

Crown gets OK to look at gambler's finances

Crown Casino has won access to the financial records of chronic gambler Harry Kakavas, to put his declared AUD 36 million losses „in context“.

Mr Kakavas, a Gold Coast property developer, is suing Crown in the Supreme Court for the money he says he lost at the casino between June 2005 and August 2006, along with AUD 50 million in damages.

He claims that Crown executives pursued a plan to lure him back to their tables despite knowing he had been the subject of various exclusion orders banning him from entering casinos. The court heard yesterday, during preliminary arguments, that Mr Kakavas will rely on reports of psychologists who say he suffered a pathological gambling problem from as early as 1994.

Pat Zappia, for Mr Kakavas, said his client was claiming disadvantage due to the condition from July 2004, „but the facts that support (it) date back to July 1994“. Nick Hopkins, for Crown, said the psychologists' reports relied only on the instructions given to them by Mr Kakavas, and evidence of his finances from 1994, including bank statements, should be produced. „He lost \$ 70 million at casinos ... for others that is a large amount of money, but it needs to be put in context,“ Mr Hopkins said.

Justice David Harper said he was concerned that compulsory disclosure of documents was not used „as a disincentive for a party to continue with proceedings“. But he agreed that Crown should have access to records relating to assumptions about Mr Kakavas' income contained in the psychologists' reports.

The case is due to go to trial in June.