

# Our YOUTH ENGAGEMENT Strategy

The Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation's Youth Engagement Strategy, *Gambling's not a Game* is about preventing the cycle of gambling-related harm which can start at a young age.

'A substantial proportion of people begin gambling by the time they are 15 years old, with further significant increases in participation rates in the next few years of age.' (Productivity Commission 2010)

This youth strategy will raise awareness about the risks associated with young people and gambling through: a major public awareness campaign, this guide for parents, a dedicated website and programs for schools and sporting clubs.

## SPORTS PROGRAM

With gambling threatening to overshadow our love of the game, the sports program will provide clubs with information and support to create a responsible and healthy club environment for all members.

## SCHOOLS PROGRAM

As teenagers are increasingly influenced by gambling through social media, online games and advertising, the schools program will provide information and resources for students, teachers and parents in your school community.

To find out more about these programs, go to [kidbet.com.au](http://kidbet.com.au)



WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

*It's not like*  
**GAMBLING**  
*is like*  
**DRUGS OR**  
**ALCOHOL**

PG 2/3

## Most Australians gamble at least once a year!

For most people, most of the time,  
gambling is innocent fun with no negative  
consequences however

**FOR SOME, INCLUDING AROUND 30,000  
VICTORIANS, GAMBLING WRECKS LIVES.**

Working out who will develop a problem with gambling is not an exact science but what prevention experts know is that like with alcohol and drugs, the earlier in life a person begins to gamble, the more likely they are to develop a problem down the track.

This is why evidence that a growing number of teenagers are gambling, is a concern.

This guide is full of information about the changing nature of gambling today and has various tips and tools to help you talk to your children about gambling.



More copies of the guide are available at  
[www.responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au](http://www.responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au)  
or call 03 9452 2600.

**Serge Sardo,**  
**CEO Victorian Responsible**  
**Gambling Foundation**



WHAT PARENTS NEED  
*to know*  
ABOUT  
*underage*  
GAMBLING

PG 4 / 5

It's a fact of life that teenagers experiment.

In terms of gambling, some teenagers will limit themselves to playing cards with friends or buying lottery tickets. Some will however try, and succeed, in getting around the legal barriers to bet on sports or bet on machines at venues.

Experts say underage gambling does not automatically lead to problems with gambling. However, they say teenagers are more vulnerable because they:

- have less impulse control or capacity to understand the risks
- are more likely to think they're going to win
- think they can predict winners in sport, or even the pokies, when they can't
- are less able to be critical about or resist advertising.

## QUICK FACTS

- 1** *one in five adults with gambling problems started before they were 18*
- 2** *boys are more likely to gamble, place bigger bets and develop problems than girls*
- 3** *parents' behaviour and values affect how children feel about gambling but family structure and income do not*
- 4** *teenagers who gamble are four times more likely to have a gambling problem than adults*
- 5** *three to four per cent of teenagers have problems with gambling. That's one in every high school class of 25 students*
- 6** *sports betting advertising reportedly increased 300 per cent between 2010 and 2012*
- 7** *in 2012, there were 20 thousand sports betting ads on free to air TV*



HAVE A SEAT AND  
**LET'S TALK**  
*about it*

DID YOU KNOW FACEBOOK NOW HAS GAMBLING?

IS GAMBLING ADVERTISING CHANGING THE WAY WE ENJOY SPORT?

WHAT'S THE DRAMA ABOUT LIVE ODDS IN SPORTS COVERAGE?

HOW MANY DIFFERENT WAYS TO GAMBLE ARE THERE?

SHOULDN'T THEY DO SOMETHING ABOUT GAMBLING?

IS GAMBLING MORE 'IN-YOUR-FACE' THAN EVER?

WHY ARE MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO GAMBLE A PROBLEM?

WHAT IMPACT IS GAMBLING ADVERTISING HAVING ON YOUNG PEOPLE?

IS PEER PRESSURE ABOUT GAMBLING INCREASING?

