



Office of Responsible Gambling



# Strategic Plan 2018-2021



Minister for Racing, Paul Toole MP, launches Responsible Gambling Awareness Week in 2017.

# Contents

<b>A message from the Deputy Secretary, Liquor, Gaming &amp; Racing .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>About the Office of Responsible Gambling .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>A message from the Chair, Responsible Gambling Fund .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>About the Responsible Gambling Fund.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Role of Trustees .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Gambling environment and participation .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Shifts in gambling products and consumer behaviour .....	13
Advertising and gambling normalisation.....	13
Emerging technologies and challenges .....	14
Gambling harm .....	17
Gambling industry and expenditure in NSW.....	18
Gaming regulation and harm minimisation in NSW .....	18
<b>Our Vision, Our Purpose, Our Functions.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Our Goals .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Goal 1: Research.....	22
Goal 2: Partnerships .....	23
Goal 3: Education and awareness.....	24
Goal 4: Support Services .....	25
Goal 5: Technology and innovation .....	26



## A message from the Deputy Secretary Liquor, Gaming & Racing

---

I'm pleased to present the Office of Responsible Gambling Strategic Plan 2018–2021, which declares our strategic direction and bold vision, clarifies our purpose and affirms the NSW Government's commitment to preventing and minimising gambling related harm.

The Plan focuses and prioritises our efforts, including the delivery of programs and initiatives funded by the NSW Responsible Gambling Fund (RGF). We seek to create a fair, safe and responsible industry, where consumers can make informed choices about participating in gambling, confident in regulatory oversight and robust safeguards.

Much of the focus of debate and ongoing scrutiny, locally and internationally, is on gambling prevalence, product innovation and gambling harm. Ensuring robust public policy dialogue, along with industry transparency and accountability, are fundamental to delivering an effective regulatory environment. If we are to secure industry integrity and ensure fair and responsible conduct while facilitating innovation that fosters sustainable and balanced development, this

debate is unambiguously in the public interest.

We have an important role to play in contributing to policy thinking and innovation and helping inform regulatory approaches. The RGF advises on the allocation of funds for purposes relating to responsible gambling and also provides arm's-length expert advice on gambling related public policy.

Our approach recognises:

- gambling is a legitimate and lawful activity
- the gambling sector is highly regulated
- informed choice and personal responsibility with robust consumer protection and safeguards
- gambling operators have significant obligations to ensure responsible conduct
- gambling causes harm and detriment to some people and can have severe individual and social impacts
- safeguards must balance consumer choice and entertainment with potential individual and social harms.

Our strategic direction is supported by significant enhancements to the RGF, including the appointment of additional trustees, who are a mix of highly regarded experts across law, public health, government, academia, business and social research. The high calibre of trustees with their diverse knowledge, skills and experience (both locally and internationally) underpins the RGF's key advisory role to government.

The gambling environment is increasingly borderless and gambling activity is progressively converging into sport and gaming. Gambling related advertising is, more and more, intruding into the community. The ubiquity and normalisation of gambling, presents policy, governance, integrity and harm prevention challenges that are rich with complexity. This challenge is amplified by the growth of sports-betting and emergence of new activities on the margins of gambling such as e-sports and social gaming, encouraged by accelerating technology and accessibility.

We must confront this dynamic and issues rich environment to ensure we can identify emerging and potential risks, as well as provide rigorous and innovative advice to government. This will help inform policy thinking and approaches which enhance responsible gambling outcomes.

This plan has been shaped by the RGF Trustees as well as extensive consultation with our key stakeholders. I thank each of you that have contributed to our plan and look forward to tackling some complex and difficult policy challenges as we deliver our ambitious agenda.

