

Gambling  
**harm minimisation**  
**plan** FOR QUEENSLAND 2021–25

*Working together to prevent and  
minimise gambling harm to individuals,  
families and Queensland communities*



**Queensland**  
Government

## Message from the AG

The ***Gambling harm minimisation plan for Queensland 2021-25*** is a shared plan of action for government, industry and community to focus our efforts in reducing harm from gambling.

The plan supports the Palaszczuk Government's ongoing commitment to addressing and minimising gambling-related harm.

The plan demonstrates industry, community and government all have a role to play in ensuring gambling environments prioritise customer wellbeing and support Queenslanders to gamble safely.

This includes an emphasis on industry social responsibility and the adoption of technological, collaborative and systemic approaches to the minimisation of gambling-related harm.

Queensland has a long history of working collaboratively to address gambling harm through the Government's Responsible Gambling Advisory Committee, and the plan is another example of the significant level of cooperation amongst committee members, who come from across industry, community and government.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this plan to make it a truly practical and achievable approach to creating safe gambling environments for Queenslanders.

I look forward to working together to deliver on the ***Gambling harm minimisation plan for Queensland 2021-25*** over the next four years.



**Shannon Fentiman MP**

*Attorney-General and Minister for Justice*

*Minister for Women and  
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and  
Family Violence*

*Member for Waterford*

# Why do we need this plan?

The Queensland Government is committed to preventing and minimising gambling-related harm. Although significant work has been done to date, more can be done to prevent and minimise gambling-related harm in Queensland.

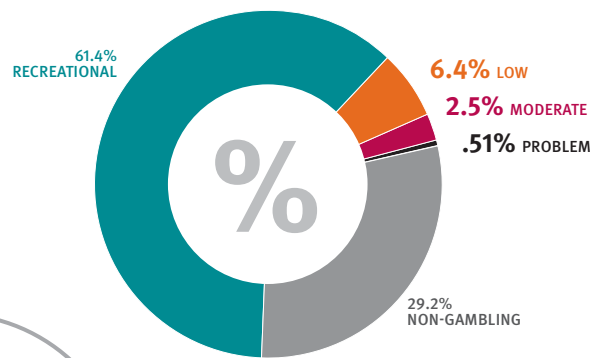
This plan provides a mechanism for government, industry and community to focus our efforts in

reducing harm from gambling and monitor how we are going in achieving outcomes.

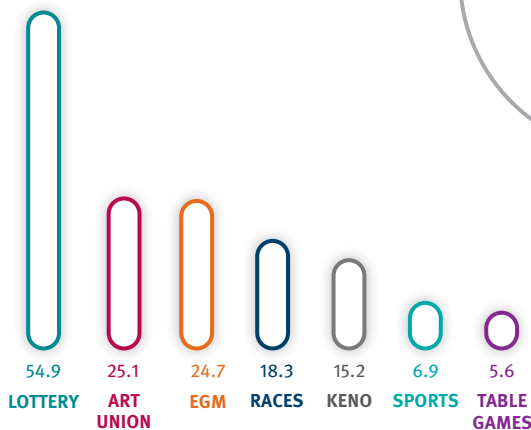
The plan demonstrates a renewed commitment and shared ownership by industry, community and government to ensure gambling environments prioritise customer wellbeing and support Queenslanders to gamble safely.



From the Queensland household gambling survey (2016-17)



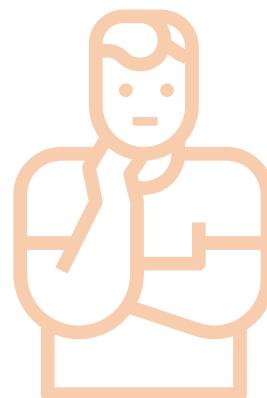
Prevalence of the gambling groups in Queensland adult population. From the Queensland household gambling survey (2016-17)



Participation in gambling activities in Queensland (%). From the Queensland household gambling survey (2016-17)



From Australian Gambling Statistics, 1993-94 to 2018-19, 36th Edition



OVER **70%**  
OF CLIENTS\* SAY  
“EGMs are problematic for me.”

\*Gambling Help service clients

## At-risk groups

It is critical that the specific needs of certain groups of the Queensland community are acknowledged and addressed.

Research indicates a number of groups could be considered at-risk of developing gambling problems, or being particularly vulnerable to the harmful impacts of problem gambling.

These include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons and communities, youth, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and persons experiencing family or domestic violence, or mental health issues.

### *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons and communities*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience disproportionate harm from gambling.

There is a need for a multi-faceted response to address harm from regulated and unregulated gambling in Aboriginal communities, which includes harm reduction, education and treatment in culturally appropriate ways that uphold the principles of self-determination.

