

Annual Work Plan 2023-2024 under the *Strategy for Gambling Harm Prevention*

Foreword

The ACT Gambling and Racing Commission's (the Commission's) functions are to administer the gaming laws and to control, supervise and regulate gaming in the ACT. The Commission must exercise its functions in a way that best promotes public interest and in particular, as far as practicable promotes consumer protection, minimises the possibility of criminal or unethical activity and reduces the risks and costs to the community and to the individuals concerned, of gambling harm. As such, harm prevention and reduction effectively underlie all the Commission's regulatory functions.

The five-year *Strategy for gambling harm prevention in the ACT: A public health approach* (the Strategy) was launched by the Commission in 2019. The Strategy provides a public health framework for developing, implementing and monitoring initiatives designed to prevent and reduce gambling harm in the ACT.

The 2023-2024 Annual Work Plan (AWP) supports the Strategy by providing direction for the Commission to deliver its overarching harm prevention objectives. The plan outlines the primary actions to be taken by the Gambling & Harm Prevention team. It also provides a strong foundation for partnership and collaboration across the Commission's harm prevention and regulatory functions.

The plan has been developed and will be implemented according to the Strategy principles for a public health approach in the ACT.

The AWP outlines the Commission's priorities and actions for 2023-2024.

Overview of the Annual Work Plan and underlying principles



Our commitment to the Strategy objectives

Strategy objective 1: Influencing policy and legislation to prevent and reduce gambling harm.

Priorities: What we want to achieve

- Policy, legislation and initiatives aimed at preventing and reducing gambling harm are updated to align with a public health approach.
- Mutual and beneficial relationships with Australian States and Territories to address gambling harm.

Actions: How we will achieve it

- Provide expert advice to influence and update government legislation, policy and initiatives related to gambling and gambling harm.
- Share best practices and support alignment, where appropriate, of ACT policy and activities with interstate and national policy and initiatives.
- Engage with ACT and other Australian government bodies to address gambling harm as linked to other social and health issues.

Strategy objective 2: Increasing understanding about gambling harm amongst government, gambling industry, communities, families and individuals.

Priorities: What we want to achieve

- Increased awareness of the nature and extent of gambling harm and support and information services.
- Reduced stigma associated with gambling harm across the ACT community.

Actions: How we will achieve it

- Promote the significance and relevance of gambling harm as a public health issue.
- Explore best practice approaches to addressing stigma in the community.
- Continue strengthening the effectiveness and reach of tailored harm prevention messaging for people experiencing gambling harm via the Gambling Harm Awareness Week and Always On campaigns.
- Enhance availability and accessibility to quality information about gambling harm and support services, including materials for gambling licensees.
- Increase awareness of support and information services and resources, including through the Community of Practice.

Strategy objective 3: Providing a wide range of accessible, responsive and effective services and initiatives that prevent and reduce gambling harm.

Priorities: What we want to achieve

- Increased accessibility and uptake of gambling harm reduction support and information services and resources.
- A diverse range of services and initiatives addressing harm prevention, reduction and community awareness.

Actions: How we will achieve it

- Investigate, assess, and implement targeted approaches to reach and support a broad range of audiences, including culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.
- Develop tailored initiatives aimed at secondary school students, their parents, carers, and educators to reduce the impact of early exposure to gambling and gambling simulated products.
- Facilitate and encourage collaboration across the community sector via the Community of Practice.
- Resource well-targeted harm prevention and reduction initiatives through the Gambling Harm Prevention and Mitigation Fund.
- Continue to improve and support the Self-Exclusion Scheme as a tool empowering vulnerable individuals.

Strategy objective 4: Supporting and facilitating gambling harm prevention and reduction initiatives in licensee environments.

Priorities: What we want to achieve

- Tailored resources and support for gambling licensees to proactively prevent, monitor, and respond appropriately to gambling harm.
- Consistent public health approach across the Commission's functions and engagement with gambling industry.

Actions: How we will achieve it

- Strengthen the capability of licensee staff, particularly of Gambling Contact Officers, and management to identify and respond to gambling harm within their venues.
- Increase knowledge among licensee board members to improve compliance with, and exceeding, harm prevention and reduction obligations.
- Support industry in implementing the exclusion scheme and using the incident recording register appropriately to monitor gambling harm.
- Ensure collaboration across Access Canberra's gambling compliance, investigations, harm prevention and licensing functions.

Strategy objective 5: Supporting and building the evidence base for gambling harm prevention strategies and initiatives.

Priorities: What we want to achieve

- Commission initiatives informed by increased knowledge and insight on the prevalence and the causes of gambling harm in the ACT.
- Strengthened exchange of data, project outcomes, outputs and best practice across jurisdictions.

Actions: How we will achieve it

- Initiate and fund research and analysis activities related to gambling behaviour and harm in the ACT community, including the conduct of the 2024 ACT Gambling Survey.
- Exchange relevant data, research and information via Gambling Research Australia and other interjurisdictional collaborations and partnerships.
- Review emerging research to inform decision-making, strategy formulation and the development of prevention activities.
- Restructure the application process of the Gambling Harm Prevention and Mitigation Fund to ensure proposals are aligned with current priorities.