**Paul Newson**

Deputy Secretary  
Liquor, Gaming & Racing

# Governance Framework

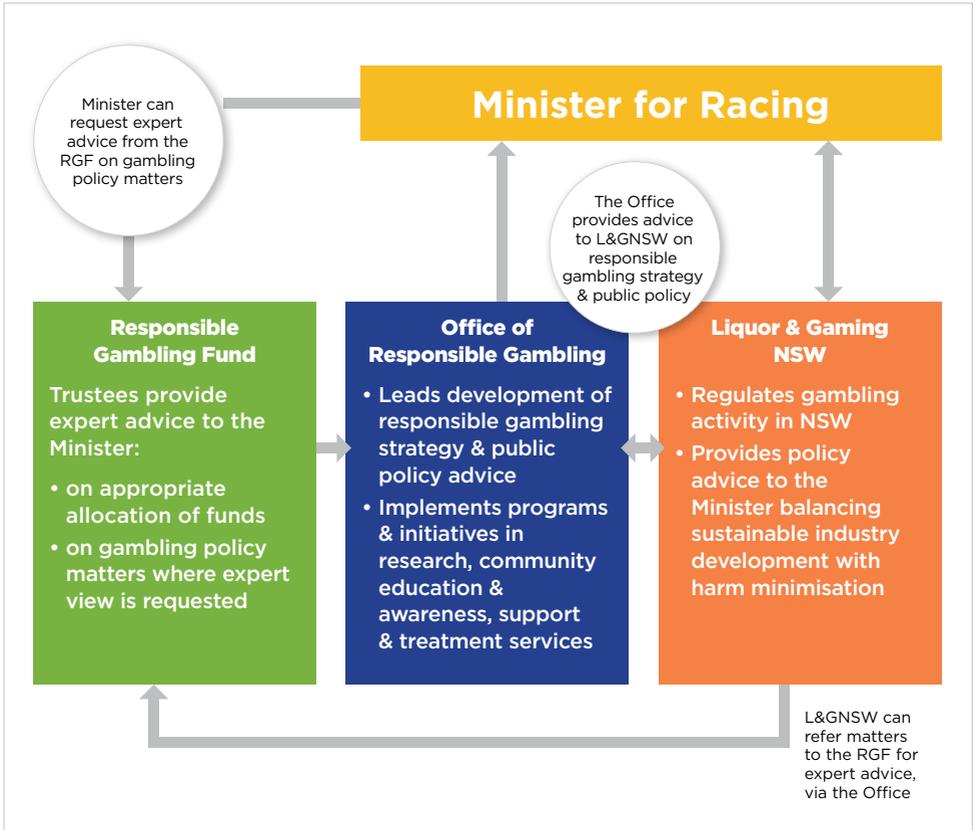


Figure 1

# About the Office of Responsible Gambling

The Office of Responsible Gambling leads the development of responsible gambling strategy and public policy advice to the NSW Government and supports and manages the RGF, the ClubGrants Category 3 Fund infrastructure grants program and the Community Development Fund.

The Office supports the RGF to ensure Trustees are best positioned to provide advice and guidance to the Minister on funding responsible gambling initiatives consistent with our strategic direction, objectives and associated governance arrangements.

The Office develops and implements programs and initiatives, as part of a strategic approach that supports responsible gambling and prevents

and minimises the risk of gambling related harm in the community. Broad program areas include:

- research
- community education & awareness
- intervention, support and treatment services
- public policy investigation & development.

The Office sits within the division of Liquor, Gaming & Racing in the NSW Department of Industry.



## A message from the Chair Responsible Gambling Fund

---

As the new Chair of the NSW Government's RGF, I'm delighted to share the Office of Responsible Gambling Strategic Plan.

We, the RGF Trustees are tasked to provide advice and funding recommendations to the NSW Government in the area of responsible gambling. It is a difficult and often contentious task. We are required to balance the harm that may be suffered by excessive or irresponsible gambling with the fact that gambling is a lawful activity in NSW which, for many people, does not cause any harm.

We want to collaborate with partners in health, the community and industry to ensure that people in NSW who choose to gamble can make informed decisions about their participation while minimising the potential for harm. This can be achieved through raising awareness of how gambling works, the indicators of excessive gambling and harm, and how to get help.

Over the next three years the RGF will focus on these priority areas:

- a comprehensive research agenda to better inform the development of innovative responsible gambling policy and initiatives
- investing in community education to support informed gambling choices, responsible gambling behaviour and encourage members of the community to seek help when they need it
- actively providing support and counselling services
- assisting the regulator to develop sensible gambling policy.