### *Young people*

Youth gambling participation and exposure to gambling-like activities via digital technologies is on the rise. This group report higher rates of problem gambling than the general population.

Longitudinal studies indicate gambling problems may be set by 20 years of age.

There is a need for prevention activities focusing on education, and environmental and structural changes that reduce the visibility and accessibility of gambling and gambling-like content.

### *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse persons*

Evidence suggests those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds participate less frequently in gambling activities but have a higher rate of problems.

### *Other vulnerable population groups*

Other vulnerable populations include individuals experiencing family or domestic violence, mental distress or disorders, substance use disorders, social isolation, economic hardship, homelessness and those within the correctional system.



# EMERGING ISSUES

Growing number of interstate and international gambling operators providing **online services 24/7**

Gambling **normalisation** through **prolific & pervasive gambling advertising** driven by rapid consumer growth in the interactive gambling market and unprecedented industry competition online.

Increased opportunities to **use technology to empower consumers**, identify and target at-risk gamblers to reduce gambling harm.

**Youth exposure** to gambling advertising and gambling-like products.

Increasing convergence between **traditional & social** gaming businesses.

## Applying a public health approach

The plan will maintain the current public health approach to addressing gambling-related harm.

A public health approach provides a holistic view of problem gambling and its determinants and emphasises the value of interventions at the individual and community levels, in the gambling and built environments, and in health and welfare support systems.

This approach recognises government, community and industry all have a role to play in addressing this complex social issue.

Queensland's public health approach is based on the premise that gambling is a legal recreational activity that will, at times, be associated with a level of harm.

While there is ongoing debate among academics and regulators about how to measure gambling harm, there is a growing body of evidence that many people are experiencing harm without meeting the criteria for problem gambling or a clinical diagnosis.

Gambling harm impacts not just gamblers but also their families and workplaces. It has a range of economic, social and cultural impacts on the community more broadly.

Reducing gambling harm requires a broadening of focus beyond an emphasis on the 'problem gambler'. It requires greater attention on preventing harm before it occurs, the proactive detection of potentially harmful gambling behaviours and the early detection of gamblers at-risk.

Where possible, policies and interventions should only be implemented if they are outcome focused, based on credible research and informed by ongoing evaluation.

In the absence of a strong evidence base, the precautionary principle should be applied to decision making where there is a risk to public health.

The principle suggests that action should be taken to reduce the potential harm before there is definitive proof of the full nature of harm. This means weighing the costs and benefits of action versus inaction and erring on the side of caution where there is a justifiable concern, but a lack of full certainty, about the potential for gambling-related harm.



## Shift from ‘responsible gambling’ to ‘safer gambling’

The term responsible gambling has evolved to focus on the consumer and the responsible consumption of gambling, resulting in significant criticism about locating the problem within the individual, being stigmatising and unhelpful for people experiencing gambling problems.

Queensland’s shift to a safer gambling framework:

- recognises that there are safe levels of gambling consumption
- reinforces both the safe provision and consumption of gambling
- aims to reduce the harms associated with gambling, irrespective of where this harm occurs on the gambling behaviour spectrum.

## Who has a role to play?

Industry, community and government all have a role to play in ensuring gambling environments prioritise customer wellbeing and support Queenslanders to gamble safely.

There needs to be an emphasis on industry social responsibility and the adoption of technological, collaborative and systemic approaches to the minimisation of gambling-related harm.

All sources of gambling harm (online, land based, unregulated and gambling-like products) need to be considered.

Where possible, strategic partnerships between individuals, communities, governments and the industry will be enhanced to support safer gambling. This includes building partnerships across sectors and jurisdictions such as between gaming venues and Gambling Help service providers.

*Industry, community and government all have a role to play*

## Strategic risks

**Potential for increased harmful gambling behaviours due to the impacts of COVID-19**

**Balancing harm minimisation objectives with commercial objectives in the context of economic pressures on industry**

**Lack of recognition of gambling as a public health issue**

**Regulatory system and gambling market does not keep pace with community expectations**

**Rapidly emerging technologies and lack of regulatory agility**



# OUR VISION

*Working together to prevent and minimise gambling harm to individuals, families and Queensland communities.*

## DELIVERY THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Gambling harm prevention is most likely to be achieved through collaborative and coordinated effort. We will work in partnership to design and deliver a multi-faceted approach and targeted initiatives.

Some deliverables will be led by Government, and others by industry or community sectors. An implementation plan that specifies roles, responsibilities and timelines will be coordinated through Queensland's Responsible Gambling Advisory Committee.

## REPORTING AND EVALUATION

Annual work plans, covering priority activities and measures of success, will be prepared. Progress will be monitored, evaluated and regularly reported to Government.

