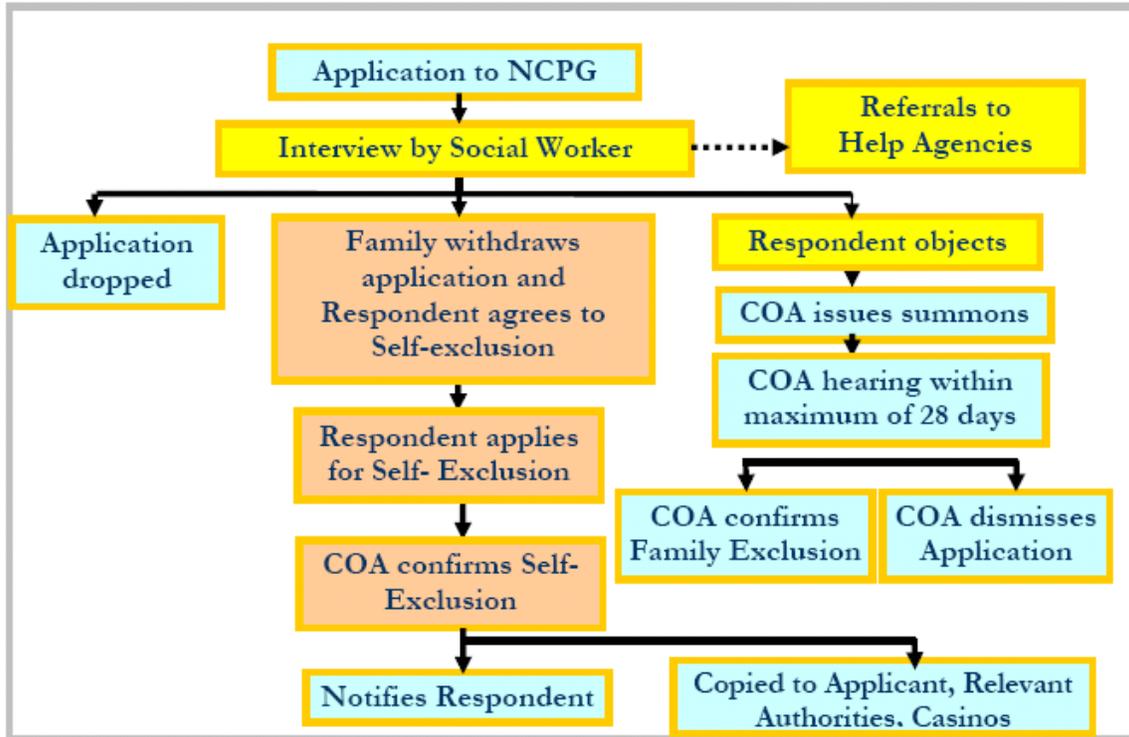
**Key points of Voluntary Self-Exclusion Procedure:**

- As per stakeholders’ suggestion, NCPG will allow applications in person, online and by post to make it convenient and easy for people to apply. NCPG will also explore the feasibility of allowing applications via phone/SMS. The application forms will be translated into the 4 official languages and made available at various distribution points.
- Online applications will be made using Singpass. Applications over post have to be accompanied by a photocopy of the applicant’s NRIC. All applications not made in person will be further verified over the phone. These steps are taken to guard against impersonations.
- The social worker will only interview applicants in person if they ask for help, or if the social worker assesses that they need help. The social worker will also engage the family where possible. The social worker will refer them to help agencies.
- Applications will be dismissed if they are found to be fraudulent.

**The public may wish to comment on the following:**

- Are there any other ways to make the voluntary self-exclusion procedure simpler and more effective?
- How can we encourage problem gamblers to apply for self-exclusion?

**DRAFT PROCEDURE FOR FAMILY EXCLUSION**



**Key points of Family Exclusion Procedure:**

- As per stakeholders’ suggestion that social work professionals be involved in the family exclusion process, the NCPG will employ/commission social workers to work with the family & respondent.
- All applicants and respondents will be interviewed by a social worker separately. A joint interview may be conducted if suitable.
- Apart from assisting in the application process, the social worker will also link families up with appropriate help agencies as appropriate.
- Some stakeholders were of the view that if the family supports the idea, the social worker would check with the problem gambler to consider voluntary self exclusion order. This would reduce the tension in the family and there might be more success if the problem gambler was himself committed to managing his problem. The family would then withdraw the family exclusion application.
- However, where the family does not wish to withdraw the application and/or where the respondent will not want to self-exclude, the application will proceed. The COA will consider the application.
- The COA will confirm the Family Exclusion Order if it is satisfied that the respondent may cause serious harm to his family because of his gambling

