

What is your club doing to help problem gamblers?

Over the last decade the rate of problem gambling has declined in every state and territory.

Clubs across Australia are working hard to reduce problem gambling.

While the majority of Australians enjoy gambling responsibly, for some, excessive gambling behaviour can become a serious problem.

We know that problem gambling is a complex issue and there are no quick fix or 'silver bullet' solutions.

That's why we have been developing solutions over a number of years to assist problem gamblers, and we feel it is important to continue to trial and test measures to find solutions that work.

In 2000, the club industry launched Australia's first comprehensive responsible gambling program in venues and we've been making improvements to it ever since.

This year, the club industry is rolling out an online self-exclusion scheme, designed to help problem gamblers get back in control.

Australia now has one of the lowest problem gambling rates in the world, averaging less than 0.5% of the adult population.

However, as community-owned organisations, clubs care about the people, not just the statistics.

Australian clubs are committed to finding ways to drive the rate of problem gambling down even further.

Clubs are working with a range of stakeholders, including state governments, researchers, counsellors and community groups, to assist those in need.

As an industry, we recognise that we cannot solve problem gambling on our own, but we will continue working to be part of the solution.



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Self-Exclusion

Self-exclusion is a process that allows problem gamblers to ban themselves from gambling activities at their local clubs. This plays an important role in the recovery process for problem gamblers, as it prevents a person from playing while they seek treatment for their destructive gambling behaviour. Self-exclusion also acts as a gateway to other vital treatments such as counselling services. For many problem gamblers, after recognising their gambling is unhealthy, self-exclusion is the first key step taken on their path to recovery.

Studies have proven that self-exclusion is effective. Macquarie University found that over 70% of self-exclusion participants report reductions in gambling as a result of participation in the program.

All clubs across Australia that offer gambling currently provide patrons with the option to exclude themselves from gaming venues.

This year, following the conclusion of a six-month trial, the industry rolled out an online self-exclusion program in NSW, which for the first time enables gamblers to self-exclude from multiple venues at the click of a button.

With the help of a counsellor, gamblers can use the online database to ban themselves from all club venues surrounding their home and workplace. The new system is provided free of charge to government-funded problem gambling services.

Strengthening self-exclusion is just one way the club industry is working towards delivering better solutions for problem gamblers.

24/7 Counselling Services

Counselling is the most effective tool to help problem gamblers think about and take control of their behaviour. Clubs provide patrons with access to free 24/7 counselling services through the promotion of the government-funded *Gambling Help* service.

Thousands of clubs across Australia also subscribe to comprehensive in-venue responsible gambling programs, such as ClubSAFE. Such programs have been developed with input from leading research institutes and offer tools, including access to crisis hotlines and local counseling services, which go beyond simple compliance with legislation and regulation.

Ban On Credit Betting

Clubs know that there is a significant difference between using your own money to gamble and spending money you don't actually have. That's why it's impossible to use a credit card to play a poker machine in a club and ATMs in clubs don't allow cash withdrawals on credit cards.

Credit cards can make a gambling session much worse for problem gamblers, as players can run up large debts which can attract interest of up to 30%, compounding an individual's financial distress.

Clubs also ban lines of credit and short-term loans for gambling and support a complete ban on all credit card gambling.

Staff Training

Our frontline staff are fully trained in responsible gambling practices and are equipped with the skills and knowledge to offer assistance to problem gamblers. Every club in Australia that offers gambling has staff trained and certified in the responsible conduct of gambling (RCG).

Other Initiatives ...

There are many other ways in which clubs are helping to make a difference.

For example, clubs know that responsible advertising plays a role in reducing problem gambling. You won't see your local club advertising poker machines on television during a football game or tennis match.

Unlike casinos, clubs don't offer gambling 24 hours a day. This means problem gamblers are forced to take a break and consider their actions. Some clubs even provide time-out rooms for gamblers.

Plus, clubs also have strict rules prohibiting offering free alcohol for gamblers and ban other inducements to gamble.

These measures all form part of the club industry's collective commitment to responsible gambling. For more information, including a comprehensive list of harm minimisation strategies used by clubs in Australia, visit www.partofthesolution.com.au



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