



PROGRESS REPORT 2006/07

TAKING ACTION ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

A strategy for combating problem gambling in Victoria

December 2007



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Message from the Minister for Gaming



In October 2006, the Victorian Government released *Taking action on problem gambling* – a \$132.3 million commitment to address problem gambling.

Taking action on problem gambling provides one of the most comprehensive responses of any government to problem gambling.

Combining a public health and social regulation approach, *Taking action on problem gambling* sets out the major actions the Government is taking to combat problem gambling.

I am pleased to say that since its announcement there has been significant progress on implementation of the priority action areas.

Treatment services remain the cornerstone of the Government's response to problem gambling.

A key achievement has been the enhancement of Gambler's Help Line to include an online counselling service from 1 July 2008.

We are also implementing a number of other enhancements such as after hours counselling and mobile counselling. This will ensure service system flexibility and responsiveness for problem gamblers, their families and friends.

In September 2007, the Centre for Problem Gambling Treatment and Research was established. The Centre is a joint venture with Melbourne and Monash universities and will conduct leading research in treatment for people with gambling problems. The research will also bolster treatment programs and the training of practitioners.

Another key component of *Taking action on problem gambling* is the active involvement of the gambling industry in creating a more responsible gambling environment. The Government is working with the gambling industry to ensure it goes beyond merely complying with its legal obligations.

In December this year, the Government passed the *Gambling Legislation Amendment (Problem Gambling and Other Measures) Act 2007*. This Act introduces measures that will require major industry participants to have a Responsible Gambling Code of Conduct approved by the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation (VCGR).

The Responsible Gambling Ministerial Advisory Council (RGMAC) plays a key role by providing a source of direct advice to Government on gambling issues.

The Council has supported key initiatives including the *Responsible Gambling Awareness Week*, which is a proactive partnership between the Government, industry, community groups and various local governments.

Partnerships remain a significant focus with 11 local community partnership grants announced this year and the extension of the statewide partnership program with Essendon Football Club.

In its first year, *Taking action on problem gambling* has delivered a number of achievements, but there is still more that can be done.

Over the coming year, a number of key initiatives will be rolled out including the *Problem Gambling Community Awareness and Education Strategy to 2011* which adopts a social marketing framework to set out the strategic plan and overarching approach to promoting healthy communities.

We must continue to work together with the gambling industry, local government, service providers and the community to prevent and minimise the harm caused by problem gambling. Together we can further combat problem gambling in Victoria.



Tony Robinson MP
Minister for Gaming



Introduction

Taking action on problem gambling was released by the Victorian Government in October 2006. The Government will spend \$132.3 million over five years to build a safer gambling environment and improve treatment services for problem gamblers and their families.

Taking action on problem gambling incorporates public health and social regulation models into problem gambling policy responses.

This strategy provides an integrated approach to prevention, early intervention, treatment of gambling-related harm and consumer protection.

This initiative also commits the Government to a coordinated, systematic and evidence-based approach to combating the effects of problem gambling.

Taking action on problem gambling focuses on seven key action areas as outlined below:

Action Area 1:
Building better treatment services

Action Area 2:
Ensuring a more socially responsible gambling industry

Action Area 3:
Promoting healthy communities

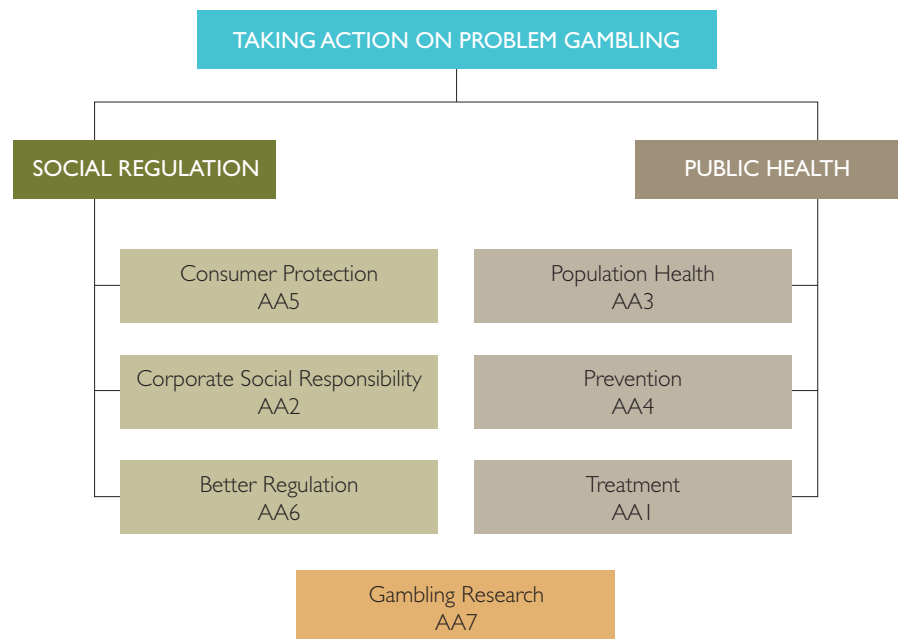
Action Area 4:
Protecting vulnerable communities

Action Area 5:
Improving consumer protection

Action Area 6:
Enhancing the regulator

Action Area 7:
Fostering gambling research

HOW THE STRATEGY FITS TOGETHER





Spending on problem gambling

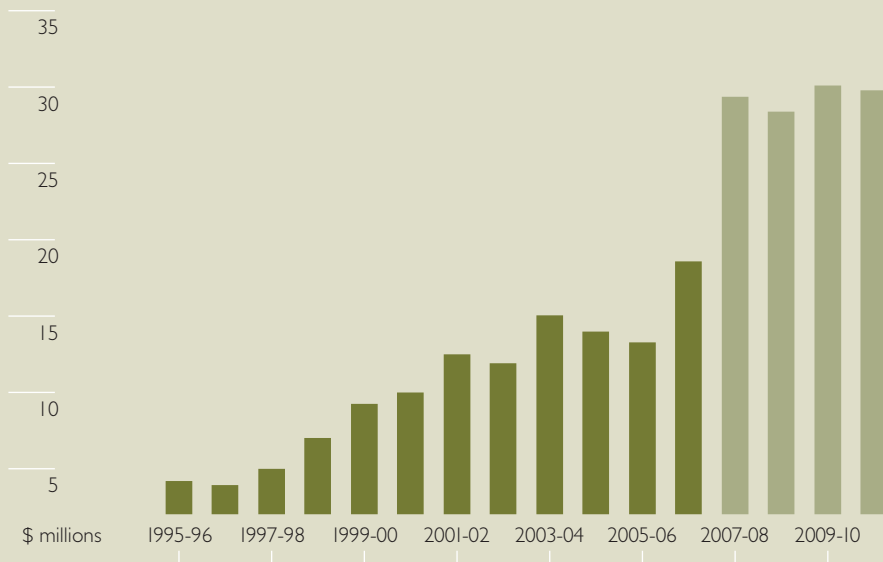
In the 2006-07 financial year, government spending on problem gambling totalled \$18.9 million. The graph below shows actual expenditure on problem gambling services from 1995-96 to 2006-07. It also shows projected expenditure from 2007-08 to 2010-11.

As can be seen from the trend line in the chart, money spent on problem gambling programs has increased and it is expected to achieve record expenditure levels compared with other Australian states and territories. Between 1995-96 and 2005-06, expenditure on problem gambling programs increased by 273 per cent.

A large part of 2006-07 focused upon review and redevelopment and as such expenditure for *Taking action on problem gambling* in 2007-08 will increase to \$26.7 million.

An agreement covering all funded action areas has been signed between the Department of Justice and the Department of Planning and Community Development. This outlines the key objectives in relation to the funding and the reporting requirements from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2011.

PROBLEM GAMBLING PROGRAM EXPENDITURE 1995-96 TO 2010-11



2007-08 – 2010-11 data is predicted expenditure based on Victorian Government Commitment in *Taking action on problem gambling* policy statement

The Government believes that concerted action can further reduce problem gambling.

Action Area

01

Building better treatment services

The cornerstone of the Government's response to problem gambling is the gambler's help service system. It offers problem gamblers and their families confidential, face-to-face counselling, financial counselling, telephone counselling and local community education activities.

