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Final Report February 2016

UNDERSTANDING THE SELF-EXCLUSION PROCESS IN THE ACT

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February 2016

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A project undertaken by the Centre for Gambling Research at The Australian National University,
commissioned by the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission

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This report was funded by the Australian Capital Territory Gambling and Racing Commission.

The opinions, comments and/or analysis expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission and cannot be taken in any way as expressions of ACT Government policy.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as the traditional owners and custodians of land in the ACT region and pay respect to the Elders of the Ngunnawal Nation, both past and present.

The authors also wish to acknowledge the great contribution that people interviewed for this research made in sharing their experiences. Their involvement has greatly informed the report and will contribute to the continued development of a strong and empowering process of self-exclusion in the ACT.

We would also like to thank the venues and counsellors that gave their time to be interviewed. The contribution of the venues is greatly appreciated. Their perspective offers significant insight into the process of self-exclusion in the ACT and the ways that the process can be improved for venue staff and venue patrons alike.

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Executive Summary

The Australian National University's (ANU) Centre for Gambling Research was commissioned by the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Gambling and Racing Commission to undertake research to better understand the self-exclusion process in the ACT. The research was intended to understand self-exclusion from the perspectives of venue-based gambling providers, people who self-exclude from gambling venues and service providers who assist them in the ACT. Over the past seven years, there have been over 700 active self-exclusions (ACT Gambling and Racing Commission, personal communication, June 2014), indicating that this is a very important harm-minimisation strategy within this jurisdiction. However, very little else is known about the self-exclusion process in the ACT.

Objectives

The key objective of this research was to explore the self-exclusion process from the perspectives of key stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the process in the ACT. More specifically, the research sought to:

- provide a deeper understanding about the process and practice of self-exclusion (from contemplation, enrolment, to self-exclusion and post exclusion);
- identify strengths and limitations of the self-exclusion process for all stakeholders in the ACT; and
- propose strategies to improve the process and experience of self-exclusion for all stakeholders.

Method

The project was an exploratory, scoping study that used qualitative data collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The different stakeholders approached to contribute to this research included:

- relevant management and staff from gambling venues in the ACT;
- ACT Gambling and Racing Commission;
- service providers from the ACT Gambling Counselling and Support Service;
- other service providers who assist people with gambling problems; and
- people in the ACT who have self-excluded or contemplated self-exclusion.

Over a period of three months, 27 interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders.

Report

Chapter 1 provides a broad overview of gambling in the ACT which includes historical analysis of gambling in the ACT, gambling regulation in the ACT and an overview of self-exclusion programmes across Australia, with particular focus on the ACT.

Chapter 2 details the methodology used to conduct the research. The methods used and recruitment strategy are outlined in detail.

Chapter 3 describes the self-exclusion process in the ACT in 2014, including the necessary procedures to process a Deed of self-exclusion in the ACT. This chapter also outlines the revisions to the self-exclusion programme that came into place in the ACT from late-2014.

Chapter 4 presents a detailed overview of the individual participants and explores their experiences of self-exclusion in the ACT. Specifically, the context of their gambling and what lead them to self-exclusion. In Chapter 5 venue staff were interviewed about their experiences of self-exclusion process. Chapter 6 outlines the way in which gambling counsellors in the ACT have been involved in self-exclusion and their experiences of the self-exclusion program in the ACT.

Chapter 7 covers the issues of breaching, revoking and ending self-exclusion agreements, including how these issues impact on people who are experiencing problems as a result of gambling.

Chapter 8 outlines the information available to the public about self-exclusion in the ACT. This chapter explores in detail how accessible and relevant the available information on self-exclusion in the ACT is seen to be by each of the stakeholders.

Chapter 9 reviews the limitations of self-exclusion. Three main themes were identified as impacting people's decisions to self-exclude. These limitations are referred to as; the social problem, the work problem and the Queanbeyan problem.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the importance of self-exclusion in the lives of people experiencing severe harm from gambling should not be underestimated. This research found that self-exclusion is a positive and empowering process for people experiencing problems from gambling in the ACT. Strengthening this process in the ACT should be viewed as a high priority in assisting people who are experiencing gambling problems. Self-exclusion is a unique process that is currently under-utilised in its potential to assist individuals and the community broadly.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Self-exclusion is a process whereby people who wish to limit or stop gambling voluntarily enter an agreement to exclude themselves from gambling venues. Self-exclusion schemes are advantageous both to venue-based gambling providers and people who wish to stop or control their gambling. For venues, self-exclusion offers a way to assist people who are experiencing problems with their gambling without inconveniencing other patrons. For those who choose to self-exclude, the knowledge that they have entered into a written, formal agreement not to enter nominated gambling venues - and may be removed from those venues if they enter - can provide a useful barrier to temptation.

While research indicates that some people who self-exclude breach their self-exclusion, and some continue to gamble at venues other than those they have excluded from, many people reported that they found the process helpful in stopping or controlling their gambling (Gainsbury, 2013). Self-exclusion is one of numerous harm-minimisation strategies used in the ACT. Improving the accessibility and efficacy of self-exclusion programs (in conjunction with other harm-minimisation strategies) has the potential to help more people who are experiencing harm from gambling and to reduce the individual and social burden resulting from problem gambling.

The Australian National University's (ANU) Centre for Gambling Research was commissioned by the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Gambling and Racing Commission to undertake research to better understand the self-exclusion process in the ACT. The research was intended to understand self-exclusion from the perspectives of venue-based gambling providers, people who self-exclude from gambling venues and service providers who assist them in the ACT. Over the past seven years, there have been over 700 active self-exclusions (ACT Gambling and Racing Commission, personal communication, June 2014), indicating that this is a very important harm-minimisation strategy within this jurisdiction. However, very little else is known about the self-exclusion process in the ACT.

1.1 Objectives

The objective is to gain an in-depth understanding of the strengths and limitations of self-exclusion in order to improve the experience of all stakeholders with an interest in the process. To this end, we seek to find out more about:

- the characteristics of people who self-exclude, the severity of their gambling problem, what motivated them to self-exclude, and what it is like to be involved in the process;
- issues for venue management and staff in administering self-exclusion, and the benefits and limitations of the process as experienced by their members and staff;
- how venue staff can be better supported in their role of liaising with patrons who enquire about, or seek to self-exclude;
- issues for service providers in assisting clients to self-exclude from gambling venues;
- service use by people who self-exclude, and how they can be better assisted in seeking and receiving specialist problem gambling counselling and other services that can assist them; and
- how the self-exclusion process can be optimised, and be made attractive to people who may benefit from it.

1.2 Research purpose and definitions

Over the past seven years there have been 700 active self-exclusions in the ACT, indicating that self-exclusion is a utilised harm-minimisation strategy within this jurisdiction (ACT Gambling and Racing Commission, 2013). Beyond this, little is known about the self-exclusion process in the ACT, including how it is viewed and experienced by people who have self-excluded, by the venues and their staff, by counsellors and service providers from other health and welfare services. Information about the process of self-exclusion and being self-excluded in other jurisdictions is also scarce, with research to date centred around evaluating the effectiveness of various schemes by measuring levels of compliance (Gainsbury, 2013; National Centre for Responsible Gaming, 2010).

The proposed study is exploratory in nature and will seek to provide a deeper understanding about the process and practice of self-exclusion in the ACT. The scoping nature of the research will build a foundation for future research collaborations with key stakeholders around the self-exclusion process.

As the Code of Practice in the ACT specifically defines a person with a 'gambling problem', as opposed to the more diagnostic measures and discussions of 'problem gamblers', this report will use the terminology used in the Code of Practice in the ACT and discuss individuals who are experiencing a gambling problem/s, as opposed to discussing 'problem gamblers'.

The following chapter will provide an overview of the unique demographic, social and gambling context that exists in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). This will be followed by an overview of the available literature on harm-minimisation strategies and self-help approaches to gambling problems. Finally, this chapter will look at the history of self-exclusion around Australia, and specifically in the ACT.

1.3 ACT demographics

The ACT provides a unique social and economic environment that differs in many respects to other major cities and towns around Australia. Many of the discrepancies between national and ACT characteristics are attributable to the population demographics, including age, ethnic diversity, education, occupation and employment rates (McMillen *et al.*, 2001). The ACT has a younger median age of 34.6 compared to the national median age of 38.1 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014). There is also a younger regular gambling population in the ACT with 54.7% of young adults aged 18-29 gambling, compared to the national average of 17.8% (Davidson *et al.*, 2015). According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the ACT is less culturally diverse with 73.9% of the ACT population born in Australia compared to 72.7% nationally (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013, 2015). Of the portion of the ACT population born overseas most are from England (4.1%), India (1.5%), New Zealand (1.3%), China (1.3%), and Scotland (0.7%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is also underrepresented in the ACT at 1.7% of the population, compared to the Australian average of 2.5% of the population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

Amongst those who attended an educational institution, the ACT has a higher proportion of university/ tertiary educated people (24.7%) compared to Australia as a whole (14.3%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Research has also shown that ACT gamblers have achieved higher levels of education than the national average (Davidson and Rodgers, 2010). The ACT has an overrepresentation of government administration and defence employees (25.8%) compared to the national average (2.0%), there is a lower unemployment rate in the ACT compared to Australia as a whole (3.6% and 5.6%, respectively), and the average wage in the ACT is 12% higher than the national average at \$686 per week (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

1.4 History of gambling in the ACT

The history of the gambling industry in the ACT has also differed when compared to other states and territories in Australia. In comparison to other jurisdictions, the ACT has had a relatively long history of engagement with Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs or commonly referred to as 'poker machines'). New South Wales (NSW) was the first state of Australia to legalise poker machines in 1956. Given that the ACT is entirely situated within NSW, the close proximity means that the population of the ACT was likely to have experienced poker machines before their eventual introduction into the ACT in 1976. Despite the growing and expanding club culture that developed over the 70's and 80's, it was not until 1992 that the first casino opened in the ACT (although there are no EGMs at the casino). Data from 2012-13 demonstrates the strong gambling culture that exists, with the ACT recording the second highest per capita expenditure on gaming machines after NSW (Australian Gambling Statistics, 2014).

The club culture in the ACT began when the Burns Club formed in 1924 (The Burns Club Ltd, n.d.). Since then, there has been continued development of clubs and large club groups. Examples include the Ainslie Group, which dates back more than 80 years and The Tradesman Club group which began in 1964 (Beer, 2009; The Tradies Group, n.d.). The Southern Cross Club which began in 1972, now includes seven venues and has 84,000 members (Canberra Southern Cross Club Ltd, 2009). Revenue from gambling at the Southern Cross Club is around \$23 million a year, making up almost half (46%) of the total venue revenue (Lawson, 2015b). The Labor Club, which first opened in 1979 with 1,500 members now has more than 60,000 members and four venues (Beer, 2009), reporting a total revenue of \$36 million in the year, 68% from gambling revenue (Lawson, 2015a). The Vikings Club which first opened in Erindale in 1979 has four sites (Vikings Club, n.d.) and made over \$5 million from poker machines in 2012/13 financial year (Tuggeranong Valley Rugby Union and Amateur Sports Club LTD, 2013). The Raiders Group is another substantial club group that has five sites in ACT and one in Queanbeyan, NSW (Beer, 2009).

The number of clubs in Canberra went from one in 1924, to 36 in 1972, and by June 2014 the number of venues with gaming machine licences had increased to 59 (Beer, 2009; ACT Gambling and Racing Commission, 2014a). According to the Allen Consulting Group (2008) an average adult in the ACT is a member of 1.9 clubs, and anywhere from approximately 78%-86% of the adult population will use a Canberra licensed club (Marshall *et al.*, 2004; Winston Sustainable Research Strategies, 2009). Multi-site clubs, small ethnic clubs, small-medium sports clubs, and big club groups are all present in the ACT. While the small ethnic clubs are well established (most starting in the 1970s), many experience financial difficulty due to the loss of original members not being replaced by new immigrants or second generations (Beer, 2009). In addition to providing EGMs, most licenced clubs in the ACT provide food, alcohol, and pay television sports broadcasts. They also sponsor, fund, and donate to local community organisations and clubs, such as local sports teams. It was not until 1992 that the Canberra casino opened, but unlike casinos in other states in Australia, the ACT casino does not have EGMs.

1.5 Venues and the accessibility of gambling in the ACT

In 2010, Australia had 13 casinos, 3,363 hotels and 2,320 club venues providing EGMs, and a total of 4,652 TAB outlets (Productivity Commission, 2010). According to the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission Annual Report there were 4,974 EGMs in clubs and hotels/taverns in the ACT in June 2014 (ACT Gambling and Racing Commission, 2014a). Although only 1.6% of the nation's population reside in the ACT (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011), 2.7% of the nation's EGMs can be found in the ACT (Productivity Commission, 2010). In addition to the venues in the ACT, the neighbouring town of Queanbeyan (NSW), located 15.9km from the Canberra city centre, has six venues with EGMs.

1.6 The regulation of gambling in the ACT

The ACT Gambling and Racing Commission (the Commission) is the gambling and racing industry regulator in the ACT. The Commission is an independent body established under Section 5 of the *Gambling and Racing Control Act 1999*. Under the Act, the Commission regulates the activities of the casino, EGMs, lotteries, racing, betting and interactive gambling in the ACT, monitor and research the social effects of gambling, review legislation and policies relating to gambling and racing, provide education and counselling services and collect taxes, fees and charges imposed or authorised by, or under, gambling laws¹. The Commission is also the responsible government body for the ACT self-exclusion program. The *Gaming Machine (Problem Gambling Assistance) Amendment Act 2010* (Division 11.2) established the Problem Gambling Assistance Fund. A mandatory 0.6% of monthly gross machine revenue at each venue contributes to the Problem Gambling Assistance Fund. The fund is used to support projects and research for the purpose of alleviating problem gambling or the disadvantages that arise from problem gambling and for providing or ascertaining information about problem gambling (see ACT Gambling and Racing Commission website).

1.7 Gambling problems in the ACT

The following section defines ‘problem gambling’ in the ACT context. This section also details the most recent research into the extent of problem gambling problems experienced by residence of the ACT.

In broad terms, ‘problem gambling’ refers to the situation where an individual is experiencing a cluster of problems and behaviours attributable to gambling (Productivity Commission, 2010). Specifically, ‘problem gambling’ is generally defined in Australia as ‘difficulties in limiting money and/or time spent on gambling which leads to adverse consequences for the gambler, others, or for the community’ (Neal *et al.*, 2005).

Precise definitions tend to conceptualise ‘problem gambling’ as the frequency and severity of detrimental outcomes of gambling (e.g. financial or social losses), or from a clinical perspective assessing individual attributes such as self-control (Productivity Commission, 2010). Policy makers and researchers in Australia tend to use the frequency and severity of behavioural and lifestyle consequences to measure problem gambling (Neal *et al.*, 2005). The *Gambling and Racing Control (Code of Practice) Regulation 2002* (Section 1.2) defines a person who has a gambling problem by means of examples and behaviours related to harm. According to the *Gambling and Racing Control (Code of Practice) Regulation 2002* (Section 1.2), a person who has a ‘gambling problem’ is a person that cannot manage their gambling activities properly.

Examples of signs a person has a gambling problem as outlined in the *Gambling and Racing Control (Code of Practice) Regulation 2002* (Section 1.6A), are detailed below:

1. admitting being unable to stop gambling or to gamble within the person’s means;
2. expressing concern about the amount of time or money the person spends on gambling;
3. acknowledging the person spends on gambling money needed for day-to-day living expenses, including for dependants; and
4. having a disagreement with a family member or friend about the person’s gambling behaviour.

¹ <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1999-46/>

The legislation suggests that the list of examples is not exhaustive, and may extend but does not limit, the meaning of 'gambling problem'. The *Gambling and Racing Control (Code of Practice) Regulation 2002* (Section 1.2) also states that:

(2) Also, a person is taken to have a **gambling problem**, if the person engages in any of the following behaviour:

- a. seeking credit for gambling unless authorised under a gaming law;
- b. seeking to borrow or scavenge for money to gamble;
- c. seeking assistance or advice about controlling the person's gambling;
- d. admitting to borrowing or stealing money to gamble.

The Productivity Commission Inquiry (2010) reported that approximately 0.5% - 1.0% of adults were suffering severe problems due to gambling, with an additional 1.4–2.1% experiencing less harm due to gambling, but were at moderate risk and vulnerable to problem gambling. The ACT 2014/15 gambling prevalence survey found that 1.5% of the population was classified as moderate risk/problem gamblers (Davidson *et al.*, 2015). The ACT gambling prevalence survey reported that 55.1% of adults had gambled at least once in the last 12 months, with 10% of gamblers having at least one symptom of problem gambling. The study also found that 76% of moderate risk/problem gamblers reported using poker machines (Davidson *et al.*, 2015).

This overview of gambling demonstrates that not only have residents of the ACT had a relatively long relationship with gambling and gambling venues, but that this relationship is potentially problematic for many people. To examine the relationship between people and venues in the ACT, the following section will provide an overview of harm-minimisation approaches, specifically detailing services available to people in the ACT, as well as providing a contextual understanding of the process of self-exclusion.

1.8 Harm-minimisation and gambling help services in the ACT

Harm-minimisation, as part of a public health approach towards gambling, has long been advocated to the Australian Government as a preferable alternative to the self-responsibility model to prevent problem gambling and increase consumer safety (Productivity Commission, 2010). Consumer protection in relation to gambling may be achieved via development and implementation of harm-minimisation strategies enforced by governments and/or gambling venues (i.e. combination of legislation and self-regulation). The defining feature of harm-minimisation is the focus on the prevention of harm, rather than on the prevention of the activity. Harm-minimisation strategies fit into three categories as outlined by the Productivity Commission Inquiry (1999): informed choice, consumer control, and venue/game restrictions. These three categories encompass such harm-minimisation strategies as: venues displaying information and help services, regulation of machine, game and venue features, gambling limits, and self-exclusion. In addition to this, all states and territories in Australia have government funded services for supporting those people negatively affected by gambling. When this research was conducted, Mission Australia was the gambling counselling provider in the ACT, funded through the Problem Gambling Assistance Fund².

² From July 2014, Relationships Australia is the gambling counselling provider in the ACT.

Mission Australia

Mission Australia is a non-denominational Christian community service organisation that has its roots in city and town missions established as far back as the 1860s. The national organisation provides support and services to Australians with problems to assist them in achieving independence in their lives. Mission Australia provides support and services to persons with gambling problems and their family, and participates in research seeking to influence government policy in order to assist change in problem gambling in Australia (Mission Australia, 2014). Mission Australia was funded by the Problem Gambling Assistance Fund to provide the ACT Gambling Counselling and Support Service (ACTGCSS). The service also provides financial counselling to people impacted by gambling in the ACT and Queanbeyan. ACTGCSS also runs a voluntary self-help group called 'Self-Management and Recovery Training' (SMART Recovery), which assists people in recovering from gambling, drug use, alcohol, and other addictive behaviours. It teaches practical skills that enable one to reduce or abstain from self-defeating behaviours and achieve a healthy lifestyle balance (Mission Australia, 2014).

Other available gambling related services

There are many counselling, psychological, rehabilitation and other help services in the ACT but few focus or prioritise gambling as an issue. Aside from the ACTGCSS, the only other services that specifically focus on gambling problems in the ACT are Gamblers Anonymous and the Salvation Army Canberra Recovery Services Centre.

In 2014, there was a weekly Gamblers Anonymous group running in Tuggeranong, ACT. Gamblers Anonymous is a self-help group. People share their experiences with each other in that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from a gambling problem. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop gambling.

The Salvation Army Canberra Recovery Services Centre is the only formal rehabilitation centre in the ACT that specifically assists people with primary gambling addictions. The centre focuses on people adversely affected by alcohol, other drugs and gambling. They provide a range of services and support to addicts, families and significant others whose lives have been affected by addiction. This can include group discussions, one-on-one sessions, alcohol and drug education, chapel services, work activity therapy and vocational training. The centre is an abstinence based, drug-free environment and the program provides a holistic treatment service that helps achieve physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual well-being.

