
Inquiry into the prevention and treatment of problem gambling

Terms of Reference

- (a) measures to prevent problem gambling, including:
 - (i) use and display of responsible gambling messages,
 - (ii) use, access and effectiveness of other information on risky or problem gambling, including campaigns,
 - (iii) ease of access to assistance for problem gambling;
- (b) measures which can encourage risky gambling behaviour, including:
 - (i) marketing strategies,
 - (ii) use of inducements/incentives to gamble;
- (c) early intervention strategies and training of staff;
- (d) methods currently used to treat problem gamblers and the level of knowledge and use of them, including:
 - (i) counselling, including issues for counsellors,
 - (ii) education,
 - (iii) self-exclusion;
- (e) data collection and evaluation issues;
- (f) gambling policy research and evaluation; and
- (g) other related matters.

NSW submission to the Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform's Inquiry into the prevention and treatment of problem gambling

Introduction

Gambling is a recreational pursuit enjoyed by many people in NSW, and indeed, across Australia. While most people who gamble do so in a responsible manner and enjoy gambling as entertainment, for some it is a cause of problems for themselves, their families and the community.

NSW continues to play a leading role in implementing measures to reduce the harm associated with gambling. The current problem gambling rate in NSW is among the lowest in Australia.

NSW policies and legislation provide an integrated and wide-ranging approach to gambling harm minimisation. This approach involves education, counselling services, research, venue and staff training, licence approval processes, and regulation.

The NSW Government welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform and to assist it in its task of making recommendations in this important area.

Responsible Gambling Fund

Funding from the NSW Government towards responsible gambling initiatives is provided predominantly through the Responsible Gambling Fund, which draws its income from a two per cent levy on the Sydney casino's gaming revenue, as required by the *Casino Control Act 1992*.

Money from the Fund is spent on the development and implementation of programs that aim to reduce and prevent the harms associated with problem gambling. The program is overseen by a board of Trustees who make recommendations to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts. The Trustees are supported in their work by officers of the NSW Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing.

During the 2010/11 financial year, expenditure from the fund was \$14.299 million. From this, \$11.243 million was spent on the counselling and support program to assist people with gambling-related problems. The program includes the Gambling Help services (face-to-face services, 24-hour helpline service and the 24-hour online service) and the service and workforce development programs such as accreditation, minimum qualification, clinical supervision, code of ethics and training.

In addition, \$0.349 million was spent on research to better inform the development of responsible gambling related policy. This includes the review of the Responsible Conduct of Gambling course and the national Gambling Research Australia program.

\$1.628 million was spent on communication activities to raise awareness about problem gambling and the availability of Government-funded resources and counselling services. Activities include the Gambling Hangover campaign, Responsible Gambling Awareness week, the Early Intervention, Prevention and Community Engagement Strategy for Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse communities as well as the Gambling Help website, social media and mobile phone applications.

For further information, a copy of the Responsible Gambling Fund Annual Report 2010/11 is available at www.olgr.nsw.gov/gaming_rgf.asp.

Measures to prevent problem gambling

(i) The use and display of responsible gambling messages

The *Gaming Machines Act 2001* requires hotels and clubs with gaming machines to provide player information. This includes the display of information about the chances of winning a major prize from a gaming machine in each gaming machine area and on every gaming machine. Hotels and clubs must also display approved player information brochures containing information about the use of gaming machines, the chances of winning prizes and the Gambling Helpline phone number. The brochures are also available in a range of community languages. Hotels and clubs must also display a gambling warning notice and problem gambling notice on every gaming machine. The gambling warning notice is,

Think! About tomorrow
Think! About your choices
Think! About getting help
Think! About your family
Think! About your limits

The problem gambling notice is,

Think! About your choices
Call Gambling Help
1800 858 858
www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au

Hotels and clubs must also display counselling signage.

