

# GAMBLING AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA

August 2011

**GRA**

GAMBLING RESEARCH AUSTRALIA



**REPORT**

To

**Gambling Research Australia**

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**Gambling and Young People in Australia**

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**Australian Council *for* Educational Research Ltd**

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August 2011

Gambling Research Australia (GRA) is a partnership between the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments and is responsible for managing and implementing a national research agenda.

Gambling Research Australia commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research to undertake a national study of young people and their gambling within an Australian context.

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- Northern Territory: Northern Territory Government through the Community Benefit Fund
- Queensland: Queensland Treasury
- South Australia: Government of South Australia
- Tasmania: Tasmanian Government through the Community Support Levy
- Victoria: Victorian Government through the Community Support Fund
- Western Australia: Government of Western Australia through the Gaming Community Trust

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## **ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS**

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ACMA	Australian Communications Media Authority
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ARL	Australian Rugby League
ATSI	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
CAGI	Canadian Adolescent Gambling Inventory
CATI	Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview
CASS-L	Connors Wells Adolescent Self-Report Scale: Long Form
CPGI	Canadian Problem Gambling Index
DSM-IV	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-Fourth Edition
DSM-IV-J	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-Fourth Edition-Juvenile
DSM-IV-MR-J	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-Fourth Edition-Multiple Response-Adapted for Juveniles
EGM	Electronic Gaming Machine
ERG	Expert Reference Group
ERIC	Education Resources Information Center
GA-20	Gamblers Anonymous – Twenty Questions
GRA	Gambling Research Australia
MAGS	Massachusetts Gambling Screen
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NFL	National Football League
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RSE	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale
SOGS	South Oaks Gambling Screen
SOGS-RA	South Oaks Gambling Screen Revised for Adolescents
TAB	Totalisator Agency Board [betting shop]
TAFE	Technical and Further Education [institute]
VGS	Victorian Gambling Screen

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

The *Gambling and Young People in Australia* research project was commissioned by the Victorian Department of Justice on behalf of Gambling Research Australia (GRA). The project, a national study of young people and their gambling in the Australian context, was undertaken by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) with assistance from the Wallis Consulting Group.

The purpose of the research was to:

- describe the current gambling behaviour of young people;
- describe the context in which this gambling behaviour occurs, including the presence of other risk-taking behaviours;
- analyse how, and the extent to which, gambling is similar to, or distinct from, other risk-taking behaviours;
- determine at what levels and in what forms young people's gambling becomes problematic or an indicator of future pathology;
- identify and analyse the differences between young people who gamble and become problem gamblers from those who do not develop a problem; and,
- determine possible risk inhibitors and risk enhancers relevant to gambling for young people.

### **Definition of problem gambling used in this study**

“Problem gambling is characterised by difficulties in limiting money and/or time spent on gambling, which leads to adverse consequences for the gambler, others or for the community”<sup>1</sup>.

### **Legality and availability of gambling activities in Australia<sup>2</sup>**

The legal age for gambling in Australia is 18.

The following gambling activities are available in all states/territories of Australia: Lotto/Powerball, football pools, lotteries, instant lotteries (“scratchies”), casino gaming, horse/dog racing, and sports betting. Gaming machines are available in all states/territories, although this access is restricted to hotels and clubs in the ACT, and to casino venues in Western Australia. Numerous gambling activities, from card games to betting, are now available via the internet. Access to these on-line gambling activities is also restricted to those over the age of 18.

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<sup>1</sup> *Problem Gambling and Harm: Towards a National Definition* prepared for the National Gambling Research Working Party by the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies together with the Department of Psychology, University of Adelaide, December 2005

<sup>2</sup> *Source: Office of Economic and Statistical Research – Queensland Treasury, 2010. Australian Gambling Statistics 1982–1983 to 2007–08, 26<sup>th</sup> edition*

Legalities aside, the availability of gambling services and access to gambling activities are not the same thing. For example, a gambling activity in a casino may be available in Brisbane, the Gold Coast, and Cairns but not easily accessible to people living in other parts of Queensland except when they are on holidays and/or travel specifically to gamble.

### Target population

The target study population was young people in Australia aged 10–24 years.

### SAMPLE

From within the target population, a national sample was drawn to ensure inclusion of young people in a range of urban, regional and remote locations, including those who were at school, in post-school educational settings, employed and unemployed. The sample also included young people from culturally, linguistically and diverse backgrounds.

The study involved respondents aged 10 (Year 4 in most Australian primary schools) through to 17 (Year 12 at secondary school), as well as a non-school-based sample of young people aged 15 to 24. The age-groups for analysis were 10–14; 15–17; and 18–24.

A school-based sample was recruited by ACER via approaches to a national sample of schools following receipt of permission to conduct research from relevant education jurisdictions. This sample consisted mostly of young people aged 10 to 17.

**Table 1: Number of sample schools by level and jurisdiction**

State	Participating schools (primary)	Participating schools (secondary)	Participating schools (total)
ACT	1	4	5
NSW	7	12	19
NT	1	1	2
QLD	3	3	6
SA	1	5	6
TAS	7	4	11
VIC	6	3	9
WA	2	5	7
<i>Total</i>	28	37	65

A predominantly non-school-based sample was recruited by the Wallis Consulting Group via random digit dialling (RDD) sampling techniques supplemented by on-line surveys with established panels of young respondents.

**Table 2: Achieved responses, non-school-based sample by age and mode of conduct**

	Age-group	At school or left school		Total
		At school	Left school	
Telephone	15–17	0	98	98
	18–24	0	1,225	1,225
On-line survey	15–17	473	60	533
	18–24	82	1,549	1,631
<i>Total</i>		555	932	3,487

**Table 3: Achieved sample by jurisdiction, age-group, gender, school-base status**

State/Territory	Age-group	Female (school)	Male (school)	Female (not at school)	Male (not at school)	Missing	Total
ACT	10–14	23	117	–	–		140
	15–17	57	137	2	3		199
	18–24	4	11	127	107		249
	missing					9	9
<i>ACT Total</i>		<i>84</i>	<i>265</i>	<i>129</i>	<i>110</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>597</i>
NSW	10–14	377	415	–	–		792
	15–17	260	339	21	25		645
	18–24	18	17	356	273		664
	missing					16	16
<i>NSW Total</i>		<i>655</i>	<i>771</i>	<i>377</i>	<i>298</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>2117</i>
NT	10–14	10	14	–	–		24
	15–17	4	10	3	0		17
	18–24	2		33	22		57
<i>NT Total</i>		<i>16</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>22</i>		<i>98</i>
QLD	10–14	37	26	–	–		63
	15–17	80	55	18	18		171
	18–24	8	3	279	191		481
<i>QLD Total</i>		<i>125</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>297</i>	<i>209</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>715</i>
SA	10–14	51	33	–	–		84
	15–17	81	69	8	7		165
	18–24	7	5	173	141		326
<i>SA Total</i>		<i>139</i>	<i>107</i>	<i>181</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>575</i>
TAS	10–14	122	96	–	–		218
	15–17	34	29	2	0		65
	18–24	7	1	88	72		168
<i>Tas Total</i>		<i>163</i>	<i>126</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>451</i>
VIC	10–14	55	51	–	–		106
	15–17	94	83	7	15		199
	18–24	15	6	352	257		630
	missing					1	1
<i>VIC Total</i>		<i>164</i>	<i>140</i>	<i>359</i>	<i>272</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>936</i>
WA	10–14	42	48	–	–		90
	15–17	34	24	12	17		87
	18–24	2	1	182	121		306
<i>WA Total</i>		<i>78</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>194</i>	<i>138</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>483</i>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>1,424</b>	<b>1,590</b>	<b>1,663</b>	<b>1,269</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>5,972</b>

Note: Totals includes a small number of students who did not provide information on their gender.

The sample design required approximately equal-sized samples from each of the states/territories so that the contribution of the states/territories to the national results reflected respective population sizes. The 10–14 year age-group, for example, included a much smaller sample of participants from Queensland (63 participants) compared with Tasmania (218). Also, a considerable degree of non-response was experienced, particularly in the younger age-groups, and particularly for some states/territories. For the results to be considered representative at the national level, the contribution of the greater number of responses from smaller states or from certain age-groups needed to be reduced; that is, the size of these particular groups had to be brought back in line with the proportion of the actual population they represent. Thus it was necessary to apply weightings for analyses that aggregated data to the national level.

As a result of this process of weighting, the sample size was reduced from an unweighted sample of 5,972 to a weighted sample 5,685 for the purpose of data analysis.

## **METHOD**

### *Literature review*

The first task was to conduct a review of the national and international literature on young people and gambling. The review is not an exhaustive summary of all the youth gambling research published to date, but it draws on this body of knowledge to inform the current project and place it in the context of existing research.