1.9 Accessing help services in the ACT

Carlbring and Smit (2008) report that only 10% of people seek formal, clinical help with their gambling problems. Reasons for avoiding utilisation of services for gambling include: perceived stigma, embarrassment/ shame, and not being able to access face-to-face services (LaBrie *et al.*, 2012). An ANU Centre for Gambling Research report found that only 8.1% of people in the ACT with symptoms of problem gambling accessed services for gambling related problems (Carroll *et al.*, 2011). The same study identified several significant interacting factors which predict who was most likely to have sought help. From the sample of adults who had accessed services (e.g. gambling specific services, health services, community organisations), all had self-identified as problem gamblers. Of those who had never sought help for gambling, only 23.1% had self-identified as having a gambling problem (Carroll *et al.*, 2011). This indicates that self-identification of having a gambling problem is necessary but not sufficient in determining whether or not an individual will seek help.

Carroll *et al.* (2011) identified several factors that significantly differed between self-identifiers and non-self-identifiers, and between those who had sought help and those who had not. These factors included: suicidal ideation, family problems or break-up of an intimate relationship, and adverse effects on one's job as a result of gambling (Carroll *et al.*, 2011). Age, gender, marital status, work status, income, mental health and smoking were also relevant factors in terms of seeking help (see Carroll *et al.*, 2011).

Research has consistently found that, on average, women are more likely than men to seek help for problem gambling, and there are potential gender differences for preference of types of services (McMillen *et al.*, 2004). In terms of cultural background and ethnicity it has been found that those from non-Anglo-Celtic backgrounds might be less likely to seek help outside of family for gambling problems (Clarke *et al.*, 2007; McMillen *et al.*, 2004). There may also be an over-representation of married or defacto persons who seek help, relative to all problem gamblers, as relationship strains or pressures are commonly a significant motivation behind help seeking (Urbanoski and Rush, 2002).

A review by Suurvali *et al.* (2010) found that the most commonly stated reasons for help-seeking are: financial/familial problems, experience of negative emotions, work and/or legal problems, change in life style, and awareness of the low probability of winning. Accessibility of services is also linked to likelihood of help-seeking (Suurvali *et al.*, 2008). Finally, there is a strong positive relationship between severity of gambling problems and likelihood of help-seeking (Suurvali *et al.*, 2008).

1.10 Self-help options for gambling problems

Self-help resources are defined as information or treatment resources which do not have any clinical involvement. Self-help is a useful alternative to formal and/or face-to-face treatment and resources. Self-help resources available for gambling include many modalities, such as: books, audio or video tapes, automated telephone Interactive Voice Response systems, computer or internet based programs, webpages, online forums, support groups, and virtual reality applications (LaBrie *et al.*, 2012; Raylu *et al.*, 2008). Self-help options have been found to be preferred by people wanting help over face-to-face options (Cunningham *et al.*, 2008). However, other research reports the effectiveness of self-help treatments as being lower than clinician guided approaches in terms of reduction in money spent on gambling and frequency of gambling (Raylu *et al.*, 2008). Although, levels of gambling abstinence between self-help and clinician guided treatment groups have been found to be equivalent (Raylu *et al.*, 2008).

Many different aims or goals exist depending on the specific self-help programs and modalities, however, cognitive behavioural based options are most common and often effective (Toneatto and Ladouceur, 2003). Such approaches focus on eliciting actual behavioural change (i.e. complete abstinence from gambling or reducing/controlling gambling behaviours). Resources include: self-assessment for identification of precipitating factors leading to gambling and the reasons for gambling, goal setting to highlight the benefits of behavioural change and identifying potential obstacles that may need to be overcome, implementation of strategies both cognitive and behavioural which encourage and foster cognitive and behavioural change and development of maintenance strategies to prevent and deal with relapse (Hodgins *et al.*, 2001).

1.11 Controlled gambling vs. abstinence

Two potential goals identified for people using self-help methods for gambling include controlled gambling or complete abstinence. Controlled gambling is where an individual sets limits on spending, or time spent gambling, or the type of gambling activities used. Another goal is complete abstinence, where the individual aims to no longer gamble at all (Dowling and Smith, 2007). Controlled gambling is not as popular as abstinence, and there is research to suggest it is less effective, although for people who do not have confidence in their ability to completely abstain it can be a more realistic option (Dowling and Smith, 2007). Some gambling venues support controlled gambling by allowing patrons to allocate daily and yearly time and spending caps (GamblingCompliance, 2009). Dowling and Smith (2007) report that abstinence is generally the preferred goal of gambling treatment primarily because individuals feel if they did gamble they would not be able to control their spending or time. Self-help for abstinence focuses on replacing gambling with a healthier behaviour or identifying, and avoiding, precipitating factors which can lead to gambling. Since the 2004 requirement of the implementation of a gambling Code of Practice in all states and territories in Australia, all gambling venues have had to support abstinence by giving patrons the option to self-exclude (GamblingCompliance, 2009).

Self-exclusion is a voluntary self-banning from venues available to individuals who feel they need external control to maintain abstinence from gambling (Gainsbury, 2013). Staff members are trained to carry out the self-exclusion process and use identification systems, aiming to ensure individuals do not gamble. Identification systems vary depending on the technology available; generally photos of those in the self-exclusion program are easily accessible to staff for identification. If an individual in the venue is identified as being in the self-exclusion program the venue has the right to remove the individual from the premises (Productivity Commission, 2010). The effectiveness of self-exclusion is largely dependent on the venue monitoring patrons to identify those in the self-exclusion program (Tremblay *et al.*, 2008). However, support for self-exclusion programs in reducing gambling related issues among problem and pathological gamblers is growing (e.g. Ladouceur *et al.*, 2007). Ladouceur *et al.* (2007) found that this is in part because people who self-excluded felt that they could not change their gambling behaviours on their own. They found the reasons people entered self-exclusion programs included relationship breakdowns, a desire to regain control and overall recognition that help is needed (Ladouceur *et al.*, 2007).

Self-exclusion has been an option available to people in different international contexts for a long time. The following section provides an overview of self-exclusion internationally and then reviews the self-exclusion process in Australia.

1.12 Overview of self-exclusion in the United States, Canada, and Europe

Canada, the United States and parts of Europe, have all encouraged or enforced the development and implementation of self-exclusion initiatives, particularly in casinos (Gainsbury, 2013). However, due to differing industry developments and different regulatory and jurisdictional situations, self-exclusion programs across the world are varied. The main differences include: minimum length of agreement, revocation allowances and processes, scope of the agreement (certain areas of single venue, whole venue, and multiple venues, state-wide), consequences of breaching agreement, and legal responsibility of the venue.

The first formal self-exclusion program was implemented in 1934 at the opening of the first casino in Austria (Hayer and Meyer, 2011). The first formal self-exclusion program in Canada began in 1989 in Manitoba and the first state-wide program in the United States was implemented in 1996 in Missouri (Nowatzki and Williams, 2002).

United States of America

In the United States, Gaming Control Boards are state-specific agencies for regulating casinos and gaming, and enforcing gaming law. These boards are considered a quasi-judicial body, as they have the authority to oversee and rule on civil cases. However, there is a separate system for Indian Casinos within reservations. These casinos have their own Gaming Control Boards and are subject to the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, enforced by the National Indian Gaming Commission, which is responsible for establishing minimum standards.

Depending on the state, people can apply for self-exclusion online or face-to-face at a specific venue. State-wide self-exclusion is available in Missouri, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, and New Jersey (Rhea, 2005). Typically the regulations in America are stricter than other countries. For example, agreements may be irrevocable, that is, life-long agreements. If a self-excluded person is found in a casino their losses may be kept by the casino and any winnings may not be awarded to them (Nowatzki and Williams, 2002). Moreover, self-excluders may be considered as trespassing if they enter the venue/s they have been excluded from, and therefore may be charged with an offence and/or fined (Rhea, 2005). Illinois, for example, may arrest self-excluders for trespassing and they may face one year imprisonment and up to \$1,000 in fines (Kelly and Igelman, 2009). In addition to self-exclusion from specific games, gaming areas, and venues in America, one can also opt to self-exclude from automatic teller machines (ATMs) and cash services through the Global Cash Access STEP program (California Council on Problem Gambling, n.d.; Global Cash Access Inc, n.d.). Slot machines in the United States can be public or private. Seven states allow for non-casino or non-track “licensed establishments” to have slot machines, that is in, riverboats, bars, restaurants, petrol stations, and supermarkets. This makes implementing exhaustive self-exclusion programs almost impossible and/or ineffective due to inability to regulate them (Nowatzki and Williams, 2002). Generally, the industry cannot be held legally responsible for detrimental outcomes of a self-excluder managing to gamble in a venue they have voluntarily excluded from (Kelly and Igelman, 2009).

Canada

Gambling in Canada is regulated exclusively by the provinces, as opposed to federal law. Similarly to the United States, if someone is found breaching their self-exclusion agreement they may be considered to be trespassing and face a fine. For example, in British Columbia persons breaking their agreement may face a fine of up to a \$5,000. Another example is in Ontario, if someone breaches their agreement three times at any of the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation establishments, self-excluders will be changed to a status of ‘involuntary exclusion’ and this exclusion will remain for an additional five years. Revocation is also difficult in certain provinces, in Manitoba for example, a person is required to attend a short gambling awareness workshop before they can re-enter the venue they were previously self-excluded from (Nowatzki and Williams, 2002).

Europe

Nation-wide self-exclusion programs exist in the Netherlands, France, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland (Rhea, 2005). In some countries, such as Estonia, the regulatory body monitors and enforces self-exclusion policies via an internet accessible self-exclusion list which brings uniformity across venues and an efficient way for venue staff and patrons to use the program (Laansoo and Niit, 2009). Overall, the self-exclusion programs and the process to self-exclude in Europe are similar to Canada and the USA. However, gambling establishments in Europe have previously been found legally responsible for failing to bar self-excluded patrons from their establishments (Kelly and Igelman, 2009).

In the United Kingdom (UK), most gambling is regulated by the Gambling Commission, although there is no coordinated national self-exclusion scheme. In the UK, self-exclusion agreements last for a minimum of six months, with longer periods negotiable. If someone has managed to gamble in a venue they have self-excluded from they are encouraged to make a complaint in order to assist the venue 'operator to identify any areas where their policies may need reviewing and take any necessary action' (Gambling Commission, 2013). The UK does not have penalties for breaching self-exclusion contracts. Bookkeepers and venues in the UK are said to be under no obligation to honour self-exclusion agreements and are not liable if the self-excluder breaches the agreement (Kelly and Igelman, 2009).

1.13 History of self-exclusion in Australia

After the release of the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into the Gambling Industry in 2010, the Australian Government announced increased support for reforms of harm-minimisation measures. The decision was made to invest more into research and the development of self-exclusion (Sherry, 2010). The most significant change thus far has been the implementation of an umbrella system – allowing individuals to self-exclude from multiple venues without having to approach each venue or franchise individually. Self-exclusion forms are now available online as well as at all gambling venues, increasing both the accessibility and efficiency of self-exclusion programs. However, current rates of self-exclusion are not particularly high relative to the number of people who gamble in Australia. Based on research between 2002 and 2009 it has been estimated that there are 4,907 self-exclusion agreements in Australia, out of a total of all 14,602 exclusion agreements (this includes involuntary or licensee exclusions) (Productivity Commission, 2010).

The history and development of harm-minimisation strategies, specifically self-exclusion, has differed significantly between states and venue types in Australia. The following section will outline self-exclusion programs and their development in each state and territory.

Victoria (VIC)

Self-exclusion was first available in Victoria from 1997 at Crown Casino in Melbourne. However, it wasn't until the *Gambling Regulation Act 2003* that it became mandatory for all venues in Victoria to develop and implement an approved responsible gambling code of conduct including provisions regarding self-exclusion. This coincided with the launch of the Crown Responsible Gambling Support Centre (RGSC), which was staffed by Responsible Gambling Liaison Officers (available 24/7), a Chaplain, and two registered psychologists to help facilitate self-exclusion and referrals. At this time Crown established a Self-Exclusion Revocation Committee for reviewing applications for the revocation of self-exclusion agreements (GamblingCompliance, 2009). The casino has a self-exclusion kit, containing information about self-exclusion, help for gambling problems, and financial services in the area.

The Crown Casino self-exclusion agreements are indefinite and revocation applications require evidence of use of a health care provider addressing the individuals gambling problems. The venue has the right to escort self-excluders from the venue and a fine of up to \$2,000 can be given for breaching the order (Dowling, 2004).

The *Gambling Regulation Act 2003* required all gambling venues in Victoria to have approved self-exclusion programs. Victoria has two organisations which supply the programs and services, Australian Hotels Association (AHA) (Vic) and Clubs Vic (Productivity Commission, 2010). AHA (Vic) works by venues sending self-exclusion requests to them. AHA (Vic) then contacts the patron and gives them some information about available services and the self-exclusion program and organise an interview if the patron wishes to proceed.

At the interview further information is given and the patron signs the agreement. Agreements can be made for 6-24 months but the patron must undergo counselling within that time frame for the agreement to expire. If they wish to revoke the agreement they must have an interview with AHA (Vic). AHA (Vic) is required by legislation to maintain records of exclusions and revocations. It is the venue's responsibility to remove self-excluded patrons from memberships, loyalty programs and mailing lists. They are also responsible for providing information about breaches to AHA (Vic). Venue staff members have access to an online database containing information and identification of persons who have self-excluded from their venue. Venues are also required by legislation to confiscate winnings from people who breach their self-exclusion (Productivity Commission, 2010).

New South Wales (NSW)

Since 1995, self-exclusion has been available in NSW at the Star City Casino, Sydney. The casino provides self-exclusion agreements for a minimum 12 month period. Revocation is not be considered until after the initial 12 month period and the process requires an application by the self-excluder, a gambling assessment conducted by a qualified gambling counsellor, and a letter of support from a family member. The casino also allow for third party exclusion by family members if their concerns about a gambling problem are substantiated. In 2001, the parent company of Star City Casino introduced the Tabcorp Responsible Gambling Code of Practice. During 2001, a self-exclusion pack was brought in, which included information about services available in the area. In 2009, this changed to the Star City Responsible Gambling Code of Practice which maintained explicit guidelines for self-exclusion at the casino (GamblingCompliance, 2009).

Self-exclusion in all gaming venues in NSW began in 2001, as required through the *Gaming Machines Act 2001*. NSW has numerous organisations that deliver self-exclusion programs and services, including: Australian Hotels Association (NSW) GameCare, ClubsNSW ClubSAFE, and NSW BetSafe (Productivity Commission, 2010). In NSW exclusion agreements are only required to cover the gambling areas within venues. Betsafe provides a minimum agreement of 6 months up to 7 years. Multiple venue exclusion is possible to a maximum of 10 venues but individual venues have the right to request an additional application if the original multiple-venue exclusion-agreement was made at another venue. Revocation requires the self-excluder to have two referees (i.e. close family member and professional such as a counsellor). ClubSAFE also provides online multiple-venue self-exclusion. This program requires patrons to see a counsellor or solicitor prior to signing the agreement and revocation is relatively simple requiring only a completed application.

Western Australia (WA)

The Crown Casino Perth (formerly Burswood Entertainment Complex Casino) was opened in 1985 in accordance with the Casino Code of Ethics and Gambling Practice (WA), which included mandatory operation of a self-exclusion program run by the security department of the casino. In 2004, this was revised and published as the Responsible Gambling Code of Practice. This included guidelines for both involuntary and voluntary exclusion which required the venue to provide counselling information and removal of patrons from mailing lists. In 2006, the casino installed informational terminals in the building which contained information regarding the self-exclusion program. They also launched a self-help book called "Moving beyond Gambling – A self-Help Guide" which was given to all self-excluders. At the end of the self-exclusion period of 12 months, anyone wishing to re-enter the venue must go through the revocation process which includes undergoing counselling and an interview with security staff. There is also a 6- and 12-week follow up to determine if revocation is suitable.

Western Australia has not legalised EGM gambling outside of the casino.

Northern Territory (NT)

Lasseters Hotel Casino, Alice Springs, was the first casino to open in Northern Territory in 1981. Self-exclusion was available at the opening of the casino. In 2003, the *Northern Territory Code of Practice for Responsible Gambling* was launched, which included instructions for self-exclusion. However, at the time it demanded only voluntary compliance; mandatory compliance was only established in 2007. Currently the self-exclusion program allows patrons to choose either full exclusion or selective exclusion of certain types of gambling. The agreement lasts for a minimum of three months, however, there is a three day cooling off period where the individual can revoke the agreement. If someone is found trying to enter, or are in an area they are excluded from, the casino may take reasonable steps to prevent that person from gambling (GamblingCompliance, 2009).

SkyCity Casino, Darwin, was opened in 1983 and implemented a “self-barring” program by 1999. In 2004, the casino voluntarily complied with the *Northern Territory Code of Practice for Responsible Gambling* and worked on improving their self-exclusion program. By 2006, the program was made more user-friendly for both staff and patrons. Self-exclusion agreements last for a minimum of three months and may apply to either the whole venue or specific gambling areas. If someone is found trying to enter or is in an area they are excluded from the casino has the right to intervene. The casino also allows a three day cooling-off period after signing the Deed before the agreement is finalised. At the present time SkyCity Darwin can only offer single-venue self-exclusion, if an individual wishes to self-exclude from multiple venues in the NT they must go through a separate self-exclusion process for each venue (GamblingCompliance, 2009).

Queensland (Qld)

In 1986, Jupiters Hotel and Casino, Gold Coast, was the first casino to open in Queensland. Over the following decade, three additional casinos opened in Queensland: Jupiter’s Casino Townsville (1986), Treasury Casino (1995) and The Reef Hotel Casino (1996). However, it was not until 2002 that the *Queensland Responsible Gambling Code of Practice* was launched (GamblingCompliance, 2009). All casinos, 82% of hotels and 74% of clubs were committed to the *Queensland Responsible Gambling Code of Practice* within a year. The code of practice included the provision of exclusion material. In 2005, the *Gambling Legislation Amendment Act 2005* was implemented. The 2005 legislation clarified the requirements of exclusion and self-exclusion orders in venues in Queensland. This included new provisions such as responsible gambling liaison officers being trained to assist with the self-exclusions process and manual checking systems, and to remove self-excluded people from mailing lists (Gambling Legislation Amendment Bill 2005; GamblingCompliance, 2009).

The *Gambling Legislation Amendment Bill 2005* and the *Queensland Responsible Gambling Code of Practice* require self-exclusion programs to be available in all venues and involuntary exclusion based on welfare grounds. Programs and services are provided by Australian Hotels Association (Qld). Interviews are held at the individual venues, with a 24-hour cooling off period after signing the agreement. After the cooling-off period revocation cannot be applied for until 12 months have passed, the agreement otherwise expires after 5 years. Venues must cancel memberships and remove self-excluders from mailing lists. There is also scope for third party exclusion (Productivity Commission, 2010).

South Australia (SA)

Skycity Casino, Adelaide, opened in 1985. In 2001, amendments were made to the *South Australia Casino Act 1997*, which included training staff in problem gambling issues – including self-exclusion (GamblingCompliance, 2009). In 2006, Skycity Adelaide voluntarily introduced a minimum 12 month exclusion period for self-exclusion. Their self-exclusion process also includes staff actively encouraging self-excluders to seek help and providing patrons with information about where to seek help. In order to revoke the agreement, self-excluders must attend

counselling and must obtain a letter from their counsellor/s proving their participation. The self-excluder must also agree to enter into the Case Management Program for at least 3 months after termination of the agreement, as well as setting re-entry criteria for spending and time limits. Third party exclusion requests from family members are also possible if their concerns can be substantiated (GamblingCompliance, 2009).

Gambling venues in SA are now all required by the mandatory *Gambling Code of Practice Notice 2013* to have self-exclusion programs. In addition to this, the *Problem Gambling Family Protection Orders Act 2004* allows for third party exclusion based on welfare grounds. SA has three organisations which deliver programs and services, these are the: Independent Gambling Authority (IGA) program, SA OLGR, and AHA (SA). The *Gaming Machines Act 1992* states that venues must provide information about available help services during the self-exclusion process.

Tasmania (Tas)

Wrest Point Hotel Casino Tasmania was the first casino to open in Australia in 1973. It is unclear when the casino first implemented self-exclusion, however, the implementation of a self-exclusion program in casinos became mandatory in 2004 under the Gambling Code of Practice (now *Responsible Gambling Mandatory Code of Practice for Tasmania*) (GamblingCompliance, 2009). The *Gaming Control Act 1993* requires clubs, pubs and hotels in Tasmania to provide self-exclusion programs. This service is run by the Tasmanian Department of Treasury and Finance, Liquor and Gaming, called the Tasmanian Gambling Exclusion Scheme. Services are provided by AHA (Tas) (Productivity Commission, 2010). This covers self-exclusion, involuntary exclusion, and third-party exclusion. After a self-exclusion request is made, the counselling service contacts the patron and an interview is conducted where the patron signs the agreement. Agreements usually last three years but the time frame is flexible. Both single venue and multiple venue exclusions are available (Productivity Commission, 2010).

Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

In the ACT, the Canberra Casino implemented a self-exclusion program within a couple years of opening in 1992, prior to the introduction of mandatory initiatives. In 2006, the *Casino Control Act 2006* outlined a mandatory approach to self-exclusion for the Canberra Casino to follow (GamblingCompliance, 2009). The *Gambling and Racing Control Act 1999* and the *Gambling and Racing Control (Code of Practice) Regulation 2002* administered by the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission requires clubs and hotels to offer self-exclusion, and allows for involuntary, licensee exclusions based on welfare grounds (Productivity Commission, 2010).

What becomes apparent from the summary of self-exclusion over this chapter is that there are many different processes, legislations, regulations and self-exclusion programs that run throughout Australia and the world. The following chapters will explore the self-exclusion process from the experience and viewpoint of all key stakeholders including venue operators, people who have self-excluded or considered self-exclusion from venues, and service providers (including gambling counsellors, and help professionals from health and welfare services) in the ACT.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This is an exploratory study that took a participatory approach to understanding and finding ways to improve the self-exclusion process and experience for all stakeholders. It will be the first study of its kind into self-exclusion, using sociological, ethnographic, and participatory research methods in order to gain a rich and multi-faceted understanding of the self-exclusion process and experience.

Participatory research has been described as a systematic investigation conducted by researchers in collaboration with those affected by the issue being studied, for purposes of education, action or social change (Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995). Participatory research can yield results more relevant to the community because of the active dialogue between researchers and participants. The ultimate goal of participatory research is to benefit stakeholders/participants/partners in the research while obtaining greater knowledge of the topic (Barbato *et al.*, 2013) and leading to change for the community (Thyer, 2009). Therefore, it is a method where the progression of the study is determined by interaction between the researcher and the participants, with the researcher responsive to the needs of the community (Conder *et al.*, 2011). This research can then be used to generate community interest and understanding about self-exclusion.

A variety of stakeholders in the ACT were invited to participate, including:

- relevant management and staff from gambling venues in the ACT;
- ACT Gambling and Racing Commission;
- counsellors from the ACT Gambling Counselling and Support Service (ACTGCSS)
- other service providers who assist people with gambling problems; and
- people in the ACT who have self-excluded or contemplated self-exclusion.

2.1 Recruitment

Recruitment began in February, 2014 and ended in late April, 2014. Different methods were used throughout the research to recruit different stakeholders. Recognition of the range of sensitivities and politics between stakeholders was also an important part of the recruiting process.

Recruitment of venues

Thirty-four letters were sent to the relevant managers of gambling venues and club groups in the ACT. The letters outlined the objectives of the research and what would be required if the venue chose to participate. Of the venues or venue groups who did not respond to the initial approach, a follow up email or phone call was made to ascertain any interest. Eight venues agreed to be interviewed for the research, a further two responded that they had not had individuals self-exclude from their venue so declined to be interviewed and another two venues agreed to participate but contact was not able to be sustained to interview. The response rate of managers of venues and club groups in the ACT to the research was 35%.

Recruitment of gambling counsellors and help service providers

Five letters were sent to gambling help services, counselling and psychological services in the ACT formally inviting them to participate in the research. A further two phone calls were made and messages were left with additional services. Three gambling counsellors were recruited, all of which came from the ACTGCSS. Three services declined to be interviewed, two because they had no experience with self-exclusion. Contact with additional services was not successful.

Recruitment of individuals who have self-excluded or contemplated self-exclusion

The research was advertised in *The Canberra Times* over three Saturdays in March and April, 2014 to recruit people who had self-excluded or had considered self-exclusion in the ACT (see Appendix A).

There were very few respondents to the first advertisement. It became apparent that there needed to be broader publicity of the research to reach more people in the community. The next step was a media release from Australian National University about the research designed to increase the publicity of the research and recruit more people. Following the media release, the local media interest in the research was good and a couple of news articles and radio interviews were conducted. Over the three week advertising period, these methods proved successful in recruiting participants.

A further method used in this research to recruit additional individuals from the community was snowball sampling. This was a successful method used. Individuals who were interviewed were asked to let other people in whatever self-help groups, gambling counselling and rehabilitation services they participated in know about the research.

Individual participants in the research received a \$20 Woolworths essentials card in appreciation for their involvement in the study. These cards could be used to purchase a variety of goods (excluding alcohol and tobacco).

Over a period of three months, 27 interviews were conducted. The research recruited 8 different venues (in 4 venues both a club manager and a Gambling Contact Officer were interviewed), 12 individual gamblers (who had varying degrees of experience with self-exclusion) and 3 gambling counsellors (all recruited from a single service) in the ACT to participate in the research.

2.2 Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all research participants. The interviews involving the industry participants took place in the venues and the interviews with the individual gamblers took place at a variety of locations across the ACT that were convenient to the individual. All of the information gathered through the interview process was treated confidentially and all interviews were de-identified.

Data collected for this study included transcripts from approximately 14 hours of interviews, interview notes, and ethnographic field notes.

2.3 Method overview

This report is a scoping study that is intended to highlight broad strengths and limitations of the self-exclusion process in the ACT. As described above, numerous methods were employed over the three month period to recruit people in the community who had self-excluded. As is demonstrated throughout the following report, people who self-exclude can be relatively isolated from society and likely represent a very disparate group of the ACT community, making recruitment challenging and expensive. In addition, the time needed to build the relationships with venues to encourage participation in the research is a point for consideration in future research design. Despite these challenges, the data collection was a thorough and successful process that

did reach a point of saturation where no new information or themes were emerging. Consistent themes were identified through the course of the interviews that are represented in the structure of this report. The themes that emerged are consistent with findings from research in other jurisdictions (see Gainsbury 2013, Blaszczyński *et al.* 2007).

2.4 Ethics

Approval to conduct this research was obtained from the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee. Written consent was obtained for both the interview and recording of the interview with all participants in the research (see Appendices B-G).

Chapter 3: Self-exclusion in the ACT

As outlined in the Introduction, self-exclusion in all states and territories across Australia is a complicated process. In the ACT, self-exclusion is co-ordinated by the single regulator, the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission. In 2012, the Problem Gambling Assistance Fund Advisory Committee funded the implementation of the ACT Gambling Exclusion Database (ACTGED). The ACTGED was implemented in late 2014. Rather than each venue having folders of paper with pictures and details of individuals to look through, the system was transitioned to an online system. The system was in transition when this research was conducted, however, the issues raised by the participants in the study were relevant to the self-exclusion process as a whole, and were not specific to the system transition to the ACTGED. The following chapter will outline in detail the self-exclusion process in the ACT, including the ACTGED.

3.1 The self-exclusion process in the ACT

For an individual to self-exclude from a venue or multiple venues in the ACT, they must complete a self-exclusion Deed (see Appendix H). To complete the self-exclusion Deed, an individual can request assistance from any gambling venue in the ACT, the ACT Gambling Counselling and Support Service or the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission. It is possible to proceed without assistance, or with the assistance of gambling counselling and support services, if all the documentation and supporting identification (including a photograph) is sent to the Commission.

If the application is processed through a venue, it will be processed by a Gambling Contact Officer (GCO) or a staff member trained to assist. Every venue in the ACT has a GCO that is trained to assist an individual through the self-exclusion process. The GCO's are re-trained every 3 years. Licensees must prepare written procedures for staff to outline how people are to be excluded from the gambling facility. The venue is required to arrange to have a private conversation with the individual to lead them through self-exclusion process. They must also inform the individual about available support services and the use of the Deed (particularly availability and effect of a deed and any confidentiality issues). The applicant may then either provide a photograph or their photograph will be taken by the staff member assisting with the exclusion. The photograph is used by venue staff to identify self-excluders if they do attempt to breach their exclusion. The photo is then uploaded on to the ACTGED system. Only selected staff at gambling venues and administrative staff at the ACT Racing and Gambling Commission have access to input data into the ACTGED. The database is password protected. However, staff at venues are able to view the pictures of self-excluded individuals in order to assist in identifying breaches. Figure 1 below outlines the current process of self-exclusion in the ACT.

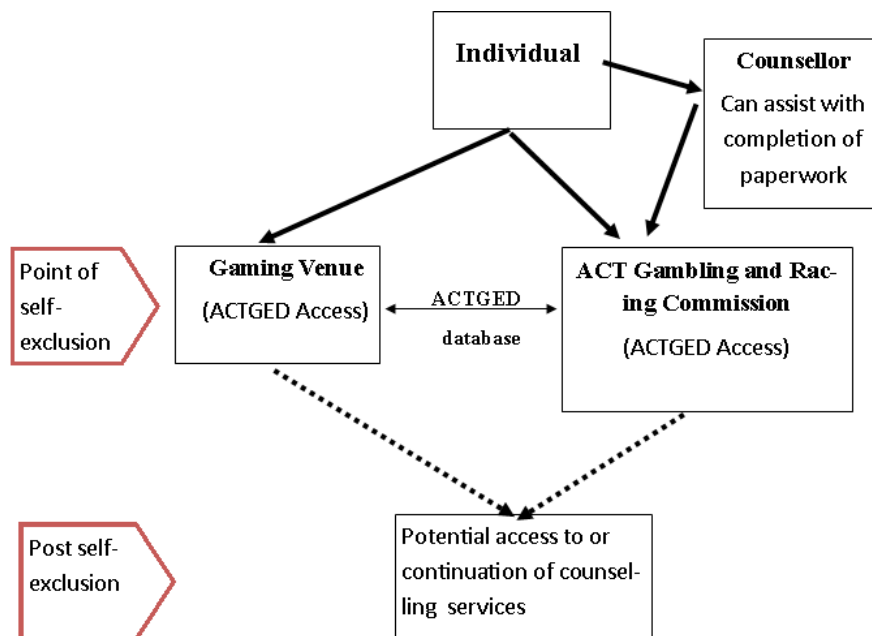


Figure 1: ACT gambling self-exclusion process

Part of the Deed requires that the applicant chooses a venue or multiple venues that they wish to exclude from. The individual must nominate how long they wish to exclude themselves. The ACTGED requires a minimum period of self-exclusion of six months and a maximum period of three years. The individual can increase the number of gambling venues they have excluded from at any time. The applicant can indicate if they would like the ACT Gambling Counselling and Support Service to contact them and can indicate if they are willing to be contacted for research. After the Deed has been completed and signed it is uploaded onto the ACTGED for all nominated venues to access. Licensees must enter the completed exclusion in the ACTGED within three trading days of completion of the Deed. The self-exclusion is effective immediately at all nominated venues. All venues involved in the exclusion will be notified by email that the Database has been updated and are required to check the Database within three trading days.

When an individual nominates a venue/s to be excluded from, it is the licensee's decision to determine if the exclusion is from the entire facility or just from the gambling areas. Most venues nominate that the entire venue is excluded from access by the individual for the duration of the exclusion Deed. During the exclusion period the applicant must not receive membership entitlements or promotional mail from the venue/s. If the excluded individual does enter a venue they have nominated and are identified by staff, they will be asked to leave. The staff at the venue will inform the Commission of the breach. The Commission will notify any other venues involved on that particular Deed of exclusion of the breach. The Commission will attempt to contact the individual about the breach, however, they will not be charged or fined for breaching the self-exclusion Deed in the ACT. However, venue operators have a responsibility under the Code of Practice to enforce exclusions – failure to enforce a self-exclusion may result in penalties for the venue in accordance with ACT regulations.

An individual can apply to revoke the Deed at any point during the exclusion period. Once the application to revoke the Deed is made, the Commission will contact the individual to ensure that this is their intention and then there is a seven day cooling-off period after the application is made before the revocation becomes

effective. The individual is not able to enter the excluded venues at any point until after that seven day period has passed.

If an individual has a special event that they wish to attend on a single occasion, they can contact the GCO at the venue. The GCO may agree to allow the person on the premises during the required time. The GCO may require the self-excluded person to enter into a written agreement not to gamble during their visit.

At the end of the exclusion period the self-excluded individual may request that the Deed be renewed for a maximum of three years. Venues may have a re-admission policy, although this is not required under law. It may relate to re-instatement of membership or assessment of whether or not gambling poses a serious risk to the person. If the venue believes there is a risk, they are required under the Code to impose a Licensee exclusion on the individual.

All venues in the ACT are required to make information about support services available to their patrons. This information includes details about self-exclusion.

Chapter 4: Experiences of people who have self-excluded in the ACT

The following chapter provides a detailed overview of the individuals involved in this research and their gambling experiences. This chapter will also look at the experiences of those people who have self-excluded or contemplated self-exclusion in the ACT. The chapter aims to highlight the complex relationship between individuals and gambling and how that leads people to self-exclude.

4.1 People and gambling

In-depth interviews were conducted with 12 people in relation to their experiences of self-exclusion in the ACT. Of the people recruited and interviewed:

- 7 males
- 5 females

Although the people interviewed were not screened for gambling problems, all reported severe problems in their lives. Of the individuals interviewed, 58% were male – this is consistent with the findings of the 2014/15 ACT gambling prevalence survey that found 64% of problem gamblers in the ACT were male (Davidson *et al.* 2015). The gender breakdown can be seen in Table 1 below.

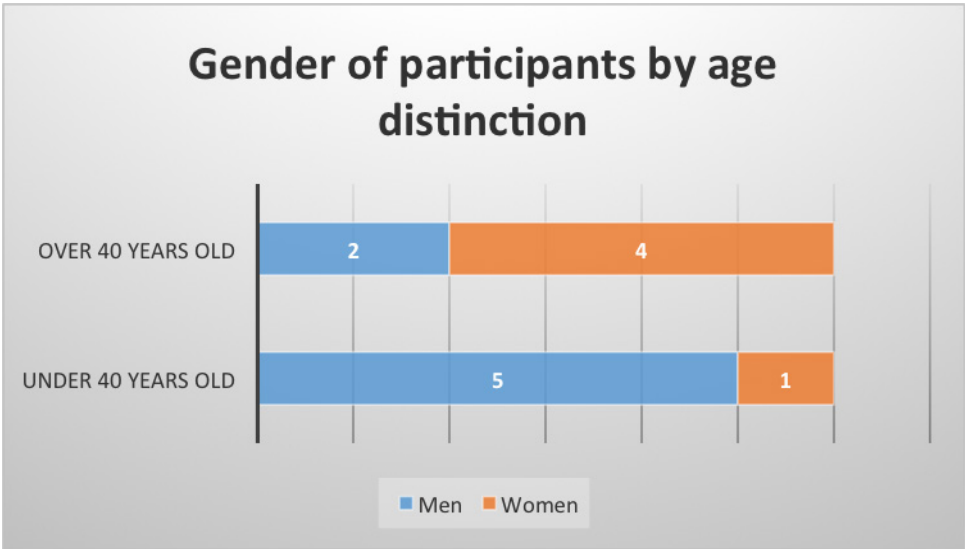


Table 1: Number and gender of participants as determined by age over or under 40 years old.

Of the people interviewed:

- 7 people had excluded in the ACT
- 3 people had experience of self-exclusion in other states, not in the ACT
- 2 people had not yet self-excluded

The following section details participants gambling experiences. These excerpts taken from the interviews are used to build a detailed picture of the context in which people self-exclude or consider self-exclusion. All except one of the people interviewed started gambling at 18, as exemplified by the excerpts below:

I started gambling when I was 18 and now I'm 31, so that's 13 years. A weekly thing. Basically, roughly about \$500-\$600 a week so the majority of the pay. Started spiralling out of control in the last sort of four to five years. Basically started as a once a week thing on a Friday, then a couple of beers and a social punt turned into, you know, pretty bad. Yeah, I was actually just going by myself to gamble. Gambling more money than I could afford to gamble with (H____, 14.04.14).

I started gambling when I was about 18 years old and all through my life I kind of gambled, gambled, gambled, mainly through a peer thing I suppose, as well as maybe for me it was to do with, deal with a lot of issues. It was an outlet for dealing with a lot of stress. I think that was probably the issue for a long time. It is a peer thing as well. You go with three or four blokes and they kind of get on the grog and, oh let's go and hit the poker machines (D____, 11.03.14).

I started on my 18th birthday my parents took me to the club. My parents were always at the club and then probably when I was about 22/23 it really started to become a problem, I did it for years and years. Had a number of periods where I tried to stop but I always went back (JM____, 02.05.14).

Basically I started gambling at 18 when my mother introduced me to gambling, by the way she put the money in the poker machine on my 18th birthday and said this is what button you press and this is how you do it. I was never really bad right from the get go, but it progressively got worse and worse as far as when I got a full time job and started living by myself or living in a group house. I started like putting through whole pays, getting behind on rent, stuff like that (T____, 15.04.14).

Between the ages of fourteen and eighteen in this small country town [NSW], there wasn't really that much to do, so all we did was drink, and then at any opportunity possible, which is quite often in small country towns, you can get in to pubs and stuff under-age, and that's where I became aware that my mum had played a lot of pokies and I started to get into it, poker-machines more than horses or Keno. So then by the time I turned eighteen, it was a regular habit, straight away. My mum was there on a daily basis, so I often just joined her, from the age of eighteen (J____, 11.04.14).

The interviews highlighted that it often took two or three years for the individual's gambling to develop into a severe problem in their lives. It was consistently reported through the interviews that the individual's primary problem with gambling was with poker machine play. The following account was typical of the interviews conducted in this research with gamblers:

I find poker machines are really, really addictive. It's the whole atmosphere. It's the sound, it's the thought of making a lot of money, winning free spins, walking out with a lot of money, which unfortunately is not always the case, because you might win a few hundred dollars one day, you'll go back the next day and put it all back through again, and more (D____, 11.03.14).

Seven people interviewed reported that they had two or three venues that they visited regularly, although others reported that they would attend any venue, whatever was closest at the time:

I go to all clubs, every club in Canberra. I was looking at my wallet the other day, and I wouldn't want somebody to really see it, but that's all my cards, for every single club in Canberra...there's not many clubs that I'm not a member at. I was looking at it the other day and going that's pretty disgusting. Now I'm chasing, I've found a new element to it, I'm actually chasing the prize draws...I don't drink while I'm in the club, I don't interact with people, I'm not there to have a good time. Just one win, just one win. So I think that's become a new thing, and I'm going to these different clubs, with no money once again, and just hanging around going I'm going to win the \$20,000, come on, come on, come on, and then walking out going that was two hours of my life I'm not going to get back (K____, 04.04.14).

All people interviewed had a 10-20 year gambling history prior to self-excluding or contemplating self-exclusion. Each individual had accessed some form of counselling, rehabilitation or called the 1800 gambling hotline to get support prior to reaching the point of self-excluding (see Chapter 6 for details on how people interacted with gambling help services). However, the impact on people's lives as a result of gambling was severe when they got to the point of actually self-excluding. Below are some of the experiences that were shared³:

I had absolutely nothing left. I'd exhausted every option I had, for lack of a better word, hocked everything I owned, and some of the stories and things that I'd made up, I lost every person I loved, every family member, every friend, no friends left, no girlfriend, no nothing. I stole off every single one of them and it just got beyond ridiculous. Like I'd lost absolutely everything, and I was at the point where ...I couldn't control my life and it just became a big spiral downwards.

I tried to commit suicide over it. Just, I didn't think a gambling hangover existed but they do. Just not myself, I live to gamble basically, every week I needed to gamble to try to gain money back that I've lost.

... I just kept on withdrawing off the [work credit] card and ended up losing my job and now have a criminal record because of it. It's something that I'm still fighting battles because of it and I'm at the very last stages of losing my career, which is something I've lived for.

I got to the point where I was so desperate, I put a knife in my pants, and walked in to a shop-front with the intention of getting as much cash as I could so that I could gamble to escape the real world, and I didn't have the guts. I didn't go through with it, which I'm quite thankful for now.