Think! About your choices
Gambling More, enjoying it less?
For free and confidential information and advice about problem gambling, please contact
Gambling Help
1800 858 858
www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au

Hotels and clubs with gaming machines must also display a notice on each automatic teller machine or cash-back terminal installed in the venue. The notice must read,

Think! About your choices
Call Gambling Help
1800 858 858
www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au

Similar requirements have also been made under the *Casino Control Act 1992*, the *Racing Administration Act 1998*, the *Totalizator Act 1997* and the *Public Lotteries Act 1996*. See www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/signs_gaming.asp

The Responsible Gambling Fund produces a range of Gambling Help information collateral that is available for use and display by any stakeholder. Collateral is also developed specifically for indigenous and cultural groups. Below is a list of current collateral. New collateral is being produced, distributed and promoted all the time.

- Gambling Hangover poster and brochure
This material is targeted at young men and promotes awareness of the symptoms of problem gambling and encourages self-reflection of gambling behaviour. It has been

distributed to a range of stakeholders including gaming venues, medical centres, TAFEs and community health centres.

- **Gambling Help poster and brochure**
This collateral details the range of Gambling Help options available to those who want information and help in relation to problem gambling. They have been distributed to a range of stakeholders and are available in six community languages.
- **Gambling Help website www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au**
The website contains information and interactive tools including a gambling calculator, stories from those who have experienced gambling problems and free SMS reminder messages.
- **Gambling Help promotional materials**
Information carrying the Gambling Help message is printed and distributed on mints, t-shirts, pens, footballs, stress balls and a range of other promotional materials.
- **Gambling Help Online website www.gamblinghelponline.org.au**
This national website, partly funded by the NSW Government, provides information about gambling issues, regaining control, accessing support and helping others.
- **A range of brochures and posters specifically designed for Aboriginal communities**
This collateral promotes responsible gambling, the symptoms of problem gambling and encourages self-reflection on gambling behaviour. The collateral is distributed to a range of stakeholders including community health centres.
- **A range of collateral specifically designed for culturally and linguistically diverse communities**
This collateral promotes responsible gambling, the symptoms of problem gambling and encourages self-reflection on gambling behaviour. The collateral is distributed to a range of stakeholders including community health centres.
- **DVD - Gaming Machines: Facts and Myths**
This DVD promotes informed decision making on gaming machine play. It has been widely distributed to stakeholders, is available in six community languages and is available on the Gambling Help website.
- **Booklet - How You Can Control Your Gambling**
This self-help booklet is available on the Gambling Help website.
- **Booklet - Self-Help Guide for Family and Friends**
This self-help booklet is available on the Gambling Help website.
- **Booklet - Guide to Problem Gambling: Children and Young People**
This booklet has been distributed to counsellors in schools and TAFE institutions across NSW.
- **Illegal conduct brochure and poster**
This collateral provides information about what is illegal and irresponsible conduct by gaming venues and how to report issues. It is available in a range of community languages.

(ii) Other information on problem gambling, including campaigns

Gambling Help Online and the Gambling Helpline are both available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and provide information and resources about problem gambling.

The Gambling Helpline received 6,700 target group calls in 2011. Gambling Help Online received 60,729 visits and held 1,491 online gambling counselling sessions.

The most recent evaluation of the Gambling Helpline service, conducted in 2008, concluded that the service was effective in assisting callers to manage their gambling problems. An evaluation of the Gambling Help Online service in 2010/11 concluded that it is a well designed and delivered service, and that the website is accessible and easy to navigate. The evaluation also provided evidence that the service is meeting its aims of attracting a new cohort of clients who may not otherwise access counselling.

The Gambling Help NSW website (www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au) offers a range of resources, information and help for a variety of stakeholders in English and in a range of community languages.

Gambling Help counselling services are involved in promoting awareness of problem gambling and help available; as well as liaising and educating a range of community, welfare, education, industry (venues) and special population groups such as those in correctional facilities and Aboriginal community groups. Services plan, and evaluate strategies and events with community feedback.

The Responsible Gambling Fund provides free training programs to health care workers, facilitated through the Centre for Community Welfare, which offer a range of courses on assessing and treating problem gambling.

Counsellor Sam is a successful online initiative where information about problem gambling is provided via Facebook [<https://www.facebook.com/gamblinghangover>] and through a dedicated blog [<http://counsellorsam1.wordpress.com/>]. Counsellor Sam (a roster of Gambling Help counsellors) provides responses to problem gamblers and others affected by problem gambling. Counsellor Sam has 3,100 'likes' on Facebook (number of other Facebook users who have visited the page and indicated they liked it) to date (March 2012). The Counsellor Sam blog has been viewed by 7,954 people to date. These social media pages are promoted and accessed via the Gambling Help website.