Levels of at-risk and problem gambling prevalence in the Queensland population will be monitored and results reported.

## KEY OUTCOMES

- Safer gambling
- Gambling industry delivering safer products and services
- Empowered, protected and supported consumers and communities
- Contemporary, effective and trusted regulatory system

## PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

- Increased industry commitment to safer gambling standards and customer well-being
- Increased stakeholder involvement in identifying problems and co-designing solutions
- Increased community awareness and understanding of gambling harm and its impacts
- Reduced rates of at-risk and problem gambling prevalence measured through population gambling surveys
- Reduced barriers to accessing best practice help and treatment services

1

### LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

- Socially responsible industry
- Industry, community and government working together to drive cultural change
- Gambling harm prevention integrated into all aspects of operators' business

- Creating a strong mandate, identifying and encouraging leadership and grass roots level engagement
- Informing and building capability of boards and governance structures to better understand and address gambling-related harm
- Taking a harm prevention and precautionary approach to product and environment
- Ensuring all consumers can make informed choices

- Industry developed customer care framework
- RGAC engages industry, community and people with lived experience
- Information, tools and services tailored for general, at-risk and high-risk populations
- Elevate and connect responsible gambling networks across the state into harm minimisation policy and program development

2

### TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

- Gambling products and environments are safer and an evidence-based approach is taken to development
- Gambling products and practices keep pace with community expectations
- Innovation is applied to consumer protection as much as it is product development

- Understanding emerging technologies, their market impact and the potential for harm
- Knowledge sharing
- All parts of the supply chain 'design in' protections to protect and empower consumers
- Transition to safe cashless environments
- Understand and respond to online emerging markets

- Facilitate the sharing and dissemination of research to inform the implementation of evidence-based technology and environmental interventions
- Increase use of pilots and place-based technology trials
- Move to a safe digitalisation and eCommerce gambling environment
- Engage and contribute to implementation of the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering

## STRATEGIC PILLARS

3

### PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

- Integrated whole-of-system approach that moves away from a focus on individual pathology
- Gambling harm is addressed along all levels of the risk continuum
- A focus on prevention and awareness raising as well as help and support

- Better understanding gambling harm to inform policy interventions
- Improving cross-sectoral linkages and approaches
- Interventions addressing specific needs of 'at risk' communities
- Collaborative, coordinated approaches to prevention and awareness raising initiatives
- Implementing best practice gambling help and self-help support models

- Population level research of gambling-related harm and risk prevalence
- Deliver consistent and targeted gambling harm awareness campaigns and messaging
- Co-designed initiatives with government and sectors responsible for areas such as mental health, alcohol and drug use and financial resilience outcomes
- Revised Queensland Gambling Help model that is client focused and tailored to meet the specific needs of individuals and communities

4

### REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- Fit-for-purpose, proportionate and risk-based
- Evidence-led and outcomes focused
- Transparent and accountable
- Queensland actively participating and leading in the national regulatory space

- Strengthening harm minimisation controls
- Taking a local and national approach to regulation
- Engaging stakeholders in the design, implementation and evaluation of programs and interventions
- Building a more complete data picture and evidence base to inform decisions
- Increased transparency in decision making and policy development.

- Review Code of Practice and mandatory requirements to strengthen and encourage effective harm minimisation outcomes
- Combine government/industry information sets to assess impact on community wellbeing
- Develop Commissioner guidelines targeting significant risks and emerging harms
- Publish significant gaming application decisions
- Encourage the Commonwealth Government to address gambling advertising

GOALS  
WHERE WE WANT TO BE

STRATEGIES  
WHAT WE WILL FOCUS ON

KEY DELIVERABLES



## Where to from here?

Queensland's Responsible Gambling Advisory Committee (RGAC) will take a leadership role in the implementation of the ***Gambling harm minimisation plan for Queensland 2021-25*** over the next four years.

Stakeholders responsible for the delivery of key actions, or potentially impacted by their implementation, will have an opportunity to be involved and contribute towards the development of key deliverables.

Where relevant, the RGAC may establish working groups comprising industry, community and government stakeholders and people with experience or expert knowledge of gambling harm (if applicable) to develop specific detail around actions associated with implementing key deliverables under the plan.

Annual work plans will be developed for each of the four years of the plan, identifying priority activities and measures of success for the relevant 12-month period. The work plans will also identify roles and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders in implementing key deliverables.

Progress in delivering key deliverables will be monitored and reported on annually and an evaluation will be undertaken of the plan's overall effectiveness in achieving its objectives.

*To stay up to date, visit  
[www.business.qld.gov.au/  
gambling-harm-awareness](http://www.business.qld.gov.au/gambling-harm-awareness)  
and follow us on socials*

