

Media release



FROM THE MINISTER FOR GAMING, MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES

DATE: Thursday, October 14, 2004

\$26.7 MILLION AND A NEW FOCUS ON RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING

The Bracks Government has reaffirmed its commitment to responsible gambling by investing a further \$26.7 million and improving the focus on gambling research and community consultation.

The Minister for Gaming, John Pandazopoulos, and Community Services Minister, Sherryl Garbutt, said Victoria's problem gambling services and initiatives would be supported through the allocation of \$26.7 million over two years from the Community Support Fund.

A new ministerial advisory committee will also be appointed to replace and strengthen the role of the existing Problem Gambling Roundtable and advise on research into problem gambling.

Mr Pandazopoulos said the new body would provide a direct line to the Government on problem gambling issues and gambling research priorities.

"The committee will provide a more effective way of engaging key stakeholders, including community groups, industry and help services, to provide advice on important responsible gambling policy and research matters," Mr Pandazopoulos said.

"This new body constitutes the next significant step in gaming policy which has included consolidation of legislation and regulations, the establishment of the new Commission for Gambling Regulation and the introduction of a range of measures to support creation of a

responsible gaming framework in Victoria.

"The Bracks Government's significant gaming reform agenda has seen spending on electronic gaming machines come down for the very first time."

The committee will be made up of up to 15 representatives from community and industry and will be chaired by the Advocate for Responsible Gambling, Kerrie Cross.

Ms Garbutt said the \$26.7 million in new funding would kick in from next July and would continue to fund existing problem gambling services, gambling related research, partnerships with local community organisations and the functions of the new committee.

"The Government's problem gambling services have been very effective in connecting with problem gamblers and working with them and their families to address their problem," Ms Garbutt said.

"This new funding will ensure that the services will continue to operate across Victoria and we can continue to form community partnerships with local organisation to tackle problem gambling at a grassroots level."

Mr Pandazopoulos said the committee's role would strengthen the link between gambling research and the development of responsible gambling policies.

"Victoria has become the national hub for problem gambling research, with the National Research Program being run out of the Victorian Department of Justice," Mr Pandazopoulos said.

"The calibre of research will be further strengthened through the establishment of a new expert panel that will closely monitor the quality of the future research being conducted and be subject to peer review.

"The Bracks Government is absolutely committed to an independent, robust research agenda that will provide relevant information to help us develop responsible gambling policies into the future."

Ms Garbutt said the funding boost would build on the Bracks Government's investment in problem gambling initiatives since coming to office in 1999.

"The Bracks Government has already tripled funding for problem gambling from \$7 million under the previous Government to \$22 million in 2004," she said.

"This funding boost will continue to implement the Government's agenda to reduce problem gambling and to help people affected by problem gambling rebuild their lives."

People can seek information and assistance on problem gambling issues 24 hours-a-day by ringing Gamblers Help on **1800 156 789**, which is a free and confidential service.

[Copyright](#) | [Disclaimer](#) | [Privacy](#)