

*Source:* The Daily Telegraph

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**A BOOZE-LOVING card player used his "poker face" to fool Star City Casino staff into serving him 42 beers in a single 17-hour sitting.**

The unnamed gambler put in a marathon innings, downing five beers every two hours.

Three waiters were happy to oblige the cashed-up player with as many drinks as he requested and failed to keep track of the seriously high level of alcohol the man was ingesting as he sat at the same card table in the main gaming floor from 2.30am.

It was not until the card table closed at 7am that Star City staff realised the man was wildly intoxicated.

"He didn't appear to be steady on his feet. He was dozing off at the table and the manager had to help him collect his chips so he could cash them in," bar waiter Helen Mikhael-Ghanime, who was sacked for her role in serving the man 15 beers in seven hours, said.

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Star City Casino has been fined \$10,000 for breaching liquor laws, which ban casino operators from allowing an intoxicated person to gamble.

When the Casino Liquor and Gaming Control Authority demanded that Star City show cause,

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Written by Administrator

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the casino argued that its staff could not tell the gambler was drunk because of his poker face.

"The nature of poker is that players tend to be ... very controlled in their facial expressions and body movements," Star City's leaked letter to the authority states.

"This level of control means that many of the visible signs that a person ... is affected by alcohol may be minimised."

In internal investigations, Star City management discovered there was no formal communication between bar staff, managers and security staff about the number of drinks each patron consumed.

The three wait staff who served the man 31 of the 42 drinks - from 2.29pm on December 31, 2008 until 7.26am on January 1, 2009 - have been sacked or demoted.

Leaked documents reveal staff member Frankie Yuen, who served the man 11 drinks over five hours, had "no recollection of serving the patron". Mr Yuen was demoted and transferred to the Garden Buffet breakfast service.

Ms Mikhael-Ghanime said she was unfairly sacked:

"Of all the cocktail servers, dealers, security guards, bar supervisors, pit managers on duty that night, I was the only one terminated," she said.

"Why wasn't anyone else accountable out of all the other employees who were responsible?"

The man, whose identity has not been revealed, bought the remaining 12 low-alcoholic beers from Star City's Bluff Bar.

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But the strength of the other 30 beers is not known. "We are unable to ascertain from our records the type of beer that was purchased from the cocktail waiters," Star City said.

The authority said the \$10,000 fine had been reduced because of Star City's otherwise good record in dealing with drunken gamblers.

It evicted 6717 intoxicated patrons in 2008.

"[The authority] considers this matter to be a serious breach of Star City's responsible service of alcohol obligations," the authority said to Star City.

"In determining the pecuniary penalty, due consideration was given to Star City's record in relation to the responsible service of alcohol and the action taken to prevent similar incidents in the future."

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