

# Progress Report 2019/20

Office of Responsible Gambling



# Introduction

**In 2019/20 the Office of Responsible Gambling (the Office) made significant progress on its first Strategic Plan 2018-2021, which outlines our vision of NSW working towards zero gambling harm. We are achieving this by initiating and funding research, educating the community, funding support and treatment services and informing policy makers and regulators.**

This, our second annual progress report, provides highlights of our progress on our goals during 2019/20. We continued to implement our core programs and services including funding free Gambling Help services across NSW, and a state-wide telephone service and online counselling through national Gambling Help Online. We also completed a major review of our support and treatment services and commenced implementing the new service model under a new GambleAware brand.

Our public health approach has seen us increase our focus on prevention and early intervention, and collaborate with partners in health, the community and industry to ensure that our communities can make informed decisions and prevent and minimise gambling harm.

The five strategic goals that guide our work are:



## Research

Initiate and fund research that provides the evidence base for responsible gambling policy, interventions and programs



## Education and awareness

Build awareness of responsible gambling and gambling related harm, and encourage resilient communities



## Technology and innovation

Leverage technology and drive innovation to prevent and reduce harm



## Support services

Provide support and counselling services and encourage early intervention and integrated care



## Partnerships

Work with partners to prevent and reduce gambling related harm



## Research

We initiate and fund research that provides the evidence base for responsible gambling policy, interventions and programs.

### RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF GAMBLING RESEARCH PUBLISHED



This research, commissioned by the Office, was published in April 2020 and will contribute to the review and improvement of the Responsible Conduct of Gambling (RCG) training, and changes in RCG policy and practices in NSW venues.

Venue employees reported regularly observing patrons showing signs of problem gambling, but rarely approach those who do not ask for help, or report them upwards. Very few patrons directly ask for help for their gambling.

This research has supported the development of the Gaming Machines Amendment (Gambling Harm Minimisation) Bill 2020, released for consultation by Liquor and Gaming NSW in September 2020.

### RESEARCH ON SHUTDOWN PERIODS FOR ELECTRONIC GAMING MACHINES PUBLISHED



This research examined the harm-reduction impact of time-based access to electronic gaming machines, from the perspective of current literature as well as players. Findings are being used to support decision-making by regulators.

### GAMBLING RESEARCH CAPACITY GRANTS DEVELOPED AND AWARDED



The Gambling Research Capacity Grants program was developed late 2019 with the aim to build gambling research capabilities of the recipients over three years and strengthen the broader gambling research field. Two post-doctoral fellowships, and three PHD scholarships were awarded in March 2020 which will see research conducted into supporting informed gambling choices in the age of digital transactions, electronic gaming machine harm investigations, interdisciplinary investigation of sports betting, family member treatment for gambling harm and the development of an implementation framework for Indigenous digital health promotion.

### MAJOR STUDY INTO YOUNG PEOPLE AND GAMBLING

This commissioned research examined youth gambling prevalence and attitudes, the migration from gaming to gambling and the impact of advertising and normalisation (especially in sport) on young people. It included a literature review, focus groups and a survey with young people aged 12 to 17 years in NSW. The field work was undertaken in early 2020, and the final report is due late 2020.



### ARE LOOT BOXES GROOMING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR GAMBLING?



This grant-funded research found that young adults exposed to loot boxes and in-game purchases are more likely to gamble and to experience gambling problems. The research, published in June 2020, provides further insight into loot boxes, which are a growing concern due to their gambling-like risk and reward elements.



## Education and awareness

We build awareness of responsible gambling and gambling-related harm and encourage resilient communities.

### CHECK-IN WITH THE CHECKMATES LAUNCHED

Responsible Gambling Awareness Week 2019 saw 75,000 visits to the Checkmates campaign platform and 80,000 plays of the Bet and Bust game. Event grant funding of \$152,271 was awarded to 23 organisations, with 53 events registered on the website.