The Responsible Gambling Fund hosts Responsible Gambling Awareness Week every year in NSW. A range of activities occur such as community events, advertising and media opportunities.

The Responsible Gambling Fund also promotes messages about responsible gambling and problem gambling at a range of Aboriginal events such as the Ella 7s Rugby Tournament, the Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout and the Indigenous All Stars football. The Fund has a presence at these events and partnership opportunities including stadium and jersey signage and on-ground announcements.

The Responsible Gambling Fund also develops a range of resources for special groups such as general practitioners, counsellors in school and TAFE; young people and families.

Information on risky and problem gambling has been recently updated in the Responsible Conduct of Gambling course for venue staff. The course has been reviewed and the new materials will be available in the near future.

(iii) Access to assistance for problem gambling

The Gambling Help Online service and the Gambling Helpline are both available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Gambling Help Online has also been configured for mobile phone access. The Gambling Helpline offers warm transfers to face to face counselling services and

email referrals where appropriate; and ongoing telephone counselling for clients who can't access or prefer not to access face to face counselling.

A separate and dedicated helpline has been established for the NSW Aboriginal Community. The helpline is promoted at community and sporting events, at medical centres and other interest groups.

The Responsible Gambling Fund's 44 mainstream Gambling Help services conduct counselling in over 200 locations. There is also a state-wide multicultural service and five specific services for the Italian, Greek, Chinese, Vietnamese and Arabic communities. Some services offer out of office hour's appointments such as evening and early morning and Saturday appointments. Many services offer phone counselling and support if required. Many regional services will travel to outlying locations to see clients. The Responsible Gambling Fund also funds a state-wide legal service to assist problem gambling clients with legal issues. All Gambling Help services are involved in promoting their service to local community and health services to aid referral.

The Gambling Help website offers range of resources, information and help for a variety of stakeholders.

Other preventative measures, including discouraging risky gambling behaviour

NSW has comprehensive strict harm minimisation laws in place, designed to promote responsible gambling and diminish the misuse and abuse of gambling activities.

This includes legislation banning 24 hour gaming in hotels and clubs, the advertising of gaming machines, and gaming venues offering or supplying free or discounted liquor as an inducement to gamble.

Other regulatory measures include ensuring people who work in gaming machine areas are trained in the responsible conduct of gambling, and requiring all clubs and hotels with gaming machines to have a self-exclusion scheme.

As noted, venues have a requirement to display approved gambling warning and problem gambling signage and notices, advising patrons of available counselling services.

NSW has also banned credit card cash withdrawals from ATMs and EFTPOS facilities in gaming venues, with fines of up to \$11,000, and prohibited the placement of cash dispensing facilities in areas of venues in which gaming machines are located.

Other harm minimisation measures in place include the display of accurate clocks in gaming areas order to prevent gamblers losing track of the time while playing gaming machines, and restrictions on the cashing of cheques and the payment of winnings over \$2000 in the form of cash.

Early intervention strategies and training of staff

The Responsible Conduct of Gambling (RCG) course is a requirement of the *Gaming Machines Act 2001* for hoteliers, club secretary managers and staff who will have gaming machine related functions. Only registered and approved training organisations and trainers are allowed to conduct RCG training.

The NSW Government, through the Responsible Gambling Fund, has undertaken a comprehensive review of the RCG course. The aim of the review was to update the course in order that staff are appropriately equipped with the skills and knowledge required to promote responsible gambling in their workplaces.

The updated course materials are currently being considered by the Government.

The Responsible Gambling Fund is rolling out the last of its successful three year Early Intervention, Prevention and Community Engagement Strategy. The strategy included the development and implementation of Gambling Help resources and activities, partnerships with a range of industry groups and health professionals, community-based activities and dedicated programs for Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

The Responsible Gambling Fund's Gambling Help counselling services are involved in promoting their service to local community and health services to aid prevention and early intervention. This includes conducting community forums and programs with schools.