ACER's Cunningham library facilities were used to locate relevant literature (including conference papers) using databases such as PsycINFO, Scopus, Medline, Family and Society, SocIndex, and ERIC. The search strategy used a combination of key words such as gambling, adolescent, youth, risk factors, addiction. In addition, documents from relevant organisations (e.g., GRA) were obtained via the Internet and through personal approach. References within references were searched for additional publications. The focus of the literature review was to summarise current information about youth gambling and to explore issues relevant to the design of the survey that was developed for the current project. Material for the review was drawn mainly from the period 1992 to 2010.

### *Survey*

The review of the literature informed the development of a survey to obtain information about the current gambling behaviour of young people, including the extent and patterns of their gambling, contexts in which they gamble, and reasons for their gambling. Three formats of the survey were developed: on-line, pencil-and-paper, and computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI). The surveys were conducted (in all forms) between August 2009 and May 2010.

**Table 4: Characteristics of survey participants**

	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	2,865	50.4
Female	2,820	49.6
Indigenous status		
Indigenous	251	4.4
Non-Indigenous	5,402	95.0
Unknown	32	0.6
Age-group		
10–14 years	1,253	22.0
15–17 years	1,551	27.3
18 years or older	2,881	50.7
School attendance		
At school	2,688	47.3
Not at school	2,997	52.7
Employment (including part-time after school)		
Employed	2,095	36.9
Not employed	3,590	63.1

Note: Unweighted sample is 5,972 as in Table 3; weighted sample is 5,685 as in Table 4.

Adding responses from 300 Indigenous Australians to the sample proved to be a time-consuming component of the project. A combination of strategies resulted in recruiting a weighted sample of 251 Indigenous young people (107 aged 10–14; 64 (15–17); and 80 (18–24).

#### *Focus groups*

Focus group discussions were conducted with a small sample of young people. They were designed to probe more deeply into young people’s reasons for gambling, their beliefs about gambling, contexts in which they gamble, and associated risk-taking behaviours. Participants for the focus groups were initially recruited from schools that had completed the survey. With the reluctance of many schools to participate in the focus group portion of the study, an additional two groups were recruited through direct approach even though they had not completed the survey.

A total of nine focus group discussions were conducted with school students aged between 10 and 18 in primary and secondary schools in NSW and Victoria. Each group comprised twelve students at most (refer to Table 5).

The discussions were scheduled to run for approximately 45 minutes. A structured series of questions was used to initiate conversation and these questions were aimed at encouraging students to discuss their own gambling experiences as well as those they were aware of in their families and communities. They were asked about their exposure to gambling and their understanding of gambling habits. Discussion was led by the interviewer, although participants were able to introduce their own ideas as the discussions progressed.

**Table 5: Composition of focus groups**

	State/Territory	Year levels	No. of students
Focus Group 1	Victoria	5–6	12
Focus Group 2	New South Wales	7	8
Focus Group 3	New South Wales	8	6
Focus Group 4	New South Wales	9	6
Focus Group 5	New South Wales	10	8
Focus Group 6	New South Wales	11	6
Focus Group 7	New South Wales	12	6
Focus Group 8	Victoria	6, 10	3
Focus Group 9	Victoria	12	7
			Total: 62

*Data analysis*

Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the characteristics of the survey participants (gender, age, Indigenous status, employment status, whether attending school or not), frequency of engagement in a range of gambling activities, extent of engagement in gambling, contexts for gambling (motivation to gamble, company in which they gambled, persons who influenced their gambling behaviour), attitudes (to self and to gambling), engagement in other risky behaviours (e.g., use of substances such as drugs, alcohol and cigarettes), and engagement in delinquent behaviours such as graffiti, stealing, and fighting). Participants were grouped according to demographic variables, including gender, age, and Indigenous status, and descriptions of participation in various gambling activities by groups were undertaken. In addition, responses to the DSM-IV-MR-J gambling items were used to assign respondents to one of four groups (see Table 6), and the responses of these groups were also compared to investigate differences in their responses.

Structural equation modelling was employed for investigating the multivariate relationships between gambling behaviour, self-esteem, attitudes towards gambling and respondents' other characteristics, including demographic information and information about involvement of family and friends in gambling. The models were intended to explore two research questions:

- 1) What are the relationships between contextual variables (gender, age-group, attitudes towards gambling, low self-esteem, family history of gambling, peer involvement in gambling, and involvement of others in gambling), risky behaviours (substance use and delinquent behaviour), and problem gambling behaviour?
- 2) How strongly are the contextual variables and risky behaviours associated with positive attitudes towards gambling and low self-esteem?

The differences in the relationships between respondent characteristics and self-esteem and between respondent characteristics and attitudes towards gambling thus revealed were explored separately for the four gambling groups – non-gamblers, social gamblers, at-risk gamblers and problem gamblers – using the techniques mentioned above.

The focus groups generated qualitative data. These data were analysed to describe behaviours, beliefs, and contexts rather than to develop theory, which is in accordance with the stated purposes of the research as outlined in GRA’s project specification. However, techniques such as those associated with grounded theory were used to assist in making sense of the qualitative data; for example, the techniques of coding, “memo-ing”, and constructing concept maps are traditional grounded-theory tools that were applied to the qualitative data. Iterative processes and co-researcher reliability checks were conducted to enhance the reliability of the qualitative data analysis.

### **Classification of young people as gamblers**

Classifying young people according to gambling status (see Table 6) was based on twelve items aligned with nine diagnostic criteria in DSM-IV-MR-J, with a score of 4 out of 9 locating the young person in the category “problematic”, and 1 to 3 out of 9 “at-risk”.

The majority of young people were classified as social gamblers (56%); nearly one-quarter were non-gamblers (23%); 16% were as-risk gamblers; and 5% were problem gamblers.

**Table 6: Classification of young people according to gambling status**

Gambling Group	Gambling activities in past 12 months	Number of DSM-IV-MR-J criteria endorsed (out of nine)	% of young people
Non-gambler	None	Not presented	23
Social gambler	Yes	None	56
At-risk gambler	Yes	One to three	16
Problem gambler	Yes	At least four	5

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

### *The sample*

Recruitment of the school-based sample proved difficult due to schools’ resistance to participating in the research. Recruitment of the non-school sample was also problematic mainly due to the lack of easy telephone access via landlines in an era of expansion in mobile-phone-only households.

### *The survey instrument*

Self-report instruments of behaviour are recognised as a source of measurement error. Nevertheless, the questionnaire enabled the researchers to gather a large volume of data from a large number of young people simultaneously and of eliciting specifically focused information that was amenable to statistical analysis.

### *Focus groups*

The survey was administered to young people in all states and territories but focus groups were held in Victoria and NSW only. The research design did not limit the focus groups to two jurisdictions; the case was that the level of interest in participating was minimal in most jurisdictions. This means that no conclusions can be drawn about the other six jurisdictions in relation to issues that vary across the jurisdictions such as advertising of gambling awareness. Nevertheless, young people’s comments from two states, although not necessarily representative of the country, provided the researchers with some bounds for interpretation of the survey results.



## FINDINGS

This research study presents a number of findings related to the gambling behaviour of young people in Australia. It pays particular attention to those young people who can be classified as problem gamblers.

### Current gambling behaviour of young people

#### *Participation*

Overall, 77% of young people have participated in a gambling activity at least once in the 12 months just past.

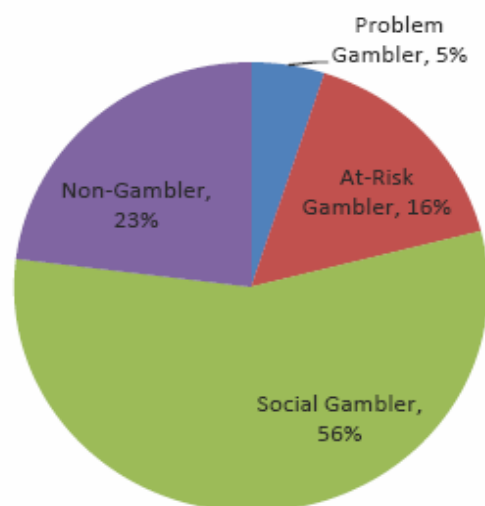
There were no significant differences in gambling participation in the previous 12 months according to gender or Indigenous status.

There were some differences in gambling participation in the previous 12 months according to age, with 76% of the 10–14 year age-group, 64% of the 15–17 year age-group, and 85% of the 18–24 year age-group having gambled at least once in the past year.

Overall, gambling frequency as reported by young people is not particularly high. Very few young people reported that they participated in gambling activities on a daily or even weekly basis.

#### *Assignment to a gambling category*

Figure 1 displays the proportion of young people in this study in each of the four gambling groups, including “non-gamblers”, as described in Table 6 above.



