

“Take the Problem Out of Gambling”

On Friday 24 October the Minister for Gaming, Tony Robinson, launched the state government’s new advertising campaign, “Take the Problem Out of Gambling”. The campaign aims to encourage people who are experiencing problems to seek help and promotes the recently created national helpline number, 1800 858 858. Callers to this number are automatically diverted to the helpline in the state from which they are calling.

The awareness raising program will run over 3 years and include TV, radio, print and online components. The first set of TV advertisements aired on 26 October on all networks. An example of the commercials can be viewed online on the Department of Justice website (see screen shot to left and link below). The advertisement also promotes an SMS service whereby people can arrange to receive information to help them address a gambling issue.

Victoria’s problem gambling website (www.problemgambling.vic.gov.au) has been revamped and offers information under headings such as “Help for gamblers”, “Family & Friends”, “Taking Control” and “Immediate Help”. A section of testimonials includes short accounts from people who have experienced gambling problems.



Images from the new campaign



Sources:

- Media Release: “New Campaign Targets Problem Gambling”
<http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/minister-for-gaming/new-campaign-targets-problem-gambling.html>

- Department of Justice Media Room – News Archive

<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/DOJ+Internet/Home/About+Us/Media+Room/News+Archive/JUSTICE+-+Take+the+Problem+out+of+Gambling+Campaign+TV+Commercial>

CALD Mental Health Awareness Program

In October Gambler's Help Southern worked together with the Cambodian Community Welfare Centre and Foundation House to deliver a Mental Health Awareness Program for the Cambodian community in Springvale. The program consisted of three sessions and aimed to raise awareness about mental health issues for refugee communities and about support services available.

With the struggle to survive the main priority in countries that are war torn or otherwise in turmoil, it is common for people to suppress their feelings in order to cope with tragic life incidents. After arriving in a new country, many refugees try to put aside their past trauma to focus on resettling, raising children and supporting other family members remaining back home. However, some people may have nightmares or flashbacks about what happened to them and to their family and friends. This can have a major effect on their mental health and the success of their settlement. In some cases, consumption of alcohol or participation in gambling might occur as a result of trying to forget the past.

From the mid seventies, many Cambodians settled in Australia as refugees as a result of the political change in Cambodia. People went through many painful experiences in their homeland and in refugee camps. During the sessions, participants talked about their perception of mental illness and shared their experiences. They learned about the causes of mental health issues and how to respond. Relaxation techniques were practiced and natural therapy options explained.

Participants found this program very beneficial and expressed their keen interest to attend more programs in the near future.



UPDATE

Gaming Venue Applications

Tooraddin & District Sports Club Tooraddin

Increase from 42 to 54 machines
**Hearing adjourned at the
request of the applicant,
to a date to be fixed**

Frankston RSL Club Frankston

Increase from 77 to 90 machines
Decision pending

Report backs Community Advocate on Gambling

Position papers concerning the "Review of the Community Advocate on Gambling", authored by Professor E.W. Russell in late 2007, were recently released to the public.

The Victorian office of Community Advocate on Gambling (CAOG) was funded in 2006 by the Department of Justice to assist community organisations and local governments to express to government, their concerns on gambling issues. CAOG was sponsored by Community Action on Pokie Problems and auspiced by the Victorian Local Governance Association.

The review is somewhat limited by the fact that the CAOG office was staffed for only one year out of a proposed three year term, with 1.5 equivalent full time (EFT) positions comprising the Advocate and a part time research assistant. Key recommendations of the report included:

- the CAOG should continue for a further 3 year period and requires increased resourcing to 3 EFT
- the focus needs to extend beyond urban settings
- reach needs to extend to community groups outside of local government
- the CAOG status at the Responsible Gambling Ministerial Advisory Council should be that of "member" rather than "observer".