The Responsible Gambling Fund requires Gambling Help counsellors to meet the minimum qualification pathways through recognition or completion of training and assessment. Minimum qualification pathways are based on nationally accredited community service training package competencies and the problem gambling counselling skill set. See: www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/gaming_rgf_qualification.asp.

Training for all workers in Gambling Help counselling services is provided through a contract with the Centre for Community Welfare Training. Training needs analyses are regularly conducted with range of stakeholders to identify training needs.

Most Gambling Help workers also attend the annual two-day NSW Problem Gambling Counsellors' Conference. Further training for counsellors is also delivered through regional counsellor forums. Online training courses have been developed for workers and opportunities for further online training continue to be investigated.

Methods currently used to treat problem gamblers

(i) Counselling

The Responsible Gambling Fund's Gambling Help counsellors are required to have a sound knowledge of appropriate and effective screening and assessment tools and counselling therapeutic practice. These requirements are assessed as part of the minimum qualification process to ensure counsellors have been exposed to and have a sound knowledge to use a range of screening and assessment tools/systems as well as counselling and therapeutic modalities. Counsellors are also expected to maintain a structured intake process, develop an appropriate intervention plan for clients, develop and maintain exit plans and, conduct structured follow up. In addition, counsellors are required to collect qualitative and quantitative data to assess the effectiveness of the therapeutic intervention and to measure client satisfaction with the service.

Gambling Help counsellors are also required to inform practice and interventions with current research. This is often done through professional development activities such as reading professional journals and other research and ongoing clinical supervision and training.

Gambling Help counsellors are encouraged to refer clients outside their area of competence/expertise to other specialists for assistance such as clients with co-morbidities or those requiring financial or legal assistance.

Gambling Help counsellors may work with individuals, couples or small groups in counselling. Counselling may happen face to face, through phone or online.

The Responsible Gambling Fund also funds financial counsellors and solicitors to assist problem gamblers and their families.

(ii) Education

The Responsible Gambling Fund has developed a range of resources to help educate problem gamblers either as a resource for counsellors or for clients as a self help option. These include the Gambling Help work books, general information, family and friends resource, TAFE and young people resource and promotional materials branded with Gambling Help and the Gambling Help website.

(iii) Self-exclusion

The *Gaming Machines Act 2001* requires gaming venues to ensure that patrons have access to a self-exclusion scheme, and to publicise their availability and provide information on how they operate. In addition, venues are required to supply the name and contact details of problem gambling counselling service providers to self-exclusion participants, and to any other person upon request.

Data collection and evaluation

The NSW Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing collects a range of data to help inform the prevention and treatment of problem gambling. This includes:

- Data on usage of the NSW Government's free 24 hour Gambling Helpline.
- Data on usage of the NSW Government's free face-to-face Gambling Help counselling and treatment services.
- Data on usage of the national Gambling Help Online counselling service.
- Data about the quality of service being provided by the NSW Gambling Helpline, the NSW Gambling Help face-to-face counselling and treatment services and the national Gambling Help Online service.
- Data about the effectiveness of problem gambling awareness activities such as changes to the number of clients contacting help services, changes to the amount of traffic on relevant websites, level of direct engagement with awareness activities by relevant target groups and direct feedback from relevant target groups and stakeholders.
- Regular major surveys of the NSW population about gambling and problem gambling.
- Various research reviews to determine the most appropriate model for the delivery of cost-efficient high quality problem gambling counselling and treatment in NSW.

Together this data is used by the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing to evaluate and improve current programs as well as informing the development of new programs to help prevent and treat problem gambling.

A study into the prevalence of gambling and problem gambling is currently underway to inform gambling policy and program activity by assessing the extent of problem gambling, its geographic spread and the profile of problem gamblers.

Further information about many of these issues is available on the website of the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing, under the Responsible Gambling Fund section at www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/rgf_home.asp#top.

Gambling policy research and evaluation

Since its inception in 1995, the NSW Government's Responsible Gambling Fund has commissioned a wide range of gambling-related research projects. From 2004, this has

included research jointly conducted with the Australian Government and other States and Territories as part of Gambling Research Australia - the national gambling research program.

All published gambling research reports funded through the Responsible Gambling Fund can be found on the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing website at:

www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/gaming_rgf_research.asp.

All research projects provide important input into the NSW Government's responsible gambling policies and programs.