**Figure 1: Proportion of young people in each of four gambling categories**

Of the 4,383 young people who indicated they had participated in at least one form of gambling activity in the past twelve months, preoccupation with gambling (thinking about and planning gambling activities) was the most commonly endorsed item in the set of 12 questions that young people answered about themselves and gambling, for each of the three age-groups.

### *Group differences in gambling classification*

There were differences according to age-group in terms of the classification of gamblers. Young people in the older age-group were three times more likely to be at-risk gamblers than their younger counterparts. They were also twice as likely as the 15–17-year-olds to be problem gamblers and one and a half times as likely as the 10–14-year-olds. Participants in the youngest age-group were more likely to be social gamblers, whereas those in the middle age-group were most likely to be non-gamblers.

It is possible that the 10–14 year olds were applying specific “childish” interpretations of some of the activities they were asked about. For example, games modelled on bingo, but without any outlay or return of money or goods, are sometimes used as class activities within a larger unit of work (perhaps a unit on a class novel); and a version of two-up, also without any outlay or return of money or goods, has been played in schools on Anzac Day as part of Australian History activities. Being rewarded access to higher and higher levels in arcade-style games, whether on a computer or in a games parlour, might be considered a “prize”. If such activities were indeed being counted in the youngest age-group’s responses, it might help explain the findings that 10–14 year-olds were more likely than 15–17 year-olds to be social gamblers, and that the 15–17 year-olds were more likely than 10–14 year-olds to be non-gamblers.

There was a difference according to gender in the classification of gamblers. Males were more likely to be at-risk or problem gamblers than females, with 5.7% of males being problem gamblers as opposed to 3.2% of females, and 19.1% of the males at-risk gamblers compared with 13.9% of females.

There was also a difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people in terms of the gambling classification. Indigenous young people were 6.4 times more likely to be problem gamblers than non-Indigenous young people. They were also more likely to be at-risk gamblers. (Note: Indigenous young people constituted only 4.4% of the sample.)

### **Gambling activities**

Problem gamblers had a greater involvement than did social and at-risk gamblers in all types of gambling activities (13 types presented). On average, problem gamblers reported participating in eight different gambling activities over the past 12 months, while at-risk gamblers reported five different activities and social gamblers three. Over 50% of problem gamblers were involved in all gambling activities presented with the exception of bingo (46%). After scratch cards (80%), problem gamblers played cards at home (77%), and purchased lottery tickets (74%).

The most common gambling activities among young people overall were purchase of instant prize-tickets or scratch cards, followed by lottery tickets, and playing cards games at home or in the homes of friends or relatives.

Amongst social gamblers, the most common gambling activities were purchase of scratch cards (52%), purchase of lottery tickets (41%), and participation in football tipping or sweeps (40%).

At-risk gamblers were also involved in purchasing scratch cards (66%), and in lotteries (58%). In addition, over fifty percent of young people in this group were also using poker machines (58%) and playing card games at home (56%).

As expected, problem gamblers had a greater involvement than the other two groups of gamblers in all types of gambling activities. For example, 13% of social gamblers and 35% of at-risk gamblers reported playing casino games other than cards whereas 62% of problem gamblers reported doing so.

For Indigenous young people, after the purchase of scratch cards, the second most common activity was card games at home (55%), followed by lottery tickets (48%), and having someone else place a bet on their behalf (46%). For non-Indigenous young people, after the purchase of scratch cards, the second most common activity was lottery tickets (46%), followed by card games at home (42%), and football tipping or sweeps (42%).

Overall, 64% of young people indicated that they had used poker machines, 62% played casino games other than cards, 59% used card games in a casino, and not all of these young people are over 18. In fact, 5% of 10–14 year-olds reported that they had played card games in a casino in the past 12 months and 7.6% of them reported that they had played other games in a casino.

Participation in football tipping or sweeps across all sub-groups was consistently high and notable given the increased community awareness of sports-related gambling, particularly those associated with football (e.g., AFL and NRL). Of particular interest was the frequency with which this form of gambling was taking place with marked prevalence amongst social gamblers for whom weekly or daily participation was higher than for other forms of gambling. Weekly and daily participation was also noticeably higher for this activity than other activities for males, and for the younger age-groups – those aged 10–14 and 15–17 years. Young males in the current study reported greater participation in sports-related betting than did young females.

#### *An inconsistency in results*

An inconsistency emerged in results between two questionnaires: In the first instance, 77% of young people indicated that they had gambled in one form or another (thirteen gambling activities presented) over the year just past. Later, when asked a different question about company kept while gambling, a reasonably large percentage of social gamblers (35%) and a smaller percentage of at-risk (8%) and problem gamblers (3%) went on to select the option: “I don’t gamble”. This may be a labelling issue: a young person might say that he or she has bought a lottery ticket in the year past (and therefore be counted in the youth gambling population) while not recognising this activity as gambling, so that when asked “When you gamble, who else is usually with you?” respond with clear conscience that they do not gamble, as according to their personal definition of gambling, they do not. The issue of what is considered gambling for young Australians was explored further in the focus-group discussions.

## **Contexts for gambling**

### *Company kept*

Overall, 30% of young people have gambled with their friends, and 20% with more than one of the following: friend, parent, partner, sibling, relative, or stranger. A further 12% gambled alone. Only 1% reported gambling with a parent present and 1% reported gambling with a sibling. But 35% of problem gamblers have gambled with friends and 25% of them alone, which is more than twice the rate for social and at-risk gamblers.

### *Influence of others*

Only 23% of young people classified as problem gamblers said they did not know any problem gamblers in contrast to the other groups of young people (81% of non-gamblers, 72% of social gamblers, and 53% of at-risk gamblers) who reported that they did not know any problem gamblers. Among those young people classified as problem gamblers, 33% reported having friends who gambled too much and 6% had partners who gambled too much. Only 0.1% of non-gamblers had a partner who, reportedly, gambled too much.

Young people with problem gamblers in their family (mother/step mother, father/step father, brother, sister) are more likely to be at-risk or problem gamblers. Young people who have a peer who is a problem gambler, and young people who know someone else who is a problem gambler are all more likely to be at-risk or problem gamblers than are young people who do not know anyone who gambles too much.

### *Motivation for gambling*

Reasons given by young people for their gambling varied across gambling groups. Overall, the most common reasons were enjoyment (47%) and to win money (42%). These were also the most common reasons given by problem gamblers (56% and 61% respectively). The least common reasons overall were loneliness (2%), to escape from problems (2%), and unhappiness (2%). For the problem gamblers, however, loneliness, escapism and unhappiness reasons were more frequently endorsed among other young people – 13%, 20% and 17%, respectively – although still amongst the least common reasons reported.

## **Gambling and other risky behaviours**

Overall, over the previous six months, 53% of young people had imbibed more than a sip of alcohol, 21% had smoked cigarettes, and 11% had used illegal drugs. Only 5% had been involved in shoplifting or other forms of theft, and only 4% in graffiti or tagging.

Alcohol was the most frequent type of risky behaviour reported in all four groups (non-gamblers and the three gambler groups) with the next most common for all (except non-gamblers) being cigarette smoking. Non-gamblers reported using public transport without a ticket as their second most frequent type of risky behaviour. For the problem gamblers, using public transport without a ticket was third on the list (42%) ahead of using illegal drugs (37%).

## **What young people said**

The young people who participated in the focus group discussions broadly defined gambling as any activity that involved using money in an attempt to acquire more money. The definitions also generally involved the notion that gambling activities were in some way harmful, imprudent or reckless activities with potentially damaging financial outcomes.

There was, however, a set of gambling activities that were not viewed negatively – in fact participants tended to view them as culturally accepted and, in some cases, expected. These activities included activities like the purchase, regular or otherwise, of a lottery ticket, usually by a family member for the whole family; a once-a-year wager on the outcome of the Melbourne Cup; or the purchase of raffle tickets for a charitable event. Furthermore, these activities were not considered to be of a kind that could or would result in problem gambling, in a sense they were considered to be safe gambling activities. This distinction was evident in all of the focus group interviews.

Problem gambling was strongly associated by the young people with other addictive habits like the use of alcohol or drugs. In particular, those interviewed linked their concepts of problem gamblers and gambling with gambling venues that served alcohol – pubs, clubs and casinos, and gambling activities that could be undertaken alone – playing the pokies, betting on the races, and betting on the outcome of other sports. It was also considered to be something that isolated the gambler from others, a lone activity undertaken solely for the potential financial reward. Conversely, “safe” gambling was characterised as something done socially and for entertainment or for reasons other than pure financial gain. These safe gambling activities were the activities that the focus group participants were likely to have been involved in themselves.

