

PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE

Outcome 3.1 – Financial Management

KEY POINTS

- At the Ministerial Council on Gambling (MCG) meeting in July 2008, Ministers agreed to create a national website to provide 24-hour, 7 days a week counselling for problem gamblers and assessment and referral interventions.
- **Total funding of \$1.5 million** for the duration of the project is being provided by each jurisdiction based on a proportion of state and territory gambling revenue.
- The Commonwealth Government is providing funding of \$75,000 (GST excl.) for the evaluation of the project.
- The evaluation is being managed by Victoria.
- A MOU between the Victorian Government and the Commonwealth Government was signed on 30 August 2010 for the evaluation.
- The evaluation is expected to be completed in early 2011.
- It is expected that a decision about the future of the website will be made in consultation with states and territories through the transition of MCG activities and will take into consideration findings from the evaluation report.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Who staffs the website?

- The website is staffed by professional gambling counsellors provided by Turning Point.
- Approximately 4.6 people (costed at \$265,000 in 08/09).

- Program management is undertaken by the Victorian Department of Justice.

2. How is the website advertised?

- It is being advertised by individual State and Territory governments as part of their problem gambling promotion material.
- The Victorian Department of Justice is implementing a marketing plan which includes mail-outs to peak bodies, service providers and industry.
- The Commonwealth has also distributed state and territory advertising material to relevant Commonwealth programs such as Emergency Relief and Commonwealth Financial Counselling.

3. How is the website funded?

- **Total funding of \$1.5 million** for the duration of the project is being provided by each jurisdiction based on a proportion of state and territory gambling revenue (except for Western Australia who provides \$10,000 per annum).

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Proportion of gambling revenue</u>	<u>2009/10 Contribution</u>
ACT	1.5%	\$11,357
NSW	40.2%	\$313,001
NT	1.8%	\$14,157
QLD	17.8%	\$138,144
SA	6.3%	\$49,082
Vic	25.9%	\$150,952
Tas	1.6%	\$12,678
WA	\$10,000 per annum	\$10,000

- The Commonwealth Government is providing funding of \$75,000 (GST excl.) for the evaluation of the website.

4. How will the website be evaluated?

- The Commonwealth is funding the evaluation of the service and has worked closely with Victoria to develop an evaluation framework.
- The evaluation is being carried out by ARTD Consultants. Their final report on the evaluation is due in early 2011.

5. How does it work? Is counselling in 'real-time'?

- Yes, people have access to 27/7 counselling in real time.
- People can also choose to access a range of gambling information and resources, including self-help advice.

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BACKGROUND

- The *Gambling Help Online* website www.gamblinghelponline.org.au was launched by the Victorian Minister for Gambling, Tony Robinson on 8 October 2009.
- A joint media release from Minister Macklin and Minister Robinson was also released.
- The service has the potential to **reach a wider range of individuals** than traditional counselling
 - particularly younger people
 - those who are isolated or reluctant to seek help for their gambling problem by traditional counselling
 - online gamblers.

Key statistics on usage Gambling Help Online (for the July- September 2010 quarter)

- 23,062 visits since the website commencement in August 2009. 10,209 of these visits were for the July to September quarter.
- The number of external websites providing links to the Gambling Help Online website is 226.
- 667 contacts responded to by a Gambling Help Online counsellor, with 379 of these contacts being related to a gambling concern and 288 contacts involving administrative requests, internal or external site testing and other non-clinical presentation. This is up by 122 live counselling sessions from the previous quarter (a 47% increase).
- In addition, the website received 100 unique email-support requests, up by 78% from the previous quarter.
- 72.6% of contacts were received **outside of typical business hours** (outside of 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday), with 45.6% of contacts being received during weekday evenings and nights and 26.9% received over weekends.
- Online clients were most frequently based in New South Wales (41.4%), followed by Victoria (35.4%).
- Clients of the website most often reported their **age** as between 20 and 34 (58.8%), with 10.3% reporting their age as being over 50 years.
- The **primary type of gambling** reported by clients was Electronic Gaming Machines (66.8%), followed by Horse/dog racing (12.4%), sportsbetting (8.2%) and casino table games (7.9%).
- The **primary gambling venue** reported by clients was hotel/pub (54.0%), followed by casino (13.6%), TAB (10.8%) and club (10.5%). 4.2% of clients reported their primary gambling venue as being their home.

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