

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2015

Communications Portfolio

Australian Communications and Media Authority

Question No: 33

Australian Communications and Media Authority

Hansard Ref: Page 16, 20/10/2015

Topic: Online Gambling Complaints

Senator Xenophon, Nick asked:

Senator XENOPHON: On notice, can you provide me with details of the number of complaints in relation to online gambling? It seems to me that when constituents contact me for assistance, they have lost a lot of money, particularly with the illegal online casinos based in Gibraltar or somewhere in the Caribbean. There doesn't seem to be an understanding of the ACMA's role in relation to this. The level of liaison there has been between the ACMA and the Australian Federal Police in relation to those complaints. If I could get some information in respect to that, it would be useful.

Ms McNeill: Certainly.

Answer:

In 2014-2015, the ACMA received 26 complaints under the *Interactive Gambling Act 2001* (the IGA).

Complaints about interactive gambling services

Of the 26 IGA complaints received in 2014-2015, the ACMA:

- > concluded 10 investigations regarding internet gambling content hosted outside Australia, of which six were referred to the AFP
- > made 16 assessments regarding internet gambling content hosted in Australia, of which six were referred to the AFP.

Enquiries about online gambling

In 2014-2015, the ACMA received 86 enquiries about the recovery of money lost through online gambling or assistance to gamblers regarding the business practices of gambling providers.

The ACMA is unable to assist gamblers with the recovery of money lost through online gambling or to provide them with assistance regarding the business practices of gambling providers. In response to such inquiries, the ACMA generally explains its role under the IGA and, depending on the circumstances, may also:

- > assist the enquirer to make a complaint regarding internet gambling content under the IGA; and/or
- > direct the enquirer to a relevant licensing authority, fair trading agency or financial institution.

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Understanding the roles of the ACMA and the AFP in relation to the IGA

Liaison with the AFP on IGA matters is based on the referral of matters and exchange of information regarding potential prohibited internet gambling content hosted in or outside Australia and is managed in accordance with an MOU between both agencies.

Information on internet gambling and the ACMA's role under the IGA is published on the ACMA's website at:

<http://www.acma.gov.au/Industry/Internet/Internet-content/Internet-gambling-complaints/internet-gambling>

To promote better understanding of the roles of the various agencies involved in administering the IGA, the ACMA has also published a *Media Matters* article on its website at:

<http://acma.gov.au/theACMA/engage-blogs/engage-blogs/Media-matters/Interactive-Gambling-Act-2001>