#CheckIn

**75,000  
VISITS**

**TO THE CHECKMATES  
CAMPAIGN PLATFORM**



**80,000  
PLAYS**

**OF THE BET AND  
BUST GAME**

### ODDS ON YOUTH

#### HELPING YOUTH WORKERS TO PREVENT GAMBLING HARM

Two rounds of Odds on Youth were delivered in Inner West Sydney and South West Sydney to target at-risk young people, with grant funding of



**\$420,000**

**AWARDED TO  
NINE ORGANISATIONS**

for projects targeting diverse populations, including some CALD specific projects.

#### LOCAL RESPONSES ENABLED THROUGH

### NEW LOCAL PREVENTION GRANTS PROGRAM

 **\$1.5 million**

This new grant program was launched in early 2020 for local initiatives to reduce gambling harm. Just over \$1.5 million was awarded to 14 projects for prevention projects targeting a diverse population.

**71%\***

**OF THE NSW  
COMMUNITY ARE  
AWARE THAT GAMBLING  
CAN BE HARMFUL**



### ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY ONLINE

A campaign during the Covid-19 pandemic promoted help-seeking and raised awareness of illegal online gambling and the risks associated with online wagering.



**AWARENESS OF THE  
OFFICE OF RESPONSIBLE  
GAMBLING IN NSW -**

**40%\***

\*Online survey - NSW residents n=1,049. Ipsos research August 2020.



# Technology and innovation

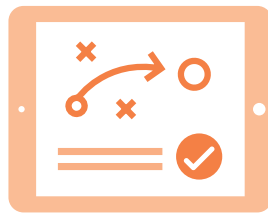
We leverage technology and drive innovation to prevent and reduce harm.



## INAUGURAL GAMBLEAWARE DIGITAL PLATFORM UNDERWAY

The Office has started developing a new digital platform to support the NSW community to access information about gambling, as well as gambling support and treatment services, for launch in 2020-21. This platform will enable clients to book and receive counselling sessions online and also assist service providers to manage client interactions through referral, scheduling and follow up functionality. The platform will host online self-help tools and apps.

## A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO HARM MINIMISATION TECHNOLOGY



An assessment of the harm minimisation opportunities presented by technology was undertaken to provide the Office with a strategic view of the technology landscape in the gambling industry and inform future investment in harm minimisation technology. Multiple opportunities are identified for implementation in 2020-21.

## RESEARCH ON EMERGING ISSUES: SMARTPHONE BETTING ON SPORTS, ESPORTS AND DAILY-FANTASY SPORTS



With funding from the Responsible Gambling Grants program, CQUniversity are investigating how mobile technologies impact on betting behaviour, gambling problems and harm amongst young people. This research will be completed in 2021.



## DIGITAL EDUCATION TO PREVENT AND REDUCE HARM

Deakin University has progressed its grant funded project to deliver two online courses to improve understanding of gambling harm, and how to prevent and reduce it. The courses, targeted at the general community and community workers, will use a range of media to deliver engaging and effective education.

## AI TECHNOLOGY BEING TESTED AND TRIALLED



Deakin University has continued its work on a chatbot with funding from the Responsible Gambling Grants program. The project team has focused on increasing the usability of the chatbot with extensive testing and an engineering trial undertaken this year. This chatbot will feature on the new GambleAware website.

## MAKING SELF-EXCLUSION EASIER

With funding from the Responsible Gambling Grants program, Sydney University Gambling Research and Treatment Clinic are developing and evaluating a website for self-directed multiple-venue self-exclusion. The first stage of research and development is complete, and the core website functionality is ready for usability testing. Completion of all three phases of research and development is expected in December 2020.





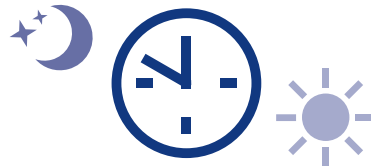
## Support services

We provide support and counselling services and encourage early intervention and integrated care.

### GAMBLING HELP SERVICES SUPPORTED OVER 6,200 PEOPLE



in 2019/20, with services across NSW delivering over 34,600 counselling sessions through telephone, online and face-to-face channels. This year saw face to face sessions decline considerably due to Covid-19, with services adapting to other modes of delivery.



