

LUCILLE BOOTH: DENIZEN OF GRASSY PARK

Lucille Booth, who joins the NRG in mid-April as a bookkeeper, is looking forward to a challenging and interesting time in her new job.

Lucille is a Capetonian “born and bred”, as she says. She has been a happy denizen of Grassy Park since the day she first opened her eyes, and “I don’t think I’d ever move away”.

The mother of two boys – Carl, 17, and Brindley, 15 – Lucille attended Crestway Senior Secondary School, followed by a year at the old Cape Technical College before plunging into the workaday world.

She got her first job in 1983, she says, “and I’m still busy working.” In the past 23 years she has worked for a number of concerns, not only as a bookkeeper but also in other capacities as the circumstances dictated. Then earlier this year she saw an NRG



advertisement in her newspaper and applied ... and, to her delight, got the job.

“I’m going to be doing several things, and it could be quite a challenge,” she says, “but the people there said they would help me along if I needed it, and that’s what I really like about the job.”

SHANI GROVÉ: COUNSELLOR – AND AUTHOR

New NRG counselling psychologist Shani Grové’s varied career has taken her all over South Africa. Growing up in George, Pretoria-born Shani lacked the money to further her education after leaving school, so she went to work as a bank clerk and lived on the smell of an oil-rag while saving every cent for her studies.

Two years later she finally got her foot in higher education’s door when she obtained a teacher-training bursary and enrolled at the University of Pretoria, where she obtained a BA degree, majoring in English and psychology.

Marriage and the birth of a son and daughter slowed her down a little but did not stop her from achieving her goals. She went on to obtain a Higher Teaching Diploma through the University of South Africa, and later an honours degree and an MA in psychology, after which she became a registered counselling psychologist.

In 1991 Shani established her own practice in East London, working in the business and



educational fields. That was also the year she wrote *Thank You, Brain*, the first of six life-skills books – the latest, *Think Light*, was published in 2004 – which have brought her widespread recognition.

Firmly settled in East London with her son, although her daughter is far from home, in Mpumalanga, Shani’s major interests are reading and travel. She confesses to suffering from a long-term addiction ... to her two dogs.

TRACKING PROBLEM GAMBLERS

Problem gamblers in one part of Canada now have to contend with more than sharp-eyed casino staff and concerned family members – two Saskatchewan casinos are testing a system which identifies and tracks them by means of facial recognition technology and leading-edge computer software.

Both Casino Regina and Casino Moose Jaw have been using the programme, a joint venture between the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation and the Ontario-based software company iView Systems, since December last year.

Bill Davies, a vice-president for the corporation, said the system had potential for expansion: “Every gaming market in the world will sooner or later need to look at how they can make gaming as safe a product as possible, so that they have a sustainable industry.”

The programme analyses data from video lottery terminals to identify trends in gambling behaviour, as well as players who might be at risk for a gambling problem. The information gathered could be used to send up a red flag to warn casino employees about an individual’s long-term gaming problem.

“Risk patterns of play develop over months and years, not over days and weeks,” Davies said. “This gives us a tool that can help manage play in the long term. It’s not a crisis-management system.”

The same software that tracks patrons also monitors who is in the casino and the interactions between staff and players. A facial recognition programme can identify players who have asked not to be allowed in the casino because of a gambling addiction.

For players labelled high-risk, the programme offers on-site information on how VLTs work and about gambling myths.

The office of the Saskatchewan privacy commissioner says casinos are still subject to privacy legislation.

Source: *Globe and Mail*

FIRST STEP TO BEATING THE ODDS

If you need help with a gambling problem for yourself, a friend, a parent, or someone you care for, call the National Responsible Gambling Programme helpline

Toll-free Helpline
0800 006 008

It's a free call and anyone can use this service. Trained helpline counsellors will tell you about the different forms of help available.

0800 006 008



SOUTH AFRICAN
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NRGP

news.

**SPECIAL
EDITION**

NATIONAL RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING PROGRAMME

A public/private sector initiative of government regulators and the gambling industry in South Africa

WELCOME TO THE CONFERENCE!