Finally, the majority of young people who participated in the discussions did not consider themselves to be gamblers, despite their participation in some gambling activities. Furthermore, they did not consider problem gambling or the effects of problem gambling to be an issue of relevance for them. Other addictive behaviours, like alcohol consumption and drug use, were identified as being of more pressing importance for young people and addictions that were likely to be more common in people of their age. This was also reflected in the lack of awareness amongst those interviewed of advertising for gaming and gambling activities and for services to assist in problem gambling. With the exception of some on-line advertising, young people did not feel that they were amongst the target audience for gambling advertising and they were largely unaware of anti-gambling advertising messages.

## **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PROBLEM-GAMBLERS AND OTHERS**

For young people in Australia who can be classified as problem gamblers, gambling behaviour is strongly associated with the following:

- a positive attitude to gambling
- low self-esteem
- peer involvement in gambling and substance use
- delinquent behaviour.

In essence, these findings about what distinguishes problem gamblers from others suggest that young people gamble because their mates do, because they are risk-takers, because they do not believe gambling is a bad thing, and because they do not have a healthy sense of self.

Because two of these characteristics – positive attitude to gambling and low self-esteem – are more susceptible to change than are others, the associations between these two characteristics and other contextual variables (e.g., gender) and risky behaviours (e.g., substance use) were investigated.

Important results observed for the relationships with *positive attitudes towards gambling* show that the effects of gender, age-group, family history in gambling, involvement of peers and other relatives, substance use and delinquent behaviours are not similar in the four gambling groups.

- Males have more favourable attitudes towards gambling than do females for the first three groups (non-gamblers, social gamblers, and gamblers who are at risk of developing gambling problems). However, for the fourth group (the problem gamblers), there are no gender differences shown in terms of attitudes towards gambling.
- Older age-groups have less favourable attitudes towards gambling than the younger ones for non-gamblers and social gamblers. However, there are no age-group effects in terms of attitudes to gambling for problem gamblers and gamblers who are at risk of developing gambling problems.
- Family and peer involvement in gambling shows no significant influence on attitudes towards gambling in all four groups.
- Substance use does not show a significant influence on attitudes toward gambling in any of the gambling groups.
- Delinquent behaviours are strongly associated with favourable attitudes towards gambling for social gamblers and problem gamblers, but not for non-gamblers and at-risk gamblers.

Important results observed for the relationships with *low self-esteem* are:

- Females have lower self-esteem than do males in the first three groups (non-gamblers, social gamblers and gamblers who are at risk of developing gambling problems). In the fourth group (problem gamblers), there are no gender differences in terms of self-esteem.
- The older age-groups have higher self-esteem than the younger ones in the first three groups (non-gamblers, social gamblers, and at-risk gamblers). There is no association between self-esteem and age-group for the problem gamblers.
- Family and peer involvement in gambling has no significant effects on the self-esteem of the at-risk gamblers and the problem gamblers.
- Gambling history in immediate family members and involvement in gambling of other relatives is associated with lower self-esteem for the non-gamblers and the social gamblers.

- Substance use is associated with lower self-esteem for non-gamblers, but not with lower self-esteem for social gamblers, at-risk gamblers or problem gamblers.
- Delinquent behaviours are strongly linked to lower self-esteem for non-gamblers and social gamblers, but not for at-risk gamblers and problem gamblers.

## **RISK INHIBITORS AND RISK ENHANCERS FOR YOUNG GAMBLERS**

Not all young people who gamble do so at problematic levels or have a gambling problem. This is indicated by the finding that approximately 77% of young people in the current study have gambled in the year just past, but fewer than one in ten of those have done so at problematic levels.

Factors identified in the research literature that appear to be associated with a greater risk of problem gambling for young people include:

### *Having*

- Low self-esteem
- A positive attitude to gambling
- Parent(s) involved in gambling
- Peers involved in gambling
- Access to gambling services and products

### *Being*

- Male
- Impulsive and lacking in self-discipline
- A participant in other risky behaviours
- In a family that functions at sub-optimal levels.

In the current study, there were indications that low self-esteem, positive attitudes towards gambling, peer involvement in gambling and other risky behaviours, and involvement in delinquent activities were indeed associated with problematic levels of gambling among young people.

Protective factors are those that appear to reduce or even negate the likelihood of young people becoming problem gamblers. It was not easy to isolate protective factors in the study undertaken here because they are not simply the opposite of risk or the absence of a risk factor. Some other factors that might reduce the risk of problem gambling for young people, and which should be investigated further, are social capital and a healthy academic self-concept. Other factors such as media/advertising and mathematical knowledge were not investigated here. The literature does not provide the definitive answer on the influence of media/advertising and mathematical knowledge on a young person's gambling behaviour but does provide the basis for a new set of research questions.

## COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

This study is the first national study of gambling behaviour among young people in Australia. The need for such a review is high, given the effects of gambling on the wellbeing of individuals, relationships and society, and the interest of Government in developing an effective interventions framework.

The findings are not unexpected. They are similar to those from smaller studies in Australia and from larger studies in Canada. Nevertheless, the revelation that 5% of Australian youth are problem gamblers calls for a more intense study of the background and psychological characteristics of that particular group.

Analyses undertaken in this research study show that the effects of gender, age-group, family history in gambling, involvement in gambling of peers and other relatives, substance use and delinquent behaviours are not all similar in the four gambling groups. One pattern, however, is striking: While most of these variables have an effect in at least one of the gambling groups, an effect is not observable among the problem gamblers for any of these variables.

### For problem gamblers

- There are no gender differences in terms of attitudes towards gambling.
- There are no age-group effects in terms of attitudes towards gambling.
- Family and peer involvement in gambling shows no significant influence on positive attitudes towards gambling.
- Substance use does not show significant influence on positive attitudes towards gambling.
- There are no gender differences in terms of self-esteem.
- There are no significant differences in self-esteem across age-groups.
- Family and peer involvement in gambling have no significant effects on self-esteem.
- Substance use does not show significant influence on self-esteem.
- Delinquent behaviour is not significantly associated with lower self-esteem.

Hence, while low self-esteem and a positive attitude to gambling are associated with problematic levels of gambling among young people, low self-esteem is not age-specific or gender-specific. This is also the case with a positive attitude to gambling.

Although a psychological profile of young problem gamblers is beyond the scope of this study, these findings do suggest that problem gambling among young people may be something other than simply non-problem-gambling taken to the next stage. The influences that most readily present themselves to the mind as being associated with the problem – gender, age, family and peer involvement, substance use and delinquent behaviour – seem to operate differently (if they operate at all) on young problem gamblers than on other young people. It is possible, then, that an intervention that focuses on these influences could have beneficial effects on most young people without having the same effects on young problem gamblers. (There may be other influences that have not been captured in the current research.) Interventions might need to be tailored to take into account the divergence of young problem gamblers from the rest of the young population.



Two of the factors shown to be associated with problem gambling – positive attitude towards gambling and low self-esteem – have the potential for targeted intervention pathways. It is possible to change attitudes to gambling (from positive to negative) and to elevate levels of self-esteem (from low to high). Psychologically valid in its own right because of its more general usefulness would be an intervention program to treat young people who exhibit low self-esteem. Also demanding attention are programs designed to provide young people with strategies for coping with alienation that might prevent them resorting to gambling when/if they are lonely or in search of a “buzz”.

Given the volume of research that nominates a range of factors in the development of problem gambling, it is unlikely that any program that focuses solely on one aspect, be that coping strategies, mathematical understanding, resistance to peer pressure, or managing money, will have a substantial impact on problem gambling amongst our young people.

Findings in a study such as this may be of several kinds – they may bring to light interpretations that have never been considered before; they may tend to confirm a familiar view of an issue; and/or they may tend to discredit a familiar view of an issue. While the first of these kinds may be the most radical, the value of the other two kinds should not be underestimated.

One familiar view of gambling that the current study tends to *discredit* is that gambling is a male problem. While males are more likely than females to be at-risk or problem gamblers, this difference by no means renders the prevalence of female at-risk or problem gamblers negligible: 13.9% of females are at-risk gamblers (compared with 19.1% of males), and 3.2% of females are problem gamblers (compared with 5.7% of males).

### **Issues for further research**

The literature review identified “difficulties with school work” as a possible risk factor. Difficulty with school work was not examined in this study as a potential risk factor for gambling but relationships between difficulties with school work and involvement in gambling could be investigated in future studies, along with relationships between academic self-concept and problem gambling.

Young people’s understanding of what constitutes gambling, their perceptions about gamblers, and their judgments of others (not self) are important aspects of further discussion on devising intervention procedures that might be feasible in reducing levels of youth gambling in Australia. There were indications from this study that young people do not necessarily define gambling in line with the law, and do not see some forms of gambling activity as such. Understanding what young people see as gambling is a crucial step in investigating their involvement in gambling at non-problematic and problematic levels.

