

**IN THE MATTER OF AN APPLICATION TO THE VICTORIAN  
GAMBLING AND CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION BY  
HUON HILL CLUB LTD FOR APPROVAL OF PREMISES AS  
SUITABLE FOR GAMING WITH SEVENTY (70)  
ELECTRONIC GAMING MACHINES AT CLUB WODONGA  
SITUATED AT 48 REID STREET, WODONGA, VICTORIA**

**WITNESS STATEMENT OF JOHN THEODORE FEROS**

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Date of document:	8 July 2025
Filed on behalf of:	The Applicant
Prepared by:	
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Level 7, 555 Lonsdale Street	Ref: EEDW:AXW:20255007
Melbourne VIC 3000	

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**Background**

1. My full name is John Theodore Feros and I reside at [REDACTED].
2. I am a Director of Huon Hill Club Limited (ACN 681 740 072) which is the Applicant in the Application for Approval of Premises Suitable for Gaming with 70 electronic gaming machines ("EGMs") at 48 Reid Street, Wodonga in Victoria ("premises"). Huon Hill Club Limited ("the Applicant") is a company limited by guarantee being a club with charitable objects to trade as Club Wodonga from the Premises which currently trades as Huon Hill Hotel.
3. The Huon Hill Hotel is the current operational business at the Premises and is operated by Wodonga Nominees Pty Ltd (ACN 144 812 626). By Sale of Shares Agreement dated 10 December 2024 JDA Management Services (Victoria) Pty Ltd (ACN 675 387 676) as Trustee for JDA Management Services (Victoria) Trust purchased the shares in Wodonga Nominees Pty Ltd from BMP Richmond Pty Ltd (ACN 101 044 713) as Trustee for the BMP Wodonga Property Trust. JDA Management Services (Victoria) Pty Ltd is a company of which I am the Sole Director and Sole Shareholder.
4. The freehold of the Premises was purchased pursuant to the Contract, dated 28 February 2024 and transferred from Regional Nominees Pty Limited (ACN 154 559 985)

to JDA Victorian Investments Pty Ltd (ACN 673 839 926) as Trustee for JDA Victorian Investments Family Trust of which I am a Director and the Sole Shareholder.

5. Accordingly, accordingly I am a Director and Sole Shareholder of the following entities related to the Premises:

- (a) JDA Victorian Investments Pty Ltd (ACN 673 839 926) which is the Trustee for the JDA Victorian Investments Family Trust which owns the Premises;
- (b) JDA Management Services (Victoria) Pty Ltd (ACN 675 387 676) which is the Trustee for JDA Management Services (Victoria) Trust which owns the shares in Wodonga Nominees Pty Ltd (ACN 144 812 626) which currently operates the Huon Hill Hotel;
- (c) Huon Hill Club Ltd which is the Applicant and which will trade as Club Wodonga from the Premises.

I am also a Director together with my brother Dean Feros and my brother-in-law Paul Henderson in Wodonga Nominees Pty Ltd (ACN 144 812 626).

6. My family, the Feros family, has been in the hospitality industry for 40 years. My father Theodore (Theo) Feros started in the industry by purchasing his first hotel in 1969 together with his brother Nick and became renowned in the hospitality industry. He is a member of the NSW Australian Hotels Association Hall of Fame. The Group JDA is now run by myself (John Feros), Dean Feros my brother, and Alexandra Henderson (formerly Feros) my sister (hence JDA). JDA currently operates 13 Venues across the eastern seaboard of Australia in Queensland and New South Wales and has a motto of “your premium pub experience” offering an exceptional experience for all patrons through supplying excellent food, service and entertainment. Together with hotels, we operate a business in Mermaid Beach, Queensland which is a putt putt mini golf experience.

7. The venues operated by JDA include the following:

- (a) Padstow Park Hotel NSW
- (b) The Peakhurst NSW
- (c) Union Place Hotel NSW
- (d) General Gordon Hotel NSW
- (e) Great Southern Bar NSW
- (f) Cherry's at Mountbatten Hotel NSW
- (g) Charlie Chan's Bar NSW

- (h) The Unicorn Hotel NSW
- (i) Globe Hotel NSW
- (j) Mermaid Beach Tavern QLD
- (k) Gold Coast Tavern QLD
- (l) Putt Putt Mermaid Beach QLD
- (m) Huon Hill Hotel Wodonga VIC