A Message from our Chairperson

In this special conference edition of NRG News, it is a pleasure for me to welcome you to the National Gambling Board conference, the leading event of its type in Africa. We in the SARGT and NRG are pleased to support this important biennial gathering of government, the regulator community, industry and civil society.

The structures within which South Africa makes provision for minimising the harm caused by problem gambling are unique.

Ultimate responsibility resides with the Minister of Trade and Industry, and the Ministers responsible for gambling matters in the different provinces. But oversight of the delivery of our actual harm-minimisation services in South Africa is delegated, via the SA Advisory Council on Responsible Gambling (SAACREG), to the South African Responsible Gambling Trust (SARGT), of which I am the independent chairperson.

The Trust is composed of four elected regulators and four elected industry professionals, and is responsible for appointing and supervising the work of service providers in the areas of research, prevention and treatment.

In theory the Trust might have invited separate tenders in the areas of research, prevention and treatment but it decided early on to seek to appoint a consortium of consultants in which all three areas would

be integrated. Hence the appointment in 2004 of the South African Responsible Gambling Foundation (SARGF), a not-for-profit organisation set up specifically to deliver a comprehensive, effective and efficient responsible gambling programme.



(continued on page 2)

Dr Vincent Maphai



From left to right: Professor Linda de Vries, Chairperson, Western Cape Gambling and Racing Board, Mr Hassen Adams, Deputy Chairman, Worcester Casino Ltd, Councillor Linda Sibeko, Mayor of the Breede Valley District Municipality at the sod turning of South Africa's latest casino development.



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A Message from our Chairperson (continued from front page)

The Trust is serviced by the National Gambling Board and the whole programme is paid for by voluntary but comprehensive contributions made by the different companies involved in the supply of gambling services.

Clearly the success of these arrangements depends on close co-operation between national and provincial governments, national and provincial regulators, the various sectors of the commercial gambling industry and those who work trying to learn as much as possible about the nature of problem gambling, to prevent people from becoming problem gamblers and ensuring that they get expert treatment if they do develop problems.

Such co-operation, in turn, depends on goodwill from all concerned, combined with a lively sense of shared interests.

Everyone, after all, wants the gambling industry in South Africa to be in the business of providing harmless entertainment and nobody wants to see lives ruined by excessive gambling.

Even so, it requires considerable managerial and diplomatic skills to secure harmony of purpose amongst individuals and organisations which have substantially different aspirations and perspectives. In this respect, the National Gambling Board has played a pivotal role from the outset, both in setting up the Trust and in ensuring its smooth running. I would specifically like to pay tribute here to the work of the NGB's chairman, Chris Fisser, who is also Vice-Chair of the SARGT and to Adv Tibbs Majake who, as CEO of the NGB, is also a trustee.

Of course, the test of whether these collaborative structures are effective must ultimately be judged by whether we are collectively successful in minimising the incidence of, and damage caused by problem gambling.

Fortunately, South Africa passes this test with flying colours. Problem gambling rates for all forms of gambling have come down between 2003 and 2005. This is almost certainly due to the success of our public education programmes. Independent

research also confirms that 75% of those who complete our customised treatment programme are problem gambling free when followed up six months later.

It has been an extraordinarily successful collective effort which richer and allegedly more sophisticated countries have failed to match.

I extend my personal gratitude and congratulations to all who have been involved, and at this time of the NGB's biennial conference, offer special good wishes to the National Gambling Board which has been a key and critical player in these endeavours.

VINCENT MAPHAI
Chairperson

The NRGP and power cuts: battered but unbowed

The recent electrical power outages caused problems for one of the NRGP's most important tools, the toll-free Counselling Line, and it will happen again in the event – or rather the inevitability – of similar cuts in the near future.

But the outages did not stop the Counselling Line from functioning, and won't stop it in the future either, says co-ordinator Barbara van der Spuy, although some callers might find it difficult to get through at the first try.

