



# NSW working towards zero gambling harm

NSW Office of Responsible Gambling  
Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024

**GAMBLE AWARE**  
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# A message from the Minister for Customer Service and Minister for Digital

*“ I am pleased to present the Office of Responsible Gambling’s strategic plan 2021-2024, which outlines the NSW Government’s commitment to preventing and minimising gambling related harm.*

*Gambling is a pastime that is enjoyed by millions of Australians every year and as an industry contributes to the economic and social life of NSW. However, it can have negative consequences for people in our community and we want to make sure robust safeguards are in place for those who experience harm as a result of gambling.*

*I believe technology has a critical role to play in our approach to responsible gambling policy. We must continue to focus on and explore the opportunities that digital platforms present to prevent and minimise gambling harm.*

*Over the past four years, the Office has established itself as a valuable contributor to the development of effective gambling policy and has worked in partnership with community organisations, service providers, industry and the research community to implement a number of important reforms.*

*This strategy is a central component of the Government’s commitment to delivery of best practice support services and gambling regulation.”*

**Victor Dominello**

Minister for Digital

Minister for Customer Service



# A message from the Chair of the Responsible Gambling Fund

*“ This Strategic Plan, based on conversations with a wide mix of our partners in industry, the community, government and academia, builds on much of the momentum we’ve achieved over the past four years.*

*We have built the quality and impact of our research, improved the reach of our community education and awareness activities, partnered with sporting codes and teams as part of Reclaim the Game, and transformed the way we deliver support and treatment to people impacted by gambling, now known as GambleAware .*

*There is growing awareness in the community of the negative impacts gambling can have, particularly due to the saturation of gambling advertising.*

*Gambling has a role in our economy and social lives, and there will always be tension between the benefits the industry can bring and the impacts gambling can have on the lives of individuals and families. The challenge is to seek common ground wherever possible and to hold an effective balance of interests and responsibilities.*

*Where we can, we aspire to embed the voice of lived experience in the design and development of our programs and initiatives, so that we can ensure we meet the needs of those who experience gambling harm.*

*While we always track the big changes and trends in gambling policy and practice not just in NSW but around Australia and across the world, it is also important that we set clear priorities that are as realistic as they are ambitious.*

*In such a complex field, it is always hard to set priorities, but we need to make choices if we are going to be effective. Over this next three years, we will:*

- Embed and monitor the new GambleAware support and treatment service model across 10 regions in NSW to enable a more digitized and integrated service system for gambling harm across NSW.*
- Extend and improve gambling education and awareness programs, targeting parents, teachers, young people at school, GPs and other health professionals and those working at the frontline of gambling support and treatment services in the community.*
- Improve the translation of the high-quality research in which we invest into outcomes that people can see and experience, including better practice in gambling venues and improved support and treatment services.*

*Our work is guided by principles that include empowerment, partnership, transparency, monitoring and reporting, always being future focused and evidence based.*

*This plan will build on our success over the past four years and set some our priorities for the next three as we continue to work towards zero gambling harm in NSW.”*

**John Dalzell**

Chair Responsible Gambling Fund





# STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This is the second strategic plan for the NSW Office of Responsible Gambling (the Office). It follows on from the inaugural plan published in 2018 after significant reform to the Responsible Gambling Fund (RGF) and establishment of the Office to drive the responsible gambling agenda.

The plan reflects research and input from the RGF Trustees and consultation with key stakeholders, including community organisations, service providers, researchers, gambling industry, NSW gaming regulators and people with a lived experience of gambling harm.

The plan will guide the Office for the next three years, define the outcomes to be achieved and outline our success measures. Each year we will publish a progress report on how we are delivering the outcomes identified in the plan.

The Office operates within a framework that recognises gambling is a lawful, legitimate and regulated activity. It also recognises that safeguards are critical to protect consumers and the community from gambling harm.

## Changing need

The plan has been developed to be responsive to our changing environment, recognising the key trends impacting on our work.