Performance of gambler's help services

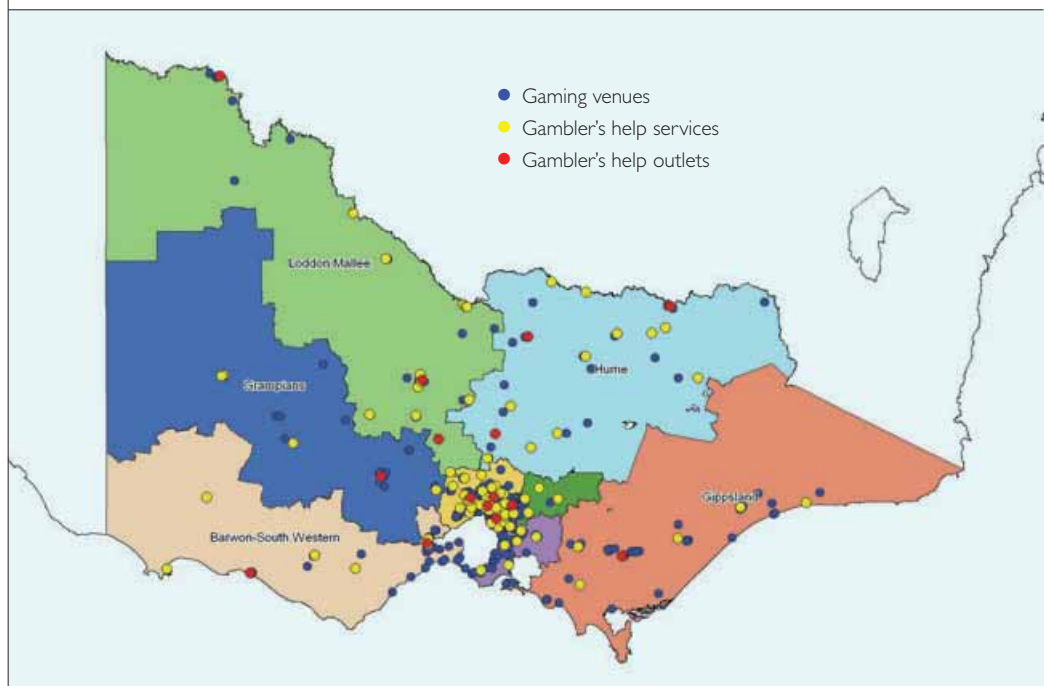
In 2006-07, gambler's help services provided over 50,000 hours of counselling to around 5,500 clients. They also provided approximately 20,000 hours of financial counselling to over 3,000 clients. In addition, Gambler's Help Line provided a service to 9,975 calls.

An important part of the strategy is targeting those people who are most vulnerable and ensuring that services are easily accessible. Of the clients at gambler's help services, approximately 20 per cent were born in a non-english speaking country and eight per cent were Indigenous.

Gambler's help services are also available to family and friends of problem gamblers. A focus on family support and counselling is a specialist service available from all gambler's help services across the state. Around 20 per cent of clients identified as being the family member affected by another's gambling.

The program focuses on the need to provide professional support while meeting the client's goals in a holistic manner. Based on this there has been a rise in the number of service hours provided to each client.

The map below indicates where there are venues with gaming machines as well as gambler's help outlets which are located throughout Victoria.



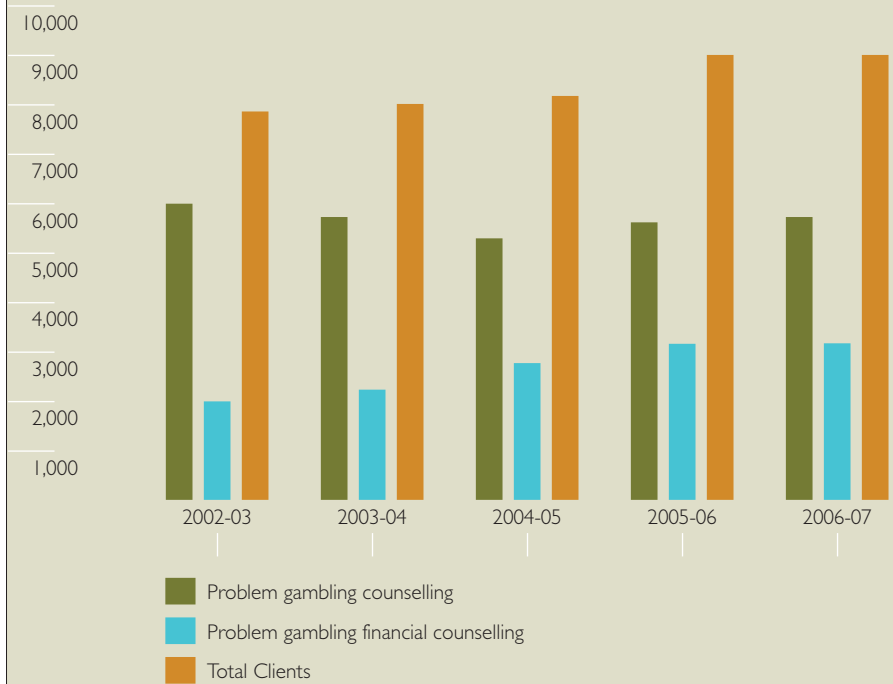
A need for financial counselling

Between 2002-03 and 2006-07 the number of clients accessing gambler's help services has increased by 14.25 per cent to 8,883. In this four-year period the number of clients accessing problem gambling financial counselling has increased significantly (67.7%) while the number of clients accessing problem gambling counselling has levelled.

Increased service hours meets demand

Recorded service hours delivered by gambler's help services have increased from around 30,000 in 2002-03 to nearly 70,000 in 2006-07. The increase of service hours per client relates directly to the deliberate targeting of increasingly complex clients and the ability of gambler's help services to provide a more comprehensive service to this client group. Gambler's help services are also providing family centred practices with a focus on the entire family.

CLIENTS ACCESSING GAMBLER'S HELP COUNSELLING SERVICES



SERVICE HOURS – GAMBLER'S HELP SERVICES



ACTION AREA 01

Addressing after-hours needs

Consultation with clients indicated many were employed so there was a need for flexible services outside regular business hours. In 2006-07, 14 gambler's help services were funded to provide after-hours counselling services which are now available in all regions across the state. Services provided include counselling, financial counselling and therapeutic group work.

Each gambler's help service conducted an evaluation of the after hours pilot and the following outcomes were reported:

- increased number of clients attended who could not otherwise attend due to work commitments
- more couples affected by gambling were able to attend together
- a more flexible and responsive model of service delivery was acknowledged.

To support the implementation of after-hours services, the Gambler's Help Line conducted a survey of problem gambler's preferences for after-hours support.

Of the 203 callers surveyed during the period the findings can be summarised as:

- 74% of callers reported their likelihood of accessing after hours support services as very/somewhat likely
- outside of business hours, callers most frequently reported weekday evenings as their preferred time to access assistance
- just over 25% of respondents reported a preference for Saturdays

- 73% of respondents were interested in receiving telephone follow-up/ aftercare support
- 65% of respondents were interested in scheduled telephone counselling.

The survey results allow for significant planning in relation to where and when services should be placed to maximise flexible treatment options.

Gambler's help redevelopment project

A gambler's help redevelopment project was initiated in January 2007 to develop a more responsive and flexible gambler's help service system that provides multiple entry pathways and alternative help options.

The redevelopment project was initiated because of a comprehensive, independent evaluation of the gambler's help service system. This review specifically examined:

- the funding formula used to fund the gambler's help service system, including a review of the statewide distribution of funds and the current model
- community education program design and implementation models
- service delivery program design and implementation models
- performance indicators, targets and measurement systems.

Enhancements to Gambler's Help Line

The first outcome of the redevelopment project was the re-purchasing of the Gambler's Help Line. The key objectives of the Gambler's Help Line are to provide 24-hour services including referrals, counselling and support to problem gamblers and their family members. New service enhancements also include:

- scheduled, therapeutic telephone counselling (operational by 1 January 2008)
- provision of real-time online problem gambling services (operational by 1 July 2008)
- facilitation of self help approaches (operational by 1 July 2008)
- real-time appointment scheduling for face-to-face problem gambling counselling (pending implementation of new system-wide IT).

Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre provide these services under the Gambler's Help brand until 30 June 2011.

FINDINGS OF REVIEW

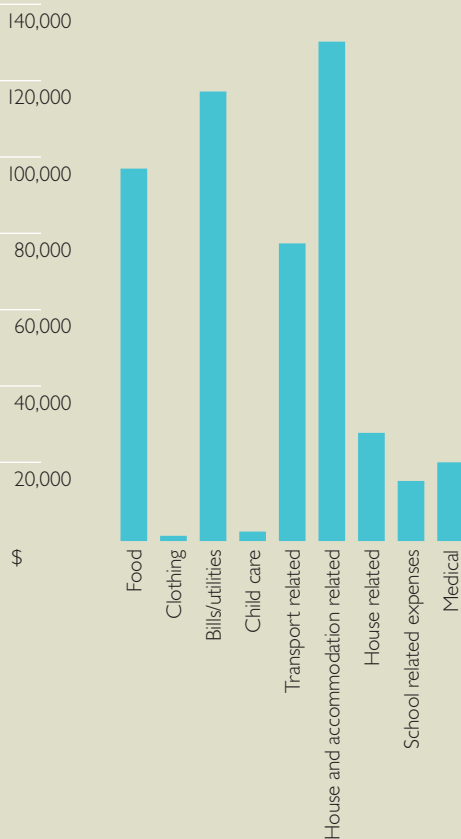
- Gambler's help services are located widely throughout Victoria and most are co-located with other services, which may reduce the stigma associated with accessing gambler's help services and provide for a multi-pronged response to assist clients with multiple issues.
- Approximately half of all gambler's help services are involved in a Department of Human Services Primary Care Partnership (PCP).
- In line with other jurisdictions and human services, Victoria provides a wide range of gambler's help treatment services and interventions to problem gamblers and family and friends.
- Accessibility to help services is good, with new extended after-hours counselling services available as well as 24-hour phone assistance via the statewide Helpline.
- The system has witnessed an overall 14 per cent increase in clients over the period 2002-03 to 2006-07, with an increase in the length of treatment over the same period.
- The number of clients receiving both problem gambling counselling and problem gambling financial counselling has increased, indicating a more complex cohort whose needs cut across service boundaries.
- Gambler's help agencies provided over 18,504 hours of community education ranging from universal, early intervention activities to those targeting at-risk populations and culturally-specific groups, including Indigenous communities.
- Community education activities were delivered in partnership with a wide range of other service providers, private industry, sporting associations, community organisations and local governments.
- While Victoria currently utilises local organisations to deliver community education targeted to local needs – which is in line with other jurisdictions – agencies should facilitate the integration of problem gambling community education into a broader community education campaign.
- The current, output-based funding framework remains the most relevant to Department of Justice at the present time, but may be enhanced through the development of a resourcing model that is more responsive to future variations in service demand across regions.



Professor Nick Crofts from Turning Point

ACTION AREA 01

2006-07 RAP EXPENDITURE BY CATEGORY



Regional gambling is an issue as well

In August 2007, grants for regional problem gambling services from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2011 were advertised. Successful providers will be appointed on the basis of an open grants submission process.

In the future gambler's help services will better integrate with the broader health and care sector through membership in Primary Care Partnerships (PCPs).

New program directions include:

- the development and implementation of mobile and outreach counselling that will increase service accessibility for clients
- common intake, assessment and referral processes that will formalise pathways to assist clients and workers to navigate the services system
- a redeveloped community education program that includes a new clinical program and embedding primary prevention activity within the PCPs
- integration of tertiary support services with early intervention and prevention
- specialist portfolio services for clients with more complex and severe gambling related issues that will join up service responses across a broader system of care.

The gambler's help redevelopment project will commence work on the development of a Families Support Program as part of a revitalised Recovery Assistance Program (RAP) in early 2008, with new program guidelines in place prior to the new gambler's help service contracts taking effect on 1 July 2008.

Introduced in 2003, the RAP provides material aid to problem gamblers and their families. An external evaluation of RAP in late 2006, found that RAP met its aims and objectives and is valuable to problem gamblers, their families and friends.

Reform of the case management system

Significant work has been undertaken in sourcing a new data collection and case management system for gambler's help services. The new system will enable a person seeking counselling to make an appointment to see a gambling counsellor at any time and anywhere in the state.

A case management function will be included that will record client details and facilitate the therapeutic intervention from intake, assessment, service provision, referral and discharge planning. This will be done in line with current privacy principles and will give clients increased flexibility on how and to whom their information will be shared.

“The \$1000 grant saved my home. I was on the last demand letter from my bank, so it saved my home! It gave me time to find a solicitor who put a caveat on my home so the bank couldn't take it.” *A Gambler's Help client.*



Pictured left to right: Professor Glyn Davis AO, University of Melbourne Vice Chancellor; Professor Alun Jackson; The Hon. Tony Robinson MP, Minister for Gaming and Professor Richard Larkins AO, Monash University Vice Chancellor.



Centre for Problem Gambling Treatment and Research

The Department of Justice, Melbourne University and Monash University announced the establishment of the new Centre for Problem Gambling Treatment and Research (the Centre) on 21 September 2007.

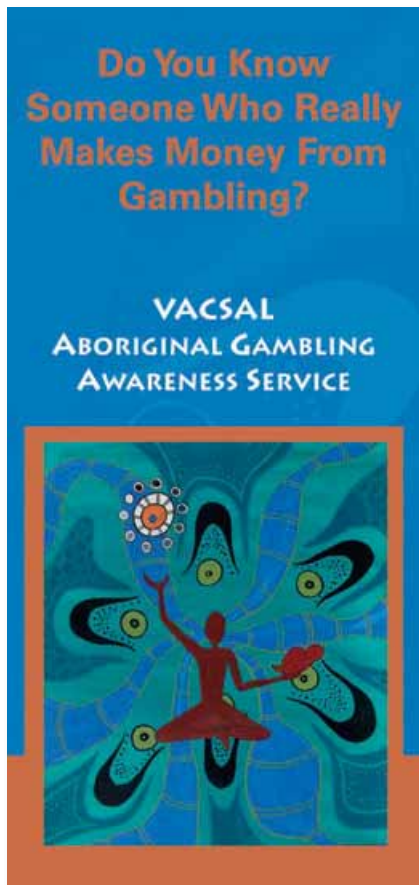
Further work will be undertaken to finalise priorities which will include:

- cutting-edge research into problem gambling treatment approaches
- development of new clinical practices
- training new and existing staff working in gambling services
- establishing a postgraduate qualification in problem gambling treatment
- providing training on problem gambling to industry on a commercial basis.

The establishment of the Centre is considered to put Victoria at the forefront of problem gambling research efforts internationally. The Centre's research will improve the design and delivery of treatment programs and the training of practitioners.

Victoria has a comprehensive statewide gambler's help services system.

ACTION AREA 01



In early 2006, the Government entered into three innovative contracts to improve community awareness and service responses to problem gambling for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) and Indigenous backgrounds.

Culturally and linguistically diverse services

Victorian Multicultural Gambler's Help Program

The Centre for Ethnicity & Health (CEH) established the *Victorian Multicultural Gambler's Help Program*, which is funded to support and strengthen the capacity of gambler's help services to provide responsive and culturally appropriate services to CALD clients and communities.

Indigenous services

To address the identified needs of Indigenous communities, two projects have been funded that provide for a statewide capacity building and awareness raising response through community development approaches.

Victorian Aboriginal Gambling Awareness Service

The Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited (VACSAL) has established the Victorian Aboriginal Gambling Awareness Service, which is funded to support and strengthen the capacity of gambler's help services to provide responsive, accessible and culturally appropriate services to indigenous clients and communities.

Victorian Aboriginal Health Service

The Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) has also been funded to deliver face-to-face problem gambling counselling and financial counselling services along similar lines to the mainstream gambler's help services. While each of the funded services brings different expertise, VAHS and VACSAL also collaborate to enhance the overall Indigenous response.

Developing the service model – culturally diverse and socially isolated people and communities

In January 2007, WIRE: Women's Information (WIRE) investigated the capacity of the current service system to address the needs of socially isolated women who may be at risk of experiencing problem gambling.

