
3. Methodology and approach

Presented in this section is the method used in developing a comprehensive analytical framework for the analysis and evaluation of the social impacts of gaming in Victoria. A key aim has been to address the research issues raised in the *Summary of Findings 1996-97 Research Program* (Arthur Andersen, 1997, p. 11ff). A particular concern was to provide a means of integrating the various forms of impact data in a framework with a scientific rationale. Guidance in developing the methodology was obtained from a broad review of the social science literature with a particular focus on social impact models.

3.1 Project methodology and approach

As outlined in the project terms of reference, this research project was undertaken in two stages:

- Stage 1 – Development of an Analytical Framework to Evaluate the Social (and Associated Economic) Impacts of Gaming.
- Stage 2 – Summary and Evaluation of the *1998-99 Research Program Findings*.

The key methodological components of these two stages are listed in Table 3.1 and are described in the remainder of this section.

Table 3.1: Key Components of the Research Process

Stage 1– Framework development	Stage 2 – Summary and evaluation of <i>1998-99 Research Program</i> findings
Methodological components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1: Identification and Collation of Relevant Data • Phase 2: Linking Levels of Analysis with the Positive and Negative Impacts of Gaming • Phase 3: Framework Review 	Methodological components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 4: Summary and Evaluation of the Findings from Individual Projects • Phase 5: Consultant Feedback on Individual Project Reviews • Phase 6: Integration and Evaluation of the Findings from the <i>1998-99 Research Program</i>

3.1.1 Stage 1– Framework development

Table 3.1 shows the key components of the method used to develop the analytical framework of the social impacts of gaming. Although discussed separately and in some detail overlap and feedback occurred across the three phases.

Phase 1: Identification and collation of relevant data

Data identification and collation incorporated the following:

- a critical review of relevant literature in order to identify descriptive, analytical, and output indicators of the social and economic impacts of gambling;
- a critical review of reports on the impacts of gambling to evaluate existing models and frameworks, both nationally and internationally;
- an investigation of the existence and availability of data and reports held by various levels of government, and non-government organisations;
- consultation with key stakeholders who could provide perspective and insights on indicators, and who have knowledge of information and data sources not easily accessed;
- an analysis of historical and comparative information.

Phase 2: Linking Levels of Analysis and the Positive and Negative Impacts of Gaming

Following the collation and initial review of relevant data, each data source was categorised on the basis of the unit(s) of analysis at which it measured gaming impacts. Four “levels of analysis” were identified as effectively representing current gaming impact data—individual and family, community, regional, and State. Precise definitions of each of these levels of analysis were developed by building on those cited in national and international research (eg. Alcohol and Gaming Authority, 1998; Productivity Commission, 1999) and through consultation with Authority staff. Several data sources were categorised as belonging to more than one level of analysis.

Once categorised on the basis of level of analysis, each data source was examined to isolate the area(s) of gaming impact it addressed. Seven “dimensions of impact” were identified as effectively representing current gaming impact data—health and wellbeing, culture, recreation and tourism, employment and education, legal/justice, economic development, and financial. As with the levels of analysis, precise definitions of each of these dimensions of impact were developed by drawing on existing literature (eg. Alcohol and Gaming Authority, 1998; Productivity Commission, 1999) and through consultation with Authority staff. Most data sources were found to address multiple dimensions of impact.

Phase 3: Framework review

Details of a draft version of the framework were sent, in the form of a discussion paper, to key Victorian stakeholder groups (Appendix F) and consultants completing projects as part of the Authority’s *1998-99 Research Program* (Appendix G).

Feedback was particularly sought in relation to the conceptual adequacy, research utility, and measurement status of gaming impacts included in the framework. Consultants were asked to provide their feedback as a written statement, while stakeholders were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews. Conducted by

the three senior members of the SERC research team. Full transcripts were taken. Appendix H and Appendix I, provide details of the stakeholders and consultants, who provided feedback on the discussion paper. Subsequent adjustments were made to the framework based on feedback received.

The categorisation and review process resulted in the construction of a two-dimensional matrix (ie. levels of analysis x dimensions of impact) containing 28 separate cells. This matrix or “analytical framework” is shown in Table 5.1 (see Section 5, p67) and was used to summarise and evaluate the Authority’s *1998-99 Research Program Findings*.

3.1.2 Stage 2– Summary and evaluation of 1998-1999 Research Program findings

Once the analytic framework was developed it was used to summarise and evaluate the findings of the Authority’s *1998-99 Research Program*.

Phase 4: Summary and evaluation of the findings from individual projects

Using the analytical framework each of the final reports from the Authority’s *1998-99 Research Program* was critically reviewed in terms of how its findings contribute to understanding the gaming impacts identified within each framework cell. For each report, this “mapping” process focused on:

- summarising project aims and specific research objectives, data collection and analysis strategies, and key gaming impact findings;
- classifying project findings in terms of levels of analysis and dimensions of gaming impact;
- evaluating the adequacy of indicators used to measure gaming impacts (eg. reliability and validity issues);
- evaluating the adequacy of project data collection and analysis strategies for identifying gaming impacts.

Phase 5: Consultant feedback on individual project reviews

A draft of the review prepared for each project was forwarded for comment to the consultant associated with each project. Specific feedback on reviews was sought in terms of:

- adequacy of the “mapping” process in determining the framework cells addressed by the project;
- accuracy of the conceptual and methodological critique of the project; and
- specific additions and/or amendments requested by the consultant.

Based on the feedback provided from consultants, additions and changes were made (where considered appropriate) to the individual project reviews before finalising Section 6 of the report.

Phase 6: Integration and evaluation of the findings from the 1998-99 Research Program

Once the results from each of the projects had been “mapped” into the cells within the analytical framework, findings were integrated and evaluated across the *1998-99 Research Program*.