Often in research studies the finding of an absence of gender differences is overlooked because it is the presence of gender differences and their interpretations that usually attract attention. However, the finding in this study that there is no gender difference in problem gamblers’ self-esteem or in attitudes towards gambling is a finding of note. Gender neutrality is a notable phenomenon and warrants attention in future research.

The main source of descriptive information in this study was young people's responses to a questionnaire. Given that children as young as 10 years old were surveyed, the limitations of this method (acknowledged earlier), are likely to be more pronounced. An alternative method is worth considering: Referrals from teachers, parents and peers of young people, and young problem gamblers themselves as volunteers, may be useful in successfully deriving a research population for further investigating problem-gambling behaviour in young people in Australia.

The landscape of gambling is radically changing with the introduction of new forms of gambling (e.g., Internet gambling). Thus, there are more opportunities for gambling and so comparisons with the past are not as relevant as they used to be. Also, it could be argued the young people of 2011 think differently and expect different things from life than did the generation before them. A fresh approach to research about gambling is recommended; for example, contacting young people via social networking (Facebook and Twitter), as well as investigating young people's involvement in on-line gambling-like games on social networking sites.

## **1 – INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The *Gambling and Young People* study was conducted for Gambling Research Australia by the Australian Council for Educational Research (the Contractor) with the assistance of the Wallis Consulting group.

Gambling Research Australia (GRA) is a partnership between the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments and is responsible for managing and implementing a national research agenda.

This report describes the conduct and findings of the *Gambling and Young People* study, which was a national study that focused on young people and their gambling within an Australian context.

For this study, young people were defined as those aged 10–24 years. The study sample was designed to include young people in a range of urban, regional and remote locations, including those who are at school, in post-school educational settings, employed, and unemployed. The sample also included young people from culturally and linguistically and diverse backgrounds.

### **1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the research was to:

- describe the current gambling behaviour of young people;
- describe the context in which this gambling behaviour occurs, including the presence of other risk-taking behaviours;
- analyse how, and the extent to which, gambling is similar to, or distinct from, other risk-taking behaviours;
- determine at what levels and in what forms young people's gambling becomes problematic or an indicator of future pathology;
- identify and analyse the differences between young people who gamble and become problem gamblers from those who do not develop a problem; and,
- determine possible risk inhibitors and risk enhancers relevant to gambling for young people.

### **1.3 PROJECT CONSIDERATIONS**

GRA required the contractor to:

- Obtain relevant institutional ethics approval for the study. In practice, this meant that permission to conduct research had to be sought from each state and territory education jurisdiction for government schools. For Catholic schools, permission to conduct research was sought from each diocese in which sampled schools were

located. For independent schools, permission was sought separately from each of the sampled schools, although the independent schools associations in each of the states and territories were provided with information about the research.

- Use the following definition of problem gambling:

“Problem gambling is characterised by difficulties in limiting money and/or time spent on gambling, which leads to adverse consequences for the gambler, others or for the community”<sup>3</sup>.
- Consider both wagering and gaming activities undertaken by young people. This includes:
  - commercial forms of gambling;
  - interactive gambling that may include the use of electronic communication technologies, Internet, mobile phones, interactive television and interactive betting (placing a bet or purchasing lottery products over the electronic media); and,
  - non-commercial forms of gambling, such as poker games played in private, non-commercial venues.

#### **1.4 PROJECT TASKS**

GRA required the contractor to:

- review the published literature relevant to the project; and,
- design and implement a research methodology that identifies and analyses the nature and context of the gambling behaviour of young people and the possible role of other risky behaviours in relation to gambling. The research design should enable the differentiation of young people who gamble without the development of problematic behaviour from those who do, and should identify risk enhancers and risk inhibitors.

#### **1.5 OUTLINE OF THE REPORT**

The main components of the report are:

- the Executive Summary, which provides a synopsis of the *Gambling and Young People* project;
- an introduction to the project (Chapter 1) that outlines the background to, and purpose of, the research, and describes project considerations and project tasks;
- a review of the relevant research literature (Chapter 2);

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<sup>3</sup> *Problem Gambling and Harm: Towards a National Definition* prepared for the National Gambling Research Working Party by the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies together with the Department of Psychology, University of Adelaide, December 2005.

- a description of the project methodology (Chapter 3), including descriptions of
  - sampling procedures and final sample,
  - survey design, including survey content, how it was used to identify and classify the gambling status of respondents, and weighting procedures, and
  - data collection procedures for the survey and focus-group interviews;
- results of the surveys (Chapter 4), including descriptive results pertaining to
  - survey participants – gender, Indigenous status, age (group), school attendance, and employment status;
  - current gambling behaviours of the participants – what they do and the extent to which they do it;
  - contexts of young people’s gambling – why they gamble, who they gamble with, the extent of problem gambling in the family and amongst peers, and their participation in anti-social and risky behaviours;
  - participants’ attitudes – to self (self-esteem) and to gambling; and
  - modelling relationships between contextual variables of gender and age-group, influences of family and peer problem gambling, problem gambling amongst others known to young people, risky behaviours, and attitudes to self and to gambling.
- results of focus-group discussions (Chapter 5) organised under five headings:
  1. definition of gambling
  2. motivation for gambling
  3. contexts in which gambling is most likely to occur
  4. awareness of gambling in the community and in Australia generally
  5. seeking help.
- a discussion of the results (Chapter 6) including
  - a discussion of the results organised around the six key purpose areas of the project outlined in Section 1.2 above,
  - a discussion of methodological limitations and future research directions,
  - a distillation of the findings about problem gambling in young people; and,
  - concluding comments.

## 2 – REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Gambling has a long-established tradition as a pastime or leisure activity in Australia. Games of two-up on Anzac day, office or family sweeps for the major horse-racing season, and footy tipping competitions all appear to be part of the fabric of Australian life and, for the most part, are accepted as fairly innocuous activities that are as typically “Australian” as barbequing and going to the beach.

Much of the research on gambling has been conducted with adults<sup>4</sup>. However, research involving young people – children and adolescents – is becoming more common. The need to obtain a clear picture of young people’s involvement in gambling is increasingly urgent, particularly with their growing reliance on the Internet, their potential exposure to overseas gaming sites, and changes in the nature of their peer-group interactions (e.g., Face book).

Questions regarding the nature and attraction of gambling for young people, the extent of their participation, when it becomes a ‘problem’, what the impacts are on those for whom gambling is problematic behaviour, and how to resolve this have been the focus of research world-wide, resulting in a sizable research literature.

This chapter presents a review of the literature on young people and gambling. The review does not attempt to be an exhaustive summary of all the youth gambling research published to date, but it draws on this body of knowledge to inform the current project about youth gambling in Australia and place it in the context of existing research.

To conduct the review, we first used ACER’s Cunningham Library facilities to locate relevant literature (including conference papers) using databases such as PsycINFO, Scopus, Medline, Family and Society, SocIndex, and ERIC. The search strategy used a combination of key words such as *gambling, adolescent, youth, risk factors, addiction*. In addition, documents from relevant organisations (e.g., Gambling Research Australia) were obtained via the Internet and through personal approach. References within references were searched for additional publications. The focus of the literature review was to summarise current information about youth gambling and explore issues relevant to the design of the survey that was developed for this project. Material for the review was drawn mainly from the period 1992 to 2010.

### 2.2 THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

Three forms of activity are generally included under the heading of formal gambling in Australia: gaming, in which an item of value is exchanged depending on the outcome of a game, such as card games, roulette or electronic gaming machines (EGMs); betting or wagering, where wagers are placed on the outcome of a race, sporting event or other contest (e.g., horse or dog races, betting on football); and lotteries, in which money or prizes are distributed according to a random draw (of numbers or tickets).

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<sup>4</sup> Reviews of the Australian research literature regarding adult participation in gambling are available in Delfabbro, 2008a; Delfabbro, 2008b; Productivity Commission, 2010

In Australia, the states and territories differ in ways that affect access to various forms of gambling by their adult populations (e.g., differences in regulatory framework around gambling, types of games available at different venues, types of venues and activities available (see Box 1 for further information) but, in all states and territories, participation in any form of gambling is restricted to those over the age of 18.

**Box 1 – What is Gambling? Forms of gambling and gaming available in Australia**

**Gaming machines** are available in casinos, clubs and hotels throughout Australia, except Western Australia where they are only available in the casino. In most jurisdictions operators must return at least 85% of wagers to players as winnings, either by cash or a mixture of cash and product. Gaming machines have the capacity to be linked in order to offer jackpots such as cars, holidays and mystery cash prizes up to \$1 million. Also known as electronic gaming machines (EGMs).