Gambling in NSW is changing. The NSW Gambling Survey 2019 found that fewer people are gambling, and most forms of gambling are declining. However, more people are gambling online, and online betting is growing fast. There are also new and emerging forms of gambling, like eSports betting and fantasy sports.

The experience of gambling is also changing, even on familiar products. Technology is changing the products available and how we consume them, with an increasing drive towards digital and cashless experiences.





The way that we are exposed to gambling is also evolving. In addition to the wagering advertising that has become so common, children and young people in particular are exposed to gambling online, through gambling-like elements in traditional computer games, social casino games, and digital and social media advertising.

Gambling remains a source of harm for many. The NSW Gambling Survey 2019 found that the number of people experiencing gambling problems is largely stable. However, as fewer people gamble, those who do, appear more likely to experience gambling problems.

Gambling harm continues to have significant impacts on people who gamble, their families, and their communities, and is increasingly recognised as a public health challenge.

## Changing expectations

Consumer expectations are also changing and this impacts the way we deliver prevention initiatives and support to the community.

In 2019, we consulted with a broad range of gamblers and affected others who told us they didn't know enough about what support was available, they wanted more options for support especially online and have it tailored to their needs. We also found that the term Gambling Help didn't resonate, people thought it was only for those with severe problems, there was confusion about what it offered and it didn't make sense for our prevention and early intervention initiatives.

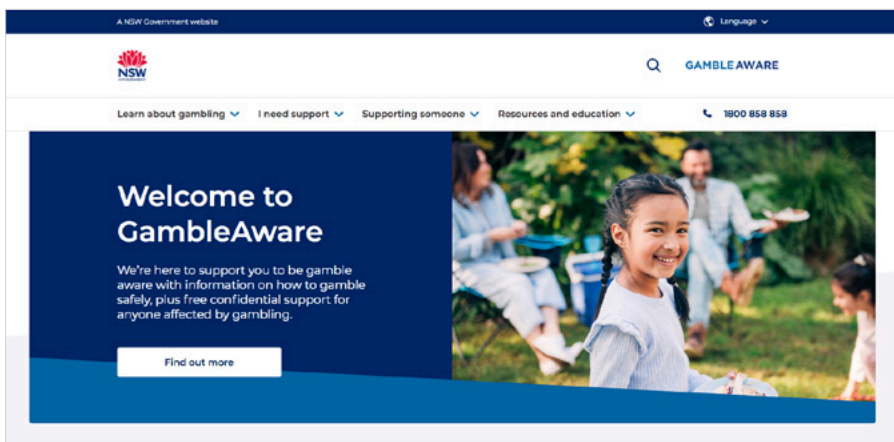
# A new offering and approach

## GAMBLEAWARE

In 2020, we embarked on a major reform to the way community outreach, education and support services are delivered by service providers, resulting in a stepped care approach and digital delivery as major features. This new model will take time to fully embed, however we will be able to reach many more people in the community impacted by gambling harm.

GambleAware is the new identity that ties all our public facing work together, from prevention and education, right through to self-help and more intensive treatment. GambleAware Providers across NSW, as our key partners, are commissioned to deliver community education and outreach and a broad range of support and treatment services tailored to their local communities.

We look forward to cementing this brand in the NSW community so they know there is a trusted and professional service available to inform and support them, no matter where they live or what their circumstances are.





# THE PLAN

## Our vision

NSW working towards zero gambling harm

## Purpose

Our purpose is to:

- prevent and reduce gambling harm, for people at risk and the broader community
- improve individual and community wellbeing, for those affected by gambling harm
- support people to make informed choices about gambling
- contribute to public debate and influence gambling harm prevention and minimisation by government, industry, community, and other stakeholders

## Our guiding principles

We reflect the NSW public sector values of integrity, trust, service and accountability in everything we do, and are guided in our work by these principles:



### **1 Empowerment**

Integrating the insights of people affected by gambling into our work and empowering individuals and communities to take action on local priorities and issues.

### **2 Partnership**

Fostering genuine partnerships and collaboration with all stakeholders.

### **3 Transparency**

Transparency in decision making and in the reporting of our performance.