One of the major changes in 2018 has been to increase expenditure in the areas of research and community education to broaden our work in prevention and early intervention. Taking a public health approach to preventing gambling harm will ensure we are reaching those affected before they experience more serious issues with gambling.

It is important that our work is supported by independent and thorough research. At the RGF we have some of the brightest clinical and academic minds in the country, supported by researchers in the gambling field around Australia. It is only once we have the evidence-base, that we are able to properly advise the Government on developing robust policies.

Providing accessible and effective help to those experiencing issues with gambling is essential. We know that individuals respond to different modes of support, whether that be self-help to better manage their gambling expenditure, online support in an anonymous environment or meeting a professional counsellor face to face.

Perhaps our greatest challenge is the emerging popularity of online gaming and gambling. Online gambling often takes place in private, large sums of money can be expended quickly and, in certain circumstances may be accessed by

minors. Advances in technology are not all negative, however, as it also presents us with an opportunity to use new innovation to minimise harm. Innovation in preventing gambling harm is a particular focus for the RGF over the next three years.

This is an exciting time for the RGF and on behalf of my experienced and dedicated colleagues, we look forward to having a real impact on responsible gambling, and to significantly reducing the incidence of gambling harm in NSW.

**John Dalzell**

Chair  
Responsible Gambling Fund

## About the Responsible Gambling Fund

The RGF plays a key role in advising the NSW Government on the allocation of funds for initiatives and programs that support responsible gambling and help reduce gambling-related harms.

The RGF is established under the *Casino Control Act 1992* (the Act). The Act requires each casino licence in NSW to make contributions to the Fund, with contributions currently set at two per cent of gaming revenue.

The Act and associated governance arrangements provide that these funds are used for purposes relating to responsible gambling. These include activities which enable a person to make informed decisions about participating in gambling, minimise the potential for harm associated with gambling and to reduce the incidence and prevalence of problem gambling.

## Role of Trustees

The RGF is administered by Trustees who make recommendations to the Minister on the appropriate allocation of money for responsible gambling purposes.

The Trustees perform an expert advisory role to assist the Minister make decisions about the appropriate allocation of funds, as well as other gambling policy matters where an arm's length and expert view is appropriate or necessary.

The operation of the RGF and Trustee decision-making is conducted within a framework that recognises gambling is a lawful, legitimate and highly regulated activity and that industry is entitled to participate in the public policy

dialogue as well as conduct and grow sustainable business. Similarly consumers should be able to participate in recreational gambling without undue regulatory constraint or interference. While enabling informed choice is fundamental the framework also recognises that safeguards are critical to protect consumers and the community from gambling harm. The RGF also has an important role to play to ensure efficient and effective intervention strategies that help prevent and minimise gambling harm and support individual and families impacted by problem gambling.

The Trustees' work and associated recommendations are guided by the strategic priorities set in consultation with the Minister.

## The Trustees



**John Dalzell** is a leading dispute resolution lawyer and Chair of Dentons global litigation group. He has previously advised the NSW Government on gambling matters.



**Dr Clive Allcock** is an experienced psychiatrist who has done significant work in the field of treatment of problem gamblers. He was a founding member of the National Association for Gambling Studies and has recently been made a life member.



**Professor Paul Delfabbro** is an internationally renowned gambling researcher and a lecturer in Psychology at the University of Adelaide.



**Dr Greg Hugh** is an experienced psychiatrist who has been clinical director of Dubbo Hospital's mental health inpatient unit since 2006.



**Elizabeth Lyne** is an accountant and auditor with over 20 years' experience in public practice and commercial accounting.



**Mark McCrindle** is a social researcher and founder and manager of McCrindle Research.



**Janett Milligan** is a senior executive who has held leadership positions at NSW government agencies.



**Professor Joel Negin** is head of the University of Sydney's School of Public Health, with a focus on health issues affecting vulnerable populations.