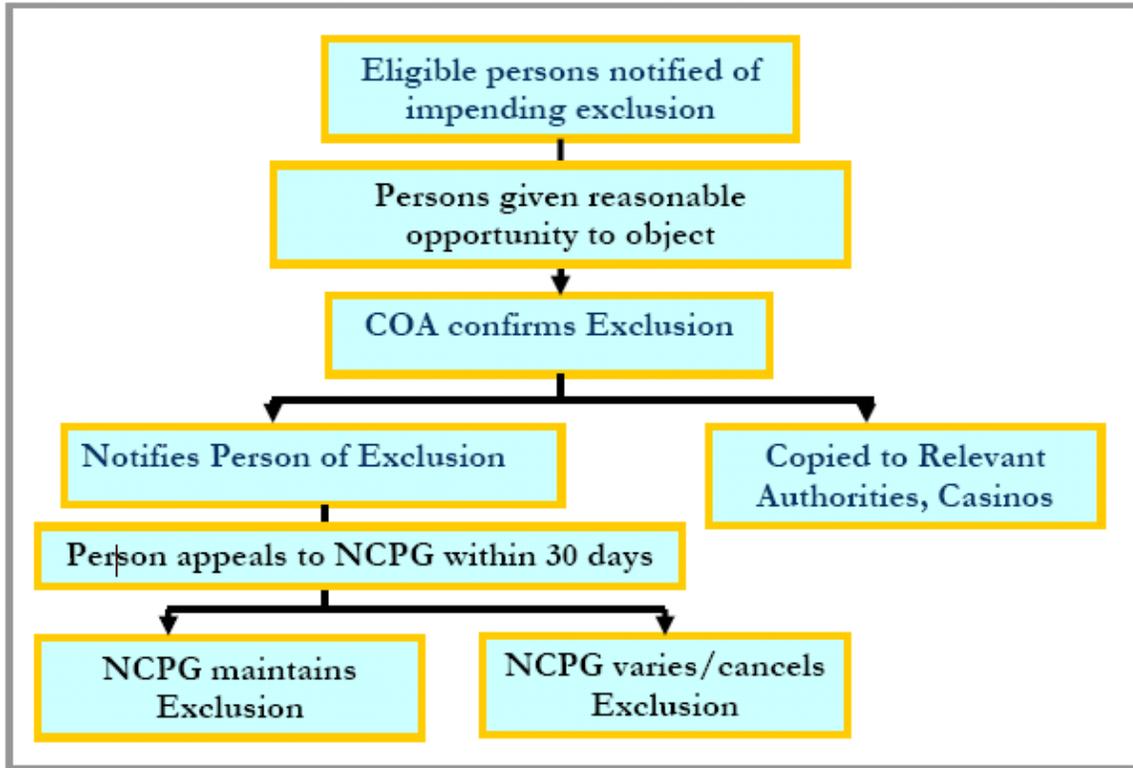
and if it is satisfied that it is in the best interests of the respondent and his family to make the Order. A respondent is regarded as having caused serious harm if he has gambled irresponsibly with regard to the needs and welfare of his family and has done so repeatedly over not less than 3 months or if less than 3 months, in a particularly irresponsible manner.

- Applications may be dismissed by the COA if it is frivolous, vexatious, without substance or has no reasonable prospect of success.

**The public may wish to comment on the following:**

- Under what circumstances, if any, could it be better for families/social workers to persuade the problem gambler to opt for self-exclusion instead of proceeding with family exclusion?
- How can we better support families going through family exclusion orders?

**DRAFT PROCEDURE FOR THIRD PARTY EXCLUSION**



**Key points of Third Party Exclusion Procedure:**

- As stated in the Casino Control Act, persons who are eligible for Third Party Exclusion are those who:
  - Are on any government social assistance programme
  - Undischarged bankrupts
  - Have poor credit records
- These persons will be notified that they will be excluded from the casinos under Third Party Exclusion and given a reasonable opportunity to object.
- The COA will then decide on whether to issue the Third Party Exclusion Order to the persons.
- The recipient of the Third Party Exclusion Order may appeal to the NCPG within 30 days of being notified of the decision of the COA. The decision of the NCPG will be final.

**The public may wish to comment on the following:**

- How can the NCPG implement the Third Party Exclusion in an effective and sensitive way?

## **PANEL OF ASSESSORS**

A Committee of Assessors (COA) will decide on exclusion orders. Every COA comprises 2 members from a Panel of Assessors and 1 member from the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG).

The NCPG has the authority to appoint the Panel of Assessors. The NCPG would like the Panel to have a mix of both professionals (e.g. social workers, counsellors, psychiatrists) and people of high social standing so that the decisions can be balanced. These people should also come from different ethnic groups and religions, so that they are representative of our multi-ethnic and multi-religious society.

The NCPG can also decide how many persons to appoint. The NCPG is considering having a larger pool of about 25-30 people on the Panel, so that they can be rotated if there are many applications for exclusion.

NCPG would employ social workers to support the COA in their hearings. We will also consider what would be a reasonable compensation package for persons serving on the Panel.

**The public may wish to comment on the following:**

- What criteria should be used to select persons to sit on the Panel?
- Who should not sit on the Panel of Assessors?

### ANNEX 3

#### **SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS FOR THE CASINOS**

The exclusion orders are just one of the many stringent social safeguards for casinos that will be put in place. These safeguards are more stringent than in other jurisdictions with casinos.

The other safeguards include:

- **Entry levy for local residents.** To discourage locals from gambling at the casinos, and to signal that gambling is an expense and not a way to earn a living, a casino entry levy of \$100 per day or \$2000 a year will be levied on all Singapore citizens and permanent residents. The entry levies collected will be channelled to the Singapore Totalisator Board for charitable and worthy causes.
- **Restrictions on granting credit for gambling.** To signal that gambling should not be done on future earnings, the casino operator will not be allowed to accept credit cards and post-dated cheques from local residents and will also not be permitted to extend credit to local resident<sup>1</sup>.
- **Patron education on gambling and problem gambling.** Information on problem gambling, help services, rules of games and odds of winning must be prominently displayed within the casino. The casino operator must also train its staff on problem gambling and its detection, and how to deal with patrons whose behaviour clearly suggests that they are at risk of problem gambling.
- **System to allow patrons to voluntarily set loss limits.** The casino operator will be required to set up a system to allow patrons to voluntarily set limits on their expenditure at the casino.
- **Restrictions on advertising.** To reduce the promotion of gambling as a lifestyle or a glamorous activity, all forms of advertising of the casino in the local mass media will be prohibited.

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<sup>1</sup> The only exception would be for resident premium players who would have to deposit no less than \$100,000 upfront with the casino.