**Parent tip:** Use these conversation starters to talk about gambling with your kids. Talking about gambling and the risks associated with gambling can help them make better choices down the track.



I WENT TO THE RACES  
*with my dad,*

WHAT'S THE  
PROBLEM?"

Like so much else in life, gambling is almost unrecognisable today compared to just a few years ago.

THERE ARE MORE WAYS TO GAMBLE THAN EVER BEFORE.

GAMBLING ADVERTISING ON TV AND AT SPORTS GROUNDS IS SO WIDESPREAD IT IS UNAVOIDABLE.

THE INTERNET ALONG WITH SMART PHONES, TABLETS AND APPS MEAN GAMBLING IS AVAILABLE 24/7 NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE.

Gambling has always been risky but some experts believe increasing accessibility and new ways of gambling, like internet gambling, are making it more risky.

This is especially so for teenagers who don't always think about the consequences of what they do.

Traditional gambling has built-in barriers that don't remove the risk altogether but can slow down and limit the amount lost.

**For example:**

- Gambling venues are only open certain hours usually between 10am and midnight
- You have to be over 18
- You have to travel to a race track, a venue or a TAB
- You have to line up for change if you are playing the pokies or to place a bet on a horse
- You need time

With newer forms of gambling all you need is a smart phone and an online bank account and you can spend a week's pay in just a few minutes.

## SPORTS BETTING

A massive increase in sports betting and online gambling in recent years has some people worried about the impact it's having on how we enjoy sport and that it could lead to corruption in our great sporting codes.

Many are also worried about the effect of sports betting advertising on children. Have you noticed kids today talking more about odds and less about who is in form?

PG 10/11

While more people currently have problems with traditional gambling like pokies, experts are concerned sports betting is attracting new people to become regular gamblers who might then develop problems.

Sports betting is also more available than traditional gambling which can mean people who already have problems are gambling more.

**Parent tip:** Instead of talking about odds, talk about the love of the game and who is (or isn't) performing on the field.

### While a punter's knowledge of a sport might statistically increase their chances of winning:

- Luck still plays a big part in who wins on and off the field.
- Professional punters treat it as a job, spend many hours combing the form guides and still go through long, unpredictable periods of losing.
- Even when the chances of winning seem good, where a particular horse or team is on a hot streak, the odds are set so the returns are low - or the bookies would go out of business.

**YOUNG VICTORIANS ARE POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO OVER TWO HOURS OF GAMBLING ADVERTISING ON TV EACH WEEK**

Source: AdQuest eXtreme, Nielson Media Research 2012-2013

## ONLINE GAMBLING

A lot of sports betting happens online using smart phones and tablets which may increase the risk. Here are the facts about online gambling

- Online bookmakers can track the way people gamble and use that information to entice punters to bet – and lose - more often.
- Bet during a game and you're more likely to get caught up in the heat of the moment, making it hard to set limits and avoid rash decisions.
- Australian gambling companies can offer wagering and lotteries over the internet but are not allowed to provide 'casino' types of gambling like virtual poker or roulette.
- People who are playing casino type games on the internet are not protected by any specific Australian laws.
- Some laws which try to protect individual rights or require fairness of games are unlikely to be enforceable.

**FACT: ALMOST HALF OF AUSTRALIA'S ADULT POPULATION NOW OWN A SMARTPHONE WITH MORE THAN 8 MILLION SOLD BETWEEN JUNE 2011 AND MAY 2012**

Source: Australian Communications and Media Authority

### Why is online betting more dangerous?

- 24/7 accessibility - Anyone with a smart phone can gamble anytime, day or night.
- Where am I? – It's easy to get lost in the game, losing track of time and the outside world.
- Win, win, win! – Free practice games on some internet sites tend to pay out more often, making you think you'll win when you put down actual money.
- On my own again – Friends can be a safety net. Playing on your own means there's no one there to remind you it's time to quit.
- Come in spinner - Online gambling companies use your betting habits to pitch special offers and events to you, encouraging you to gamble more.
- Faster, faster – You can place more bets faster online, increasing the chances of losing track of how much you are spending.