CAOG activities during the 12 month period included:

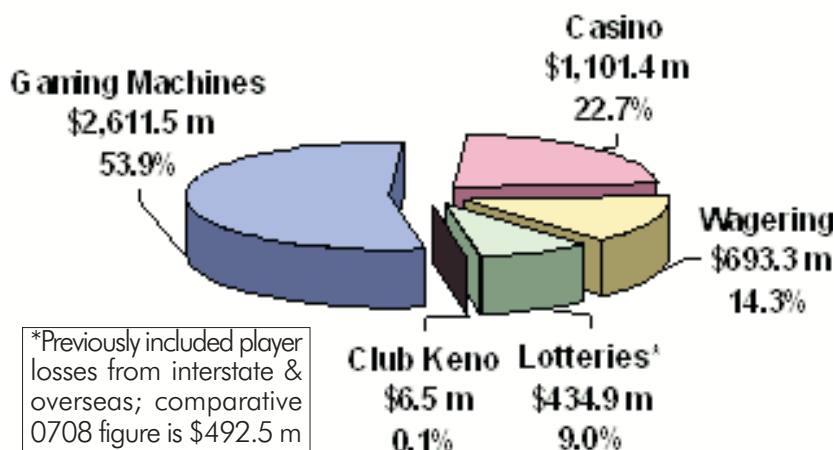
- support for community and local government submissions to the Electronic Gaming Machine (EGM) Licence Review
- discussion with local governments regarding their increased influence over EGM placement in municipal catchments
- research to explore which local governments had gambling policy which would underpin their capability to deal with planning issues in relation to gambling.

Professor Russell's report also explores alternate models for gambling advocacy, including consideration of the structure of the Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand and the Nova Scotia Gaming Foundation in Canada.

The full report can be downloaded at:

<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/DOJ+Internet/resources/file/eb414b09b75d27d/Bill%20Russell%20-%20Review%20of%20Community%20Advocacy%20on%20Gambling%20-%20Dec%202007.pdf>

~ 2007/08 ~ Victorian gambling losses



Details of Victorian gambling losses in the last financial year recently became available. Loss data taken from the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation (VCGR) 2007-2008 Annual Report is depicted in the chart at left. The graph also shows the relative share each category of gambling had in the state's overall loss of over \$4.8 billion.

Total expenditure increased by 1.8% on the 2006/07 year, on the strength of greater losses at the casino (3.7%), on pokies (2.7%) and wagering (2.2%). The VCGR report now show lotteries losses for Victoria only – excluding player loss from interstate and overseas jurisdictions. However the report also provides an aggregate figure of \$492.5 million to allow comparison with previous year's reports. The change in player loss on lotteries therefore ranges from + 4.5% to -11%, depending on which final loss figure is used.

The Annual Report also notes that there were 520 gaming venues and 26,797 gaming machines in operation in 2007/08. The average pokie loss per adult was reported as \$647. Calculations put the average loss per gaming machine at \$97,455.

New ad laws for bookies

Interstate bookmakers and wagering service providers licensed in other Australian jurisdictions are now allowed to advertise in Victoria. The Victorian gambling laws which previously made this illegal will be repealed and in the lead up to that occurring, the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation (VCGR) will not prosecute providers who do advertise. New South Wales is following a similar path.

According to Victorian Deputy Premier and Minister for Racing, Rob Hulls, the changes will "...provide new revenue streams for racing clubs in both states through advertising and race sponsorship."

However, it has also been acknowledged that the changes have resulted in some questionable advertising messages. NSW Minister for Gaming and Racing, Kevin Greene, observed that "Over the past few weeks wagering operators have placed advertisements in NSW offering inducements to open betting accounts and I am concerned these advertisements have no regard for the need to minimise the harm associated with problem gambling." Mr Hulls stressed that "...Victoria remains committed to a responsible gambling environment" and that advertising guidelines for wagering providers will be proposed.

Sources:
<http://www.vcgr.vic.gov.au/CA256F800017E8D4/WebObj/25A3B275D76988A7CA2574E20021C27B>
<http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/minister-for-racing/interstate-bookmakers-advertising-restrictions-to-be-lifted-in-victoria-and-new-south-wales.html>

GHS welcomes a new counsellor to our team. Mary Mac Manus will be working three days a week - Monday's at Prahran, Tuesday's at South Melbourne and Wednesday's at Sandringham.



She previously worked as a counsellor with the Alcohol and Drug Program at Central Bayside Community Health Service. Mary will also be working on the Mental Health portfolio, which aims to expand GHS connections with mental health services.