The project concluded in December 2007 with the finalisation of its report which is being distributed to gambler's help services and generic service providers for use as a reference guide.

The Centre for Culture Ethnicity and Health (CEH) was engaged in March 2007 to undertake a project that investigates the needs of newly-arrived refugees in relation to gambling behaviour. Using a peer-based action research approach, the project delivered a report on each of the four target communities (Somali, Sudanese Dinka, Burundi and Iraqi). Project findings will be used to increase cultural competency and inform community education activity undertaken by gambler's help services. This project also concluded in December 2007 with the finalisation of its reports.

The incidence of problem gamblers in the corrections system is being investigated via a joint project between the Office of Gaming and Racing and Corrections Victoria. The project aims to further understand the extent of problematic gambling within the offender population, the role gambling plays in offending and the identification of appropriate service responses.

The needs of refugees in relation to gambling behaviour

KEY FINDINGS

All four communities are experiencing significant financial hardship and low labour force participation, along with low literacy. Conversely, there was relatively high English proficiency among three of the communities.

Gambling behaviour is not openly discussed in these communities and there is a high level of secrecy and denial around any potential problems. To approach these issues, a significant effort towards relationship building with communities through community leaders and elders is required.

The general attitude to gambling, especially among the young, was that gambling was a way to win lots of money quickly, although older people also cited other reasons such as boredom, isolation, and wanting to fit in with Australian society.

The concept of western-style counselling is generally not well understood. There is an overall preference to discuss personal issues within their own community. Each community tended to utilise traditional community elders and structures such as tribal or religious councils to resolve disputes or problems. Only the most complex or serious problems went outside the community for resolution.

Problem gambling appears to be an emerging issue for communities that increases with length of stay. This finding is supported by other research on migrant communities who have had little exposure to gambling in their country of origin.

ACTION AREA 01

OPENING DOORS TO WOMEN: Assistance for organisations working with women experiencing problem gambling and social isolation

KEY FINDINGS

The research demonstrated a link between problem gambling and social isolation. For some women, feeling socially isolated is one of the reasons they take up gambling in the first place; for others, social isolation is the result of their problem gambling, as it erodes their relationships with family and friends. Often, both of these dynamics are in play and serve to reinforce each other.

Women experiencing problem gambling and social isolation exist right across the spectrum of our society. This research identified some factors that contribute to vulnerability as being experiencing violence, relocation, grief, unresolved trauma and living alone. Certain groups shown to be at risk included carers, older women, culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) and Indigenous women.

The shame and stigma women with problem gambling feel further contributes to their social isolation and acts as a significant barrier to them seeking help. Sometimes these barriers are only overcome by the extraordinary courage of individual women when they find themselves in extreme crisis. Women's experience of shame and stigma is qualitatively different to men's because of the different societal expectations placed on women in their historically assigned gender roles. These roles also entail obligations, such as being primary carers, which affect their access to services.

Victorian Multicultural Gambler's Help Program
Delivering training, education and support

Victorian Multicultural Gambler's Help Program
Delivering training, education and support

Workforce Development
Training and education initiatives building organisational capacity
Workshops are offered to:
• Gambler's Help agencies on key aspects of service delivery to CALD clients and communities
• Ethno-specific, multicultural and community organisations on problem gambling assessment, referral and early intervention
Forums and seminars to create dialogue and share knowledge of CALD problem gambling issues
Information sessions to ethno-specific and multicultural organisations and networks to strengthen referral pathways and promote collaboration

Research and Consultation
• Research projects on problem gambling and help-seeking in CALD communities
• Community and service sector consultations to improve knowledge of gambling issues in CALD communities

Resource Development
• Development of in-language brochures and materials for communities
• Specialised resources and tools for service providers

Information Dissemination
Raise awareness of gambling harm and available services through information dissemination at community festivals and events

Information Services
A comprehensive information service that specialises in problem gambling and counselling in CALD communities including:
• Specialist in-house library
• Online catalogue and resources
• Website with downloadable publications
• E-newsletter

Partnership and Innovation
Developing partnerships between Gambler's Help and ethno-specific services to:
• Raise awareness of gambling harm and promote services
• Address barriers to help-seeking
• Strengthen communities
• Support culturally appropriate services



Action Area 02

Ensuring a more socially responsible gambling industry

Ensuring the active involvement of the gambling industry in creating a more responsible gambling environment is a key component of *Taking action on problem gambling*. To this end, the Government is continuing to work with the gambling industry to ensure that the industry goes beyond merely complying with its legal obligations.

An industry code of conduct

In December this year, the Government passed legislation that requires major industry participants to have a Responsible Gambling Code of Conduct approved by the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation (VCGR).

To ensure the gambling industry provides a more responsible gambling environment, the legislation will also:

- require all gaming venues to have a self-exclusion program approved by the VCGR
- make it an offence for a gaming venue operator to knowingly allow a person to play a gaming machine, for the holder of the wagering licence to knowingly allow a person to place a bet or the casino operator to knowingly allow a person to gamble while intoxicated
- further restrict the availability of cash at gaming venues (see Action Area 5).

Responsible Gambling Awareness Week

For the second year running, the Government supported the staging of *Responsible Gambling Awareness Week*, which was held this year from 21-27 May. This initiative is a pro-active partnership between the Government, industry, community groups and various local governments.

During the week a variety of activities were undertaken to emphasise to all Victorians the importance of gambling responsibly and of staying in control. Activities included a public awareness campaign using radio and press, the distribution of information materials highlighting responsible gambling messages, and internal staff awareness and education campaigns in gambling venues.

Market research undertaken to evaluate the week found that over 27 per cent of gamblers had heard about *Responsible Gambling Awareness Week* and that all who had heard of the week could recall the key messages. There was also a 50 per cent increase in visits to the problem gambling web site during the week and a 6 per cent increase in number of calls to the Gambler's Help Line during the week.

These results highlight the success of the Government in working with the gambling industry to spread the responsible gambling message, especially given that the initiative only ran for one week.

GAMBLE RESPONSIBLY. STAY IN CONTROL.

HOT TIPS TO HELP YOU STAY IN CONTROL



-  Gamble for the fun of it, not for the money.
-  Don't chase your losses. Walk away.
-  Set yourself a limit and don't exceed it.
-  Don't let gambling take over your life.

RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING AWARENESS WEEK

GAMBLER'S HELP 1800 158 789

www.problemgambling.vic.gov.au

Supported by the Victorian Government. The Responsible Gambling Awareness Week is a partnership between industry, the community sector and the Victorian Government.

Strengthening the self-exclusion program

A pilot program to strengthen self-exclusion programs began in April 2007. This pilot program is a partnership between Government, gambler's help services and the members of the Victorian Gaming Machine Industry (VGMI).

Under the pilot, gambler's help staff have been attending self-exclusion interviews and assisting in the management, monitoring and ongoing support of people choosing to self-exclude from gaming venues. The pilot provides pathways for referral, support and treatment options for people that self-exclude. It has also developed self-help materials and support for problem gamblers that do not wish to engage with formal help services.

This pilot program has been well received. Feedback from participants indicates that approximately 59 per cent of those participating in the pilot program elected to use the pathway services provided by the gambler's help self-exclusion officer.

On the 20 April 2007, the Government, industry and support services developed and signed a partnership agreement, which is a significant outcome of the pilot program.

An independent evaluator has been appointed to review the *Pathways to Recovery Self-exclusion Partnership Pilot Program* with a view to assessing and improving program operation. The evaluation will specifically examine:

- how much the pilot has increased awareness of gambler's treatment services among program participants
- has the program contributed to increased take up of gambler's treatment services by program participants
- what is the participant satisfaction with the products and services provided by the *Self-exclusion Partnership Pilot Program*. This may include a review of perceptions regarding the degree to which the program has impacted on their gambling problem
- has the program been successful in reducing the incidence of self-exclusion deed breaches by participants and to trends in breaches over time
- has the program increased other protective factors or reduced other risk factors associated with the target group
- has the program demonstrated an effective partnership approach in supporting problem gamblers participating in the VGMI self-exclusion program.

Outcomes from the pilot program will also help with the development of guidelines for the requirement for self-exclusion programs required by the legislation.