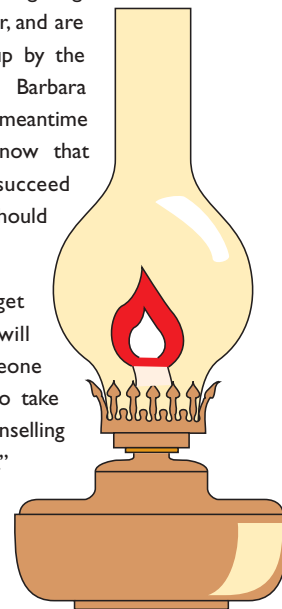
"Our greatest problem," she told *NRGP News*, "was that all our new technology such as our computers were out of action, and the switchboard went down so that we were back to one line instead of four ... and we were working by candle-light – very romantic!

"On the other hand, we were still better off with our direct one line than some other concerns, which were totally cut off."

Is there anything that can be done to counteract the effects of future outages?

"We are investigating installing a generator, and are hoping to be set up by the onset of winter," Barbara says, "and in the meantime people need to know that if they don't succeed immediately they should please keep trying.

"When they get through there will definitely be someone at the other end to take their call, and counselling continues as before."



AURET TELLS BRITS: SA'S NRGPA MODEL FOR THE WORLD



South Africa's National Responsible Gambling Programme provides a model for dealing with problem gambling "which is now being replicated as international best practice in jurisdictions throughout the world" SARGT trustee Derek Auret told British legislators at a policy seminar hosted by a cross-party parliamentary group at the House of Commons in London in January.

South Africa, he said, had been a relatively late entrant into the world of legal regulated gambling in 1996, and "this meant that we were able to learn from the mistakes and successes of other jurisdictions."

Since then South Africa's post-1996 gambling dispensation had earned international respect for its policy framework, social sensitivity, and the economic benefits for the country, he said, adding that when it came to introducing a new dispensation the United Kingdom could learn from South Africa.

Prior to 1996, Mr Auret said, horse-racing was the only legal form of gambling in South Africa. But illegal gambling had been "almost out of control," with about 150 000 unlawful slot-machines "in sleazy venues that were in most cases associated with criminal behaviour such as drug dealing, loan-sharking, money laundering, prostitution and the like." There were doubts about honesty aspects, the machines being 'crooked,' operators paid no taxes and no attention had been given to problem gambling.



"Today this has been replaced by a rigorously regulated and tightly controlled industry which has created nearly 100 000 direct and indirect new jobs, has yielded over R12 billion in new investment in tourism and other amenities and facilities such as more than 5 000 hotel rooms and two internationally-competitive convention centres, and in which previously disadvantaged South Africans control on average an effective 38% economic interest, as well as having voting control.

"And significantly, government earns over R2.7 billion per annum in revenue from the industry. In addition, together with government, a comprehensive public-private sector partnership – the National Responsible Gambling Programme (NRGP) – has been developed to deal with problem gambling, a model which is now being replicated as international best practice in jurisdictions throughout the world."

It was essential that British policymakers be clear up front about how they intended to leverage the public interest by legalising casinos. A profusion of gambling venues, for example, might well yield high levels of taxation, but would not deliver public infrastructure because the price of entry would be that much lower. Alternatively, if Britain chose to restrict the supply of gambling and limit the number of casinos to a smaller number of larger facilities, it could expect substantial investment in tourism plant and other public infrastructure.

Some lessons which would be "particularly useful to British policymakers include a regulatory authority independent of the political executive, distributing casino opportunities throughout the jurisdiction so as to attract investment and infrastructure to rural areas, 10-year geographic exclusivity in exchange for a substantial licence fee payment to the state, and a requirement that casino licence applicants provide non-gambling amenities and other public infrastructure,

especially in the tourism sector," he said.