THE LINK BETWEEN

# GAMING APPS *and* GAMBLING

PG 12/13

Online games have become quite prominent especially on social media sites. Some games simulate gambling using virtual credits, while others are real betting games using real money.

*The average teenager spends more than five hours a day on digital media activities*  
*(Australian Communications and Media Authority)*

Research has found gaming apps are making gambling more accessible and attractive to young people, making gambling more socially acceptable.

The apps promote misleading information about gambling, often paying out at a higher rate than real gambling games.

Many online gambling games are not regulated like traditional gambling.

WATCH OUT FOR ADS THAT CLICK  
THROUGH TO GAMBLING APPS

TURN OFF THE APP STORE TO LIMIT  
APPS ACCESSED BY CHOICE OR ACCIDENT

TURN OFF IN-APP PURCHASE OPTIONS  
TO LIMIT ACCESS TO CREDITS

## how do young people LEARN ABOUT GAMBLING?

### PARENTS

What they say  
and do

### SCHOOL

What you hear  
from others

### PEER PRESSURE

Advertising  
portrays gambling  
as cool and  
sophisticated

### MEDIA

Melbourne Cup  
and sports tied up  
with gambling

### CULTURE

PG 14/15

## Why do young people gamble?

Young people gamble for the same reason they try other risky things like using drugs and alcohol. They may think it's fun, exciting and 'the thing to do with your mates'.

It could be a way to escape the pressure of school or home life or they may wrongly believe it's an easy way to make money.

**HOW YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT GAMBLING IS STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY THEIR HOME ENVIRONMENT, WHAT THEY HEAR FROM THEIR MATES AND FROM THE MEDIA.**

## New forms of gambling

The internet has changed our world in so many ways including gambling. Today, you can gamble online at a real or a virtual casino anywhere in the world, anytime, day or night.

Social media like Facebook and Twitter are now bringing virtual as well as real gambling, and advertising about gambling, to anyone who has a smart phone and an account.

What you need to know about the internet and gambling:

- Facebook links from friends can contain links to gambling sites.
- Some simulated gambling apps deliver prizes at a higher rate than real gambling games which makes people think they'll win more often when playing for real.
- Very young children have accidentally spent thousands on mum or dad's smart phone or tablet on credits for virtual games.
- If a Facebook friend 'likes' a gaming site, a link to that site could end up on your teenager's newsfeed.





TALKING TO  
**TEENAGERS**  
*about*  
**GAMBLING**

PG 16/17

Talking to young people about gambling gives them a chance to understand what gambling is all about so they are able to make better choices down the track.

### SOME KEY POINTS

### TO DISCUSS

- The odds of winning on any game are hardly ever in your favour - talk about house advantage.
- It doesn't matter how long you play, the odds of winning don't change whether you are on game 1 or game 100 - talk about the rules of probability.
- Knowing who is in or out of form might improve your likelihood of winning more points in the tipping comp but chance always comes into play - talk about chance and what influences winning.
- The gambling industry exists to make a profit - talk about the reality of gambling as an industry.
- Looking out for your mates is part of being a teenager - talk about how being an informed friend can be positive for their group.
- Gambling can be a form of escape for people who are feeling lonely or isolated - talk to them about who they can talk to if they need help including parents, teachers, school counsellor or gambling help professionals.
- Gambling online is risky - talk to them about staying safe online.
- If you want more information on the real chances of winning big and more, go to [kidbet.com.au](http://kidbet.com.au)

### ROLE MODELS

Parents' behaviour and values affects how young people think and feel about gambling.

Monitoring their exposure and access to gambling and being conscious of your own gambling habits will influence how they view gambling, even from an early age.

Demonstrating responsible gambling can have a positive influence on how they feel about it and help them take a responsible approach once they turn 18.