**Paul Newson** is Deputy Secretary, Liquor, Gaming & Racing at the NSW Department of Industry.

# Gambling environment and participation

## Most prevalent gambling activity

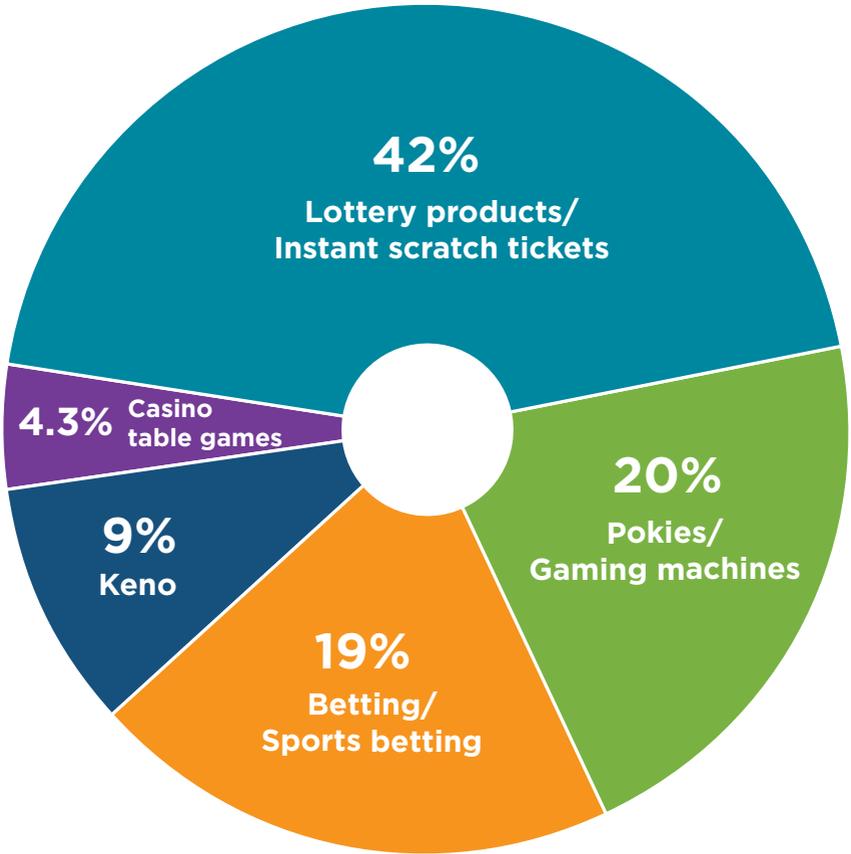


Figure 2: Source: Roy Morgan (2018)

## **Gambling includes gaming and wagering activities that are legally provided in Australia, including gaming, racing, sports betting and lotteries.**

In the 12 months to June 2018, 54.6 per cent of the NSW population\* participated in some form of gambling in the previous 12 months.

Lotteries and instant scratch tickets are the most widely used, followed by playing gaming machines.

## **Shifts in gambling products and consumer behaviour**

In the last five years, there has been a rapid shift in gambling behaviour and gambling products due to technology and changing consumer preferences. Online wagering is growing exponentially, with 40 per cent of Australian wagering, both sport and racing, taking place online in 2013.\*\*

Internet and mobile technologies have been key drivers of growth, enabling the expansion of wagering services across borders, while providing easy access, convenience, anonymity and better prices for consumers.

Within this environment we have seen declines in the number of people playing gaming machines.

## **Advertising and gambling normalisation**

The growth of online wagering, coupled with intense saturation of advertising in mainstream media and sporting sponsorships is contributing to the normalisation of gambling. There is growing community concern that constant gambling advertising is forming views among children that gambling is a normal part of watching sport.

Since 2011, the amount of money spent on gambling advertising has risen from \$91 million to \$236 million in 2015, according to Standard Media Index (SMI) figures. This competitive environment, has seen companies offering inducements to gain customers, which is against the law in NSW. The laws were strengthened in early 2018 to improve protections for gamblers and those who might be encouraged into gambling but cannot afford to bet, from inducements to open betting accounts or to gamble.

\* Source: Roy Morgan (2018. Currency Report: NSW (excluding ACT) Gambling Industry – Market Overview. June 2018. Melbourne: Roy Morgan Research

\*\*Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform 2013, The advertising and promotion of gambling services in sport, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.



## Emerging technologies and challenges

As the industry continues to evolve and innovate, part of our role is to ensure that consumers can participate in new forms of gambling with appropriate protections in place and to minimise harm.