**Keno** is typically played in clubs, casinos and hotels. It is also offered by lottery agencies in some jurisdictions. Prizes and the odds of winning vary according to how many numbers are chosen and matched. In Tattersall's keno, the probability of winning the jackpot is almost 1 in 9 million and the average jackpot is \$840,000.

**Lotto** games are conducted at both a state and national level. Oz-lotto, drawn every Tuesday, is the national lotto game. Saturday night Lotto, conducted by the Australian Lotto Bloc, is similar to Oz-Lotto with all states except New South Wales participating in the draw. At the state level, a number of lotteries are run. For example, New South Wales Lotteries draws Lotto on Monday and Wednesday; South Australia Lotteries draws X-Lotto on Monday, and the Queensland Golden Casket Lottery draws Gold Lotto on Wednesday.

**Powerball** is similar to lotto but its two-draw structure means that the chance of winning the major prize is significantly lower (about 1 in 55 million).

**Football pools** is a lotto-style game where the winning numbers are based on the outcome of English or Australian soccer matches. There are five prize divisions – the chance of winning a prize in the first division (an average prize of \$450,000) is over 1 in 1 million, whereas the chance of winning a prize in the fifth division (an average prize of \$14) is 1 in 149.

**Instant scratchies** are tickets (ranging in price from \$1 to \$10) that are scratched to reveal symbols. Prizes are paid on a set return to players and are based on the number of tickets in a set, the cost to purchase the tickets, and a set percentage retained by the operator for costs. Prizes range in value from \$1 to \$500,000. The chance of winning a prize varies with the type of ticket; the chance of winning a prize on a New South Wales ticket, for example, is about 1 in 5.

**Lotteries (caskets)** are drawn Australia-wide by both government and commercial operators. For example, the Golden Casket Lottery Corporation in Queensland sells \$2 and \$5 casket tickets. Prize ranges are \$10 to \$250,000 in the \$5 lottery and \$5 to \$100,000 in the \$2 lottery. In addition, free tickets are awarded to every ticket holder who is one number away from a winning ticket. Over 7,000 tickets in each draw win a prize. New South Wales Lotteries conducts a similar style of lottery but also offer a jackpot prize. The \$2 jackpot starts at \$500,000 and grows by \$50,000 until it is won. The \$5 lottery jackpot starts at \$750,000 and grows by \$100,000 until it is won. The odds of winning a prize are 1 in 18 for the \$2 lottery and 1 in 11 for the \$5 lottery.

**Casinos** offer range of gambling activities. Some, such as roulette and the money wheel, are based entirely on luck. Others, such as blackjack and poker, require some degree of skill. The average percentage of each bet that is retained by the casino varies with the table game. Blackjack, for example, has the lowest of all house percentages, ranging from 0 to 1%. In comparison, the average house advantage on the money wheel is 5%, on two-up it is 3%, on baccarat it is 1% of player and bank bets and 14% on tie bets, on craps it is 2.5%, and on other dice games such as mini-dice, sic-bo, and heads & tails, the average house percentage is 5%.

**Racing** involves betting on horse and greyhound races with on-course and off-course bookmakers and totalisators. At on-course totalisators and totaliser agency boards (TABs) betting is in the form of a “unit” wager (a unit being a multiple of 50c or \$1, depending on the jurisdiction). The operator deducts a percentage of the total units wagered and the remainder is returned as winnings to players in multiples of the unit wagered. Types of TAB betting include win-and-place betting, quinella betting, trifecta betting, doubles and trebles betting, and mystery betting. Unlike totalisators, bookmakers offer win-and-place bets on racing events at fixed odds. A player can wager any amount above a set minimum and will receive the bookmaker’s odds at the time of making the wager. Those odds stand, irrespective of whether the bookmaker alters the odds at a later time.

**Sports betting** is wagering on local, national or international sporting events (other than horse and greyhound racing) with bookmakers and TABs. Sports bets can be made at the betting agency, by telephone or via the Internet.<sup>5</sup> Prize money and the odds-on sports betting at TABs, such as footy-bet, depends on total amount wagered, whereas sports betting with bookmakers is based on fixed odds.

**Bingo** is a numbers game where each player has one or more cards with differently printed numbers (ranging from 1 and 99) on which to place markers as the numbers are called. The odds of winning and the prize money vary with the number of cards sold to players.

Other forms of minor or informal gambling include raffles and lucky envelopes, often used for fund-raising purposes by community groups, informal wagering on sports, such as sweeps (each player draws the name of a horse or team at random after contributing a set amount to the prize “pot”) or tipping competitions and playing card or video or computer games for money (often in social or family groups). Betting on the outcomes of illegal activities, such as dog or cock fighting, also occurs but in a much more clandestine manner.

Access to many forms of gambling, including placing bets on sports or races, EGM or “pokie” type games, and traditional casino table games can also be achieved via the Internet, an issue of growing concern in terms of regulating the access of those under the age of 18.

*Source: Productivity Commission, 1999. Australia’s Gambling Industries, Report No. 10*

### 2.3 DEFINING YOUTH – WHAT IS THE AGE RANGE?

Generally speaking, the literature on youth gambling includes in its participant range respondents who do not meet the requirements for being able to gambling legally – in Australia, those under the age of 18. However, a glance at the literature reveals that respondents in different studies can range anywhere from 11 years of age through to 17, and in the US literature there are some studies of US college students aged 18 to 19 that are considered to be studies of youth gambling because the age of majority is 21 in the US. Internationally, there are very few studies that concentrate on pre-adolescents, although this appears to be a key age in gambling behaviour as it is a common age nominated (retrospectively) by later problem gamblers as their first memory of gambling (Custer, 1982; Dell, Rusicka & Palisi, 198; Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a; Jacobs, 2000). Australian studies on youth gambling have tended to focus on secondary school students in Years 7 to 12, thus covering ages 13 to 18 on average.

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<sup>5</sup> At the time of writing, sports betting via interactive pay-for-viewing television had not been released to the public, although its marketing had started.



The current study involved respondents aged 10 (Year 4 in most Australian primary schools) through to 18 (Year 12 at secondary school), as well as a non-school-based sample of young people aged 15 to 24 years of age.

## **2.4 PARTICIPATION IN GAMBLING BY YOUNG PEOPLE – INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH**

There is ample evidence in much of the Western, English-speaking world (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the US, and the UK) that gambling is a popular activity for young people (Derevensky & Gupta, 2004; Volberg, Gupta, Griffiths, Ólason & Delfabbro, 2010). Estimates of overall participation, based on international research, indicate that the vast majority of adolescents have gambled at some point, both in informal settings, such as at their own or friends' homes, and in formal settings such as casinos (which would indicate that the activity was actually illegal) (Derevensky & Gillespie, 2005). Depending on the time-frame for the estimate (life-time, past twelve months, past month, past week), and the activity specified, the estimated gambling rate of youth can range from around 1% to close to 90%.

Meta-analytic studies of adolescent gambling participation, in which data and findings from numerous studies are combined and compared to achieve an overall result, have revealed that adolescent life-time gambling rates range from 39% to 92%, with a median life-time participation rate of 85%, while rates for the past year range from 52% to 89%, with a median of 73% (National Research Council 1999; Shaffer, Hall et al., 1999). Rossen (2001) reported that, based on a review of 40 surveys, rates of adolescent life-time involvement range from 21% to 99% and that regular involvement in gambling ranges from 1% to 35%. Jacobs (2000) has estimated that close to two-thirds of underage youth (12–17 years of age) in North America had gambled for money in a twelve-month period.

A recent summary of research on youth gambling in the US, Canada, Europe, the Nordic countries, and Oceania reported past-year participation rates of 61% and 67% for national samples of young people in their mid-teens to early twenties in Canada and the US, 54% for 12- to 15-year-olds in Great Britain, and between 50% and 80% of young people (aged 12 to 19) in the Nordic countries (Volberg et al., 2010). Only in a few studies, mostly earlier studies or those that focused on participation in particular forms of gambling within a more restricted period (one week, for example), were participation rates for young people below 30%.

## **2.5 PARTICIPATION IN GAMBLING BY YOUNG PEOPLE – AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH**

In contrast to the situation in Canada and the US, relatively little is known about the extent of participation in gambling activities by Australian adolescents, at least on a national level. Studies that have been conducted to date have been limited to single-state or even single-town samples. Delfabbro and Thrupp (2003) surveyed 505 adolescents aged 15 to 17 years of age in secondary schools located in Adelaide metropolitan regions about their participation in a variety of gambling activities and found that over 60% (62.5%) of

adolescents had gambled in the previous year and that almost 15% (14.7%) gambled at least weekly. In another study, Delfabbro, Lahn, and Grabowsky (2005) surveyed 926 adolescents aged 11 to 19 years of age attending secondary schools in the ACT. The results showed that 70% (70.4%) of the students had gambled in the previous 12 months and that 10% gambled at least weekly.