### **4 Public health**

Recognising gambling harm is a public health issue and social, economic and environmental factors all play a role in influencing individual behaviour. All stakeholders have a role to play in prevention and early intervention at a population level.

### **5 Harm minimisation**

Understanding that gambling is a legal and regulated activity that some people enjoy without experiencing harm, but that it can be a significant source of harm for others.

## **6 Inclusion**

Responding to the diverse needs of individuals and communities, and engaging in culturally appropriate and safe ways which recognise the different needs, experiences and perspectives of people from across NSW.

## **7 Continuous improvement**

Evaluating our services and programs to ensure efficacy, efficiency and inform improvements.

## **8 Future focused**

Monitoring and responding to emerging issues, trends and developments in practice and policy.

## **9 Evidence based**

Supporting and using reliable research, data and other evidence to inform our work.

# Our outcomes, approach, priorities and success measures

## Our outcomes



### **Research**

Our research builds the evidence base to influence gambling policy, programs and behaviour.



### **Education & Awareness**

We educate and empower individuals and the community so that they can make informed choices, take action to prevent and reduce gambling harm, and seek support when they need it.



### **Services & Support**

Our support and treatment services are multimodal, integrated, tailored to the needs of diverse communities and are widely seen by professionals and people experiencing gambling harm as accessible and effective.



### **Leadership & Influence**

We lead and influence stronger gambling harm prevention and minimisation culture and practice by government, industry, community, and other stakeholders.



## Research

### Outcome

Our research builds the evidence base to influence gambling policy, programs and behaviour.

### Our approach

We fund and support relevant, timely and rigorous research and build capability in the gambling research field, through the RGF Research Agenda, to build an evidence-base that:

- informs improvements to policy and regulation
- evaluates and guides improvements to programs and support
- contributes to an informed public discussion on gambling harm, increasing community awareness and understanding
- anticipates and keeps pace with emerging trends.



## Our Priorities

- understanding and tracking changes in gambling behaviour and attitudes in NSW, through the NSW Gambling Study, NSW Youth Gambling Study, and other projects
- identifying and understanding emerging technologies and trends and impacts
- understanding issues affecting different groups and communities across NSW including young people and vulnerable populations
- building the knowledge, skills and diversity of gambling researchers to create a broader network of high-quality gambling researchers
- sharing, distilling and promoting broader gambling research findings to ensure that research translates into action
- working in partnership with community organisations, industry and other stakeholders to capitalise on opportunities to undertake, share and apply research, including through trials and the use of collected data.

### Measures of success

- Research insights and findings are actionable and used to improve education, support, policy and regulatory outcomes
- Improved quality, relevance and impact of Australian gambling research
- Increased capacity, innovation, collaboration and cross-disciplinary approaches in Australian gambling research
- Increased participation and retention of post-graduate candidates and early career researchers in gambling research.



## Education and Awareness

### Outcome

We educate and empower individuals and the community so that they can make informed choices, take action to prevent and reduce gambling harm, and seek support when they need it.

### Our approach

We develop, deliver and support:

- awareness campaigns for the general community
- targeted education and awareness initiatives for priority populations, such as culturally and linguistically diverse communities, young people, Aboriginal communities, lower socio-economic and other at-risk groups

- accessible, engaging and evidence-based information and resources for the general community, priority population groups and stakeholders
- partnerships with key stakeholders and influencers.

### Priorities

- delivering targeted initiatives for young people, parents and teachers including education delivered through school settings
- reaching priority populations and others at risk of gambling harm through the settings that they access, for example workplaces and community services
- establishing GambleAware as the place to go for information and services through awareness campaigns and uplifting digital delivery
- supporting GambleAware services to develop local gambling harm prevention initiatives which address specific issues in their communities
- coordinating the annual GambleAware Week to continue to build community awareness of the risks of gambling and the need to be gamble aware.

### Measures of success

- Increased understanding of gambling risks and harm
- Reduced stigma in seeking support for gambling issues
- Increased awareness of where to access services and support
- Increased use of strategies by individuals to prevent gambling harm for themselves and others.