The convergence and blurring of traditional gaming and gambling presents challenges. Video games containing loot boxes, eSports cash

and skins betting and social gaming attract younger participants, often occur in unregulated environments and can pose a risk of normalising gambling for minors.

The advent of cryptocurrency and block chain as an alternative way of exchanging money also presents unique issues, with transactions taking place outside traditional regulated industries.



Electronic gaming machine technology is also experiencing change with immersive features such as virtual reality and skills-based games commonplace in international jurisdictions, with little research into potential harms arising from these forms of gambling.

Our role is to keep abreast of the gambling environment and invest in research to understand consumer behavior and ensure emerging products and technology don't exacerbate gambling harm.

## NSW problem gambling prevalence

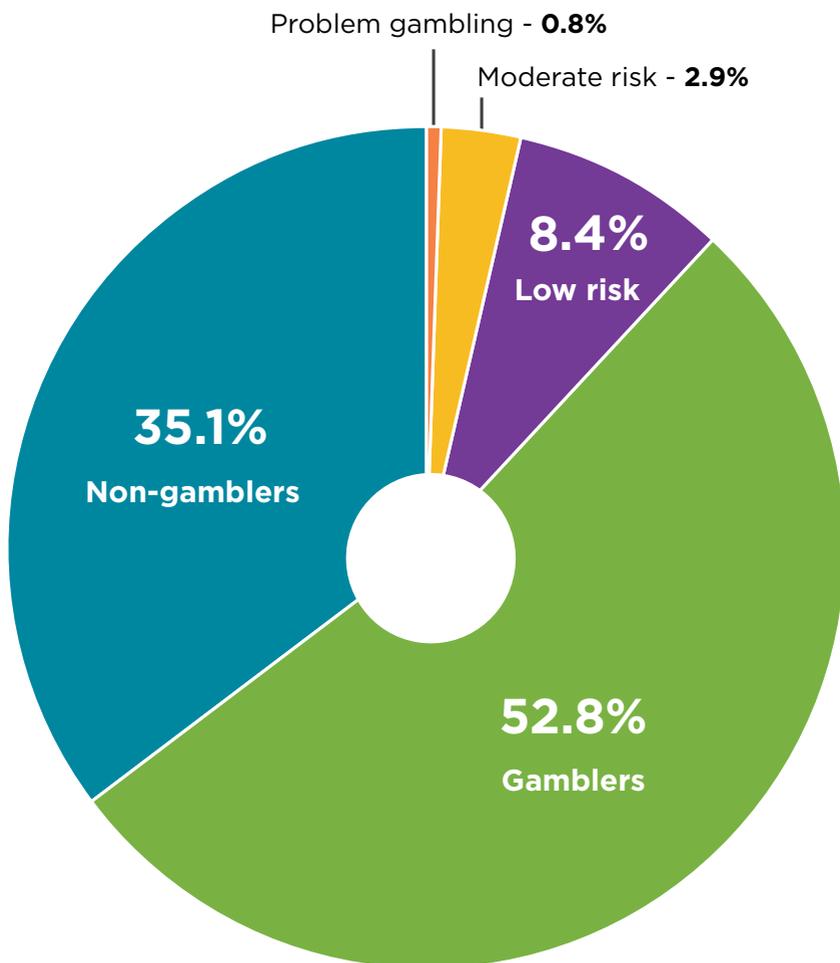


Figure 3: NSW Gambling Prevalence Study, 2012

## Gambling harm

The most recent gambling prevalence study in NSW was published in 2012, with the next study commencing in 2018.

The number of problem gamblers in NSW was estimated at 0.8 per cent (39,840 people) of adults in 2012, which remained unchanged from the 2006 study. The NSW problem gambling prevalence rate remains static and low. When compared with other Australian jurisdictions, the prevalence of problem gambling (among regular gamblers) is lower than the rest of the country. A further 2.9 per cent of NSW adults were identified as moderate risk gamblers and 8.4 per cent as low risk gamblers.

Problem gamblers are significantly more likely to be male, younger (18-24 years and 35-54 years), be single, divorced, separated or widowed, unemployed, have low education attainment and be a regular gambler on gaming machines, on horse or greyhound races and on sports or non-sports events. Males were more likely to experience issues with gambling, with 1.4 per cent of males estimated to be problem gamblers, compared to 0.1 per cent of females.