I'm starting to make excuses with my teenage daughter that's at home after school, drop her off, go down to the club for a few hours, and I'm lying to her pretty much and telling her I'm at an appointment with this, I'm doing that. So it was five, ten minutes, now three hours have gone by, and she's going hey are you coming home. So I'm getting guilty mum, going what am I doing, and I've got no money there really. If I did have any money at all, a few dollars here or there, it would go on the poker machines, and that's what I'm worried about.

These experiences demonstrate the severity and depth of the problems that people involved in this research were experiencing just prior to the point that they self-excluded or at the point of considering self-exclusion. The extent of the shame that was clearly felt by the individuals in telling these very painful stories was significant (which is consistent with other research on stigma related to gambling problems, see Carroll *et al.* 2013). Each story was not unique to each individual. Many of the people interviewed had attempted suicide at some point as a result of their gambling, all had experienced severe depression, three people had criminal records as a result of stealing money and all participants were in the situation where gambling had seriously impacted on employment and their relationships with their family and children. These interviews highlight the very vulnerable position that people who were going through, or contemplating, the process of self-exclusion were coming

3 Individuals in this section have been completely de-identified to avoid any chance of identification.

from. For every person interviewed, gambling had seriously negatively impacted their lives prior to the point of self-exclusion.

The counsellors involved in this research also reiterated this point that when people reached the point of self-exclusion they were in a very vulnerable position.

If I suggest it to them then it depends on the severity of their problem gambling. If they feel they've hit rock bottom and they have no control over it then they don't see any other option. Rather than harm minimisation or harm reduction it just seems that abstinence is sometimes the most beneficial to those clients (Counsellor A, 10.02.14).

Two participants discussed their feelings towards ending their relationship with the venues and the prospect of complete abstinence:

One thing that scares me about self-exclusion and still does now is the fact that potentially, you could never walk into another establishment again, and yes, I can admit to the fact that I have a problem, but unfortunately, it's the only place where I feel comfortable. So to actually self-exclude means that I lose the only place I feel comfortable at, which is quite scary and has been the reasoning behind why I haven't self-excluded from every single place (G____, 27.03.14).

I would be devastated, and like, not being able to walk back in to a place where my favourite machine is... what would I do? Where would I go? How would I live without that in my life? (J____, 11.04.14).

Other participants interviewed saw the option of self-exclusion as a chance to prove to employers, courts and family members that they were taking a step in the right direction:

Yeah the Mission counsellor suggested it. She said it was an option and I kind of ummed and ahed about it for a while and then I just kind of thought well when I was in the battle of if I was going to keep my job or lose my job or not, I had decided to do self-exclusion in the hope of them seeing that I wanted to get better or that I am getting better (T____, 15.04.14).

My security clearance is up for review next year and I will not be able to hide my gambling because of the financial statements...yeah, hopefully declaring the self-exclusion will help to show them that I am doing something about it (A____, 05.05.14).

4.2 People and Venues

Considering the severity of the impact of gambling on the lives of the people interviewed and the distress that people reported that they experienced at times while in venues, each person interviewed was asked if they had ever been approached by any staff members of any venue in their gambling history to ask if they were ok or needed any assistance, or were offered any information about available services. One individual described their experience:

Never. Never. Never. I have, in some venues, spent \$5,000 at one time. But the irony of it is when I went up and got change, I could see the pity in their eyes. I would acknowledge the pity in their eyes that they had for me because they could see that I was losing all this money and I wasn't a happy chappie. But there was no, "Are you okay?" (A____, 05.05.14).

Despite experiencing significant distress as a result of their gambling, none of the people interviewed in this research had ever been approached by a staff member at a venue to see if they needed any assistance or to provide them with information. The people interviewed expressed the view that they wished they had been approached at some stage and offered assistance, although they were aware of the difficulties that venue staff face in doing this (this issue is discussed in further detail in Chapter 5).

So it's quite difficult, but I mean if people were trained...a certain level of staff were trained in identifying... people that could be selling off their house, and lying to their whole family, and spending all their super money, that sort of stuff, that would help (K____, 04.04.14).

In addition to this, just prior to self-excluding, people reported that they felt very nervous about approaching the venue to admit that they had a problem and wanted to be excluded. This was partly due to the fact that the individuals had built relationships with staff members of the venues over time and felt ashamed to approach them to say they had a problem. One person reported that they decided to go to the club during the day to self-exclude to avoid seeing the staff members that they normally interact with at night.

4.3 People and self-exclusion

In contrast to how isolated people felt just prior to self-excluding, when people made the decision to self-exclude and then approached the venue about going through the process, people felt supported by the venues in the ACT.

They were good, yeah. Yeah they were quite good and helpful. They explained the situation, you're not allowed in the venue and then if you do come in, well we'll have to escort you out, which is not very nice. They were quite pleasant, the staff were quite good, helpful (D____, 11.3.14).

...when I asked about self-exclusion, and whether or not that was something that he could do right there on the spot, or whether, because usually you need management to sign off on it, you need to do an interview, all that sort of stuff. He said, "No I can sign off on it, I'm second in charge." He goes, "Do you want to do it? You can do it right now." He gave me a lot of information, he made me feel like it's okay to do, he made me feel really comfortable about talking about it. He was even going, "Yeah it won't take that long, maybe if you really think about doing it, maybe you just should, maybe this is the moment." I'm like yeah maybe. That was a good staff interaction about self-exclusion, he was pretty gung-ho actually on selling me on the idea, without actually pressuring me (K____, 04.04.14).

...the whole procedure was very smooth. They [the venue] took it seriously the second I said that I wanted to self-exclude and were professional and supportive (A____, 05.05.14).

All of the people interviewed for this research who had self-excluded had done so by approaching a venue directly. None of the people interviewed had gone through the process with the gambling service provider, Mission Australia or directly to the Commission. Each individual's account of the process they went through was very similar. Below were some of the typical responses to questions about how people self-excluded:

I went personally, face-to-face with the managers of a couple of the clubs and decided to do it that way. I think one of them offered a state-wide ban through notification of every club in Canberra. Once I did that, that was the end of it. That was the end of my gambling in clubs in the ACT. Yeah that was a three or four year ban I put on, but I haven't been since (D____, 11.3.14).

They made me fill out some forms, and then I was banned for one year from that club, and then from the other clubs, because I was still going in them, so I had an opportunity to ban myself for two years with them as well. And then ... I was going into the casino every day again, and then I decided to ban myself from the casino for two years. And then two months after that I was going into the TABs, betting on the horses. And then I banned myself from that for one and a half years. And then I was going to Queanbeyan often, and then I banned myself for one year [from Queanbeyan venues]. ...But it's working for me so far (G____, 27.03.14).

Three of the people interviewed for this research had experience with self-exclusion in other states, specifically Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. The reported experiences with the self-exclusion processes in other states had, for most of the individuals, been a negative experience. This had directly impacted on their decision to self-exclude, or not, in the ACT. The problems associated with self-exclusion were mainly reported in regional or rural areas where venues did not enforce the exclusion, despite the exclusion being specific to those venues. In addition, the way that people had to ban themselves from specific venues or groups of venues in other states, rather than a total ban, meant the process was less effective, or perceived as less effective, than in the ACT where people are able to exclude from all venues. In the cases where people had experience with self-exclusion in other states, they were often not aware of how the process differed in the ACT.

4.4 Overall experience of self-exclusion

Overall, the people interviewed for this research described the process of self-exclusion in the ACT as a positive one. The people interviewed who had self-excluded, found it to be an empowering process, as suggested below:

Yeah it has been a positive process. And a bit difficult now and again because I'm used to doing it [gambling] (G____, 27.03.14).

The thought of not having that venue available to gamble, not having that outlet available, it's one less outlet to have that stress of the gambling (D____, 11.3.14).

Kind of empowering. Yeah it was really just that, another stop gap to combat my addiction (K____, 04.04.14).

I had temptations to go to a club on my way back [from interstate], but I knew I couldn't, so kind of when I came back [to Canberra] I felt safe, so safe from myself (T____, 15.04.14).

Yes, it definitely is [an empowering process] – especially...when you first go, there is a sense of this is a good step, and it definitely forces you to look at other ways of dealing with issues, and definitely takes away, or potentially takes away that avenue. So from that point of view I think it is (S____, 16.04.14).

Hugely empowering. I know as soon as I come back to Canberra I can't go, that's it. You know, and if I can't go, I can't go and I just have to find other things to do (A____, 05.05.14).

The overall findings of this chapter highlight that self-exclusion is an important process to individuals in the ACT. Much thought and consideration is given by people in deciding if self-exclusion is a process that they want to engage with. However, it is often only considered as a final option when people have hit 'rock bottom' and their life has been severely negatively impacted by gambling. Prior to embarking on the self-exclusion process, people did not feel supported by venues or venue staff even when they described that they were clearly distressed by the impact of gambling on their lives. In contrast, when the individual approached the venue to self-exclude, each person interviewed found the venues in the ACT supportive and professional. Overall, people who self-excluded in the ACT reported that they had found it to be a positive and empowering process.

4.5 Key findings from Chapter 4

- People who self-exclude or are considering self-exclusion are experiencing severe negative impacts of gambling in their lives.
- People who self-exclude or are considering self-exclusion were in a very vulnerable position, reporting severe depression and anxiety over the consequences of their gambling.
- All the people interviewed in this research, despite experiencing serious negative impacts of gambling, had never been approached by gambling venue staff in any venue to offer information and support at any stage of their gambling history.
- Prior to approaching venues about self-exclusion, individuals often felt anxious and concerned about admitting their problems to venue staff.
- People found gambling venues in the ACT supportive and professional when they did approach a venue about self-exclusion.
- People found self-exclusion to be a positive and empowering process in the ACT.

Chapter 5: Venues and self-exclusion in the ACT

The following chapter outlines the profile of the venues involved in this research, followed by a detailed exploration of how the process of self-exclusion works in the venue setting.

5.1 Venue Profile

The research recruited 8 different venues in the ACT (12 individuals in total including managers and GCOs). The venues broadly covered all the different forms of gambling available in the ACT. The venues involved included a range of sizes – from small venues to large multi-site venues. The venues also included a range of inner city, as well as the northern and southern suburbs of Canberra.

In relation to self-exclusion, one venue reported 1-2 self-exclusions a week, others once a month and others once every 3-4 months. There was a broad range of experience in dealing with self-exclusion and the approach that each venue took to the process varied in terms of the importance they placed on self-exclusion.

5.2 Venue perceptions of self-exclusion

Overall, the venues interviewed for this research viewed self-exclusion favourably and felt it was a way to help people who were experiencing problems. This is expressed below in excerpts from the interviews. Venues reported that self-exclusion:

... gives people a bit of a way out. I think it's a good scheme because, I mean, you do see it, and that's the sad thing about the club industry is you do see people and you know that they got money problems and they still come in and gamble. And that's obvious - a lot of the time that makes them very hard to deal with... but, I mean, as a scheme I think it's very good (Venue J, 05.03.14).

If you rank self-exclusion on a one to ten basis, I'd say it's probably about a seven, heading in the right direction (Venue L, 24.02.14).

The great thing about self-exclusion is that it is the gamblers decision - it's the only form of assistance that really works (Venue H, 24.03.14).

The resounding view of the venues interviewed was expressed by one venue manager:

At the end of the day if somebody has got an addiction, it is an illness as such - whether you want to call it similar to a drug addiction or alcoholism or what have you, people are not going to help themselves unless they're prepared to change themselves... Unless you're prepared to help yourself, and you're the only person that can help yourself... So yeah we can offer all the services in the world, and I think it's fantastic that we promote that and we encourage that, and we certainly encourage it with our staff... But the reality is, unless the individual in question sees the issue and wants to address the issue, nothing is going to change (Venue F, 19.03.14).

The venues viewed self-exclusion as a process of the individual self-identifying a problem and taking responsibility for it. The nexus between the venues individuated understandings of 'the problem' and the process of self-exclusion provided the grounds for broad support of the process. The venues interviewed expressed a genuine will to assist individuals through the process once the individual had expressed their interest in self-excluding.

5.3 Who self-excludes from the venues

When the venues were asked about the age and gender of the people who self-exclude, the following responses were consistent throughout many of the venues:

I'd say it's probably younger guys and older women. That's the way I sort of see it. You know, you see younger blokes like maybe tradies and stuff, because it's a very big culture, I guess. You know, you go down to the pub, have a bet, you know. And older ladies who maybe don't work anymore - maybe their husbands have died and things like that, and that's their sort of social outing and maybe it gets out of hand (Venue J, 05.03.14).

It's mainly men that use our facilities and that's a very general statement, but it happens to be true. I would say 90 per cent of our exclusions are male (Venue B, 25.02.14).

The majority of venues reported that it was predominately males that were self-excluding. There was a general perception that women were more involved with the clubs socially and therefore more reluctant to self-exclude. This view was reiterated by the counsellors interviewed:

Females, the ones that I have offered it to, tend to be more reluctant. The kinds of responses I've had have been due to socially they feel that the clubs are somewhere they need to go to meet friends and to feel part of belonging somewhere. Especially the elderly retired women (Counsellor A, 10.02.14).

5.4 When do people self-exclude

Similarly to the findings from the gamblers interviewed, many venues reported that people self-excluded when they were experiencing significant distress as a result of gambling.

... once they're self-excluded, they really realise that they have a problem. Whether that's always in time is very hard to say, I think it's like with anything else, any addiction, maybe that by the time you actively seek help, basically you've lost the family fortune and the family. I don't know, I can't say that is a fact, but I mean it's just true for many, many cases (Venue B, 25.02.14).

5.5 The self-exclusion process

Through the interview process each of the venues were asked to briefly outline the process that they go through when approached by a patron wanting to self-exclude.

I will contact the person, offer assistance, find out if we can help, refer them to Mission Australia, make sure they've got all the information. As a general rule, the exclusion does not happen in public...we will then arrange for a meeting here in private, we've got like a template that we work through to make sure that we tick all the boxes and that we offer all the help, we make sure that we give a brochure on certain gambling help, there's got to be pictures taken of the person, the person must consent to it. It depends where that person would like to exclude themselves from our venues only, or from all gambling venues in the ACT. We offer assistance from Mission Australia, the Gambling Assistance Helpline, the deed of exclusion, we usually go through it and we've got little notes to say the person understands what the deed means, they understand for how long they can exclude themselves (Venue B, 25.02.14).

We have different levels of management here and what we call a Gaming Shift Manager is the senior person on duty at all times. They also act as the Gambling Contact Officers under the legislation, so there's always someone here. Pretty much all they [the individual] do is need to talk to anyone [staff member]; ask anyone and they can refer them on and a lot of times it happens down in the foyer at either the Guest Service Desk or the Security Officer that's manning the front doors. They'll have a chat with them. Usually the Security Shift Manager on the day will start proceedings, get their ID or whatever and the Gambling Contact Officer will come along and initiate the process or initiate the exclusion (Venue A, 26.02.14).

They can speak to any staff member and then obviously, the staff member would get the duty manager or the venue manager if they're here as well... who are all GCOs and we've got a pack, a folder, we've got one at reception and one in the office and they grab that. It's got all the exclusion paperwork that needs to be completed as well as flyers for information, like counselling services and all that sort of stuff, the Mission Australia flyers. Then they just - and grab a camera too, and take them somewhere quiet, be it up into one of the function rooms or over into the corner of the bistro or somewhere a little bit private to go through all the documentation and answer any questions if need be (Venue K, 05.03.14).

All staff interviewed clearly understood the process of self-exclusion in their venue. All staff were clear on which staff members needed to be present to action the exclusion and what the paperwork process entailed. All the staff interviewed had been through the process of self-exclusion and described it as straightforward. The fact that staff members felt confident in processing self-exclusion documentation was reflected in the perceptions of the individuals reported in the previous chapter, that is, that the venues were helpful and supportive.

5.6 Training required for self-exclusion

Through the interviews, the venues were all asked about the training they had received for self-exclusion and their views on the adequacy of this training. These questions were specifically targeted at the training of the Gambling Contact Officer. Some of the responses to questions about the adequacy of the training are outlined below:

That's a hard question because the GCO...it's an administrative role. They can't be counsellor and maybe the people do want counselling at that time but we've got to get them to stand back. I'd say the training they do is adequate but there seems to be a gap between a self-exclusion and actually getting along to a counsellor (Venue A, 26.02.14).

It was for me but most of my GCO's still don't really get it...It's too factual, it needs to be more... involved I think, actually with people doing it. They get told the facts but they still have no idea what they're doing. And then after a few months they've forgotten the facts but if they actually do it then they'll remember (Venue M, 19.03.14).

We've all got different learning skills and styles and not everybody out there [in this industry] has historically done well in academia, they fall through the cracks and are supposed to get picked up by it only because it's an easier trade or it's an easier occupation to get into than most. So it's reasonable to suggest that there'd be a lot of those people in our industry that need more support and training (Venue F, 19.03.14).

It would have been nice if the training was formalised, almost like a certificate level or something. Look, it's definitely accredited providers that does the training, I've got no hassle with that, but especially because of the high turnover in the industry, it could be nice if that was a little bit more formal process and a little bit more of the personable, the psychological. I think many of the people in the industry, that work in the industry, are – they're wagering and sports people, betting people, and it does not necessarily make you a person that can empathise with somebody who's spending the kids crèche money on gambling, so maybe a little bit more formalisation in the training. Not at the Responsible gambling level, but at that GCO level (Venue B, 25.02.14).

Yes, definitely adequate training. I think also that it all only really comes from experience dealing with gamblers (Venue H, 24.03.14).

Yeah, I suppose...they do go into more detail on the whole exclusion process. It's relevant, it goes through the steps that are needed to complete, and the signs, I suppose it goes through all the warning signs and everything too, involved with people gambling (Venue K, 05.03.14).

So I think it's really important with how we deal with it on the ground because those people ... they need the empathy and the encouragement ... I think it's hard, we're not counsellors. We don't claim to be, but I think you've got to give them some type of reassurance that they've done the right thing and they're trying to help themselves. So at least they're not walking out of here going, what did I just do? They're walking out of here going, right, I've done it...But it's hard. Do you give them the reassurance or do not? But I mean, we try to, so then at least then they can walk away and hopefully either get more help or at least feel good about their decision when they leave, otherwise in a week, two weeks, they will be back (Venue C, 04.03.14).

The perceptions of the industry staff when asked about the adequacy of the training in dealing with the self-exclusion process were varied. The responses highlighted that it is perhaps not the training on the self-exclusion process that is problematic, rather that further training to best deal with people who were experiencing problems with gambling was needed. These results are consistent with other research that has found that venue staff felt reasonably confident in being able to assist people who self-reported as having difficulties with gambling, but few felt confident about proactively approaching customers (see Hing, Nuske & Nisbet 2010, Delfabbro, Borgas & King 2011). One venue suggested that this was not such an issue previously when the help-service provider was also the GCO training provider in the ACT. They suggested:

...it was good because you were receiving the training from people [counsellors] who had experience and could give you an insight on how those people [gamblers] feel as well. It's one thing to say, this is what you should do, and this is how you should do it, and this is the processes. But to actually have someone who has...talked to these people when they're actually admitting they have problems and trying to help them – gives you a bit of an understanding of where they might be coming from. We're just sitting down with someone and going, yep, right-o, fill this out, yep, done, no worries. It's taken so much for this person to come and sit right here, but you're just, yeah, no worries (Venue C, 04.03.14).

As part of the GCO position, some of the mandatory requirements outlined in the ACT Code of Practice are to:

- keep a register of persons that the contact officer has been told may have a gambling problem;
- keep a register of persons that the contact officer considers may have a gambling problem;
- make reasonable steps to discuss the matter with persons that may have a gambling problem;
- give a person that may have a gambling problem advice about the availability of counselling and support services, and
- to record and report to the licensee on gambling incidents and complaints.

The venue staff interviewed in this research were asked if they would approach someone in their venue who they thought might be experiencing a problem with gambling to offer support or provide information. The responses are outlined below:

Look, occasionally we do and usually you identify that by a change in behaviour. It's often taken as a security issue, if you like, if someone's sort of acting up a bit. We'll get someone to have a chat with them and ask them to change their behaviour, at the same time sort of working in that "Do you have any problems?" Things like that. "Here's a brochure if you want." It's a part—and like I say, these guys aren't counsellors. They're only—I shouldn't say "only" but it's more an administrative role, the GCO (Venue A, 26.02.14).

It depends. Like my 2IC GCO was approached a while ago by a bloke saying "I'm spending too much money, can you pray for me?" in which case he initiated a discussion right then. Usually though they'll notice a behaviour and they'll write up a problem gambling incident report for me and I'll take it from there (Venue M, 19.03.14).