More recently, studies using samples of South Australian youth indicated that between 43% and 56% of their participants had gambled in the past 12 months (Lambos, Delfabbro, & Pulgies, 2007; South Australian Department for Families and Communities, 2007).

In contrast to the studies that report past year and past week (at the time of data collection) estimates of participation, Moore and Ohtsuka (2001) have estimated that close to 90% of their samples of working-class students in Melbourne will participate in gambling at some point during their lives.

Gambling participation rates among Australian adolescents have also been found, perhaps unsurprisingly, to increase with age. Delfabbro and colleagues (2005) found that participation in gambling activities was highest among students in Years 11 and 12 (between 16 and 19 years of age) and lowest among the youngest students (Year 7), with a strong increase appearing after Year 10 (when the average Australian student is around 15 years of age), thus reflecting transitions from primary school to middle school to senior school. This increase was not limited to frequent gamblers but was more apparent among infrequent gamblers, suggesting that overall exposure to, and participation in, gambling might have been a growth spurt between the ages of 15 and 17. This pattern of increased participation in gambling activities, in terms of increased frequency of gambling and/or increased range of activities, has also been found in studies with North American youth (Carlson & Moore, 1998).

**Table 2.1: Gambling frequencies reported in research**

Study	Frequency of gambling				
	Never	Infrequently	Frequently (weekly or more)	Daily	
ACT Yrs 7–12 Delfabbro et al., 2005	30%	60%	10%		<i>3–4% classified as problem gamblers</i>
Oregon 13–17-year-olds Carlson et al., 1998	Less than monthly 55%	Monthly 28%	Weekly 13%	Daily 4%	<i>3–4% classified as problem gamblers</i>
South Australia Yr 10 Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003	Never 33%	Infrequently 48%	Frequently (weekly or more) 20%		<i>3.5% classified as problem gamblers (no difference between age-groups)</i>
South Australia Yr 11 Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003	Never 41%	Infrequently 43%	Frequently (weekly or more) 16%		
South Australia Yr 12 Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003	Never 38%	Infrequently 55%	Frequently (weekly or more) 7%		
Alberta Grades 7–12 AADAC, 2005	Non-gamblers 59%	Non-problem gamblers 32%	Hazardous 6%	Problem 4%	<i>3.8% classified as problem gamblers</i>
Canada	Never	Less than	1–3 times/month	Weekly+	<i>5% classified as</i>

Study	Frequency of gambling				
12–18-year-old Boys Ellenbogen et al., 2007	17%	monthly	25%	26%	<i>problem gamblers</i>
Canada 12–18-year-old Girls Ellenbogen et al., 2007	Never 21%	Less than monthly	1–3 times/month 21%	Weekly+ 13%	<i>1.4% classified as problem gamblers</i>

## 2.6 MOST POPULAR YOUTH GAMBLING ACTIVITIES

The level of popularity of different forms of gambling among young people is influenced by factors external to the young person, such as legal status of the activity, ease of accessibility and cost, and by internal factors such as the young person's level of interest (Felsher, Derevensky & Gupta, 2004a; Felsher, Derevensky & Gupta, 2004b). Thus, lottery tickets and scratchies can vary in popularity across states or countries that have different laws about purchasing for 16- to 18-year-olds, while gambling in casinos, entry to which is restricted by law to those over 18, tends to be rarer amongst teenagers (though not non-existent). The local availability of different forms of gambling also has an impact on the level of youth participation – some young people live close to casinos, others to racing tracks, and some have greater access to bingo games or venues with pokies (Jacobs, 2004). Internationally, card games, sports pools or tipping competitions, lottery tickets, “fruit” or “slot” machines (types of EGMs), raffle tickets and bingo-type games have been identified as the gambling activities most commonly favoured by young participants (Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, 2005; Carlson & Moore, 1998; Hardoon, Derevensky & Gupta, 2002; Johansson & Götestam, 2003; Moodie & Finnigan, 2006).

Similarly, Australian studies found that the most popular forms of gambling for Australian adolescents are lotteries, scratch-tickets, racing/sports betting, and private card games (Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003; Delfabbro, Lahn & Grabosky, 2005), while fewer young Australians report using EGMs (Lambos et al., 2007). It is interesting to note that while lotteries are viewed by some as relatively benign forms of gambling activity that pose “no substantive risks” (Productivity Commission, 2010, p. 11), researchers in the area of youth gambling would tend to disagree, identifying lottery tickets and scratch cards as a common means by which young people are introduced to the “excitement” of gambling, often by family or friends, and that their attitudes towards lotteries and their beliefs about the role of luck and their chances of one day winning the jackpot” are an area of concern (Felsher, Derevensky et al., 2004b; Wood & Griffiths 1998; Wood & Griffiths 2002; Wood & Griffiths 2004).

## 2.7 PROBLEM GAMBLING AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

As is the case with many types of behaviour, participation in gambling might be relatively innocuous for some (although still illegal for youth in most countries) but have serious consequences for others. Once a level of participation in various gambling activities by young people has been investigated, the vast majority of research then moves on to examine

how many young people exhibit frequent or high-level gambling behaviours. In other words, how many young people appear to have a gambling problem?

**Box 2 – Pathological versus problem gambling**

Historically, research on gambling issues and excessive or harmful levels of participation in gambling has been strongly influenced by models from medicine or pathology, in which gambling is defined as an addictive behaviour and where a participation level beyond what is considered to be “normal” is described as *pathological*. It is difficult to identify pathological gambling in a youth population for two reasons: (i) Young people are highly likely to be financially dependent upon adults (predominantly their parents) and therefore may not be at risk of suffering financial adversity due to gambling behaviour (a key criterion for diagnosis among the adult population); (ii) The vast majority of research studies of youth gambling have identified high levels of gambling using screening instruments that are not designed to diagnose the existence of a condition or disorder.

The following definition of problem gambling is used throughout this report:

“Problem gambling is characterised by difficulties in limiting money and/or time spent on gambling, which leads to adverse consequences for the gambler, others, or the community”<sup>6</sup>.

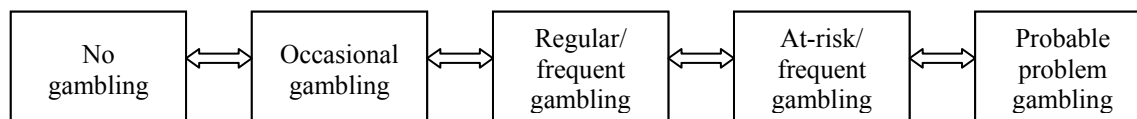
Much of the literature on youth gambling endorses the notion of gambling behaviour as falling along a continuum, with non-gamblers located toward the further most left, moving through to those who gamble occasionally, to those who gamble regularly, to those who gamble frequently and may be at risk of developing a problem in the future, to those who are considered to be gambling at a problematic level – the probable or potential problem gamblers – on the far right (see Figure 2.1) (National Research Council, 1999; Productivity Commission, 2010). The cut-points for determining group membership along the continuum are not pre-set and may vary across different studies, using different measures (Gambino, 2005). Some researchers (see Thomas & Jackson, 2008) eschew hard cut-points, such as determining that a score of +9 out of a possible 12 equals problem gambling, and instead choose to use a percentile cut-point whereby the highest 5% of scores on whatever measure is used are considered those most problematic, while still acknowledging that problem gambling can exist in people who fail to meet this selection criterion.

Movement along the continuum from left to right is not automatically linked to the development of a gambling problem. Young people may continue to gamble at non-problematic levels throughout their lives or they may move to the right and then back towards the left at any stage of their lives. The goal of treatment may be to move the behaviour back towards the left, even to abstinence or non-gambling while the goal of prevention is to impede or discourage movement towards the right. For example, a study of young people in South Australia followed a group of 15-year-olds for four years, measuring their gambling activity levels each year. The results of this study indicated that although there was a positive association between involvement in gambling at the start of the study and later gambling (when the participants were legally adults), there was considerable individual variation in the patterns of involvement from one year to the next (Delfabbro, Winefield & Anderson, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> *Problem Gambling and Harm: Towards a National Definition* prepared for the National Gambling Research Working Party by the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies together with the Department of Psychology, University of Adelaide, December 2005.

Progression, or even continued involvement in gambling at the same level, is not necessarily a foregone conclusion for young people – only one in four young people in this study who were gambling at age 15 continued to do so in subsequent years.

Similarly, in another longitudinal study of adolescent gambling behaviour, Slutske and colleagues (2003) found that problematic levels of gambling among their participants were highly transitory – most of those who met the criteria for problem gambling did so at only one point in time during the study with the situation then resolving (remission) and participants moving back towards the left of Figure 2.1.