8. Although the majority of venues operate in metropolitan areas, the Globe Hotel in Deniliquin is a premier destination in regional NSW which has been an institution in the area since 1867. JDA recently purchased the Globe Hotel to further diversify the operations of JDA. The Hotel is a regional institution with an established focus on community and family, an area of keen interest to my family and values we reflect in our operations, which prompted the purchase of the Globe Hotel and our regional expansion and diversification.
9. In or about 2019 I met William Perry who is very much a local identity in the Wodonga area albeit living in Metropolitan Melbourne now. He shared with me his vision for his relatively new and modern venue known as the Huon Hill Hotel. Mr Perry created and built that venue from scratch as a community venue and intended to provide a modern, well run, quality, full facility offering to the local community, supporting local community and providing a space to retain events in Wodonga and to encourage locals to stay in Victoria and on the southern side of the Murray River rather than going to Albury for hospitality offerings particularly. Albury has always been the bigger “brother/sister” of Wodonga.
10. Over the following years and whilst the purchase of the Globe Hotel in Deniliquin was settled, my discussions with Mr Perry continued and our relationship solidified. Together with my family, we believed we could assist Mr Perry in bringing his vision to life in Wodonga. This was important considering Mr Perry's advancing age and health issues he experienced during this time, together with other focuses in his life at this stage. Accordingly, negotiations led to my family agreeing to purchase the freehold and thereafter the operating entity on the basis that Club Wodonga would be created to sustain and increase the offering from a hospitality venue as commenced by Mr. Perry, and to have a vehicle to further support and consolidate support to the local community.

11. The concept of Club Wodonga was raised with the local Council and we have been in discussions with the local Council at all levels numerous times over the period culminating in a relatively recent meeting this year with statutory planning staff as well as Councillors including the Mayor, and the CEO. We have at all stages had discussions with the local Council to ensure that not only Mr Perry's vision but the vision, philosophy and requirements of the local Council were also considered in the proposal.
12. Club Wodonga will be a venue which will offer a quality food service, provision of liquor, a sports bar, bistro, gaming lounge with 70 EGMs a function facility for large functions including weddings right down to smaller birthdays or family gatherings, and a cafeteria assisting the local businesses such as the adjoining Quest Hotel with a breakfast and small meal offering for guests as well as the wider community.
13. Having learned from the experience in not only Deniliquin being a regional area in NSW, but also in the very geographically specific areas (principally near train stations) in Metropolitan Sydney, the nature of community and the local people is of paramount importance in this Proposal.
14. Club Wodonga is a large venue and a full offering of hospitality options is required to not only provide that full facility offering but also to ensure funds are available to support community to the extent anticipated and desired. Following discussion with Council as well as substantial investigation on the local demographics, competition, expenditure, and other considerations, the number of 70 EGMs was decided upon for this Application. Notwithstanding there is an ability to apply for a larger number of up to 105, in considering our findings and in discussions with my family and the local Council, 70 was decided upon to adequately encourage and entice those who already game particularly back across the border from New South Wales. Albury, NSW is a sophisticated gaming market with a substantial number of EGMs available. Also, through our experience particularly with the responsible service of gambling and technologies used by our group, the new expenditure on gaming that would be likely through an Application for 70 EGMs at Club Wodonga, would be managed as well as possible according to best practice by an experienced gaming operator.
15. The JDA Group is a community minded group supporting local communities through various and numerous sponsorship opportunities and donations. Specific examples of these sponsorships and donations include the following from our current existing venues:
  - (a) Oztag Beach Tournament on the Gold Coast;

- (b) Sutherland Shire Elite Teams Oztag competition;
- (c) Boys to the Bush;
- (d) Hurstville Zagreb Football Club;
- (e) Boldface Public School 75th Anniversary;
- (f) NoLedge House Mental Health Awareness.

16. Another aspect of the JDA Group's hospitality offering is to employ diverse local workforces. Currently JDA Group employs a number of motivated and keen members of the community with a disability or a permanent medical condition to develop their skills to be valuable hospitality employees. In an area such as Wodonga, the ability to ensure employment for locals particularly younger locals, to remain in the area and support their career goals, is also an important factor. Together with the use of local suppliers and contractors, the JDA Group is aware of the enormous impact it can have on the local Wodonga economy alongside and at the same time as the social benefits that we feel able to offer.
17. If we were not to proceed with the EGM Application and subsequent installation the JDA Group would not anticipate the commencement of Club Wodonga operations being a transition from the Huon Hill Hotel as the financial benefit would not be maximized. The Huon Hill Hotel is profitable in its current operations but not to the extent anticipated if the proposal and development proceeds as we hope. The development includes a \$6,000,000.00 spend on the Premises through a well thought out and experienced development taking into account local needs and desires and discussions with the local Council.
18. For all of the reasons included herein I strongly believe in the concept of Club Wodonga as a full facility hospitality offering with 70 EGMs as an additional regional asset extending and expanding the vision of the JDA Group, a community "hub" supporting and fulfilling the vision of Mr Perry, and a great economic contributor to the local community as an appealing venue to ensure Wodonga locals (as well as those from afar) stay in Wodonga for their entertainment and hospitality choices.

**Signed on this                      day of                      2025.**

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John Theodore Feros