Problem gambling is characterised by difficulties in limiting money and/or time spent on gambling which leads to adverse consequences for the gambler, others, or for the community. (Neal, Delfabbro, & O'Neil, 2005). Gambling harm experienced by gamblers can relate to financial, health, relationships, education and employment, social and psychological wellbeing\*.

\*Gambling Harm Minimisation Report, Sydney University Gambling Treatment Clinic, 2015

## Gambling industry and expenditure in NSW

NSW is the largest jurisdiction with 32 per cent of the population, and has the largest gambling expenditure at 40 per cent of total gambling expenditure in Australia.

In 2016-2017, \$9.53 billion was spent on gambling in NSW, with \$976 million on racing, \$152 million on sports betting and \$8.4 billion on gaming\*. Of gaming expenditure, 73 per cent was on gaming machines. Gambling expenditure on sports betting remains relatively low compared to other forms of gambling (1.6 per cent of overall expenditure during 2016-17).

\*Gaming includes: lotteries, poker and gaming machines, casino gaming, football pools, interactive gaming and minor gaming.

Source: Liquor & Gaming NSW

## Gaming regulation and harm minimisation in NSW

The regulatory framework for gambling activity in NSW is governed by a range of laws, including the *Gaming Machines Act 2001* for gaming machines in pubs and clubs, the *Casino Control Act 1992* for gaming at the casino, the *Public Lotteries Act 1996* for lotteries and Keno, the *Betting and Racing Act 1998* for some aspects of wagering, the *Totalizator Act 1997*, and the *Unlawful Gambling Act 1998*. This is supported by a range of regulatory controls, instruments and licences. See figure 4.

These laws aim to minimise harm associated with the misuse and abuse of gambling activities and facilitate the balanced development, in the public interest, of the gaming industry.

Harm minimisation objectives are achieved via a number of regulatory mechanisms that govern all activities associated with gaming activity including technical standards for gaming machines, mandatory responsible conduct of gambling training for gaming-related staff, provision of self exclusion schemes, prohibitions on gaming machine advertising and wagering inducements for example.

## Regulatory framework for gambling



Figure 4

## Our Vision

---

**NSW working towards zero gambling harm**

## Our Purpose

---

**Our purpose is to:**

- prevent and reduce gambling related harm and problem gambling
- support consumers to make informed choices
- contribute to public debate and influence gambling policy and regulatory practices
- work with industry to affirm and embed responsible culture and practices
- enable responsible industry development that delivers social and economic benefits and meets community expectations

## Our Functions

---

**We achieve our purpose by:**

- initiating and funding research
- educating the community
- funding support and treatment services
- informing policy makers and regulators

## Our Goals

---



### Research

We initiate and fund research that provides the evidence base for responsible gambling policy, interventions and programs



### Partnerships

We work with partners to prevent and reduce gambling related harm



### Education and awareness

We build awareness of responsible gambling and gambling related harm, and encourage resilient communities



### Support services

We provide support and counselling services and encourage early intervention and integrated care



### Technology and innovation

We leverage technology and drive innovation to prevent and reduce harm



## Research

**Goal 1: We initiate and fund research that provides the evidence base for responsible gambling policy, interventions and programs**



Develop a research agenda that prioritises:

- enhancing efficacy and efficiency of support and treatment
- what works in prevention and harm minimisation
- informs a targeted approach that minimises undue regulatory burden on responsible gambling operators and consumers
- identifying emerging technologies and trends
- attitudes and behaviours towards gambling in vulnerable or target groups
- gambling prevalence and understanding and measuring harm
- policy development and effective regulation

Evaluate current programs and services to determine efficacy and efficiency

Build capability and capacity for rigorous academic gambling research

Synthesise and publish relevant insights, research findings and information to build capacity and contribute to improving responsible gambling practices, service improvements and to influence policy

Develop research insights and findings to contribute to policy development and policy and regulatory reform

### Measures of success:

- Research insights and findings are used to improve education, support and policy and regulatory outcomes
- Provides considered, rigorous and informed advice to Government



