

Productivity Commission Draft Report *Overview of Australia's Gambling Industries*

Comments: Part 2; Page xv

82% of adult Australians engaged in gambling in 1997-98; 10% of gamblers accounted for 80% of the total gambling expenditure in 1997-98 ∴ 8.2% of adult Australians accounted for 80% of total gambling expenditure.

Could these 'heavy gamblers' be considered problem gamblers? Possibly not all, not yet, as a small percentage can afford the losses but only for a limited time.

To suggest that 6% of adult Australians be problem gamblers would not be unrealistic according to the above figures and is certainly more in line with the thinking of many in contact with problem gamblers.

On page xxiv it is stated that 5-10 people are affected by the problem gambler. Whilst Counsellors/Service Providers dealing with the problem may believe the higher figure applies, using the mean figure of 7.5 people affected, and the 6% figure above, a telling statistic of 6% of the adult population are problem gamblers with 45% of the adult population being affected – a total of 51%.

Whilst it may be argued that the above figures are flawed, they indicate a figure so much higher than the accepted 1.8% which itself was produced from flawed figures – flawed because of the excessive number of people who declined to participate in the survey, with many of those not participating quite probably because they were problem gamblers not prepared to acknowledge and/or discuss their problem.

This is without taking into account the effect of the extension in numbers and increased availability of EGM's that is yet to occur.

These figures need to be made very clear to persons who consider problem gambling to be such a minor problem with regard to the percentage of population.

Electronic Gaming Machines have introduced a new wave of problem gambler and additionally have lured existing heavy gamblers, of other forms, into problem gamblers.