They will – yeah, they will approach the person and maybe give a pamphlet and my number or something like that, and then they'll let me know that they've spoken to this person and if they've contacted, I'll try and contact the person or do some sort of proactive approach, to see if we can't assist (Venue B, 25.02.14).

Being smaller [venue], they don't really have a chance to hide, if that makes sense. So we can keep an eye on how often there in here, their habits, and they know that. So if they were people that didn't want to show that they had a problem or, I mean obviously, you've got people that don't admit they've got a problem either. But we can see and we've had a couple of patrons that we've said - that we didn't necessarily think had a problem, but thought they needed a break for a bit. We've sat down and spoken to them and they have taken breaks. So not necessarily self-excluded, but given them all the pamphlets and tools and said, maybe you just need to go away for a month and just catch up and then come back (Venue C, 04.03.14).

However, others in the industry believed that they were not able to approach individuals:

The thing is you're not allowed to approach anyone. You have to wait until they approach you. So, when you can see someone sweating and going back to the ATM a fair bit, and everything like that it's totally illegal for us to approach them. There are ways around it, where you're picking up glasses and start a conversation and they might say they're doing it tough... (Venue L, 24.02.14).

What was clear from the interviews was that there is an issue at the point of interaction between venues and people experiencing problems from gambling prior to the point of self-exclusion that needs to be addressed. As outlined in the previous chapter, all the gamblers interviewed for this research reported that they had never been approached by a staff member in a venue to ask if they were ok, if they needed any assistance or provided any information (although, the extent to which the individuals were showing recognisable signs of distress is unknown). Taking into consideration the length of time that these people had been gambling (most for a period of 10-20 years), the regularity with which many of these people attended particular venues, and the reports of significant distress and mental health issues faced as a result of gambling, this is an issue that needs to be addressed.

Understanding ways to better support staff to identify and approach people who are experiencing problems as a result of their gambling as per the mandatory requirements is an area where further research needs to be conducted.

This issue directly relates to self-exclusion because if people are only excluding when their life reaches a significant crisis point (as outlined in Chapter 4), it is in the community's interest first and foremost, that people do not reach that point. It also raises questions about what are adequate levels of training required to assist venue staff who are dealing with people in significant distress at the point of self-exclusion. Another question that should be raised here is at what point in this process of interaction between venue staff and gamblers are people being encouraged and supported to access gambling help services.

5.7 Staff training on recognition of excluded people

One of the major issues discussed through the literature on self-exclusion is people breaching exclusion orders. This issue will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7, however, questions and issues that venues face in relation to recognising people who have self-excluded are discussed below as it directly relates to staff training. Prior to the introduction of the ACTGED, each venue was responsible for its own recognition system. Most used folders of photos of excluded people. Venue staff were required to look through these photos of excluded people and recognise people entering the venue.

All venues reported that improving their ability to recognise excluded people was the most anticipated change of the exclusion system in the ACT going online. They also hoped that as a result of the three year maximum exclusion that photos would be more up-to-date, to again assist staff in their ability to recognise individuals.

Part of the issue of recognising excluded people was that many of the venues experience high staff turn-over which means that identifying self-excluded patrons is a significant challenge. The venues described the process below:

Well, yeah, because even if that person excludes from just here...12 months down track ...if they start coming back in, you know, with a high turnover of staff in hospitality there might be a night where nobody will recognise them so they just come in and gamble (Venue M, 19.03.14).

Yeah, we have four folders now. So you get to that stage, it's like, whatever. However, going on to the online system in the next couple of months I think is going to be ideal, have slideshows of faces and also the three years⁴ does help with that, because it flicks them [people] off your lists (Venue C, 04.03.14).

It's really hard. With the folders that we have now, it's really hard. They [staff] look through the folder, but some of the photos are so bad and some of them have been in there for six, seven years. So people change. Some of them are bad quality photos because back then not everyone had a digital camera. They'd take photos of licences and also people change in that time (Venue C, 04.03.14).

We receive e-mails continually on a weekly basis of the self-exclusion, which is good information. It's something that it's good to have knowledge of it, but then when you're actually going through files of hundreds of people, it makes it difficult. You can't really recognise everybody that walks through the door, let's put it that way (Venue L, 24.02.14).

Identifying people who are breaching their exclusion is a significant issue and critical to the success of self-exclusion. As the ACT self-exclusion system goes online there is a belief that this is a start in the process of making it easier for staff to identify people. However, commitment of venues to the process of self-exclusion and the expectations they place on staff being familiar with excluded people is also a critical part of the success or failure of self-exclusion.

Clubs in the ACT all have membership systems, so some venues reported that they have put all the names of excluded people into their system to alert a staff member when an excluded person attempts to sign up:

...in our membership system we have put them all in. So even if they've never been a member here, if they go to join, it will flag them and it will say self-excluded from Venue x, self-excluded from Venue y. So straight away our staff know, hang on, don't let this person be a member yet. Go and check the folder, work out where it's up to and then we take it from there (Venue C, 04.03.14).

5.8 Venue interaction

In addition to GCO formal training, the ACT Gambling Counselling and Support Service (ACTGCSS) provider in the ACT also ran GCO forums. The idea of these forums was to supplement the knowledge of GCOs, particularly in relation to dealing with people with problems relating to gambling. These forums also provided a space for discussion about gambling issues between the venues and the gambling help service. It was also reported that occasionally researchers were invited to speak, providing an overview of the latest research findings. One venue described the forums:

They [staff] have attended and found them useful. On perhaps the first and second visit, I'm not sure if they get much more out of it without them introducing a new format to it but it was handy, they all mentioned it was handy for them to see what other clubs are doing and the problems; the issues are the same really, just in a different way. I also think it was really handy for them to meet Mission Australia rather than just a brochure (Venue A, 26.02.14).

Most venues interviewed reported that these forums had significant potential to be a valuable supplement and support to their role. The benefits that could be gained through improved communication between venue and

⁴ Three years is the maximum length of self-exclusion under the new online system in the ACT.

help service provider interaction is potentially significant. The venues reported that the forums would be more beneficial if they were better structured, more informative and held on a regular basis.

In conclusion, most of the venues interviewed took self-exclusion seriously and viewed it as a positive process to enable them to assist individuals who were experiencing problems from gambling. Venue staff were well informed of the self-exclusion processes in their venue and the paperwork requirements to complete a self-exclusion Deed. However, further training is needed in assisting staff members to identify signs of people experiencing distress as a result of gambling. The interviews also highlight that ongoing staff training within venues, and constant review of potential innovations in identification systems to prevent people breaching their exclusion, is also needed to ensure the process of self-exclusion in the ACT continues to be effective. Finally, the interviews with venues suggested that the GCO forums held by the ACTGCSS provider had potential to be valuable for staff if the forums were better structured and held on a regular basis.

5.9 Key findings from Chapter 5

- The venues interviewed for this research viewed self-exclusion favourably and felt it was a way to help people who were experiencing problems.
- Venue staff interviewed reported the process of self-exclusion as straightforward.
- The interviews highlighted that the GCO training was adequate in outlining the self-exclusion process, however, further training is needed to assist staff in identifying people who are experiencing problems from gambling.
- Continually looking at innovative ways to improve venues ability to identify excluded people should be of high priority of all stakeholders
- The interviews highlighted that GCO forums have significant potential to be a valuable supplement and support for staff, particularly if they were well structured, informative and held on a regular basis.

Chapter 6: Interaction with support services

The following chapter aims to highlight the types of help services available to people who have self-excluded or were considering self-exclusion. It identifies points in the process of self-exclusion where people engaged with available services. It also highlights services that were identified as useful to people. The interviews with counsellors and venues also asked about the nature of their working relationship around the issue of self-exclusion.

6.1 Engagement with support services

The interviews with the individual gamblers highlighted the non-linear way that people who are experiencing problems with gambling engage with support services over extended periods of time. There are many different types of services available that people engage with, as is exemplified below:

Yeah, Gambling Helpline - I've called them quite a few times, and the rehabilitation centre (J____, 11.04.14).

Prior to going to rehab I had been to quite a few different types of services. But they were not beneficial as far as the gambling. I found it was good, like, because of the gambling I always had a lot of other things going on in my life so it was always good to go ... to speak to somebody about the other stuff but it never really helped [the gambling] if anything it actually made me want to go. I'd sit there talking about the gambling and thinking I can't wait to get out of here so I can go to the club (JM____, 02.05.14).

One service that I have been using in the last 12 months is Mission Australia, which has been really helpful and really kind of good...They have a support group on Monday night, which I have been going to lately, but they've been quite good (D____, 11.3.14).

And the other option I was aware of was G-Line at the time, telephone counselling for poker machine addicts... I did actually go to Lifeline at one point about ten years ago ...But very recently, I went to Mission Australia. So I actually found that the most useful counselling so far. But then still...it only lasted for two or three meetings before I started playing poker machines again. And I just thought, I'll just go back there later, or something, when I really decide to give up again (F____, 26.03.14).

Yeah I have [accessed help services], I mean Gamblers Anonymous I've been to a few times. I went to Mission Australia. I've done, look I've done two appointments...the lady there, she was pretty helpful... I think, for me personally, I do this with all counsellors. So I'm a bit of a one time wonder until I find somebody really good, but even when I do, I'm late, disorganised, all that kind of stuff (K____, 04.04.14).

I was at [interstate rehab centre] last year for six months and then relapsed. So, I thought I needed a bit of a change, staff members, change a bit. So, that's why I came down here to the rehab centre. But, I find being down here is more useful because there's GA meetings and yeah sort of smaller tight knit community (H____, 14.04.14).

Probably going back about ten years ago now, I was seeing a counsellor through the Lifeline Service, which was more focused on the gambling counselling...I thought that was pretty good. I haven't really gone to Gamblers Anonymous regularly until this year. But I'd sort of on and off over the past few years had seen various psychologists... And Mission Australia, I've seen them once, and I've got an appointment again this Thursday (S____, 16.04.14).

I saw gambling counsellors... once a week for quite some time, that was through Mission Australia. And Gamblers Anonymous.... (T____, 15.04.14).

Yes, Relationships Australia up on the Gold Coast and they were very good. I had individual and also attended group meetings. Then I took myself to a long-term rehab and I was in there for seven months. And I eventually got onto the Salvation Army, Canberra Recovery Services...and they took me to Gamblers Anonymous meetings... (GHH____, 02.05.14).

From the gambling counselling hotlines, the ACTGCSS, private psychologists, Gamblers Anonymous and rehabilitation facilities – all the individuals interviewed had tried at least one type of service and most had tried a range of different services over the course of their gambling history. What stood out from the interviews with gamblers was that most people had engaged with the ACTGCSS, demonstrating that this is a service that people considered when experiencing problems related to gambling. However, retaining individuals in the service is an issue, as many of the people interviewed report only attending two or three counselling sessions.

Three of the people interviewed had also engaged with long-term residential rehabilitation facilities in the ACT and a further two people had attended interstate rehabilitation facilities at some point. Of the people interviewed who had self-excluded, most had engaged with self-help groups, like Gamblers Anonymous, regularly after excluding. What the interviews also demonstrated was the importance of different services that complement each other, particularly when looking at how to better support people who are considering self-exclusion.

What was highlighted in the interviews with individuals who had not yet self-excluded, was that they were not aware of all the different forms of help services available to them in the ACT (for example, many people did not know about rehabilitation facilities available in the ACT, or the existence of self-help groups). The issues of availability of information regarding self-exclusion is discussed in Chapter 8, however, it was clear that people needed better information about exactly what help services are available in the ACT.

As is outlined from the interviews with the counsellors, different people approach services wanting different things:

With self-exclusion, I think that they consider it but they don't want to get it as their first option. They want to give it a go, do their counselling and to learn some self-control strategies because they don't want to stop going to the clubs (Counsellor A, 10.02.14).

Normally we try and engage them in this service and we try to engage them in financial counselling as well. Then if they have other issues we mention that there are other services for alcohol issues or convalescence issues. Sometimes they are just very focussed on self-exclusion and then they just want to do that and they are fine but we give them information (Counsellor B, 10.02.14).

6.2 Self-exclusion and support services

None of the people interviewed had self-excluded through gambling help services, all excluded through the process of approaching venues. When individuals were asked which support services had suggested the option of self-exclusion or at what point in their engagement with services did they begin to think about self-exclusion, most responses were vague. Responses were also vague to questions asked about awareness of the possibility of self-excluding with assistance from the counselling service, as opposed to going to a venue. All individuals said that self-exclusion was not something that came up regularly in their engagement with services.

However, the exception to this was the self-help groups: Gamblers Anonymous and the SMART Recovery⁵ group. Individuals reported numerous discussions about self-exclusion:

It's brought up often at meetings. A lot of people utilise it. One guy said, no, it doesn't work for him. He doesn't seem to believe in it. He actually seemed to be pretty strong on his gambling, and he's stopped gambling, just decided to go cold turkey and stop. He doesn't support self-exclusion for some reason, some personal reason, whereas most of the group did. Most of the group did self-exclusions through their counsellor, and helped them with the paperwork and get it organised (D____, 11.3.14).

There are people that think the self-exclusion was very useful. They think they will not go to the club because they have been self-excluded and it would be very embarrassing... So they're people that for them it has been quite useful. For others they think because they just try once and then they were able to get into the club they thought then it's not very useful (Counsellor B, 10.02.14).

I have heard a couple of them talk about self-exclusion yep. A few of them there have it and do it (H____, 14.04.14).

I'll bring it up every now and then; I don't bring it up every day, but I certainly bring it up when I feel the need that I want to talk about it...I suggested to all new members that come in that seemed like they're struggling, but all the older members they all know about it... Some other people that have come in the meeting that say it doesn't work, that you can get around it, but like I said in my experiences, you can't get around it (T____, 15.04.14).

The self-help groups appeared to provide a valuable forum for people to engage in discussions about self-exclusion. The individuals were asked whether they found these groups to be beneficial in supporting them with their problems from gambling, the responses are outlined below:

Yeah I think so, because you're meeting other like-minded people, you're sharing your stories, and instead of the sharing with other gamblers, the oh yeah I won this great amount the other day, and this happened, that happened, it's more getting a bit real and seeing it as a problem in your life that hopefully you can change, because other people did before you. I guess it's getting some tools on board and some knowledge and all that kind of stuff (K____, 04.04.14).

Yeah, yeah I enjoy it. It's a very small group, but yeah I get a lot out of it. Yeah 'cause other people expressing their views and what they've been through and can relate to a lot of it (H____, 14.04.14).

Very beneficial, yeah. Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous have daily meetings, and their ritual is that if you're trying to get off your substance or whatnot, you should be attending a meeting every day in your first ninety days, to stop yourself from thinking that you have to drink or have to use. GA in Canberra has one a week, one meeting a week, so the opportunity for the gamblers to get that same information happens once a week, where over the course of a week, there are about twenty or thirty AA meetings and the same with Narcotics Anonymous, but there's one Gamblers Anonymous, and it does my head in because [gambling has] ruined my life (J____, 11.04.14).

It's nice to speak to people who - as opposed to speaking to counsellors who don't know what I'm feeling, who don't know - who for instance, are just doing it from a book sort of theoretical point of view. It's nice to speak with real people who have done similar things, the lying, the cheating, the stealing, the denying, the hiding, you know, the whole secrecy of it (A____, 05.05.14).

5 SMART (Self Management and Recovery Training) Recovery is a free group program assisting people with problematic behaviours, including drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, gambling, food, shopping, Internet and others.

Yeah I think so yeah, I've been getting a lot from it, I actually got more from gamblers anonymous than I have from a gambling counsellor. Give credits to my gambling counsellor, she's a good counsellor, but she's not a gambler and I couldn't relate to her and I found it easy to lie to her. So if I had a relapse while I was talking to her I could tell her that I hadn't gambled and I had no intentions to. Where if I go to gamblers anonymous I don't feel I need to lie to them, because they've all done it (T____, 15.04.14).

Yeah, they're positive, a good thing I think. If it was advertised probably more to people would attend - maybe in the venues could actually have a lot more information in regards to that. So they have phone numbers. They have counsellors that people can ring up. But I think support groups are really important (D____, 11.3.14).

The value of the self-help groups to those participants interviewed who attended in the ACT was significant. The people interviewed felt these groups could be better supported in the ACT particularly in assistance with getting information to the community about meetings, as well as better resourcing and in making these groups accessible to people from different areas of Canberra.

6.3 Friends and family support

Discussing family and friends support was also an important part of understanding the support that people who self-excluded or considered self-exclusion in the ACT had available to them.

Most people who were interviewed for this research had very few supportive friends or family members in their life. Many relationships had been severely strained or broken by people's problems with gambling (see Chapter 4) . When asked if family and friends were aware of and supportive of the self-exclusion process, some responses were as follows:

Yeah, I've been pretty honest about it, pretty open about it, all the gambling problems I've had over the years. Not overly supportive, but they're certainly aware of it (D____, 11.3.14).

Yeah my mum spoke to me about self-exclusion. Yeah she's known about my gambling. It's good, I think if I can stay accountable to my mother, I feel a lot more guilty for going... (K____, 04.04.14).

Mum spoke to me about it. It's funny Dad's a bit of a gambler himself...Dad's way of fixing something would be sit down in front of a poker machine, and say "let's have a beer" (H____, 14.04.14).

As reported in Section 6.2, many of the participants reported that the networks that they had built through rehabilitation and the self-help groups were of great value in terms of the support they received in relation to gambling problems and self-exclusion.

6.4 Venues and the ACT Gambling Counselling Support Service (ACTGCSS)

Throughout the interviews, venues and the ACTGCSS were asked about their relationship with each other around self-exclusion. They were specifically asked what interaction they had, or needed, to better support individuals going through the process of self-exclusion. The venues views of the service provider at the time

in the ACT were negative in terms of what could be done to support people. Likewise, the service provider believed that venues could take self-exclusion more seriously by keeping excluded people out of their premises. As was outlined in Chapter 5, the venue staff had interacted with the service provider at times through the GCO forums and had expressed mixed views on this experience. Understanding the tensions in the relationship between venues and the ACTGCSS provider were outside the scope of this research. However, in terms of providing a strong, working relationship between all stakeholders in the ACT around the issue of self-exclusion, improving communication between stakeholders is essential.

The findings of this chapter were limited as the research was unable to recruit any gambling help service providers outside of the ACTGCSS.

However, what was evident from the interviews was that individuals experiencing problems from gambling are aware of, and attempt to engage with, the ACTGCSS. This is a very important connection point, particularly as people who self-exclude, or consider self-exclusion, are most likely experiencing severe negative consequences from gambling. The interviews also highlighted that people access a range of services over their gambling history and the reported effectiveness of these services seemed to very much correlate with individual expectations. In order to better support people experiencing problems from gambling and who may be considering self-exclusion, it is suggested that better information be made available about what help service options people have in the ACT, as well as what is involved and what to expect from these services.

This chapter also highlighted that for many people who self-exclude, self-help groups (such as Gamblers Anonymous) appear to be a significant source of support.

6.5 Key findings from Chapter 6

- The ACTGCSS is an important service that is known and accessed by people who have self-excluded or are considering self-exclusion.
- Services in the ACT need to work to complement each other, particularly when looking at how to better support people who are considering self-exclusion.
- People interviewed were not fully aware of the range of services available to them in the ACT.
- Self-exclusion was not a discussion point that came up regularly in engagements with gambling help services.
- People interviewed for this research had very few supportive friends or family members in their life, and very little support going through the process of self-exclusion.
- Self-help groups (such as Gamblers Anonymous) were a significant source of support to most participants interviewed.

Chapter 7: Breaching, revoking and ending self-exclusion

Breaching self-exclusion is reported in the literature as one of the most significant failings of the self-exclusion process (see Gainsbury, 2013; South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, 2003). The fact that people who have self-excluded sometimes enter gambling premises that they are excluded from is a well-known limitation. As outlined in Chapter 1, different jurisdictions in Australia, as well as different countries, have different levels of penalties that apply to people who breach their exclusion. In the ACT, there is no legal or financial penalty for an individual breaching the Deed of exclusion.

The following chapter will outline the extent to which individuals interviewed for this research breached their exclusion and the impact that this had on them. The chapter will also look at the responses of venues who catch an individual breaching their exclusion. In addition to breaching self-exclusion, this chapter will also address issues around revoking exclusion, as well as what happens when an individual comes to the end of their exclusion period.