He offered "five key lessons" from the South African experience:

- It is imperative that government decide early on what its objectives in licensing casinos are. These can vary from purely fiscal considerations to broader objectives such as economic upliftment of economically depressed areas – or regeneration. But the objective must be clear and potential applicants must be fully informed of these goals.
- Government must decide and inform potential applicants of the so-called "add-ons" that it desires. In South Africa the allocation of casino licences has been viewed as an opportunity to secure much needed financial benefits for government and the broader public and the process has been demonstrably successful.
- The process must be fully transparent, fair, equitable and as comprehensive as possible. The adjudication authority, which should be provided with the maximum independence, must be clear as to the objectives that are desired and must act accordingly.
- Applicants should be kept abreast of all developments during the adjudication process.
- The ideal would be that the regulatory authority/applicants approach the process in the manner of a partnership that will endure following the conclusion of the process.



NRGP IN AT THE START AT WORCESTER

“We welcome the involvement of the NRGF in Worcester” – Sibeko

The NRGF is alive and well at the Worcester Casino – even though South Africa’s latest gambling venue hasn’t even been completed yet. The programme’s importance was made quite clear by the Mayor of the Breede Valley District Municipality, Councillor Linda Sibeko, when she turned the casino’s first sod.

In her address Ms Sibeko paid tribute to the Breede Valley’s beauty and Worcester’s strategic location and well-developed infrastructure, which put the town and its hinterland “in an excellent position to accommodate rapid growth and development ... Situated on the NI national road, Worcester lies on the main route to and from Cape Town, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth, providing the region with significant locational advantages.”

But, she pointed out, “beneath the prosperous veneer of our region’s vibrant agricultural, manufacturing and tourism sectors, there lies a significant incidence of poverty, unemployment and homelessness. There is therefore a very great need to attract the type of high-potential growth industries that will create the jobs and bring the investment without which we cannot hope to improve the quality of life of all our people.

“The Worcester Casino, with the numerous opportunities which it promises to our community, is precisely such an investment. It has often been remarked that – in terms of its regulation and policy framework – the Western Cape has one of the world’s most sophisticated and scrupulous gambling regimes. I believe that to be true ...

“Being relative latecomers to the world of legal gambling, we in South Africa have had ample opportunity to learn from both the mistakes and successes of other gambling jurisdictions. The result is a legal framework which protects the customer, provides the industry with an unambiguous set of ground-rules, and gives the public a legitimate outlet for their gambling instincts.”

Ms Sibeko said that the leisure industry,



Mayor Linda Sibeko says social issues must be addressed.

the world’s most rapidly expanding economic sector, especially in terms of the gambling industry, had had a “profound impact” on the provincial economy, and “it is important that we in the Breede River Valley should take note of this in our strategic planning, since it is a sector which has the ability through its labour intensiveness, high levels of investment, and economic knock-on effects, to address in a meaningful and sustainable way the challenges of underdevelopment in our region”.

However, “we must exercise great care that in creating a regulatory framework which legalises gambling, and in promoting the economic benefits of gambling, we do not simultaneously introduce a threat to social wellbeing by ignoring the fact that gambling does carry with it risks of individual dependency and personal financial stress.

“It is a regrettable truth that while the majority of South Africans gamble with little or no adverse consequences, the percentage of people with gambling problems – some 4% at present – is bound to increase with time as gambling becomes more socially acceptable and accessible.

“We therefore welcome the involvement here at Worcester of the National Responsible Gambling Programme, which is an internationally-unique partnership between the gambling sector and government. At an early stage it was recognised that if such a project was to be credible, effective and independent of any sectoral interest, it should be established as a public-private partnership which integrates the concerns, insights and resources of the gambling industry, regulators and the national and provincial governments.

“Being charged with political oversight of this district I warmly welcome this problem gambling initiative, aimed particularly at the most vulnerable sections of our communities, and funded by, among others, the casino project we launch today.”

It was relevant to note, she added, that “we in the Western Cape implemented from the start measures to promote responsible gambling, such as strict regulations to ensure that gambling licenses complied with government’s objective of minimising the incidence of problem gambling.

“The industry in our province has certainly fulfilled our expectations in this regard, and for this they deserve recognition.”