HERE ARE SOME SIGNS  
*that a*  
**TEENAGER**  
*might be having*  
**PROBLEMS**  
*with gambling*

PG 18/19

## SIGNS TO LOOK FOR

- SHOWING SIGNS OF DEPRESSION INCLUDING ISOLATION FROM FRIENDS
- OBSESSION WITH SIMULATED GAMBLING APPS AND GAMES
- SPENDING LOTS OF TIME TALKING OR THINKING ABOUT GAMBLING
- EXPERIENCING MOOD SWINGS, FEELING STRESSED WHEN NOT GAMBLING
- ISSUES AT HOME AROUND GAMBLING
- OBSESSING ABOUT ODDS WHEN WATCHING SPORT INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ON THE GAME
- LYING OR BEING SECRETIVE ABOUT GAMBLING ACTIVITIES
- MISSING SCHOOL OR GRADES FALLING DUE TO TIME BEING SPENT GAMBLING
- BORROWING OR TAKING MONEY FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS
- CONTINUING TO GAMBLE TO WIN BACK MONEY THEY HAVE LOST

Risk factors that can lead to gambling problems include:

**Underage gambling** - around one in five adults with gambling problems say they started before they turned 18

**Issues at home with gambling** – a proportion of people with gambling problems grew up in a home with a parent or grandparent with gambling issues

.....  
What's the big deal? Talking to teens about gambling.

# STAYING *safe* ONLINE

PG 20/21

Australian based gambling sites are likely to be more diligent in preventing minors from using their sites and responding to complaints because they are governed by local laws.

The best choice however is always prevention so here are some ways to help protect your bank account:

- Set up alerts to come to your phone for any purchases so you can track your child's smart phone, iPod touch or tablet spending
- Talk to you kids about only using secure websites and checking with you to ensure a particular site is safe
- Install and keep up to date a firewall, anti-virus software and anti-spyware software

## BEING CYBER SAFE

Use the 'Cyber Safety' button from the Australian Governments cybersafety website.

[www.cybersafety.dbcde.gov.au](http://www.cybersafety.dbcde.gov.au) has information for parents and kids about online games and staying safe online.

It has information on the most popular online games and social media sites including whether you can spend money on them.

You can download a cybersafety help button which links to counselling and educational resources. The help button is a free app you can download onto a home computer, mobile device or school/library network.



## BLOCKING GAMBLING SITES

If online gambling has become a problem for your family or you want to stop issues from arising you can block access to gambling sites using a filter.

Two popular filters are Gamblock and Betfilter or you can also install internet monitoring software like cyberpatrol, cybersitter or netnanny.

[www.gamblock.com](http://www.gamblock.com)  
[www.betfilter.com](http://www.betfilter.com)  
[www.cyberpatrol.com](http://www.cyberpatrol.com)  
[www.cybersitter.com](http://www.cybersitter.com)  
[www.netnanny.com](http://www.netnanny.com)

Reputable gambling sites also offer self-exclusion programs where you can ban yourself (or your teenager) from their site.

## WANT TO COMPLAIN ABOUT AN ONLINE GAMBLING SITE?

Australian law prohibits online casinos from offering games like roulette, poker, craps or online pokies and blackjack to people on Australian soil.

If you find a site offering this type of game you can report it via the Australian Communication and Media Authority - go to the complaints page and click on the internet gambling form.

[www.acma.gov.au](http://www.acma.gov.au)

What's the big deal? Talking to teens about gambling.

# INFORMATION *and* ASSISTANCE

PG 22/23

If you or someone you care about has an issue with gambling, have a question or are looking for further information; confidential, professional, free advice and support is available at:

- Gambler's Help **1800 858 858** or
- Gambler's Help Youthline **1800 262 376** or
- **gamblinghelponline.org.au**

School counsellors, doctors and other health professionals will also be able to help.

Go to **kidbet.com.au** to:

- learn more about this issue
- find tips on taking a responsible approach to gambling
- find out how your school or sporting club can get involved

The Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation is an independent statutory authority set up to help people who are affected by problem gambling and to foster responsible gambling. To find out more go to **www.responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au** or email [contact@responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au)

