



Tackling gambling harm in Australia symposium communique

Adelaide, 1 May 2023

An unprecedented [gathering of experts](#) focusing on how to tackle gambling harm in Australia has met on Karna country/Adelaide today. The hosts agreed:

The gambling epidemic in Australia costs individuals, families, and communities more than \$25 billion annually – the highest per capita in the world.

Rather than tackling gambling harms, governments across Australia consistently fail to take action. Gambling is a harmful product, but unlike alcohol or tobacco, there is no national strategy to limit its use, nor funding to better understand and reduce its impact in our communities.

We call on the Commonwealth, State, and Territory governments to take urgent action to create a comprehensive national strategy to address gambling related harm.

Guided by a public health approach, this recognises the harm and need for regulation which includes prevention (awareness and education), strong regulation and enforcement, treatment, and research.

The Commonwealth must

- Acknowledge that gambling harm is part of their responsibility.
- It should create a unit within the Department of Health and Aged Care to address it, and establish a new, properly-resourced national regulator to combat gambling harm.
- Implement a mandatory pre-commitment scheme for online gambling services with binding and practical default limits which can only be increased with proof of income.

All State and Territory Governments must

- Commit to introduce cashless gambling cards, with mandatory and binding pre-commitment (loss limits) for poker machine use in all casinos, pubs, and clubs.
- Close poker machine venues between midnight and 10am as these are the hours when people are most vulnerable to gambling harm.
- Introduce additional protections on poker machines features including banning losses disguised as wins, and decreasing maximum bets.

Attributable quotes

“The tens of billions of dollars that the gambling industry sucks out of households across the country each year is shameful, and the harms and stresses caused to individuals, families and the wider community is preventable. What we’ve explored today, from people with lived experience and other experts, are the various ways each government can act.

“We urge governments who receive revenue through gambling, and political parties who receive donations from gambling companies, to set aside their pecuniary interest and act on behalf of the most vulnerable members of the community, who are those who most often pay the biggest price.”

Adj Prof Terry Slevin, CEO, [Public Health Association of Australia](#)

“Australian governments have been asleep at the wheel when it comes to regulating the gambling industry and it is beyond time for Federal, State and Territory governments to step up and address gambling harm as a public health problem that is exacting a huge health, social and economic toll on communities, especially our most vulnerable.”

Carol Bennett, CEO, [Alliance for Gambling Reform](#)

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