GAMBLE RESPONSIBLY. STAY IN CONTROL.

YOU CAN BE AN INFORMED GAMBLER.



Did you know, on most gaming machines in Victoria you can check-out the odds of winning, see the rules of the game and check statistics about your chances of winning?

They even let you track your play so you can keep an eye on how much time and money you are spending.

PRESS THE **i** BUTTON TO CHECK IT OUT AND MAKE SURE YOUR GAMBLING STAYS FUN.

If you would like more information, please ask gaming machine staff.

RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING AWARENESS WEEK

GAMBLER'S HELP 1800 158 789

www.problemgambling.vic.gov.au

Supported by the Victorian Government. The Responsible Gambling Awareness Week is a partnership between industry, the community sector and the Victorian Government.

Pictured left to right: Judy Abbott, Self Exclusion Officer; Terry Graham, Australian Hotels Association - Victoria; Robert Heveren, Australian Hotels Association - Victoria; Paddy O'Sullivan, Australian Hotels Association - Victoria and Tim McCorriston, Coordinator, Gambler's Help City.



Improving pathways for referral and support between the gambling industry and gambler's help services.

ACTION AREA 02

Ensuring a more socially responsible gambling industry – Responsible Gambling Ministerial Advisory Council

The Responsible Gambling Ministerial Advisory Council (RGMAC) plays a key role in the Government's responsible gambling strategy by providing a source of direct advice to Government on gambling issues and on responsible gambling. The RGMAC includes members from both the community sector and industry to ensure that its advice is balanced.

In September 2007, Professor Bruce Singh was appointed as the new chair of the RGMAC. Professor Singh, head of Melbourne University's Psychiatry Department, has served with distinction on a number of government and university committees. As well as chairing the RGMAC he also chairs the Government's key advisory body on gambling research, the Independent Peer Review Panel.

The RGMAC met four times in 2006-07 and oversaw five working groups exploring key issues in greater detail. These groups were:

- industry code of conduct
- pathways to recovery
- risk awareness and reduction
- research
- product safety.

Key achievements for the RGMAC include:

- working with the Venue Staff Training working group to provide recommendations adopted by the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation, on the criteria and learning outcomes of training courses for venue staff
- drafting a code of conduct
- developing a *Responsible Gambling Awareness Week* in 2006 and holding a further *Responsible Gambling Awareness Week* in 2007, with endorsement of a 2008 Week
- contributing to reviews of Player Information Standards
- continuing to progress work on the improvement of Player Information Standards
- developing a pilot self-exclusion program including developing partnerships with industry, developing enhanced referral pathways, and developing recommendations for revocation and monitoring of self-exclusion.



The Hon. Tony Robinson MP, Minister for Gaming and Professor Bruce Singh, Chair, Responsible Gambling Ministerial Advisory Council.



Problem Gambling Community Awareness and Education Strategy 2007 to 2011

The development of the *Problem Gambling Community Awareness and Education Strategy to 2011* commenced in early 2007. This strategy adopts a social marketing framework to set out the strategic plan and overarching approach to promoting healthy communities. The first stage was a literature review of like social marketing campaigns in relevant public health areas and learnings from previous communication strategy activities has been undertaken. A segmentation study will be done to provide an evidence base to underpin the strategy and initiatives.

Statewide campaigns

Think of What You're Really Gambling With

The successful *Think of What You're Really Gambling With* campaign was continued with media activity occurring in December 2007. Its focus is on early intervention and recognises that Victorians need information about the risks of gambling and seek practical ways to deal with the problem in their own way.

In-venue advertising program

During 2007-08 the *In-venue advertising program* was continued in all gaming venues to maintain awareness of problem gambling and promote the Gambler's Help Line.

Player Information Standards

Player Information Standards required by legislation are being reviewed to improve information and responsible gambling messages to patrons. This review is close to completion. Player Information Standards aim to deliver consumer protection information to people who play Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs).

Action Area 03

Promoting healthy communities

GAMBLE RESPONSIBLY. STAY IN CONTROL.

PLAYER INFORMATION DISPLAYS (PIDs)



HELPING YOU TO KEEP INFORMED ABOUT YOUR PLAY ON GAMING MACHINES

A new approach to local community education through enhancing and broadening the gambler's help services system.

ACTION AREA 03

Problem gambling: a guide for Victorian schools

School-based learning programs

Problem gambling: a guide for Victorian schools

In June 2007, *Problem gambling: a guide for Victorian schools* was launched and distributed to all schools in Victoria. The guide is intended as a reference guide for use within the school community by student counsellors and teachers.

Consumer Education in Schools (CEIS) Program

To develop the problem gambling school-based learning program, a partnership has been established with Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV). The partnership will result in responsible gambling content being incorporated in the Consumer Education in Schools (CEIS) Program.

The partnership provides an innovative way to introduce problem gambling curriculum materials into schools and raise awareness of problem gambling among teachers through professional development sessions.

Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE)

To ensure that young people disengaged from mainstream schools are targeted, a pilot partnership with the Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) has also been pursued.

The Big Deal! pilot with ACFE targeting at risk young people not engaged in the mainstream school system concluded in June 2007. The trainer and learner guides – including a DVD following the stories of three young people, a CD for students and an extensive trainer guide – offered up to 20 hours of classroom material. The pilot was evaluated. Based on this evaluation, the pilot is being extended.

Partnerships

Local community partnership grants scheme

Eleven new partnerships were announced in September 2007 as a result of the third round of the Local Community Partnership Grants Scheme. The total value of these partnerships is \$750,000. Community organisations have been funded to deliver two statewide and nine local initiatives, which aim to raise awareness about problem gambling and its impact and improve the health and well-being of people affected by problem gambling.

These initiatives include community arts projects that explore problem gambling themes, the delivery of education programs and alternative recreational programs for groups in the community who are at risk of developing a problem with their gambling. Funding initiatives also include targeted programs for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, apprentices in the building and construction industry, women, young people and the unemployed.



Statewide community partnerships

In November 2007, an extension of the Statewide Community Partnership with Essendon Football Club was announced. Partnership activities will build on the successful elements of the previous partnership, and will see the organisational knowledge and capacity in the area of responsible gambling continue to grow.

A key activity of this partnership is the Victorian Elite Sports Gambling Taskforce that will provide an opportunity to broaden the reach of the responsible gambling message and create a framework for numerous sporting clubs and associations across Victoria to adopt responsible gambling strategies within their organisations.

Pictured above: The Hon. Tony Robinson MP, Minister for Gaming; Scott Lucas, Partnership Ambassador; Peter Jackson, CEO, Essendon Football Club and Peter Harley, Marketing Manager, AFL Victoria.

Community education and health promotion

Community Education Liaison Officer

A six-month position was established to coordinate the development and delivery of priority statewide information and service promotion materials.

The project provided a central resource for the community education program and established a clearinghouse/library of existing materials and resources.

The position concluded in September 2007. In the future, this position will be replaced by a new approach to community education through the redevelopment of the problem gambling service system currently underway.

A new approach to local community education has been developed and will commence from 1 July 2008.

- **Health promotion and service promotion** activities progressed in partnership at the local level to raise awareness of problem gambling issues and services.
- **Specialist portfolio services** to provide external clinical consultation and liaison services to targeted cohorts of clients considered unlikely to take up referrals (cold or facilitated) for gambler's help services.
- **Provider education** will provide education, training and relationship building activities that involve other health and welfare professionals likely to encounter individuals and families experiencing problem gambling related impacts.

Grandparents preventing problem gambling project

Grandparents Victoria was funded in 2005 through the Community Partnership Strategy to conduct the Grandparents Preventing Problem Gambling Project. This project, funded by the State Government is designed to stimulate grandparents across Victoria to reflect on the effects of problem gambling and to take action to help control it.

The project consisted of discussions with grandparents to inform the development of a resource to raise awareness of problem gambling. The discussion took place throughout 2006, Grandparents Victoria members held discussions in their homes where issues associated with gambling were discussed. In early 2007 the views of grandparents along with the results of research conducted here and overseas have been used to inform the development of a booklet.

The booklet has been written by grandparents, for grandparents wanting to address problem gambling. The booklet provides practical information and advice and should be viewed as the start of the process of thinking about and taking action to prevent problem gambling.

