

17 October 2023

Chances are, there's more to life this Gambling Harm Awareness Week

Gambling is a big business in this country and gambling products are increasingly being promoted in our everyday lives. While gambling can be entertaining, it can also cause significant individual and community harms.

This Gambling Harm Awareness Week (16-22 October 2023), the Gambling and Racing Commission is reminding our community that gambling is not an intrinsic part of life and to connect with the array of things that bring us joy, including friendships, family, special interests and hobbies.

Let's live beyond the bet – *Chances are, there's more to life.*

This year the Commission is also encouraging our community to learn about the features of different gambling products that are designed to keep people spending, and to understand the risk of harm they pose. Product information has been included on the Commission's website to increase this awareness.

Gambling harm isn't experienced by all people in the same manner, but everyone's story matters and everyone can access the support they need. The Commission continues to promote that *Every Story Matters* and to encourage people to access the support they need.

If you or someone you know is experiencing gambling harm, help is available. Call the 1800 858 858 helpline or visit www.everystorymatters.act.gov.au to find free and confidential support that suits you.


Free forum – Thursday 19 October, 9am to 12.45pm, Ann Harding Conference Centre, University of Canberra

The Commission applies a public health approach to addressing gambling harm, which highlights the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders to work towards harm prevention. In line with this approach, the Commission is hosting a free forum on Thursday 19 October, bringing all stakeholders together to discuss how we can 'Prevent, Empower, Support' to make it easier for people to ask for support. Speakers include Minister for Gaming, Mr Shane Rattenbury MLA. Registrations have now closed.

Presentations will be practical in nature, with topics including:

- lived experience reflections
- video gaming and its impact on future gambling behaviours
- prevention at the low end of the gambling harm continuum
- building skills and confidence of industry staff to engage with patrons on gambling harm
- normalising help-seeking.

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Quote attributable to Paul Baxter, Chair of the Gambling and Racing Commission

“The Commission recognises that gambling products can be harmful. It is critical that we stop talking about “responsible gambling” and instead talk about the responsibility we all share to prevent gambling harms. This Gambling Harm Awareness Week, the Commission is focusing on the role gambling might play in our lives and highlighting the potential risks of harm posed by various gambling products. We hope through this awareness raising that our community is empowered to seek support if they are experiencing gambling harm.”

Quote attributable to Markus Fischer, Lead Peer Support and Community Engagement Worker, ACT Gambling Support Service

“When I was young, I joined my family and friends in gambling. I never saw a path of harm for myself. It was only later, when I could not stop thinking about gambling, each and every day, that I realised that gambling was causing harm to me and to the people around me.

What I want people to know is that there is no shame in speaking out if you’re being impacted. Chances are, you’re not alone. Support is available, there’s more to life and you just need to take the first step.”

Statement ends.

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