7.1 Breaching self-exclusion

Below is the view expressed by one individual that was representative of the views of many of the individuals interviewed who had not yet self-excluded in the ACT:

I think there are ways around it...part of me thinks, you're just trying to stop me from getting what I want, and that's honest. That's what we do in addiction, but there are ways around it, and with conversations with other people who are gambling addicts, like we just find ways, we're just deceptive people who will do whatever we can to get around from it, so maybe there has to be some kind of just really stringent rules or penalties (J____, 11.04.14).

As demonstrated above, one of the very powerful reasons used by people who were not quite ready to self-exclude was that self-exclusion was too easy to breach. There was also a commonly held belief by those who had not yet excluded that once the Deed was breached, then the exclusion was no longer effective in the minds of the individual. However, those individuals who had actually excluded had a different experience.

Almost all of the people interviewed who had excluded in the ACT had at some point breached or attempted to breach their exclusion. Some of these experiences are outlined below:

I did sneak back to the ... Club once to watch some football. The funny thing is, even though I was banned, I was able to sign in as a totally new member with a licence. I had a new address and there were no questions asked. I thought this was a bit scary and I walked out and never went back. But that was the only one I've been back to since I've been excluded. I know some people who have been escorted out of the place, but I didn't want to...go through that, and I haven't (D____, 11.3.14).

I tried to, yeah. But I prefer not to sneak in otherwise I'd be stepping back a bit if I do (G____, 27.03.14).

...I went up to them [venue staff] and said I used to be a member and I haven't got my membership card and then they go oh we'll just check your licence and check your card number. And then checked my licence, then he looked at the computer for a bit and he goes oh it says here you're self-excluded, we can't let you in. I just started to act dumb and thought it was kind of embarrassing and I was like well I thought it wasn't for this club and they said oh yeah well we can't let you in because it says it. So yeah see you later. And then I walked away, walked away with the shits initially but then a couple of hours passed and I was kind of happy that I'd tested it. Because then I knew it worked, so I don't have to test it again (T____, 15.04.14).

That was about probably four years ago... I did walk in there. I went in there, had a beer and I sat down and was watching some of the gambling. There was no monitoring and no one threw me out. So I just tested it (A____, 05.05.14).

The most recent sort of interaction I had with them was in December of last year where I updated my photo, because I think I was mainly getting in because I'd had my head shaved, and I assume that's why ... so I thought I'd better update my photo. I haven't been back since (S____, 16.04.14).

As demonstrated above, many people interviewed had breached or attempted to breach their exclusion at some stage. However, breaching the Deed was viewed more as a personal test- not so much a test of the system. People who had breached the exclusion reported feeling very uncomfortable in the venue and most did not actually gamble. None of the individuals had gone to any length to intentionally alter their appearance or to manipulate the system, they had simply walked in. This is exemplified below:

I thought maybe someone might have [caught me]...I didn't stay long. I had one beer. I thought I just want to test it out. I had one beer and sat around ...and I walked out. I thought well, I cannot stay here because it doesn't feel comfortable (H____, 14.04.14).

In most cases, people breached their exclusion once and never went back. However, one individual reported breaching their exclusion numerous times:

I can't remember exactly what the wording was, but they [the venue] did advise me that I'd been self-excluded. It was something along the lines of, you know, if I get caught in there again they'll call the police. That stopped me for a fair while, but... I was thinking oh they won't remember that...So last year I went for a stretch of about six weeks, weekly, and I wasn't getting picked up (S____, 16.04.14).

Despite this experience, this particular individual still reported that they found self-exclusion to be a positive process and they still valued their exclusion despite the breaches.

However, the experience seemed quite different for the people who had breached their self-exclusion interstate. The people who had self-excluded interstate reported systemic breaches as venues let them in continuously. This then influenced their views of self-exclusion and the potential it offered in the ACT. This is an instance where the ACT's unique venue structure is important in differentiating the ACT system from other states. Most venues in the ACT are clubs that require membership and identification upon entry, as opposed to the many hotels and pubs that exist in other states. This difference offers significantly more potential for venues to identify people who are attempting to breach the system. The other major issue that arises here is accountability of the venues which will be discussed in further detail later in the chapter.

7.2 Counsellor perspectives on breaches

The counsellors interviewed for this research expressed strong views that breaches of the self-exclusion Deed were detrimental to their client's recovery. They stated:

To them it can seem like, "well that was a bit pointless" and then we get told it's not a legally binding document. Then what was the point of the whole thing after all, if the gambling contact officers are not aware that they're in the premises and they don't throw them out?...If it's not a legally binding document then what's the point? (Counsellor A, 10.02.14).

It impacted on him [client] badly because he managed to go to a club and bet there. The club didn't check his identity...It was because the club didn't take their precautions or the measures that they should have (Counsellor B, 10.02.14).

The counsellors expressed the views that there was much more that venues could be doing to ensure that self-excluded people were not getting in. They found it difficult at times to support people who had put a lot of time and energy into actually going through the process of self-exclusion to then be let into the venues.

7.3 Venues and breaches

The venues interviewed for this research were asked about how often they would identify an individual breaching their exclusion. They stated:

It might happen once a month, once every six weeks, something like that. Not all that often but not unknown, not unusual for it to happen (Venue A, 26.02.14).

It has happened once and the gentleman was approached. He left straight away, it's really, yeah no arguments, no issue (Venue L, 24.02.14).

Yeah there was one bloke, he didn't exclude from here it was from another venue so again it's just one of the pictures in the book, and he came in one day and I didn't recognise him and he gambled and then he had a go at us for letting him in. I didn't know who he was. But yeah anyone who self excludes from here, we make sure they don't come in...As long as we take the responsible steps (Venue M, 19.03.14).

No one has snuck back in that I know of except for one but I'm sure they come in all the time (Venue M, 19.03.14).

Yeah, one guy...he breached it. But we didn't know. I didn't know him. But, yeah, he blamed us (Venue J, 05.03.14).

The other venues interviewed reported that they had not had an individual breach exclusion in their venue to their knowledge.

As a result of talking to the individuals, counsellors and venues it is clear that issues exist in relation to breaching self-exclusion Deeds. The findings suggest firstly, that individuals are highly likely to attempt to breach their exclusion, and secondly, that venues rarely identify people breaching their exclusion. It is also important to highlight that the individuals interviewed reported breaching their exclusion in venues that they frequented regularly prior to the exclusion, that is, individuals were not randomly entering venues.

7.4 Accountability around breaches

One of the major issues that breaches of self-exclusion raised was whether the venues were enforcing the exclusion Deeds.

People are getting in and it's not just that they don't recognise them... people don't follow their procedures. And clubs, because the self-exclusion deed doesn't put any kind of legal responsibility on the clubs, we can't complain (Counsellor B, 10.02.14).

This research found that people who have self-excluded are entering excluded venues. All but one of the people interviewed who had self-excluded, had breached their exclusion. The venues that the individuals were visiting were not random, people typically entered venues where they were regulars prior to exclusion. Even though these breaches had not significantly reduced the effectiveness of self-exclusion for the people interviewed, the extent to which venues are meeting their mandatory requirements of ensuring all reasonable lengths are taken that excluded people do not enter their gambling facilities is important.

There is no doubt that it is a challenging task for venues to identify individuals, especially if their venue experiences high staff turn-over and high volumes of patrons. Some venues argued that the onus was really on the individuals and that it was up to them to take responsibility for their actions. The people interviewed in this research did take responsibility for their breach and did not blame the venues. However, there is still an issue of accountability. For self-exclusion to work effectively there needs to be accountability and responsibility taken by all parties – the venues, individuals and the Commission (particularly in terms of regulatory compliance) with each having a significant role to play. For the people who had had negative experiences in other states with self-exclusion it was predominately because there was a lack of regulatory compliance. If the ACT is going to have a strong and effective self-exclusion process, regular dialogue needs to occur between all stakeholders around self-exclusion.

The idea of tougher penalties for people who breach their exclusion was something that was brought up by both individuals and venues interviewed as a potential answer to the issue of breaching self-exclusion. However, thoughts on this issue were mixed. It is difficult to see that making penalties harsher for people who breach an exclusion Deed would contribute a positive step in the process, as it would most likely make people more reluctant to self-exclude in the first place. It would also be penalising people who are already in a very vulnerable position. Similarly, penalising venues at this point seems counterproductive given that positive momentum is needed on this issue and engaging stakeholders in regular discussions about self-exclusion and strengthening self-exclusion is essential. Active efforts to strengthen relationships between all stakeholders would contribute to a stronger system where breaches would be less likely to occur and venues more likely to identify someone breaching their exclusion.

7.5 Revoking and ending self-exclusion

In the ACT, a person can choose to revoke their exclusion at any stage in the exclusion period. None of the individuals interviewed for the research had experience of revoking an exclusion Deed. Below are some of the experiences reported by the venues:

How often they revoke? I'd probably say half of the ones we do. So if we do two [self-exclusions] a year, on average one'll revoke. But it just makes us watch them more. But in saying that, the ones that have revoked I haven't had problems with again (Venue C, 04.03.14).

We had one come back not long ago actually and said, "Look, I've been away for six months, it was a money thing, however, I've got the income back, and I want to come back in". After speaking to him I was more than happy to do that. However, I said look, we'll be watching and I don't want to have to get to a venue exclusion, so you know your limits, so keep to it (Venue E, 10.02.14).

One of the counsellors also discussed an incident of revoking an exclusion Deed:

I've just had the one client who wanted to go back to the club again and wanted to change the deed. I don't know how long the deed was for but he wanted to change it so he went to the club. The club said to him that he has to come here to receive some counselling and then he decided after counselling that he didn't want to go back to the club (Counsellor B, 10.02.14).

The other issue that arose was what happened after people revoked their exclusion Deed. The responses of a couple of venues are detailed below:

There was a lady who did do a self-exclusion and then wanted to come back in at the end of her self-exclusion period, for six months... and we just sat down with her and obviously spoke to her about it and made sure she was okay personally and all that sort of stuff, because she said that she's been good. She does want to come back in here on a social basis for the bistro and that sort of thing with her family, because she does live around the place. We just said, we'll monitor and if she needs - just made it really clear to her that if she needs anything, don't hesitate to ask anyone, or need some more counselling services - all that sort of support too, that we can help her get if need be (Venue J, 05.03.14).

Yeah, once it's expired, they're just allowed to come in. Our Gambling Contact Officers keep notes, files on individuals...When they come back in, everyone knows that they're allowed to come back...we watch them for a little while (Venue A, 26.02.14).

I think it's fine up to the point where a person wants to lift their self-exclusion before it expires. They might have put it in for twelve months; three months later they come in and say, "I want to lift it." I think there... should be some sort of formal process for them to go through rather than just being able to lift it. I think that's all that's lacking and that stops that...impulse (Venue A, 26.02.14).

Many of the venues interviewed suggested that they monitored individuals who came in once their exclusion period was over, however, this was not something that individuals were aware of. One person stated:

The fact that you can walk back in after the exclusion without any kind of monitoring is not good... although, I'm pretty sure a lot of clubs these days want you to sign forms before you come back, saying you're prepared, you've monitored the problem and you're on top of it type thing. That's a good thing too, that you need to fill paperwork out before you come back (D____, 11.3.14).

The findings indicate there is a need for a formal process after someone revokes or ends their exclusion period. Formalising this process would ensure that the individual is aware of and has access to relevant information and support processes if they experience any problems in the future.

Two people interviewed were outside their exclusion period, described their situations below:

I don't know about renewing it, even this morning it was like so are we going to go and do it today, but I don't know. Because the exclusion ended in September/October, okay, I had a big bust a couple of weeks ago but ... I kind of like the idea of having a choice, and it's like I don't go because I choose not to rather than being just because I can't, so I don't know (JM____, 02.05.14).

I would be [outside exclusion period], but I've made no attempt to [renew] - mentally, I've banned myself for life, because I don't want to have to go back... It's too big a risk going back... So, self-exclusion does work for me personally (D____, 11.3.14).

How people respond and react after the exclusion period is over is highly individualised. However, it is important that people are informed of the ACTGCSS and other counselling and support options available to them when their exclusion period is nearing the end and they do not want to renew the exclusion.

7.6 Key findings from Chapter 7

- Individuals interviewed are highly likely to attempt to breach their exclusion Deed.
- For the individuals interviewed, breaching their exclusion did not necessarily reduce the effectiveness of the process.
- Venues rarely identify people breaching their exclusion. This includes venues that people frequented regularly prior to the exclusion.
- People who do not wish to renew their exclusion once it has expired or who wish to revoke their exclusion should be provided with adequate information regarding the ACTGCSS and other support services in the ACT, should they need them in the future.

Chapter 8: Available information on self-exclusion

As part of understanding how the process of self-exclusion works in the ACT, it was important to review what information is currently available about self-exclusion and how this information reaches the community. The next step was to determine if the available information was adequate in terms of clearly explaining the process of self-exclusion, as well as adequate in terms of reaching people who need it most.

8.1 Information available through the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission

In May 2014, the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission website⁶ had a page titled “Problem Gambling”. This has a section called “Strategies to Control Gambling”. This page lists several suggestions for reducing harm associated with gambling. The final suggestion reads:

Exclude yourself from gambling at one or more venues by completing a Deed of Exclusion and lodging it with a Gambling Contact Officer at your local gaming venue. Mission Australia can also assist you with this process.

The Commission’s website also has a page titled “Publications” which has a list of brochures for Responsible Gambling, Playsmart, and the Code of Practice. The Responsible Gambling brochures “Take Control” and “How to Set Your Own Limits” present the same information, reading:

Did you know that you can ask your gambling outlet not to let you gamble? By law, club, pub, casino, bookmaker or ACTTAB outlets are required to stop you from gambling if you ask them to or if they feel that gambling has become a problem for you. Every gambling place in the ACT has a Gambling Contact Officer who can discuss your gambling with you or give you information about where to get further advice. A Gambling Contact Officer must, by law, give you help confidentially.’

These are the brochures that are available to patrons in all venues in the ACT, however, they provide very little detail about the process of self-exclusion (for example that there is the option available to exclude from all venues in the ACT, or information on the length of time you can self-exclude for). The brochures provide contact information for Mission Australia and Gambling Help Online.

The Commission’s website also provides a link to the government’s Responsible Gambling website⁷. This website has a specific page titled ‘Exclusion’ that provides information on banning yourself from gambling venues. The page provides approx. 330 words on how self-exclusion works in the ACT in addition to the basic information provided in the brochures. The page provides outdated information, for example it asks that you contact Lifeline (the gambling counselling service provider in the ACT prior to Mission Australia). The page was last updated four years ago, in mid-2010. Accessing this information also requires access to the internet⁸.

In addition to this, on the Commission’s website, the Code of Practice is available to download. This outlines the legal requirements of venues and the regulator in the self-exclusion process.

6 www.gamblingandracing.act.gov.au

7 www.problemgambling.act.gov.au

8 The Commission’s website has since been updated late 2014. See <http://www.gamblingandracing.act.gov.au/gambling-help/exclusion-support>

8.2 Information available through Mission Australia

The other source of potential information regarding self-exclusion is Mission Australia's website (the ACTGCSS at the time the research was conducted). They have a page titled 'Self Help' that mentions self-exclusion as an option available to people experiencing problems. They state:

Self-exclusion is effectively a way to keep yourself from a place where you may be tempted to gamble. You have the right to ask to be excluded from any licensed gambling venue, including clubs, casinos, pubs and TABs. Your local gambling help service can help you to complete the paperwork.

To exclude yourself from online or mobile phone-based gambling, visit the GamBlock website. This is not a free service and users can be charged up to US\$100 a year.

Mission Australia's brochure also suggests under services they offer that they offer 'Information and guidance on self-exclusion procedures'⁹.

8.3 Information available through venues

Venues in the ACT are required to provide the brochures provided on the Commission's website to patrons. In the venues visited during this research, these brochures were available at the front reception. To determine exactly what information is available to the public, every available website for venues in the ACT was visited (59 in total). It was recorded which venue websites provided information about self-exclusion, as well as venue websites that provided links or information for support services and/or the Code of Practice.

Below were the results:

| Available Information | Venue Type website* | |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| | 6 Hotel and Tavern websites | 53 venue websites |
| Information on website about Self-exclusion | None | None |
| Information on website/links to support services | 1 | 32 |
| Code of Practice link available to public | None | 8 |
| | | |
| *Websites are not available for all venues in the ACT | | |

Table 2: Information available on venue websites in the ACT

Only 60% of gambling venue accessible websites in the ACT provided help information or links to help information. The Casino Canberra website is typical in the information it provides. In very small text at the bottom of the home page there is a line of text that states: *Gambling a problem? Call Mission Australia 1800 858 858*. Eight venue websites have links available to the ACT Code of Practice which details exclusion practices.

⁹ Relationships Australia is the ACT gambling counselling service provider from July 2014.

Many venues interviewed in this research stated that they provided people who approached them to self-exclude with a 'pack' of resources. In the cases where this 'self-exclusion pack' was made available to the researcher it contained the ACT gambling help brochures outlined above and the Mission Australia gambling brochure, along with a copy of the Deed of exclusion.

8.4 Accessibility of information

There is a lack of detailed information available to people in the ACT about the self-exclusion process. As self-exclusion processes differ in other jurisdictions around Australia, it is important that people understand clearly what the process is in the ACT. With the implementation of the ACTGED, the Commission's should ensure that to update information is available on their website for people considering self-exclusion.

Accessing information is also a significant issue if you do not have access to the internet. Aside from the available brochures on self-exclusion or actually approaching staff members at venues or counsellors, there is no other forms of information available. The issue of accessing information online is also potentially problematic in the context of dealing with people with severe gambling problems. Two specific issues arose over the course of the research that are worth considering in this discussion. Firstly, over half of the people interviewed did not have access to the internet at home. These people reported receiving disability or Centrelink allowances, and/or were employed in low income jobs and could not afford internet access at home. The second issue that arose was that some people interviewed also choose not to have access to the internet at home or via the phone to avoid accessing online gambling.

8.5 Awareness of self-exclusion in the ACT

The following section of the chapter will detail the views of individuals, venues and counsellors in the ACT about awareness and availability of information provided on self-exclusion.

Of the venues interviewed, all believed that there was adequate information advertised to gamblers regarding self-exclusion and help services in the ACT. Below are some of the responses to this issue:

I think our customers are really well aware, so I don't think it needs any more advertising here in the [venue]. If you're talking about education programmes, that's aside from that. That's something different... We've got the brochures that the Gambling and Racing Commission provide; we've got those out. We've got the Mission Australia ones around the place...Yeah, there's a bit of information (Venue A, 26.02.14).

It's everywhere, we've got posters on Mission Australia, other posters, we've got little business cards that says "Gambling Contact Officer", a lot of Mission Australia information (Venue B, 25.02.14).

Definitely enough information available to people (Venue F, 19.03.14).

Pamphlets? Information? I think there's enough (Venue C, 04.03.14).

The venues all believed that their patrons were well aware of self-exclusion and were well informed by the information provided by the Commission and Mission Australia as to the process of self-exclusion and gambling help more broadly.

The gambling counsellors interviewed were also asked the same questions about people's awareness of self-exclusion when they access the service. The responses are detailed below:

Most [people] come with knowledge of self-exclusion, we have a formal intake form where they are asked if they know what self-exclusion is about and they normally know (Counsellor B, 10.02.14).

Not always. A lot of [people] don't know about it until you tell them about it and I always tell them about it. As soon as we get a call on the 1800 I ask them straight off, "have you ever self-excluded in the past?" and they've said, "what's that?" So then you explain to them, "would you like to do this?" and give them that option on the phone (Counsellor A, 10.02.14).

When discussing the issues around making people aware of self-exclusion, one counsellor stated that it was perhaps more complicated than simply letting people know:

This has been a bit of a problem here because there'd have been a lot more [people who self-excluded] but the previous program manager told us not to encourage it. He said don't offer it, maybe in the second or third [counselling session], but don't offer it straight off the bat. That could mean they won't come back to service for counselling face to face, otherwise I probably would've done it every time (Counsellor A, 10.02.14).