Exception fees are disclosed in the account terms and condition and may be charged when:

- there are insufficient funds available to cover a transaction which may result in either a dishonour or honour (approval to overdraw);
- credit card payments are late; or
- credit card limits are exceeded.¹

Bank Exception Fees

In August, Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service drew our attention to some online information which compares the exception fees charged by thirteen Australian banks.

The Australian Bankers' Association "Exception Fee Fact Sheet" (September 2008), includes four tables which show the lowest exception fees for:

- standard transaction accounts
- standard credit card accounts
- transaction accounts for eligible low-income earners and concession card holders
- credit card accounts for eligible low-income earners and concession card holders

The August 2007 version of the fact sheet² also includes a section on how to avoid exception fees. Paying out less on bank fees – by avoiding them where we can and/or by choosing accounts with the lowest rates – means we get to keep more of our money...and that has to be a good thing!

Source: Australian Bankers' Association fact sheets
¹ <http://www.bankers.asn.au/default.aspx?ArticleID=1127>
² <http://www.bankers.asn.au/default.aspx?ArticleID=1102>





Try another **BEST BETS FOR SPRING** story

When we were young, many of us were lucky enough to hear stories which were read to us by parents, grandparents, carers or teachers. We would sit and listen and with our "inner mind", create the pictures of places and people to accompany those stories. Of an evening when we lay down to sleep, we probably replayed the stories that we had heard, as no doubt they had seemed so real!

Throughout our life, though, people told us other stories. We may have heard that we were "not good enough", that we were "stupid", "unimportant" or really "not a valued member" of our family, school or community. Did you ever listen to these sorts of stories?

Often we may grow into adulthood replaying such stories and the stories start to become "real" to us and take on a life of their own. For some reason, we seem to play these sorts of stories over and over in our minds; so it's no wonder they seem real.

It's sort of like playing the same CD over and over again, then from time to time, we probably catch "this little jingle" just playing away in our mind. When this happens, we rob ourselves from hearing "other tunes" and stories. This means we "block out" the opportunity for different experiences and sensations, because we keep listening to that same old story of how we are "not good enough" or that "no-one likes us"...

So how do we try to block these messages? Sometimes we try to "numb out" and we may do this by gambling, or trying some other form of escape. For example, when we go to the pokies, we really don't have to think too much about things...the stories stop for a while, in fact we don't even have to talk with people if we don't want to. But funnily enough, once we leave the venue, the same old stories are still with us.

This is where it can become useful to share these stories with a gambling counsellor. The counsellor can then work with us to help us to understand the stories we have been escaping from, whilst also helping us to discover the "other stories" – the "different stories"...the stories we have forgotten, the stories that tell us that we are OK! So in conclusion, is it time for you to turn the page and begin to hear a different story?

- Race 1
Set yourself a money limit and stick to it!
- Race 2
Only bet what you can afford to lose.
- Race 3
Let the horses do the chasing. Don't chase your losses.
- Race 4
Put your winnings in your pocket, not the next race.
- Race 5
Keep track of your losses.
- Race 6
Only use your money to bet. Don't borrow or use credit.
- Race 7
Alcohol affects your judgement. Take care when drinking and gambling.
- Race 8
Enjoy the day - don't regret it

Content by Gambler's Help Barwon

Gambler's Help Southern provides free, confidential, professional support for gamblers, their families and others affected by gambling.

Services available include:

- Counselling for gambling related issues
- Financial Counselling
- Community Education & Development
- Professional Development
- Multicultural Services

We can also provide a wide range of resources and information such as:

- Self-help guides
- Materials for families & friends
- Brochures, posters & other display materials
- Personal stories
- Statistics & research
- Materials in community languages

If you have concerns about your gambling, or the gambling of a family member or friend, call Gambler's Help Southern Intake between 9.30 am and 4.30 pm on 9575 5353 or the Gambler's Helpline which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 1800 156 789.

**WANTED - FEEDBACK
ON GM: GAMBLING MATTERS
Go to www.ghsouthern.org.au
and follow the FEEDBACK link**



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