ClubSAFE Ambassador  
Nathan Hindmarsh (L)  
and Minister Paul Toole (R)

## Partnerships



### Goal 2: We work with partners to prevent and reduce gambling related harm

Work with the health sector and non-government organisations to prevent or reduce gambling related harm

Work with industry to encourage best practice and increased investment and innovation that achieves improved responsible gambling outcomes

Collaborate and contribute to policy development and strategies with other jurisdictions

Work with sporting codes, media organisations and others to support awareness raising and consumer empowerment

Use a transparent and robust decision-making framework for grant allocation, including one-off grants for innovative and impactful programs

#### Measures of success:

- Leveraging partnerships to extend reach and implement responsible gambling initiatives in key gambling related activities across the State
- High levels of industry engagement in the development, implementation and continual improvement of responsible gambling practices



## Education and awareness



### **Goal 3: We build awareness of responsible gambling and gambling related harm, and encourage resilient communities**

Develop and implement an overarching awareness and education strategy

Recognise gambling is a highly regulated recreation and entertainment choice for consumers

Build the capability and profile of the Office and RGF to become a thought-leader in responsible gambling

Develop and implement targeted community awareness initiatives to:

- effectively target population groups, such as CALD, young people, Indigenous, lower socio-economic and vulnerable groups
- raise community awareness of gambling risks and harms
- destigmatise help seeking behaviour

#### **Measures of success:**

- Increased levels of community awareness and understanding to make informed choices about gambling participation and associated risks and harms, particularly in the target population groups
- The Office/RGF is recognised as a thought-leader in responsible gambling practices, advice, insights and approaches
- Consumers are better able to manage their gambling choices and seek help early



## Support Services



### **Goal 4: We provide support and counselling services and encourage early intervention and integrated care**

Reform our service delivery model and develop a multimodal and integrated approach that best meets the needs for prevention, accessible support and treatment services for diverse cultural, geographic and population groups across NSW

Build capability across the service system to enhance its effectiveness and improve outcomes

Develop a clear and consistent evaluation and continuous improvement framework to support service quality

#### **Measures of success:**

- Help seekers are able to access services in their preferred mode of delivery
- Incidence and prevalence of problem gambling is stable or declining
- The quality and evaluation framework is defined and used to inform improvements in service outcomes

# Technology and innovation



## Goal 5: We leverage technology and drive innovation to prevent and reduce harm

Promote, fund and pilot innovative approaches to:

- prevention
- support
- treatment services
- education and awareness

Proactively work with industry on new and emerging technologies and innovations to trial and implement responsible gambling practices

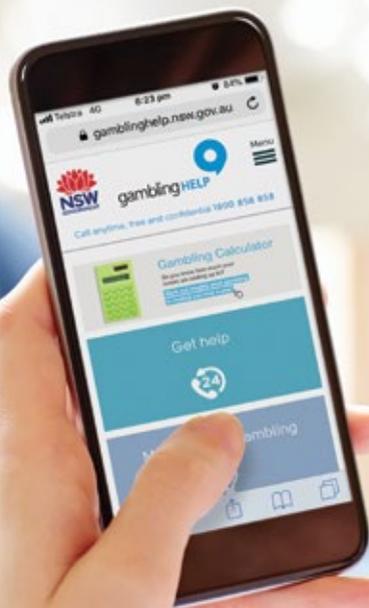
Leverage technology to most effectively deliver responsible gambling education, services and outcomes

Collate, analyse and leverage internal and external data to inform:

- research
- service delivery
- education and awareness activities
- policy investigation and regulatory effectiveness

### Measures of success:

- Innovative responsible gambling practices are leveraged across the industry
- Successful pilot programs are rolled out on a broader scale
- Opportunities to improve programs and operations are implemented effectively and in a timely manner



gambinghelp.nsw.gov.au



gamblingHELP

Call anytime, free and confidential 1800 858 858

Gambling Calculator



Get help



gambling



**Office of Responsible Gambling**

Lvl 16, 323 Castlereagh St, Haymarket NSW 2000

GPO Box 7060, Sydney NSW 2001

[responsiblegambling.nsw.gov.au](http://responsiblegambling.nsw.gov.au)