

APPENDIX 2

HIGHLIGHTS OF JURISDICTIONAL ACTIVITIES AGAINST KEY FOCUS AREAS AND STRATEGIES

Australian Government

The Australian Government has continued to provide secretariat support to the MCG through the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS). In 2004, the MCG met in July, and in 2005, it met in April and October.

The Australian Government conducted a review of the *Interactive Gambling Act* (IGA) 2001. The IGA aims to minimise the impact of interactive gambling on problem gambling. The review found that: there is no evidence that people who gamble over the Internet are more likely to become problem gamblers; or that betting exchanges contribute to problem gambling and greater opportunity for consumer protection. The Australian Government decided that there would be no changes to the IGA as a result of the review.

In 2005, the Minister for Family and Community Services announced the Australian Government would commit up to \$3 million to establish a national gambling research institute (NGRI). On behalf of the MCG, the Australian Government engaged the Allen Consulting Group to undertake a Strategic Review of Current Responsible Gambling Research. The Australian Government funded a scoping study on options regarding the structure, governance, costs and possible funding arrangements for an NGRI.

New South Wales

New South Wales has implemented a range of initiatives to address the adverse effects of problem gambling. These include imposing regulatory controls on gambling operators, funding responsible gambling education and awareness campaigns, and working with stakeholders in the gambling industry and counselling services.

New South Wales has commissioned over 20 state specific gambling related research projects since 1995. These have been funded by the Casino Community Benefit Fund, which provides dedicated funding for gambling research, education, and awareness campaigns and the establishment of a range of counselling, treatment and related community services and projects.

In July 2003, New South Wales commissioned the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to conduct a wide ranging review of the effectiveness of various existing and proposed measures designed to minimise gambling related harm. The review was aimed at developing a comprehensive evidence based decision making process to deal with gambling harm minimisation. The review included:

- a review of existing gambling harm minimisation measures and counselling services;
- submissions from stakeholders; and
- consultation with industry, experts, community agencies and counselling services.

The review found a need for a more integrated policy framework regarding problem gambling, with the aim of developing policy programs and a regulatory system that promotes a culture of responsible gambling.

Victoria

Victoria has in place a nationally used comprehensive community education and awareness strategy which is part of an integrated problem gambling strategy and a range of legislative measures that address the Problem Gambling Framework focus areas.

Specific strategies include community partnerships with a range of organisations who work with local communities to improve their knowledge of the risks associated with gambling and comprehensive sets of legislative and regulatory measures in Australia to ensure that electronic gaming machine (EGM) gambling is provided in a responsible manner and in an environment that supports recreational gamblers in controlling their gambling.

In addition to this, is Victoria's comprehensive Gambler's Help System which provides support and treatment services over the telephone and in 100 locations across the State, and the Victorian Gambling Research Program, which is informed by advice from the Responsible Gambling Ministerial Advisory Council and the Independent Peer Review Panel. One of five current gambling research program projects is entitled 'The Changing EGM Industry and Technology'. It explores aspects of technology and features of machines.

Queensland

Endorsed in February 2003, the Queensland Responsible Gambling Strategy is based on a public health approach which encompasses a set of harm minimisation strategies focusing on prevention, protection and rehabilitation initiatives. Queensland has recently completed a community awareness campaign reinforcing responsible gambling practices by recreational gamblers and research is currently being undertaken to evaluate 'Where to get help' signs in all venues.

Queensland continues to do research in a range of areas to support evidence-based policy decisions around responsible gambling and administers a Responsible Gambling Research Grants Program which explores a wide range of topics. An innovative project, led by Queensland, has been a legislative model for a new exclusions regime for problem gamblers (including self-exclusion) developed by a tripartite working group of community, industry and government members in May 2005. A responsible gambling training package, based on the Queensland Responsible Gambling Code of Practice, is currently being developed for use by all gaming venues, peak bodies and Gambling Help Service providers and it is intended that the exclusions regime provisions will be incorporated into that training package.

Queensland is also reviewing its Responsible Gambling Code of Practice, in three phases, over a five year period, the second phase of which is currently in progress. The focus of this phase is to evaluate whether a cultural shift has occurred over the past two years. Early data suggest there is evidence of a cultural shift, particularly at a local level, where venues and Gambling Help Service Providers are effectively working together to create responsible gambling environments.

More information regarding Queensland's activities can be obtained from the Queensland Office of Gaming Regulation's responsible gaming website www.responsiblegaming.qld.gov.au.

South Australia

On 1 February 2005 the *Gaming Machines (Miscellaneous) Amendment) Act 2004* came into effect. The main purpose of this Act is to effect a reduction in the number of gaming machines in South Australia by 20 percent (3,000 machines). All hotels with 20 or more machines were subject to a compulsory reduction effective 1 July 2005 and further reductions are being achieved through a gaming machine entitlement trading process. To date, there has been a reduction of 2,205 gaming machines and there are 17 less gaming machine venues in South Australia.

Additionally, the Government has introduced mandatory Advertising and Responsible Gambling Codes of Practice for all major gambling operators. These Codes were approved by the Independent Gambling Authority (IGA), following extensive industry and welfare sector consultation. They place mandatory responsibility on venue operators, with respect to a range of measures and are reviewed every two years. The IGA also operates a voluntary barring scheme where persons can apply to have themselves barred from gaming venues. All gaming venues also operate a venue-specific barring system whereby patrons can have themselves banned at a particular venue.