However, the real depth of understanding the extent of knowledge the ACT community has about self-exclusion comes from the 2014/15 ACT gambling prevalence survey that found less than half the adult population (41.8%) reported having heard of self-exclusion (Davidson *et al.*, 2015). This number did not change when looking at poker machines players, where 45.5% reported knowledge of the self-exclusion program. There was no significant difference in comparison to people who did not play poker machines (40.9%, $p=.419$) (Davidson *et al.*, 2015).

Individuals interviewed in this research were asked when and how they first heard about self-exclusion, some of the responses are detailed below:

I think it was just actually on one of the cards on the side of a poker machine or something like that, yeah (H____, 14.04.14)

Yeah, I've known it pretty much all the way through, yeah. I think it's only been really prominent though, the last few years. I don't think before then, there was really much talk about it. There wasn't much information in the pubs or any of the clubs, but now there is. The managers are happy to give flyers and information, which is good (D____, 11.3.14).

I think it was just when they were starting to put information in front of pokie people, little cards saying if you think this is a problem, and all the rest of it. I think I read a pamphlet one day that said look you could go here, you could do counselling, you could find better strategies and all that kind of thing. Then at the bottom it said if you want to you can do self-exclusion (K____, 04.04.14).

Never. I'd never even heard of it [self-exclusion prior to counsellor], never even seen signs about it (T____, 15.04.14).

Finding [information about] it was difficult, because I was losing it, not concentrating on what I was actually doing (G____, 27.03.14).

The findings from this research and the 2014/15 ACT gambling prevalence survey suggest that self-exclusion is not a well-known process in the ACT. However, the responses above suggest that people were aware of information that was positioned around the poker machines.

What was also apparent in the interviews was the very limited understanding people had of how self-exclusion worked in the ACT and what their actual rights were in relation to the exclusion Deed. There were many significant misunderstandings that arose throughout the interviews, including with people who had self-excluded in the ACT. The following were just some examples:

I've heard they're going to an online system, I don't know when that's active, but I've heard that you'll be able to do Australia wide [self-exclusion] once that's active, which that will be good, because I've heard you can do Australia wide from a click of the button (T____, 15.04.14).

The form [Deed of exclusion] stated, if you sign this form you're also signing to wave your rights to sue away. Sue anyone in regards to your poker machine use. Well I'm not going to sign that, that's why. Because I believe there's a possibly for a class action, or something like that, for some people who've had poker machine addictions in Canberra, and in other places in Australia. You know, that shouldn't be on the form. So I would recommend that they take that off the form (F____, 26.03.14).

I think five years after I excluded for life I sort of did investigate trying to get that exclusion lifted, but I think at the time they had – like I don't know what the rules are now, but you had to apply to the Gambling and Racing Commission and pay a fee, I don't know, it was \$100 or something, and it just sounded like too much effort so I decided against it (S____, 16.04.14).

The significant misunderstandings evident in the interviews highlight the need to provide accurate information to the community and to people considering self-exclusion. There was also considerable misinformation in relation to how self-exclusion worked in the ACT in comparison to other states.

In contrast to the findings from the interviews with the venues who suggested that there was ample information available to people, the interviews with individuals suggested otherwise:

I think self-exclusion, the message should be told a lot more, whether that's advertising through TV. You... think that you get people when they're in the clubs, but people hardly talk to each other, let alone interact or take in messages (K____, 04.04.14)

Maybe more media, maybe more information through the media, through TV. Maybe some of the newspapers could do something about it (D____, 11.3.14).

I think that there's a lot of people maybe just starting out, or even been doing it even a while and they don't know that they can do self-exclusion. I can't think of anywhere that I've seen it in the club...I don't think there is enough of that, telling people what they can do, what their options are (K____, 04.04.14).

Not at all, not at all, not at all [enough information on self-exclusion]. I know there are people that would do it if they knew about it. I know. And if it was made easy and user-friendly. Not to be stigmatised, not to be, "You're a bad person, you've been doing a bad thing, we can help you," or whatever (GHH____, 02.05.14).

It would be good actually if I had pamphlets or something on self-exclusion...But yeah definitely information that I could hand out to new members in an information pack, because yeah I think it's helped me with my recovery a lot (T____, 15.04.14).

Yes, definitely more information. Like a little card here or there is great, but say, for example, something like smoking. Smoking ruins people's lives and they're aware that it ruins people's lives, and they put an ad on TV once every ad-break, saying, potentially, this is what could happen, and call the Quit line, or this or that. But I don't personally see a difference in gambling. In fact, I honestly think gambling is worse, because the amount of money that you spend and how much more quickly your life will actually deteriorate than smoking (J____, 11.04.14).

Yeah [more information] because you don't generally hear about it that much (H____, 14.04.14).

The following points were identified through the research as information that is needed in the community to better inform people considering self-exclusion:

- What is self-exclusion in the ACT?
- How does self-exclusion work?
- What is the role of the Commission to support people?
- What support services are available for people who self-exclude in the ACT?
- What can people expect from venues as per the ACT Code of Practice?
- Information about Gambling Contact Officers – who they are and what their role is in relation to assisting individuals?
- What to do if you breach your self-exclusion Deed, who to notify, what services are available to support?
- What to do at the end of the exclusion period, what are the options?
- Information about the privacy and confidentiality requirements of the self-exclusion process.
- Information about who to contact in relation to exclusion from NSW venues.
- Particularly in the context of website information, there needs to be information in the form of Frequently Asked Questions to assist in minimising mis-information in the community about self-exclusion.

It is also important that the information available to the ACT community is consistent, that is, that venue staff and counselling services are also adequately informed. To improve the quality and consistency of information that is accessible to all stakeholders, it is suggested that relevant resources be developed with information about all aspects of the process.

In conclusion, individuals interviewed in this research were unclear about how they came to know about self-exclusion and were in many cases misinformed about the process. Contrary to the views of the venues, all individuals interviewed felt there was inadequate information available to the public about self-exclusion in the ACT. These findings are unsurprising as the earlier section of the chapter outlines what minimal information is actually available to people in the ACT.

These issues relating to the availability and accessibility of information should be considered when discussing how to better inform the community about the process of self-exclusion in the ACT.

8.6 Key findings from Chapter 8

- There is very little detailed or informative information available to people considering self-exclusion in the ACT.
- Consideration needs to be given to the particular mediums for disseminating information to the public about self-exclusion and what is most appropriate way to reach people who are experiencing problems relating to gambling.
- Venues in the ACT believed that there was adequate information advertised to gamblers regarding self-exclusion and help services in the ACT.
- There was no single, standout medium of information that alerted people to the existence of, or process involved in self-exclusion.
- Significant misunderstandings were evident throughout the interviews with individuals about the self-exclusion process in the ACT.
- All individuals interviewed felt there was inadequate information available to the public about self-exclusion in the ACT.

Chapter 9: Limitations of self-exclusion in the ACT

Throughout the interviews, three key limitations were identified in the process of self-exclusion in the ACT, some of which greatly impacted on peoples decision to self-exclude. The three limitations are described below as the social issue, the employment issue and the Queanbeyan issue.

9.1 The social issue

Probably the most significant limitation identified by individuals, venues and counsellors was the fact that self-exclusion in venues in the ACT often means that an individual simply cannot enter a venue. People are unable to just exclude from the gambling areas of venues. Self-excluded people are not able to access the bars and restaurants facilities at the venues. Clubs, in particular, have an important social place in the lives of many people living in the ACT which makes the commitment made by people to exclude themselves from venues all the more great. The bars, restaurants, sports facilities, functions and events that clubs offer make it difficult for some people to see excluding as an option, despite their gambling problems. This is exemplified below:

Some people don't really like the option, they are quite reluctant to self-exclude, because then you cut the access to the social networks, to have a beer or how to socialise (Counsellor B, 10.02.14).

I think [self-exclusion] sometimes makes it hard because there is a club culture in the ACT. People go for dinner, they take their families, they go to watch a game and I think that's prohibitive, because if I want to exclude myself from your gambling facilities, I don't want to exclude myself from your restaurants. I think that this prohibitive for some people to initiate a self-exclusion, because they watch a union game there Saturday afternoon, and drink a beer, and if the club is going to stop them at the door in front of their family ... I think that's very prohibitive for people approaching self-exclusion (Venue B, 25.02.14).

What I would like to see in Canberra is the gaming venues partitioned off or separate rooms. So if I ban myself from a gaming room, I can still go into the club or the pub. Go and have a social drink. Here [in the ACT], I can't do that because they're dispersed throughout the club which is something that I battled with when I banned myself from the pubs and clubs here. Because I used to play a fair bit of sport here and I always have to make excuses now why I can't go into the clubs and things. But not with my real friends, they know what the problem is. But it would have been nice to still be able to go in for a beer but I can't do it here in Canberra because they're not set up that way. And I think that would probably be the same with quite a lot of people who are serious about it- but they would use that as an excuse because they've grown up in a social environment, so they would still gamble...They want to give up gambling but don't want to ban themselves from the clubs (A____, 05.05.14).

... if [people] were allowed to still go to the venues and go into the areas like the restaurants and the bars, being able to socialise with their friends. That would make it more attractive because they're not being stopped at the door and sent away (Counsellor A, 10.02.14).

One of the main downsides again is that not being able to socialise you know because I grew up in clubs and pubs and yeah, it takes away that whole aspect of going to watch a footy game on Fox because I don't have Fox at home, you know that whole thing. I can't do any of that anymore and that's something I love doing (GHH____, 02.05.14).

However, others mentioned that this was potentially an issue but described the approach they took to it:

Oh look occasionally I've sort of thought, oh what happens if I need to go to that place for some sort of social thing, whether it be a work lunch or something like that. But the reality is, over the last ten years I've never had a need to go there. Occasionally there might have been a social thing...But I figure, well if you miss out on that, so what (S____, 16.04.14).

A lot of my family have dinner at clubs, but at this stage I don't want to go and I've told my family don't invite me, because I don't want to even go to the club, I don't want to hear the bells. But that may change in a year and a half, two year's time, I may feel comfortable with going there and going to the restaurant at least to have a pub meal or have a birthday celebration or whatever (T____, 15.04.14).

Future technological advances will make recognising individuals easier and/or areas of venues more or less accessible by individuals. However, as self-exclusion currently stands in the ACT, there are significant issues with breaches of exclusions in the current system. To complicate this process by attempting to define accessible and non-accessible areas of venues would have significant potential to weaken the effectiveness of self-exclusion. Once people made the commitment to self-exclude they generally accepted that they could no longer access venues, so this issue was more relevant to those considering self-exclusion in terms of their willingness to commit to complete exclusion.

9.2 The employment issue

Over the course of the research, two issues became evident in relation to the interaction between employment and self-exclusion in the ACT. As a result of the ACT having such a strong club/venue culture, many work related functions in the ACT are held in venues. Business meetings, after-work drinks, work lunches, Christmas parties and work functions are often held in clubs in the ACT. Most people interviewed reported at least one event they were required to attend for work that occurred in a venue. Attendance at these events for people who are self-excluded is highly problematic. One individual interviewed described an instance where they had to avoid a work situation at a venue. They explained that they chose to pretend they forgot and failed to show up to the meeting to avoid the embarrassment of being pulled up at the venue door. This naturally reflected badly on the individual, however, the individual felt they had no other option in this situation.

The other issue that is quite unique to the ACT context is the number of people who work in the public service, Defence Force and the Australian Federal Police that require high levels of security clearance. The interviews exposed some of the complexities of the issues that people with high security clearances face if they do have a gambling problem and were to consider self-exclusion. The main issue for individuals was that by self-excluding it put them in the position of having to disclose a gambling problem to an employer.

One individual interviewed was having their clearance reviewed at the end of the year and knew that bank records would disclose losses exceeding \$200,000 over a period of two years. This individual chose to self-exclude in the hope that it would demonstrate a commitment to combating the problem to retain the level of clearance needed for employment in that position.

However, for others, as one counsellor stated, security issues around disclosing personal information to venue staff members was also a significant barrier to self-exclusion:

People I know won't exclude because of reasons to do with work. Security clearance and public service, they are scared to hand over their details. It is a very big issue, they don't want their photo taken, they don't want their licence details or anything about themselves to be shared on a club database (Counsellor A, 10.02.14).

Gambling problems potentially pose significant issues for employers particularly in areas where staff are dealing with highly sensitive information and high levels of security are required. This was an issue outside the scope of the research, however, as the employment context of the ACT requires a significant proportion of the population to have security clearances for their employment it is important that people are informed about how the information that they hand over in order to self-exclude is used and who has access to it. Better informing the community about the privacy and confidentiality requirements of the self-exclusion process would provide people with the information to then make informed choices in relation to self-exclusion in their lives.

9.3 The Queanbeyan issue

The fact that the ACT is a relatively small, bounded community works to make self-exclusion a very viable option for people because they have the option to exclude from all venues. However, this also works in reverse in that many people identified the close proximity of Queanbeyan (NSW) to the ACT as an issue that potentially undermines the effectiveness of self-exclusion in the ACT. People could exclude from venues in the ACT and simply drive 10 minutes down the road to the venues in Queanbeyan to gamble. This is highlighted in excerpts below:

Of course being the Territory compared to New South Wales, people who self-exclude themselves from a club here can just drive over to play there and vice versa. I know it is different legislation, so it makes it difficult to work hand in hand (Venue L, 24.02.14)

Sometimes, some people have come and excluded from the whole of Canberra and then they've gone out to Queanbeyan to gamble because they couldn't gamble here (Counsellor A, 10.02.14)

Every individual interviewed was also aware of this issue and many people who had self-excluded in the ACT had also eventually self-excluded from the venues in Queanbeyan as well. Some individuals who did self-exclude from venues in Queanbeyan reported that they found it a difficult and complicated process.

9.4 Key findings from Chapter 9

- Restricting access to venues entirely in the ACT (as opposed to just gambling areas) when self-excluded is viewed by many as a limitation of the process.
- As self-exclusion stands at this point in the ACT, to complicate the process by attempting to define accessible and non-accessible areas of venues would have significant potential to weaken the effectiveness of self-exclusion.
- Work related meetings, events and functions held at venues are highly problematic for people who self-exclude or are considering self-exclusion.
- As the employment context of the ACT requires a significant proportion of the population to have security clearances, it is important that people are informed about the privacy and confidentiality requirements of the self-exclusion process to then make informed choices in relation to self-exclusion in their lives.
- Canberra's close proximity to Queanbeyan venues potentially undermines the effectiveness of self-exclusion for some people.
- Information should be made available to individuals in the ACT when they self-exclude as to who they need to contact in NSW to exclude from venues should this become an issue for them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the importance of self-exclusion in the lives of people experiencing severe harm from gambling should not be underestimated. Strengthening this process in the ACT should be viewed as a high priority and one of many strategies that can be used and accessed by people to minimise the harm from gambling. Self-exclusion is a unique process that is currently under-utilised in its potential to assist individuals and the community broadly.

This research found that self-exclusion is a positive and empowering process for people experiencing problems from gambling in the ACT. The findings demonstrate that when people get to the point of considering or actually self-excluding, they were experiencing severe negative impacts of gambling in their lives. People were socially isolated and in an extremely vulnerable position just prior to self-excluding. Most people had very erratic engagement with help services over long periods of time prior to self-excluding. For the people interviewed in this research, self-exclusion was not something that was entered into lightly, people invested significant amounts of time considering their options.

The research found that venue staff were not confident in approaching people in venues who may be experiencing problems related to gambling in offering assistance or information and venue staff were not clear on exactly what their responsibilities were in that regard. However, the research found the venue staff were well informed and clear on their responsibilities in processing the documentation needed to action the self-exclusion Deed. Individuals found venues to be supportive and professional when approached about self-exclusion. Educating and empowering venue staff through improved training and ongoing staff development (like the GCO forums) would assist venues to better support individuals experiencing harm from gambling.

The research found that individuals were highly likely to breach their exclusion Deed. In addition to this, the research also found that venues were unlikely to identify people who were breaching their Deed. It is suggested that improved communication and information between all stakeholders in the process of self-exclusion would strengthen regulatory compliance, as well as minimise an individual's likelihood of breaching the Deed. As the process stands a major limitation is the lack of consultation with people who have self-excluded. Feedback from these people, particularly around the issue of breaching self-exclusion has potential to be particularly valuable in improving the self-exclusion process.

Significant improvements are needed in the information that is made available to the community about self-exclusion in the ACT. Investment is needed in making self-exclusion information broadly available to the community, particularly those people with limited access to the internet. It is essential to the integrity of the process of self-exclusion that people have the opportunity to make an informed choice when signing the Deed.

Overall, the findings of this research suggest that self-exclusion in the ACT is an under-utilised process as it currently exists. It is recognised that the transfer of self-exclusion from a manual system to an online system in 2014 is highly anticipated by venues, and will ideally provide a much improved mechanism to assist in the functionality of the process of self-exclusion. However, the demographic, geographic and regulatory structure of the ACT offers a unique opportunity to build a significant and strong framework around the process of self-exclusion to assist people in the ACT who are experiencing problems relating to gambling.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Advertisement



Australian
National
University

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Have you ever thought about self-exclusion?

Venue-based self-exclusion is when people who wish to limit or stop gambling voluntarily enter an agreement to exclude themselves from gaming venues.

If you have ever self-excluded, or thought about self-exclusion and are over 18, then we would like to meet you and ask you about your views and/or experience of self-exclusion. Interviews will take 20 minutes and you will receive a \$20 gift card as a token of our appreciation. All information you provide will be treated as strictly confidential.

T 1800 251 880 (free call)
E marisa.fogarty@anu.edu.au

This research is funded by the
ACT Gambling and Racing Commission.

CRICOS# 00120C | 140314CT

G671395GAA-220314

Appendix B: Consent form for Venue staff and management



ID Number:

CONSENT FORM

Understanding the self-exclusion process from the perspectives of venue-based gambling providers, people who self-exclude from gambling venues, and services providers who assist them

Researchers: Dr Marisa Fogarty, Prof Bryan Rodgers, Dr Helen Keane, ANU

I (please print) consent to take part in the **understanding the self-exclusion process** research. I have read the information sheet for this project and understand its contents. The information provided explains the nature and purpose of the research project, so far as it affects me, to my satisfaction. My consent is freely given.

1. I understand that if I agree to participate in the research project I will be asked to take part in an interview that will take 15-30 minutes, depending on the time I have available.
2. I understand that while information gained during the research project may be published in reports to the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission, and in peer-reviewed academic publications, my name, position title and organisation will not be used in relation to any of the information I have provided.
3. I understand that personal information, such as my name and work contact details, will be kept confidential so far as the law allows. This form and any other identifying materials will be stored separately in a locked office at the Australian National University. Data entered onto a computer will be de-identified and kept in a computer accessible only by password. All data will be securely stored for a minimum of 5 years following publication, in accordance with the ANU Responsible Practice of Research Policy, and only members of the ANU Centre of Gambling Research team (listed above) will have access to the data.
4. I understand that although any comments I make will not be attributed to me or my workplace in any report or publication it is possible that others may guess the source of information, and that I should avoid disclosing information to the researchers which is of confidential status within my workplace or which is defamatory of any other person or organisation.
5. I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage, without providing any reason and that this will not have any adverse consequences for me. If I withdraw, the information I provide will not be used by the project, and the researchers will delete my data.

Signed Date

Appendix C: Consent form for service providers



Australian
National
University

ID Number:

CONSENT FORM

Understanding the self-exclusion process from the perspectives of venue-based gambling providers, people who self-exclude from gambling venues, and services providers who assist them

Researchers: Dr Marisa Fogarty, Prof Bryan Rodgers, Dr Helen Keane, ANU Centre for Gambling Research

I (please print) consent to take part in the **understanding the self-exclusion process** research. I have read the information sheet for this project and understand its contents. The information provided explains the nature and purpose of the research project, so far as it affects me, to my satisfaction. My consent is freely given.

1. I understand that if I agree to participate in the research project I will be asked to take part in an interview that will take 15-20 minutes, depending on the time I have available.
2. I understand that while information gained during the research project may be published in reports to the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission, and in peer-reviewed academic publications, my name, position title and organisation will not be used in relation to any of the information I have provided.
3. I understand that personal information, such as my name and work contact details, will be kept confidential so far as the law allows. This form and any other identifying materials will be stored separately in a locked office at the Australian National University. Data entered onto a computer will be de-identified and kept in a computer accessible only by password. All data will be securely stored for a minimum of 5 years following publication, in accordance with the ANU Responsible Practice of Research Policy, and only members of the ANU Centre of Gambling Research team (listed above) will have access to the data.
4. I understand that although any comments I make will not be attributed to me or my agency in any report or publication it is possible that others may guess the source of information, and that I should avoid disclosing information to the researchers which is of confidential status within my organisation or which is defamatory of any other person or organisation.
5. I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage, without providing any reason and that this will not have any adverse consequences for me. If I withdraw, the information I provide will not be used by the project, and the researchers will delete my data.