The booklet was distributed to all Grandparents Victoria Members, gambler's help services and a number of generic services.

ACTION AREA 03

Problem gambling resource kit

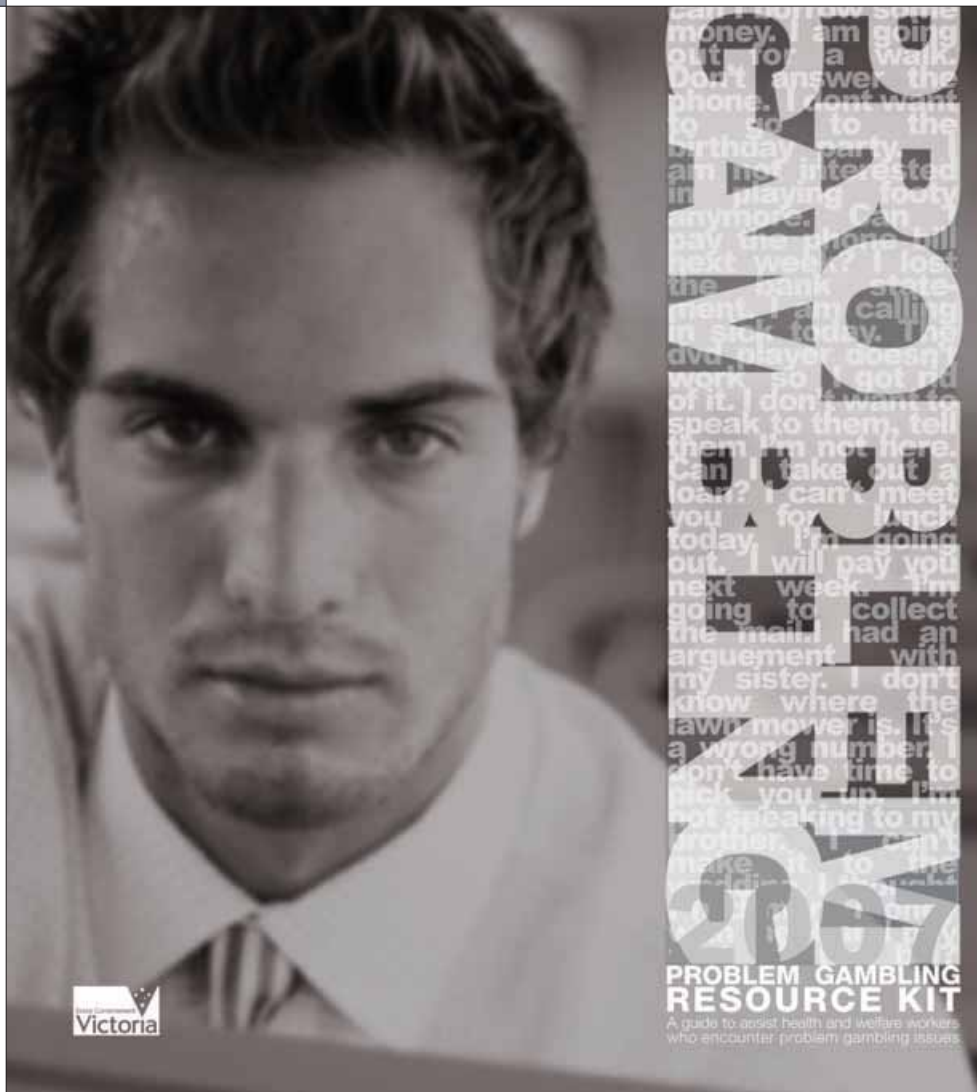
Released in May 2007, the Problem gambling resource kit has been developed in consultation with gambler's help services to assist health and welfare workers respond to problem gambling in their day-to-day work. It is consistent with the commitments detailed in *Taking action on problem gambling* and addresses the information needs of a range of health and welfare workers.

It is intended that the kit be used to help identify people presenting at a wide range of health and welfare services with gambling related issues. It will assist in the early identification of gambling problems as well as in the identification of people with longer standing problems and will support health and welfare workers in making effective referrals and other interventions on behalf of their clients.

Community advocacy

In July 2007, a consultant was appointed to review the first twelve months of the community advocacy project with a view to recommending sustainable models to take community advocacy forward over the next four years.

The consultant's report was provided to the Minister for Gaming in December 2007. The review of the Community Advocacy on Gambling project found that the first twelve months of the Community Advocacy on Gambling project demonstrated that such a role could provide a very valuable supplement to the limited gambling advocacy capacity in local government and community organisations. The Minister for Gaming is currently considering the recommendations of the report.





The Government is committed to effectively managing the distribution of gaming machines in order to protect those communities that are most at risk from the harm caused by problem gambling. In 2006-07, we have implemented a number of strategies that aim to protect vulnerable communities.

New regional caps on the number of gaming machines

Regional caps seek to limit access to gambling opportunities in vulnerable communities. As a part of *Taking action on problem gambling*, we committed to double the number of capped regions and extend the boundaries of the metropolitan regions that were capped in 2002.

On 12 October 2006, the Minister for Gaming made an order implementing the new regional caps policy. This order increases the number of capped regions to 19 and covers all areas capped under the first round and the new areas identified in the Government's 2002 election commitment.

The boundaries for capped regions are based on local government boundaries. Where only part of a local government area is capped, the postcodes included in the capped region were selected because they are considered to be most vulnerable to the harm caused by problem gambling, based on relative disadvantage indexes produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The cap is set at 10 gaming machines per thousand adults or the existing density of gaming machines in the region as at 12 October 2006, whichever is lower. The Government set the cap at this level because it responds to community concerns regarding the number of gaming machines without going beyond what is justified by the available research.

Under the *Gambling Regulation Act 2003*, the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation (VCGR) is responsible for implementing the regional caps order made by the Minister for Gaming.

On the 11 December 2006, the VCGR published its determination of regional limits in the Victorian Government Gazette. The direction requires 543 gaming machines to be removed from capped regions with a density above 10 gaming machines per 1000 adults. All excess gaming machines must be removed from the regions by 18 December 2007. The table on page 22 provides a list of the number of gaming machines to be removed according to local government area.

Action Area

04

Protecting vulnerable communities

Better protection for communities most at risk.

ACTION AREA 04

Local Government Area	Gaming machines to be removed under the second round of regional caps	Percentage of machines to be removed in the capped area
Ballarat	Frozen at current density	
Banyule (partially capped)	Frozen at current density	
Bass Coast	Frozen at current density	
Brimbank (partially capped)	Frozen at current density	
Casey (partially capped)	Frozen at current density	
Darebin	Frozen at current density	
Greater Dandenong	89	8%
Greater Geelong and Borough of Queenscliffe	Frozen at current density	
Greater Shepparton	Frozen at current density	
Hobsons Bay	Frozen at current density	
Hume (partially capped)	32	7%
Latrobe	80	13%
Maribyrnong	164	24%
Melbourne (partially capped)	Frozen at current density	
Monash (partially capped)	165	21%
Moonee Valley	Frozen at current density	
Moreland (partially capped)	Frozen at current density	
Warrnambool	13	5%
Whittlesea (partially capped)	Frozen at current density	
Total	543	

Destination gaming

Destination gaming has been suggested as a potential problem gambling harm reduction measure that involves redistributing gaming machines into fewer, but larger, gaming venues.

