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Strategy for Tatts charity

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VICTORIANS do not need to look too hard to find evidence of Tattersall's charitable works.

Hospital, sporting groups and community organisations have all benefited from the millions of dollars donated by the pokies giants -- usually with a large Tatts sign or novelty oversized cheque attached.

But documents lodged with the Supreme Court by Tattersall's trustee David Jones show the calculated strategy behind some of these donations.

In a remarkably candid assessment of Tattersall's charity work, the trustees show how giving away money can earn respect, a better public image and help make political connections.

"The charitable and philanthropic activities carried out by the estate have contributed to the reputation and political standing of the estate," the affidavit said.

"These events have also provided opportunities in which the current trustees have liaised with politicians from each of the major political parties."

The documents also state that: "Tattersall's has also made a number of other charitable and philanthropic contributions. While fundamentally philanthropic, these contributions have on occasions served strategic ends."

The trustees admit in the documents that the purchase and donation of the medals of war heroes -- including those of Nancy Wake -- were at least partly done to curry favour with the RSL.

"These contributions have fostered the relationship between Tattersall's and the Returned (and) Services League of Australia, the owners of a large number of gaming venues at which Tatts Pokies operated," Mr Jones said in the affidavit.

A brief return to financially supporting horse racing through sponsorship in the early 1990s appeared to be a successful venture for Tattersall's.

"The involvement provided the estate with access to senior management and board members at the TAB . . . (and) also provided the estate with access to senior Victorian State Government officials," the document said.

"Sponsorship was then dropped when it no longer served the estate's purpose."

Tattersall's website shows the gaming giant's commitment to charity.

"George Adams was a great benefactor and his financial support mainly revolved around the sick, the aged and the youth of our community," it said.

But the Interchurch Gambling Taskforce said the court documents confirm what they have suspected for many years.

"Tattersall's giving appears cynical," spokesman Mark Zirnsak said. "Giving is something

that should be done for its good, not to gain political leverage."

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