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PRESS RELEASE

$199,476 GRANT TO SUPPORT PROBLEM GAMBLERS

NEDLANDS-based not-for-profit community support organization – Linkwest – is proud to announce it has obtained a grant for $199,476 to facilitate help for problem gamblers in Western Australia.

Linkwest CEO Jane Chilcott said: “About 115,000 Australians are classified as problem gamblers with a further 280,000 people at moderate risk and many families, from all walks of life, need urgent community support.

“This grant will enable Linkwest to work with eight community centres throughout the state that are dealing with the fallout from problems caused by gambling in our community.

“Problem gambling causes a wide range of issues including marital and family breakdown, homelessness, suicide, job loss and bankruptcy.”

Mrs. Chilcott said that the social cost of problem gambling is estimated to be at least $4.7 billion a year. Linkwest chairperson Dr Nicky Howe said the gambling grant – provided jointly by the WA Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor and Department of Local Government and Communities will provide significant, grassroots opportunities to tackle the problem.

Linkwest’s Our Ace Community – Beyond Gambling project will include community workshops, an awareness raising campaign and training for frontline staff. Linkwest is proud to be delivering the project in partnership with ConnectGroups, Centrecare, WA Association for Mental Health and Relationships Australia Australia WA. Eight WA community centres will be running the 30 Days 30 Ways community workshops, which will offer alternatives to social gambling and opportunities to bring communities together in creative ways.

Linkwest is the peak body for community, neighbourhood and learning centres in Western Australia. It offers targeted and relevant training and support to those working in small community-managed, not-for-profit organisations. Linkwest, with a staff of six, offers crucial support to more than 75 members, including 35 regional and remote organisations. More than 70,000 Western Australians currently use these centres. The centres provide a friendly, welcoming place where local people can meet to learn, gain new skills, make friends and feel part of their community. They also provide a safe, affordable space for playgroups, community and support groups to gather.

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Australian Gambling Statistics

- Around 70 per cent of Australians participated in some form of gambling in the past year.
- About 115,000 Australians are classified as ‘problem gamblers’ with a further 280,000 people at ‘moderate risk’.
- Total recorded losses through gambling in Australia reached just over $19 billion in 2008–09 (an average of $1,500 per gambler and a share of household consumption of 3.1 per cent).
- The social cost of problem gambling is at least $4.7 billion a year.
- The harms from problem gambling can include suicide, depression, relationship breakdown, lowered work productivity, job loss, bankruptcy and crime.

BACKGROUND: Linkwest
Nedlands-based Linkwest is a small not-for-profit organisation that is largely funded by the State Government’s Department of Local Government and Communities.

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Former Premier of Western Australia, Professor Carmen Lawrence, is Linkwest’s official patron. She has been a patron for the past five years.

The history behind the organisation goes back to 1978 – for many years it was known as Learning Centre Link, until it was renamed Linkwest in 2011.

It proudly hosts an informative conference for small not-for-profit organisations every alternate year in Perth. Into the Spotlight: Our Role on the Community’s Stage, to be held from August 26-28, is the 19th biennial Linkwest conference. For the first time, Linkwest will join forces with ConnectGroups to co-host the conference. The conference will be attended by up to 200 local community leaders from all over Western Australia.

http://www.linkwest.asn.au/
http://www.linkwest.asn.au/documents/item/710

Jane Chilcott, Linkwest CEO
Jane Chilcott, CEO of Linkwest since 2011, has been instrumental in re-establishing the peak organisation’s focus and commitment to small, locally managed centres and not-for-profits. Jane’s knowledge of the sector and her extensive HR background has helped many centres become better equipped at meeting the needs and aspirations of their local community. Through her significant advocacy initiatives, Jane has bought attention to the issues affecting small not-for-profits and to the essential services that these organisations provide.