From 1 July 2004 a Problem Gambling Family Protection Order Scheme under the *Problem Gambling Family Protection Orders Act 2004* was introduced. This scheme allows family members who are being adversely financially affected by a problem gambler to seek an order against that person. Applications for an order are made to the South Australian IGA in a relaxed environment with many cases expected to be resolved through counselling and mediation. Orders issued by the IGA can bar a person from gambling venues, require counselling, prohibit contact and harassment, prohibit taking family property and require specified distribution of income similar to a garnishee order.

South Australia also substantially increased funding to its Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund in 2005 and has introduced a significant school-based gambling education program on the impacts of gambling and problem gambling (called "Dicey Dealings").

Western Australia

Initiatives in WA include a problem gambling community awareness campaign, which commenced in August 2005 and ran for six weeks. The campaign included bus and bus shelter advertising, radio advertisements and newspaper advertisements.

The Gaming and Wagering Commission has been pro-active in ensuring the Casino Licensee's player information brochures provide clear, simple and informative detail to patrons. In addition, the Burswood Entertainment Complex and Racing and Wagering Western Australia conduct staff training for new and existing employees. This includes training in the responsible service of gambling. Training sessions are attended by Gambling Help WA counsellors.

These efforts are complemented by the:

- WA Problem Gambling Helpline, which provides a crisis counselling and referral service for people affected by problem gambling 24 hours a day seven days a week. The Helpline also provides ongoing case managed telephone counselling, which is particularly beneficial for those people located with regional, rural and remote parts of Western Australia;

- free face to face counselling service provided by Gambling Help WA, that is available in the metropolitan area. Gambling Help WA is also required to establish collaborative links with regional financial counsellors and alcohol and drug counsellors, to provide training and support on an “as needs” basis.

Tasmania

A new integrated gambling exclusion scheme (TGES) was formally introduced in Tasmania in August 2002, and is complemented by amendments to the *Gaming Control Act 1993*, to provide for the TGES system of more flexible exclusion options.

Other key initiatives have included a major media campaign in 2003, using television advertising, revised codes of practice for the gambling industry that include expanded responsibility by venues, and specific provisions for hours of operation. A revised advertising code of ethics promotes responsible advertising by gaming providers, that conforms to national standards, has been developed by industry.

Also in Tasmania, delivery of courses on responsible gaming to employees in the industry continues, together with extensive community consultation, particularly in relation to formulation and implementation of problem gambling harm minimisation measures.

Northern Territory

The Northern Territory has developed a range of initiatives that target CALD and Indigenous groups, including an Indigenous-specific harm minimisation poster and holding a regional workshop on Indigenous gambling issues. Player guides have been developed, such as a self-help guide on playing gaming machines, to contribute towards ensuring gamblers have access to consumer information about the nature of gambling products.

Gambling providers are required to nominate Responsible Gambling Officers as a contact to assist access to gambling support services, and self-exclusion schemes are available. A principal object in all the legislation governing gaming and wagering in the NT is the explicit object of reducing any adverse social impact of gambling. This is taken into account for the assessment of any gambling proposals.

Extensive research has been commissioned to identify the prevalence of different forms of gambling, to identify populations and areas of risk and to explicitly assess the impact of gaming machines in the community. Work plans of the Racing, Gaming and Licensing Division include the integration and further development of gambling legislation, and the formulation of a Framework, to guide the future development and management of gambling in the Northern Territory.

Australian Capital Territory

In December 2002, the ACT legislated a mandatory Code of Practice applicable to all gambling providers in the Territory. The Code incorporates a wide range of responsible gambling and harm minimisation initiatives and has recently been subject to a review, which included a period of public consultation. The review concluded that the Code of Practice was working well and a number of minor or technical amendments were recommended to Government, which were accepted by Government and incorporated.

Additionally, the *Gaming Machine Act 2004*, incorporating a number of harm minimisation recommendations flowing from the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission's review of the *Gaming Machine Act 1987*, commenced on 1 November 2004. The Act contains many technical improvements to the previous legislation, as well as improving accountability and transparency of club and hotel operations.

It has also introduced the requirement for a social impact assessment for all applications for additional gaming machines or when licensees wish to relocate their premises (new licence applications already had to undertake a social impact assessment). The Commission undertakes extensive community consultation, particularly in relation to its legislation review process and the formulation and implementation of problem gambling harm minimisation measures.

Community and Disability Services Ministers Conference

The Community Services Ministers Advisory Council (CSMAC) has endorsed the work of the CSMAC Gambling Working Party and extended its life from 2004-2008 to enable it to: support the implementation of the National Framework on Problem Gambling 2004-2008, support the participation of the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference representative on the Ministerial Council on Gambling and; to complete a programme of work.

The programme of work includes the development of a National Minimum Data Set for Gambling Support, Intervention and Treatment Services, contributing to the development of the research agenda of Gambling Research Australia and increasing national collaboration on community education.

The Community Services Ministerial Advisory Council Gambling Working Party has commissioned a scoping study on the development of a National Minimum Data Set on Gambling Support, Intervention and Treatment Services. The working party has forwarded a funding proposal for the development of a National Minimum Data Set to Gambling Research Australia. If funding is obtained work on a National Minimum Data Set will commence in December 2005.

Norfolk Island

The Norfolk Island Government has a low tolerance attitude towards gambling and there are no electronic gaming machines on Norfolk Island.

The TAB is the only licensee on Norfolk Island operating bookmaking operations. The TAB has appropriate warnings in place in its venue in regard to problem gambling and is regulated through the Norfolk Island Gaming Authority (NIGA) which operates in accordance with the *Gambling Supervision Act 1988*. The NIGA is empowered to implement and enforce a strict regulatory regime that provides high standards of gaming administration and control.