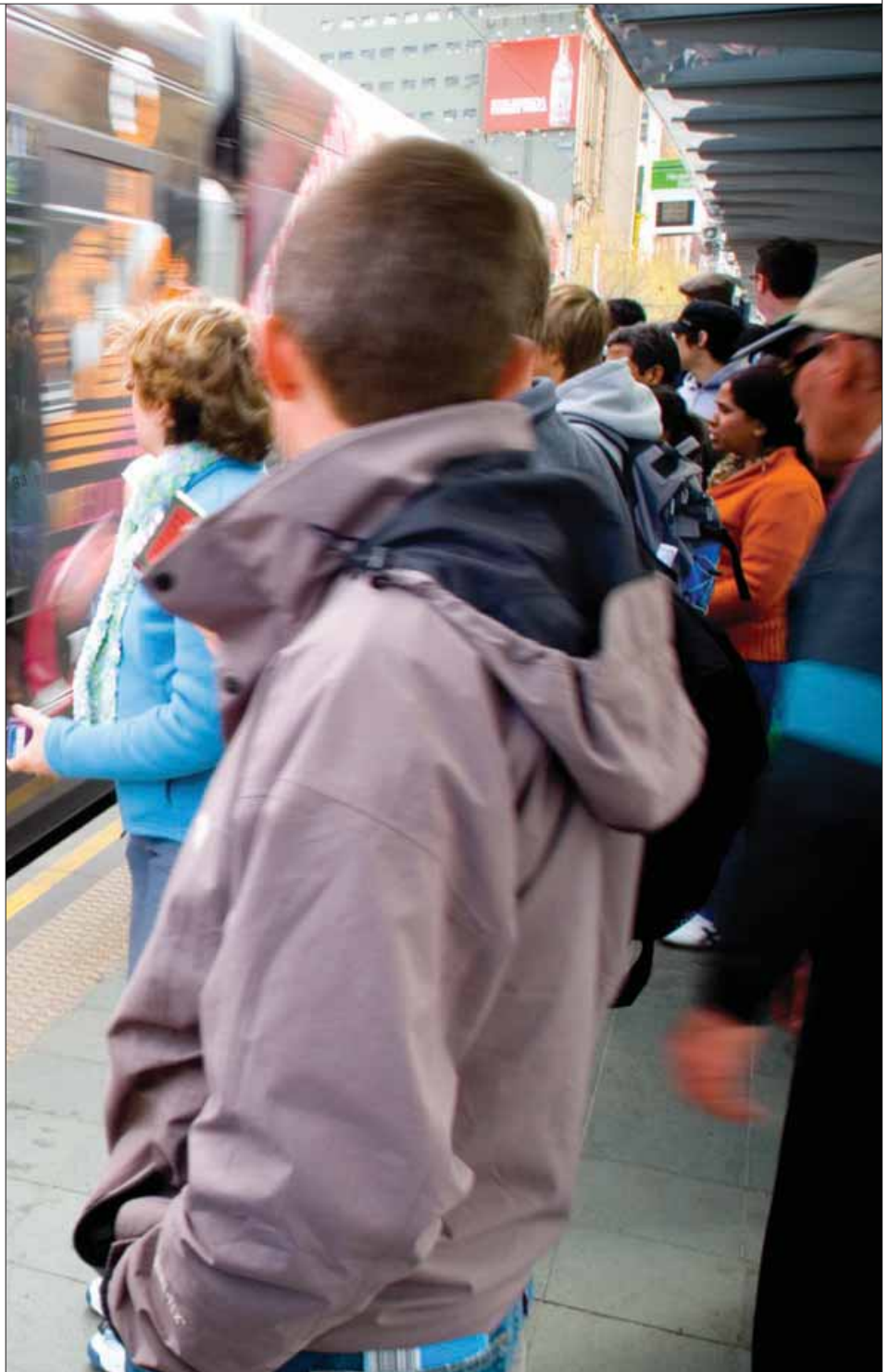
A project investigating whether destination gaming would deliver a net community benefit to Victoria commenced in January 2007 and is now at an advanced stage. The investigation is based on objective analysis, research and experience both locally and in other jurisdictions. A literature review of available evidence, in Australia and from other jurisdictions, was commissioned. A key feature of the project is ongoing consultation with key stakeholders, representing community, industry and local government interests.

Giving greater control to local councils

On 18 October 2006, the Minister for Planning amended the Victoria Planning Provisions in order to give local councils greater control over the placement of gaming machines in their municipalities. Previously venue operators did not require a planning permit if gaming machines took up less than 25 per cent of the venue's total floor space.

These new amendments mean that a council planning permit is now required for any new gaming venue or any increase in the number of gaming machines at an existing venue. This gives local councils a greater say in the placement of gaming machines in their communities.

In response to these changes, local councils now need to develop their own gambling policy and planning frameworks. In November 2006, the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) was contracted by Government to administer a grants scheme worth \$250,000. This scheme will assist local councils to develop their frameworks.



These new amendments mean that a council planning permit is now required for any new gaming venue or any increase in the number of gaming machines at an existing venue.



Action Area 05

Improving customer protection

The Government is committed to providing information to consumers to allow them to make informed decisions and limiting unsafe gambling product designs. At the same time, we ensure every consumer's ongoing right to engage freely in a legitimate recreational activity. The Government leads the nation in adopting balanced measures that protect gambling consumers and create safer gambling products.

Limiting access to ATMs and EFTPOS

In December this year, the Government passed the *Gambling Legislation Amendment (Problem Gambling and Other Measures) Act 2007*. This Act introduces measures that will require major industry participants to have a Responsible Gambling Code of Conduct approved by the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation (VCGR).

The legislation will not allow any automatic teller machine (ATM) in a gaming venue if it does not limit the amount a customer can withdraw to a total of \$400 per day.

The prohibition will also apply to ATMs within 50 metres of an entrance to the gaming area at the casino and to the entrance of a gaming machine area at a racecourse. The Act also prohibits a gaming venue operator from cashing more than one cheque per customer per day and limits the total amount cashable to \$400 per day.

Halving maximum bet limits

In *Taking action on problem gambling* the Government committed to reducing the maximum gaming machine bet limit from \$10 to \$5. Preliminary consultation regarding this measure has begun, it is anticipated that this measure will be implemented by 2010.

Requirement for payment of winnings by cheque

In August 2007, as part of its commitment to introduce measures protecting consumers, the Government enacted legislation requiring that all winnings and accumulated credits of \$1000 or more on a non-casino gaming machine be paid entirely by cheque.

This measure will stop winnings over \$1000 being paid partly by cheque and partly in cash, with the latter at risk of being reinvested immediately in a gaming machine.

Action Area

06

Enhancing the regulator

Gaming machine applications

The Government decided to review matters that the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation (VCGR) considers when determining applications for gaming machines.

The review will consider the breadth of existing matters the VCGR must consider and the evidence that an applicant must provide in support of an application, as well as the role that local councils and other interested parties should play in the decision-making process.

As the first step in the review, a discussion paper was released, *Gaming machine approvals: enhancing the decision making process*, for public comment in July 2007.

This paper provided background information on the existing gaming machine approvals process and the role played by the various parties in the process. It also provided information about the processes used in the other states. Submissions were sought to assist in the developing of options for improving the approval process.

The submissions period closed on 1 August 2007. A copy of the submissions is available for viewing on the Department of Justice website. The submissions are now being considered and further consultation with key stakeholders is planned. It is anticipated that recommendations will be made to the Minister for Gaming in 2008.

An independent regulator is vital for ensuring the risks associated with gambling are minimised.



Action Area 07

Fostering gambling research

In June 2006, the Government initiated the *Submission Based Grants System for Gambling Research 2006 Pilot*, focusing on accessibility to gambling products as a priority area in the research agenda.

The grants system aims to re-invigorate gambling research by encouraging participation and input from a range of disciplines to undertake applied research. Eight projects have been commissioned as a result of the first grants round.

These projects involve disciplines as diverse as social science, psychology, sociology, health, anthropology, hospitality and management. They have received funding of approximately \$0.9 million.

In 2006-07 alone, the Government has invested \$1 million towards gambling related research projects.

The Government has also supported Gambling Research Australia and the national gambling research program through the provision of secretariat leadership. Eleven projects were either nearing completion, in progress or offered for commissioning by grants, public or select tender in 2006-07.

Epidemiological and longitudinal study

A survey of Victorian adults will be piloted in early 2008 and then a full survey of 15,000 adults will be undertaken in April/May 2008 after the pilot results are analysed. This study will provide a prevalence rate of problem gambling within Victoria and an understanding of its distribution throughout the state.

This study will describe the participation in gambling by Victorians, the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of those who gamble and who are at risk of developing a gambling problem, the prevalence of problem gambling within cohorts such as youth and those people who come from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) group, and the presence of mental illness in at risk groups.

An amount of \$1 million over four years has been allocated to a sustained longitudinal study of the various forms of gambling available in Victoria to better understand how problem gambling develops. It is proposed that some of the survey participants in the epidemiological study will participate in the longitudinal study.