Signed Date

Audio taping

I consent to have my interview (if any) audio-taped by the interviewer. I understand that the recording will be stored securely at the Australian National University.

Signed Date

Appendix D: Consent form for participants who have self-excluded



ID Number:

CONSENT FORM

Understanding the self-exclusion process from the perspectives of venue-based gambling providers, people who self-exclude from gambling venues, and services providers who assist them

Researchers: Dr Marisa Fogarty , Prof. Bryan Rodgers & Dr Helen Keane, ANU Centre for Gambling Research

1. I (please print) consent to take part in the **understanding the self-exclusion process** research. I have read the information sheet for this project and understand its contents, and any questions I have about the research have been answered. The information provided explains the nature and purpose of the research project, so far as it affects me, to my satisfaction. My consent is freely given.
2. I understand that if I agree to participate in the research project I will be asked to take part in an interview that will take approximately 15- 20 minutes. My participation in the research is entirely voluntary and I can stop the interview at any time without giving a reason.
3. I understand that while information gained during the research project may be published in reports to the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission, and in peer-reviewed academic publications, my name and any identifying information will not be used in relation to any of the information I have provided.
4. I understand that personal information, such as my name and contact details (should I agree to provide them), will be kept confidential so far as the law allows. This form and any other identifying materials will be stored separately in a locked office at the Australian National University. Data entered onto a computer will be de-identified and kept in a computer accessible only by password. All data will be securely stored for a minimum of 5 years following publication, in accordance with the ANU Responsible Practice of Research Policy, and only members of the ANU Centre of Gambling Research team (listed above) will have access to the data.
5. I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage without providing any reason and that this will not have any adverse consequences for me. If I withdraw, the information I provide will not be used by the project, and the researchers will delete my data.

Signed Date

Audio taping

I consent to have my interview (if any) audio-taped by the interviewer. I understand that the tapes will be stored securely at the Australian National University.

Signed Date

Appendix E: Information sheet for venue staff and managers



INFORMATION SHEET

Are you a venue-based gambling provider? – we'd like to speak to you

The ANU Centre for Gambling Research has been asked by the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission (an independent statutory body responsible for the regulation of gambling and racing activities in the ACT) to find out about **understanding the self-exclusion process from the perspectives of venue-based gambling providers, people who self-exclude from gambling venues, and services providers who assist them.**

Why are we carrying out this research?

Venue-based self-exclusion is a process whereby people who wish to limit or stop gambling voluntarily enter an agreement to exclude themselves from gaming venues. While research indicates that some people who self-exclude from venues breach their self-exclusion, and some continue to gamble outside of venues they have excluded from, many people have reported that they found the process helpful in stopping or controlling their gambling. Therefore, improving the accessibility and efficacy of self-exclusion programs has the potential to help more people who have experienced harm from their gambling.

What does the research involve?

You have been chosen as a potential participant because you have experience in administering venue-based self-exclusion. If you agree to participate in this research, our primary investigator (Marisa Fogarty) would like to interview you at a time and place convenient to you. The duration of the interview will be 15-20 minutes, depending on the time you have available. This will involve you signing a consent form and answering questions about your work with patrons who self-exclude. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw your consent at any time before, during or after your interview without giving any reason.

What we'd like to ask you:

We would like to ask you:

- how does the self-exclusion process typically work in your venue?
- what are the strengths and limitations of the self-exclusion system in the ACT?
- have you encountered any difficulties in arranging self-exclusions under the self-exclusion system in the ACT?

- Your views on how the process can be improved to make it easier for venues to administer self-exclusion in gaming venues
- Your views on how the process can be improved and made more attractive to patrons who might benefit from the system.

What will happen to my information?

Your personal information, such as your name and work contact details, will be kept confidential so far as the law allows. Notes made by the interviewer during your interview will be de-identified and stored securely at the Australian National University on a password-protected computer accessible only to members of the research team for a minimum of five years following publication. Any information used from your interview will be attributed to 'a venue worker' and the name of your venue will not be disclosed.

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time, and you do not need to provide any reason to us. If you decide to withdraw from the research we will not use any of the information you have provided, and we will delete your data.

Can I find out about the results?

The results of this study will be reported to the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission (who we anticipate will make the report available to the public via their website). The researchers will also seek to publish research findings in peer-reviewed academic publications. However, the names of individual participants, and the organisations they work for, will not be reported in connection with any of the information obtained in interviews. A summary of research findings can also be sent to you if you wish to give us your contact details, or email marisa.fogarty@anu.edu.au or phone 1800 251 880 (free call).

Are there any risks if I participate?

We do not intend to seek any information in interviews which is particularly sensitive or confidential. It is possible that because the venue-based gaming sector in the ACT is relatively small, others working within the sector may be able to guess which organisations were likely to have been asked to participate, even though we will not attribute any information to any person or organisation. Accordingly, it is important that you do not tell us information which is of confidential status, or which is sensitive or defamatory.

Below you will find contact details and phone numbers in case you have questions or concerns about the study.

Please note that questions about your patrons will be of a general nature, and we will not seek any specific or identifying information about any individual patron.

Contact Names and Phone Numbers

If you have any questions or complaints about the study please feel free to contact:

Marisa Fogarty, ANU Centre for Gambling Research
 Tel: 02 6125 9215
 Email: marisa.fogarty@anu.edu.au

If you have concerns regarding the way the research was conducted you can contact:

The Human Ethics Officer
Human Research Ethics Committee
Australian National University
Tel: 02 6125 3427
Email: Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au

Appendix F: Information sheet for service providers



INFORMATION SHEET

Do you have clients who have self-excluded from venue-based gambling providers? - We'd like to speak to you

The ANU Centre for Gambling Research has been asked by the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission (an independent statutory body responsible for the regulation of gambling and racing activities in the ACT) to find out about **understanding the self-exclusion process from the perspectives of venue-based gambling providers, people who self-exclude from gambling venues, and services providers who assist them.**

Why are we carrying out this research?

Venue-based self-exclusion is a process whereby people who wish to limit or stop gambling voluntarily enter an agreement to exclude themselves from gaming venues. While research indicates that some people who self-exclude from venues breach their self-exclusion, and some continue to gamble outside of venues they have excluded from, many people have reported that they found the process helpful in stopping or controlling their gambling. Therefore, improving the accessibility and efficacy of self-exclusion programs has the potential to help more people who have experienced harm from their gambling.

What does the research involve?

You have been chosen as a potential participant because you have practice wisdom as well as unique insights into the lives and experiences of people experiencing gambling problems. If you agree to participate in this research, our primary investigator Marisa Fogarty would like to interview you **at a time and place convenient to you**. The duration of the interview will be **15-20 minutes**, depending on the time you have available. This will involve you signing a consent form and answering questions about your work with people with gambling problems. If you agree, we may record the interview on audio tape. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw your consent at any time before, during or after your interview without giving a reason.

What we'd like to ask you:

We would like to ask you about:

- Your knowledge of self-exclusion
- What your clients know about self-exclusion
- Do you offer assistance with self-exclusion to clients who have gambling problems?

- What reasons do clients give for enrolling / not enrolling into self-exclusion?
- How useful do you think self-exclusion is for your clients who have gambling problems?
- How do you think self-exclusion can be made more attractive?

What will happen to my information?

Your personal information, such as your name and work contact details, will be kept confidential so far as the law allows. Recordings of your interview, should you agree to be recorded, will be de-identified before being securely sent to a reputable transcription service. Interview recordings and transcripts will be stored securely at the Australian National University on a password-protected computer accessible only to members of the research team for a minimum of five years following publication. Information from your interview used in publications will be attributed to 'a service provider' and the name of your Agency will not be used.

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time, and you do not need to provide any reason to us. If you decide to withdraw from the research we will not use any of the information you have provided, and we will delete your data.

Can I find out about the results?

The results of this study will be reported to the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission (who we anticipate will make the report available to the public via their website). The researchers will also seek to publish research findings in peer-reviewed academic publications. However, the names of individual participants, and the organisations they work for, will not be reported in connection with any of the information obtained in interviews. A summary of research findings can also be sent to you if you wish to give us your contact details, or email marisa.fogarty@anu.edu.au

Are there any risks if I participate?

We do not intend to seek any information in interviews which is particularly sensitive or confidential. It is possible that because the service sector in the ACT is relatively small, others working within the sector may be able to guess which organisations were likely to have been asked to participate, even though we will not attribute any information to any person or organisation. Accordingly, it is important that you do not tell us information which is of confidential status, or which is sensitive or defamatory.

Below you will find contact details and phone numbers in case you have questions or concerns about the study.

Please note that questions about your clients will be of a general nature, and we will not seek any specific or identifying information about any individual client.

Contact Names and Phone Numbers

If you have any questions or complaints about the study please feel free to contact:

Marisa Fogarty, ANU Centre for Gambling Research
 Tel: 6125 9215 or 1800 251 880 (free call)
 Email: marisa.fogarty@anu.edu.au

If you have concerns regarding the way the research was conducted you can contact:

The Human Ethics Officer
Human Research Ethics Committee
Australian National University
Tel: 02 6125 3427
Email: Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au

Appendix G: Information sheet for people who have self-excluded



INFORMATION SHEET

Have you self-excluded from a gambling venue, or contemplated self-exclusion? – We'd like to speak to you

The ANU Centre for Gambling Research has been asked by the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission (the statutory body responsible for the regulation of gambling and racing activities in the ACT) to find out about **understanding the self-exclusion process from the perspectives of venue-based gambling providers, people who self-exclude from gambling venues, and services providers who assist them.**

We would like to speak to:

We would like to speak to adults who have entered into venue-based self-exclusion in the ACT, or who have contemplated doing so.

We would like you to take part in private interview at a date and time that suits you, at a pre-agreed location (this could be a private office at the ANU or a private room at a Public Library). The interview will take 15-20 minutes, and you will be given a \$20 gift card* as a token of our appreciation for your participation. Before the interview begins, the interviewer will give you the opportunity to read this information sheet, and then explain the research to you and answer any questions you may have. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw your participation at any time before, during or after your interview without giving a reason.

What we want to know:

During the interview, we would like to ask you questions about your views and experience of self-exclusion, what you like or don't like about self-exclusion, how you think self-exclusion can be improved, and how you think self-exclusion can be made more attractive to people who might benefit from it.

Are the results confidential?

Yes! We will keep all your personal information confidential (as far as the law allows). While we will use the information you give us in our reports and publications, we will not name you or include any information that

* Gift cards can be used for purchasing a variety of goods such as groceries, clothes, gifts, toys, DVDs, petrol etc. but cannot be used to purchase alcohol or tobacco

would make you identifiable. If you agree, we may record your interview but we will not include your name on the recording. All identifying information about you will be removed from the recording before being transcribed by a secure and reputable transcription service. However, we will not record your interview if you do not want us to.

Why is this study important?

This research will help to inform and improve self-exclusion in the ACT so that it better suits the needs of people experiencing harm from their gambling.

What happens to my information?

Your information will be de-identified and securely stored at the ANU Centre for Gambling Research Office for a minimum of 5 years following publication in accordance with the ANU Responsible Practice of Research Policy, and will be accessible only to the researchers at the ANU Centre for Gambling who are working on this particular project (Marisa Fogarty, Professor Bryan Rodgers & Dr Helen Keane).

Do I have to take part?

No. Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary and you can stop the interview at any time without giving a reason, and this will not have any adverse consequences for you. We will erase any information you have given us and we will not use any of your information in our report.

Can I find out about the findings?

Yes! When the report is complete, a summary of findings will be published on the ANU Centre for Gambling Research Website (<http://sociology.cass.anu.edu.au/centre-gambling-research>), and we anticipate that the ACT Gaming and Racing Commission will make the report available to the public via their website (<http://www.gamblingandracing.act.gov.au/Publications/Research.htm>). If you prefer, you can call us on 6125 9215 to arrange to have a copy sent to you. It will take a few months before the report is released, but results should be available in the second half of 2014.

Any questions?

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, or any concerns about how our interview with you was conducted, please contact our Supervisor, Professor Bryan Rodgers at the ANU Centre of Gambling Research: email bryan.rodgers@anu.edu.au, or phone 6125 0399.

Ethics Committee Clearance

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee.

If you have concerns or complaints about how this research is being conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee
Australian National University
Tel: 02 6125 3427
Email: Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au

If you would like to be interviewed for our study, please call us on 1800 251 888 or email: marisa.fogarty@anu.edu.au

Appendix H: Self-Exclusion from Gambling Deed

ACT Online Gambling Exclusion Scheme

Self-Exclusion from Gambling Deed

Applicant Details (*Indicates Compulsory Field)

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|--|
| First Name* | <input type="text"/> | Last Name* | <input type="text"/> |
| Middle Name | <input type="text"/> | Date of Birth* | <input type="text" value="/"/> <input type="text" value="/"/> <input type="text"/> |
| Email Address | <input type="text"/> | Gender* | <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female |
| Also known as | <input type="text"/> | Telephone Number* | <input type="text"/> |
| Address Line 1* | <input type="text"/> | Address Line 2* | <input type="text"/> |
| Town/Suburb* | <input type="text"/> | State* | <input type="text"/> |
| Postcode* | <input type="text"/> | | |

Preferred method of contact* ☐ Letter ☐ Telephone ☐ Email ☐ Other

I request to be contacted by the ACT Gambling Counselling and Support Service * ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to be contacted in relation to participating in anonymous gambling research* ☐ Yes ☐ No

I wish to be excluded from the gambling venue(s) I have nominated in this Deed (the Nominated Venue)
for a period of* days months years from the date of this Deed.

Please Note: Under the Gambling and Racing Control (Code of Practice) Regulation 2002 the minimum period of time for a self-exclusion agreement is six months and the maximum period is three years.

VENUE CONDITIONS OF AGREEMENT

1. For the duration of this self-exclusion I agree not to attempt to enter the Nominated Venue.
2. I understand the licensee of the Nominated Venue may prevent me from entering, or remove me from the Nominated Venue.
3. I agree that if I attempt to enter the Nominated Venue during this self-exclusion the Nominated Venue may advise the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission (the Commission) and any other venues I have requested to be excluded from, of my attempt to enter.
4. I understand that the Commission may contact me if I attempt to enter the Nominated Venue during this self-exclusion.
5. I authorise the Nominated Venue to retain and display a copy of my photograph and other details only for the purpose of assisting Nominated Venue staff to identify me as a self-excluded person, but not for access or display to the general public or venue staff who do not have relevant duties.
6. I understand that details of this self-exclusion will be kept within the ACT Gambling Exclusion Database which is administered by the Commission. Details of this self-exclusion will be accessible to authorised staff of the Nominated Venue and Authorised Officers of the Commission.
7. I understand that if I hold an account with the Nominated Venue that the licensee of the venue will not allow me or anyone else to use that account for the duration of this self-exclusion.
8. I understand that for the duration of this self-exclusion I am ineligible to claim any prizes or winnings from the Nominated Venue.
9. I agree not to sue or make claim against the Commission or the licensee of the Nominated Venue or their agents in relation to any damage or injury caused directly or indirectly as a result of any act, default or omission in relation to the matters contained in this Deed.
10. I agree to the Commission using non-identifying information about me for statistical purposes that relate to the management of problem gambling in the ACT.
11. I understand that self-exclusion is voluntary and I may apply to revoke this self-exclusion agreement.
12. I understand that if I apply to revoke this self-exclusion there will be a minimum period of seven (7) days before this self-exclusion ceases to have effect. During this seven (7) day period the Commission will endeavour to contact me to confirm my intention to end this self-exclusion.
13. I understand that after this self-exclusion ends, each Nominated Venue may seek to determine whether my gambling poses a serious threat to my welfare or the welfare of my dependants before allowing me to return to their venue.
14. I understand that I can apply for self-exclusion from additional gambling venues or lengthen my period of self-exclusion at any time (to a maximum period of three years) by contacting any ACT gambling venue or by contacting the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission.
15. I have been provided with a fact sheet about the ACT Online Gambling Exclusion Scheme, I acknowledge that the contents of this Deed have been read and explained to me and I accept the effect of this Deed and the obligations, duties and/or responsibilities placed on me by the matters set out in this Deed.

VENUES NOMINATED FOR SELF-EXCLUSION

I request to be self-excluded from the following gambling venue(s):

☐ **ALL ACT GAMBLING VENUES** (Includes Casino Canberra, ACTTAB, ACT Gaming Machine Licensed Clubs, Hotels and Taverns)

Or

Please nominate one or more of the following types of gambling venue:

☐ **ALL ACT GAMING MACHINE LICENSED CLUBS, HOTELS AND TAVERNS**

☐ **CASINO CANBERRA**

☐ **ACTTAB** (Includes all ACTTAB facilities, sub agencies located in ACT gaming machine venues and on-line accounts)

Or

Please nominate one or more specific districts or individual venues. You may also indicate as a 'Hotspot' any venue(s) you believe you may find it more difficult not to visit.

☐ **ALL BELCONNEN**

| Venue name | Exclude | Hotspot | Venue Name | Exclude | Hotspot |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Belconnen Bowling Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Magpies Belconnen Golf Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Belconnen Magpies Sports Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Moby Dick's Tavern | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Belconnen Soccer Club-Hawker | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Raiders Belconnen | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Belconnen Soccer Club-McKellar | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Southern Cross Club-Jamison | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Canberra Labor Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sports Club Kaleen | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ginninderra Labor Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |

☐ **ALL GUNGALIN/HALL**

| Venue name | Exclude | Hotspot | Venue Name | Exclude | Hotspot |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Gungahlin Lakes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Raiders Gungahlin | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Wood Duck Inn | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |

☐ **ALL NORTH CANBERRA**

| Venue name | Exclude | Hotspot | Venue Name | Exclude | Hotspot |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Ainslie Football and Social Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hellenic Club in the City | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Australian Croatian Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Magpies City Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Canberra City Bowling Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mercure Canberra | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Canberra Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | O'Neill's Irish Pub | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Canberra Racing Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Southern Cross Club-Turner | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Canberra Tradesmen's Union Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tennis ACT | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| City Labor Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yowani Country Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Civic Pub | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |

☐ **ALL SOUTH CANBERRA**

| Venue name | Exclude | Hotspot | Venue Name | Exclude | Hotspot |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ACT Rugby Union Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Harmonie German Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Canberra Bowling Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Italo Australian Club (ACT) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Canberra Deakin Football Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Kingston Hotel | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Canberra Services Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | National Press Club of Australia | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Eastlake Football Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Southern Cross Club-Yacht Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Federal Golf Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Spanish Australian Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fyshwick Tavern | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |

☐ **ALL TUGGERANONG**

| Venue name | Exclude | Hotspot | Venue Name | Exclude | Hotspot |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Burns Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Murrumbidgee Country Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Calwell Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | PJ O'Reilly's Tuggeranong | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chisholm Sports Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Southern Cross Club-Tuggeranong | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Kambah Inn | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Town Centre Sports Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lanyon Valley Rugby Union & Amateur Sports Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tuggeranong Valley Rugby Union & Amateur Sports Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

☐ **ALL WESTON CREEK**

| Venue name | Exclude | Hotspot | Venue Name | Exclude | Hotspot |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Canberra Irish Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Weston Creek Labor Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Raiders Weston | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |

☐ **ALL WODEN**

| Venue name | Exclude | Hotspot | Venue Name | Exclude | Hotspot |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Austrian Australian Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Southern Cross Club - Woden | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hellenic Club of Canberra | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Statesman Hotel | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mawson Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Woden Tradesmen Union Club | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Location / venue that this Deed was accepted: _____

Name of person authorised to accept this Deed: _____

Signature of person authorised to accept this Deed: _____ Date: ____/____/____

This application must be accompanied by a good quality photo clearly showing the face of the applicant to assist venue staff identify them should they enter the venue whilst excluded.

The authorised person who accepts this Deed must ensure a copy of the completed Deed is provided to the applicant.

School of Sociology, ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences
sociology.cass.anu.edu.au/research/centre-gambling-research

ANU Centre for Gambling Research reports
gamblingandracing.act.gov/community/research