### PROVIDING GAMBLING HELP 24/7

The national Gambling Help Online website provided online counselling support to over 3,000 people from NSW. The Gambling Helpline assisted over 8,500 NSW residents in 2019/20. Both Gambling Helpline and Gambling Help Online operate year-round, 24 hours a day.

### REACHING PEOPLE BEFORE CRISIS



The development of a new model of support for individuals and families experiencing gambling harm commenced. The model will be implemented in 2021 and features an integrated, stepped-care system of support services across NSW and online, with a 'no wrong door' approach to clients seeking help.

### GAMBLING HELP CONTINUED TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY THROUGHOUT COVID-19

Our services adapted to support people during Covid-19. Gambling Help services provided almost 13,000 telephone counselling sessions, an increase of 59% from 2019/20, and over 2,500 online counselling sessions - 243% more than the previous year.



### HELP FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Over 75 language groups accessed our services, with 20% of Gambling Help clients speaking a language other than English at home in 2019/20. Services were offered in over 30 community languages by eight specialist counselling services. Aboriginal communities were supported by Warruwi and four Aboriginal-specific Gambling Help services.

### HELPING ALL WHO ARE AFFECTED

It's not just gamblers who receive help from our Gambling Help services.

18.1% of clients in 2019/20 were partners or family members of gamblers.



### DRAWING ON LIVED EXPERIENCE AND FRONT-LINE EXPERTISE

The Office undertook an extensive co-design process with Gambling Help providers, complimentary service providers, industry representatives and community members, to develop the new model of support. 35 consultation sessions were held and input was received from 186 individuals and organisations.

**20% of Gambling Help clients spoke a language other than English at home in 2019/20.**





# Partnerships

We work with partners to prevent and reduce gambling-related harm.

## STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

We surveyed over 155 stakeholders to understand their engagement and satisfaction with the Office. 85%\* of stakeholders were very or fairly satisfied with their experience with the Office, a 7% increase on 2019 results.

# 85%\*

**OF STAKEHOLDERS WERE VERY OR FAIRLY SATISFIED WITH THE OFFICE.**

## PARTNERSHIPS WITH HEALTH SECTOR AND GPs PILOTED

These partnerships support problem gambling screening and referrals. Training has been developed and is being piloted for community workers and GPs to support screening and referral, to be rolled out subject to pilot results in 2020-21.

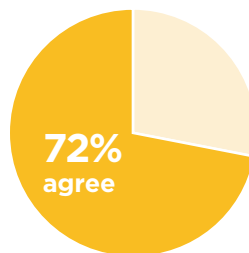


## CREATING CHANGE THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

A Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships Strategy is in place to guide our efforts to partner with sporting, community, health and industry organisations. A strategic partnership with Cricket NSW has been developed as part of our Reclaim the Game sporting partnership program, to address the normalisation of sports betting and raise awareness of the risks of gambling.



## RECLAIM THE GAME PROGRAM DEVELOPED



**‘Sports betting advertising makes gambling a normal part of sports’.**

72%\*\* of the community either strongly agree or somewhat agree that ‘Sports betting advertising makes gambling a normal part of sports’. Sports partnerships are a priority for the Office with discussions underway to support the delivery of sporting-focused partnerships in 2020/21.

## PARTNERS INVOLVED AND SHOWING THEIR SUPPORT

Responsible Gambling Awareness Week 2019 was well supported with strong stakeholder participation and support for the week. Gambling Help services, wagering operators, industry organisations, individual venues, community groups and councils held 53 events across NSW and promoted our campaign through their online channels.



## GENUINE AND EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO PARTNERSHIPS

The stakeholder survey found that most stakeholders (78%) view the Office as having developed a genuine, trusting partnership with their organisation.



\*Online survey – stakeholders n=155. Ipsos research August 2020.

\*\*Online survey - NSW residents n=1,049. Ipsos research August 2020.



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