The study will allow the tracking of specified population groups including women, CALD communities, at-risk gamblers and problem gamblers, and will be the first Victorian study to gather information on how the problem gambling population is changing.

Ongoing funds for independent research

A second round of research grants was advertised in late October 2007. Submissions were received in late November 2007 and are currently under consideration. This round of grants will be awarded to researchers whose projects cover the following themes from the Victorian Research Agenda:

- emerging technologies
- youth and gambling
- early interventions.

In 2006-07, an example of strategic research undertaken was the commissioning of a project looking at destination-style gaming.

1. Identifying problem gamblers at gaming venues

The purpose of the study was to summarise and review existing published materials relating to problem gamblers within venues, and conduct empirical research into the nature of visible indicators of problem gamblers within venues. The research concluded that within venues, identification of problem gamblers from others who gamble was theoretically possible through observation and the use of a checklist of indicators.

A list of approximately 50 indicators was identified which included behavioural such included objective ones subject to little variation in interpretation (such as visits to ATMs, time spent) and other more subtle responses such as mood state variations (anger at staff, agitation, striking the machine). The findings from the project may assist with the development of codes of conduct, policy development, training packages development and the development of effective strategies for breaks in play for those experiencing problems.

2. Systematic review and meta-analysis of studies on early intervention and prevention for problem gambling

The purpose of the study was to determine which primary prevention and early intervention measures work, which do not work, and why by looking at studies that have been conducted nationally and internationally. Systematic reviews, by assessing the eligibility and relevance of studies completed in this area, integrate and critically appraise large amounts of evidence in a scientific manner. Researchers combined the outcomes of studies using statistical techniques (meta-analysis). As a result of this process, the authors conclude that early interventions and the prevention of problem gambling were more likely to succeed: when they are implemented to students aged 12 to 14 in years 7 and 8, are school-based, are psycho-educational, delivered by trained personnel and use a video-activity-lecture combination of delivery.

Over \$1 million towards gambling related research projects in 2006-07.

Commitment to progress

The Government is committed to monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of its strategies to combat the harm caused by problem gambling.

To this end, the Government will report on a regular basis to the Victorian community on:

- the implementation of this strategy
- the delivery of services to problem gamblers and their families
- the incidence of problem gambling and the level of participation in, and expenditure on, gambling in the community.

Monitoring strategy progress

The Government undertakes to implement the actions set out in this strategy.

The Government will undertake a review of this strategy and the effectiveness of its implementation in 2010.

Reporting on service delivery

The provision of better services to problem gamblers, their families and others affected by problem gambling is a priority for this Government.

The Government will evidence its commitment by providing regular and transparent information on:

- the services provided including:
 - the number of calls to gambler's help telephone services
 - the number of clients receiving problem gambling and financial counselling services
 - the total number of service hours delivered
 - the number and type of community education activities conducted
 - the demographics of clients using the services
 - the services provided to culturally and linguistically diverse and Indigenous communities
- the quality and outcome of the services provided.

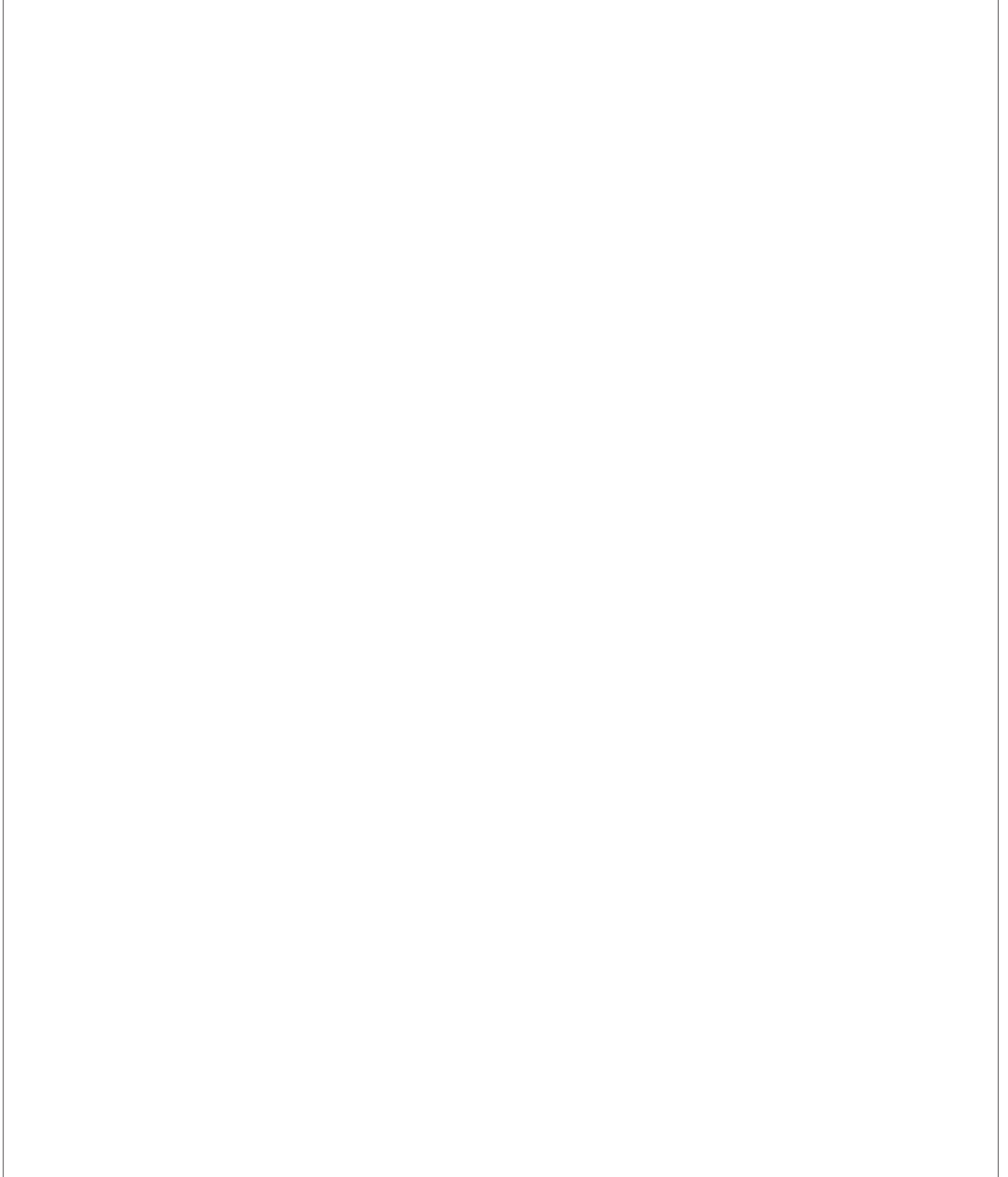
Reporting on gambling within the Victorian community

The Government has moved to make the reporting of research and gaming machine expenditure statistics much more transparent and accessible. This data is now freely available via the Department of Justice and Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation website.

The Government will also provide regular information to the community on the major indicators of gambling activity in Victoria, as well as the incidence of problem gambling, to communicate its progress in combating the harm caused by problem gambling and to better inform the community debate.

The Government is committed to monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of its strategies.





STARTING TO PUT YOUR GAMBLING FIRST?



ON MOST DAYS DO YOU THINK ABOUT GAMBLING?

DO YOU SOMETIMES GAMBLE MORE THAN YOU CAN AFFORD?

DO YOU TRY TO WIN BACK YOUR LOSSES?

DO YOU MAINLY GAMBLE ALONE?

DO YOU GAMBLE WHEN YOU'RE NOT ENJOYING IT?

HAVE YOU TRIED TO CUT BACK GAMBLING BUT CAN'T?

DO YOU SOMETIMES GAMBLE TO OVERCOME BOREDOM?

DO YOU LOSE TRACK OF TIME WHEN GAMBLING?

DO YOU GAMBLE TO TAKE YOUR MIND OFF PERSONAL ISSUES?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, you may be heading towards a gambling problem.

GAMBLER'S HELP[™] 1800 156 789

THINK OF WHAT YOU'RE REALLY GAMBLING WITH

www.problemgambling.vic.gov.au

