

Taking action on problem gambling

Action area 1: Building better treatment services



Office of Gaming and Racing

***Taking action on problem gambling* is the Government's five year strategy to combat problem gambling in Victoria. The strategy includes initiatives totalling \$132 million and is an integrated approach to consumer protection and the prevention, early intervention and treatment of problem gambling. The strategy identifies seven priority action areas that the Government will act on to reduce problem gambling and its effects on Victoria.**

This statement builds on the Government's record of achievement in addressing problem gambling, including the introduction of regional caps and the removal of gaming machines from vulnerable areas, eliminating all 24-hour gaming venues outside the casino, banning smoking in gaming machine areas, restricting gaming venue signage and banning gaming machine advertising.

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Problem gamblers and their families and friends have diverse needs. Providing a gambler's help services system that responds effectively to those needs is a key challenge for Government.

A total funding commitment of \$79.8 million (an increase of \$36.8 million over five years).

Key initiatives in this action area are:

- \$53.6 million for direct counselling services across Victoria, bringing total counselling provided to 100,000 per year.
- \$500,000 to develop a new integrated internet based support service to provide online counselling and self-help tools.
- \$2.1 million to expand after hours gambler's help services.
- \$500,000 in 2006-07 for the development of new services for culturally diverse and socially isolated communities to address gaps identified in the current system.
- \$4.3 million to improve existing case management and referral systems so that a person seeking counselling will be able to make an appointment to see a gambling counsellor at any time and from any place in Victoria.
- \$4.2 million in a joint venture with the University of Melbourne and Monash University to create a world-leading Centre for Excellence in Problem Gambling Treatment.
- \$4.9 million in maintaining and enhancing services for culturally and linguistically diverse and Indigenous communities.
- \$300,000 for a pilot program to provide a wider range of sentencing options for problem gamblers who come into contact with the criminal justice system.
- \$4.8 million to provide material aid for the families of problem gamblers who face severe hardship as a consequence of the problem gambler's behaviour.
- \$4.2 million for management of the Government's problem gambling services program.
- \$350,000 in 2006-07 to improve data on the use of problem gambler's help services.

Further information on *Taking action on problem gambling* can be obtained from the Department of Justice website www.justice.vic.gov.au.