## Services and Support

### Outcome

Our services are multimodal, integrated, tailored to the needs of diverse communities and are widely seen by professionals and people experiencing gambling harm as accessible and effective.

### Our approach

We work in partnership with our commissioned GambleAware providers to deliver accessible, evidence-based and culturally competent support and treatment services to the NSW community.

## Priorities

- embedding the new GambleAware support and treatment service model across NSW and adding to the service offering over time with peer support, client guides, self help and digital support
- building capability across the service system to enhance its effectiveness and improve outcomes
- implementing the GambleAware quality standards framework to ensure high quality and consistent service delivery
- integrating GambleAware with the broader public health and human services system and embedding clear referral pathways for complementary services
- using data and insights from the GambleAware system to inform continuous improvement and evaluation.

## Measures of success

- Increase in people seeking support from GambleAware
- Improved access to quality support and treatment services in preferred mode and location
- Improved wellbeing, reduced harm and improved service quality
- Increased referrals from the health and community services sector.



## Leadership and Influence

### Outcome

We lead and influence stronger gambling harm prevention and minimisation culture and practice by government, industry, community, and other stakeholders.

### Our approach

We:

- support regulatory and policy development with insights, evidence and broad-based expertise across the gambling sector
- collaborate and contribute to policy development with other jurisdictions
- improve gambling harm minimisation knowledge, skills and resources across stakeholder groups
- work in partnership with industry to trial new approaches and innovate.

## Priorities

- informing and supporting development and implementation of regulatory reform that strengthens harm minimisation
- providing insight and evidence on harm minimisation risks and opportunities for regulators, government and industry
- partnering with industry to support and share best practice in harm minimisation and support digital innovation
- developing and supporting improved training and resources for industry, and the community and health sectors
- partnering with sporting codes and clubs to counter the normalisation of sports betting and empowering staff, players and communities to minimise gambling harm.

## Measures of success

- New and more effective responsible gambling and harm minimisation practices are adopted across the gambling sector
- More gambling operators adopt gambling harm minimisation practices beyond the minimum-legislative requirements
- Gambling harm prevention is delivered and supported by industry, community and health sectors.

## Governance Framework

The Minister for Customer Service and Digital oversees the Responsible Gambling Fund (RGF), which is administered by Trustees. The Trustees perform an expert advisory role to assist the Minister make decisions about the appropriate allocation of funds, as well as other gambling policy matters where an arm's length and expert view is appropriate.

The Office of Responsible Gambling leads the development of responsible gambling strategy and public policy advice to the NSW Government and supports the Trustees to provide advice and guidance to the Minister on funding responsible gambling initiatives consistent with the strategic direction.

The operation of the RGF and Trustee decision-making is conducted within a harm minimisation framework that recognises gambling as a lawful activity and that safeguards are needed to protect consumers and the community from gambling harm.

The diagram on the right shows how the Office and RGF work with the regulator Liquor & Gaming NSW, as well as GambleAware Providers who deliver direct services to the community.



## MINISTER FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE AND DIGITAL

Minister can request expert advice from the RGF on gambling policy matters

### Responsible Gambling Fund

Trustees provide expert advice to the Minister:

- on appropriate allocation of funds
- on gambling policy matters where expert view is requested

### Office of Responsible Gambling

- Leads development of responsible gambling strategy & public policy advice
- Implements programs & initiatives in research, community education & awareness, support & treatment services under the GambleAware Brand

The Office provides advice to L&GNSW on responsible gambling strategy & public policy

### Liquor & Gaming NSW

- Regulate gambling activity in NSW
- Provides policy advice to the Minister balancing sustainable industry development with harm minimisation
- L&GNSW can refer matters to the RGF for expert advice, via the Office

GambleAware overseen by the Office

### GambleAware Providers

- Community engagement, support and treatment services for people experiencing gambling harm and the NSW community
- 10 regions in NSW

### GambleAware Multicultural Service

- Cultural capability building across service network
- Community engagement
- Bilingual counsellors to supplement GambleAware support and treatment across NSW

### GambleAware Aboriginal Service

- Cultural capability building across GambleAware providers
- Community engagement

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