**Figure 2.1: Continuum of gambling behaviour in youth**

The issue of identifying problematic levels of gambling behaviour amongst young people is contentious for a number of reasons, including the choice of instrumentation, the theory underlying the instrumentation, and more practical issues of how adolescents can meet diagnostic criteria for exhibiting a gambling problem. Issues surrounding how the choice of instrument can have an impact on the *prevalence* estimates, or proportion of young people reported to exhibit problematic levels of gambling, and the theories that underlie these instruments will be discussed further in the section on instruments and measurement of gambling behaviour, while Box 2 (above) presents some of the reasoning behind the choice of language (“problem” instead of “pathological”), and the arguments around diagnosis of problem gambling in youth.

There are actually a number of different estimates of prevalence of problem gambling reported in the gambling literature, and the distinctions between the different measures are not always made clear. According to Thomas and Jackson (2008), one possible explanation of the variation in international prevalence estimates of problem gambling can be traced back to the introductory statements of the instruments used in the studies. Using an instrument that asks “Have you ever ... (performed the target behaviour)?” will produce *life-time* estimates of gambling participation (for example, Moore & Ohtsuka, 2001), whereas using an instrument with phrases such as “Have you in the past six/twelve months ... (performed the target behaviour)?” will produce six- or twelve-month period prevalence estimates. Instruments that ask “Have you recently...” or “Do you currently ... (performed/perform the target behaviour)?” are not as common in the gambling literature but would result in-point prevalence estimates. Point or period estimates of the prevalence of problem gambling are considered to be the most useful information in planning services such as prevention and treatment programs (Thomas & Jackson, 2008), and some authors have suggested that life-time estimates, particularly with young participants, can be quite unreliable (Abbott & Clarke, 2007). Confusion can arise when studies do not specify which type of prevalence estimate they are reporting or when subsequent citation and comparison between studies do not report these details:

In the development of tools and measures of rates or of prevalence of problem gambling within the community, the type of prevalence being measured must be clearly specified (Thomas & Jackson, 2008, p. 13).

There remains the issue of measurement error in what, for the most part, are self-report instruments of behaviour. At least one measure, commonly used in studies of the prevalence of gambling among young people, has received criticism for being based on diagnostic criteria that are supposed to be presented and probed in a clinical interview, but which have been used in pencil-and-paper surveys as a self-report “screen” for gambling problems (see Fischer, 2000). Some researchers have questioned the readability and comprehension of self-report measures for young people, suggesting that the questions are not always readily understood by young people, as evidenced in their revision of their responses after having had the questions explained to them (Ladouceur, Bouchard, Rhéaume, Jacques, Ferland, Leblond & Walker, 2000; although see Thompson, Walker, Milton & Djukic, 2005 for a critique and contrary findings). The content of the various gambling tools commonly used in research with young people will be discussed further in Section 2.11 Assessment and Measurement.

Some researchers have reported a discrepancy between the proportion of young people identified through screeners as being problem gamblers, and the proportion who actually identify themselves as having a gambling problem (Cronce, Corbin, Steinberg & Potenza, 2007; Hardoon, Derevensky & Gupta, 2003). Hardoon and her colleagues (2003) found that while between 3% and 6% (3.4% to 5.8%) of young people were identified as problem gamblers (using three different instruments), only 1% (1.1%) of individuals classified themselves as such. This suggests that, at least in some cases, young people may be grossly underestimating the severity of their gambling problems. Alternatively, it may be that the gambling screens are overestimating prevalence rates. Some have suggested that young people are less likely to identify themselves as problem gamblers because gambling and its consequences do not constitute or are not perceived as a major problem in their daily routine (Ladouceur, Blaszczynski & Pelletier, 2004). Others have suggested that the absence of particular features, such as a family member with a gambling problem, daily gambling, or wagering large amounts in a single day (binge gambling) may decrease the likelihood that an adolescent will perceive themselves as having a gambling problem (Cronce et al., 2007). One reason that adolescents do not perceive gambling to be a problem may be linked to the absence of some major adverse consequences stemming from their gambling activities. One of the major dimensions of pathological gambling included in the adult version of the DSM-IV criteria – financial bail-out – is considered by many researchers of adolescent gambling to be inappropriate for use with young respondents as many are not financially independent and are thus not at risk of suffering financial hardship as a direct result of their gambling to the same extent as adults are (e.g., Fisher, 2000).

The message for researchers designing studies and policy-makers and others using the results of studies is that (a) there is no simple test for identifying gambling problems, and (b) self-reports are not necessarily the best means of diagnosing individual problems but are at least

a relatively efficient means of gaining estimates of possible problem levels of gambling in youth populations.

### **2.7.1 Prevalence of “problem” gambling among youth – international research**

There are greater differences in the prevalence rates of problem gambling for young people reported in the research literature than there are for estimates of adult problem gambling, which is generally agreed to be between 1% and 2% of the adult population in Australia, depending on the measures and cut-points used (Delfabbro, 2008b; Productivity Commission 1999, 2010) and slightly higher in Canada and other Western nations (National Research Council, 1999; Petry, 2005). Estimates of problem gambling among young people and adolescents in particular, however, vary greatly across studies (Derevensky, Gupta & Winters, 2003). As alluded to in Box 2, there are a number of situational and measurement issues that have been raised as possible explanations for such differences in prevalence rates (see Derevensky, Gupta & Winters, 2003, for a comprehensive discussion of the measurement of problem gambling in youth).

Despite this variability in estimates, there is consensus that young people are more at risk of developing gambling problems than are adults (Derevensky & Gupta, 2006; Hardoon & Derevensky, 2002). Estimates of the prevalence of problem gambling among adolescent populations generally range between 4% and 8%, two to four times the adult population rates reported in the literature (e.g., Derevensky, Gupta & Winters, 2003; Gupta & Derevensky 1998a; Shaffer & Hall, 1996). In addition to the problem gamblers, some researchers have suggested that another 10% to 15% of adolescents could be considered “at risk” or “potential problem” gamblers (Derevensky, Gupta & Winters, 2003; Gupta & Derevensky 1998a; Hardoon & Derevensky, 2002; Shaffer & Hall, 1996).

### **2.7.2 Prevalence of “problem” gambling among youth – Australian research**

To date, very few studies have specifically investigated the prevalence of youth problem gambling in Australia and all of these have used samples from single jurisdictions (Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003; Delfabbro, Lahn & Grabosky, 2005; Splevins, Mireskandari, Clayton & Blaszczyński, 2010). The first two studies reported that between 3% and 4% of young people could be classified as problem gamblers, and that a further 15% report potentially mild-to-moderate problems, while the most recent study reported a probable problem gambling rate of close to 7% (6.7%).

Delfabbro and Thrupp (2003) investigated participation in gambling among a sample of more than 500 South Australian adolescents and found that almost 15% of students were gambling on a weekly basis or more often, and that over 3% met the criterion for problem gambling (i.e., a score of 4 or more on the DSM-IV-J). Over 18% reported at least one gambling-related difficulty on the DSM-IV-J, and could thus be considered at risk for problem gambling (see Table 2.3 for a list of DSM-IV-J items). An interesting divergence between frequency of gambling and gambling-related problems was highlighted by the finding that 62 of the students who reported at least one gambling-related problem reported that they only gambled infrequently (once or twice a year to two or three times per month)

and only 27 were classified as frequent gamblers. This finding suggests that frequency of gambling participation alone is not sufficient to identify youth at risk of developing gambling problems – not all those who gamble frequently develop a problem and not all those who report having problems or suffering negative consequences of involvement in gambling are gambling frequently.

Delfabbro et al (2005) used two instruments to investigate participation in gambling and its outcomes among adolescents in the ACT, and found that 4% (4.4%) were classified as problem gamblers when using the DSM-IV-J, while 3% (3.3%) could be classified as problem gamblers on the Victorian Gambling Screen. More than 5% of their sample scored in the problematic range on at least one of these scales.

Splevins et al (2010) investigated the prevalence of gambling in a sample of Australian adolescents in NSW using the DSM-IV-MR-J and found that over 80% of their sample of 12- to 18-year-olds reported participating in gambling in the past twelve months, and that close to 7% (6.7%) met the criteria for probable problem gambling. As had been found in other studies, greater proportions of males reported gambling, and they also tended to report having started gambling at a younger age than females and found their initial experiences more exciting than did females. All probable problem gamblers in this study were male, an interesting finding in comparison to the earlier studies of Australian youth gambling, in which the majority of probable problem gamblers were male but at least some were female.

The rates of problem gambling reported amongst Australian youth are, thus, consistent with the lower end estimated rates for youth problem gambling reported in North America, Canada, and the UK (O'Neil, Whetton & Duerrwalk, 2003).

## **2.8 CORRELATES OF GAMBLING AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE**

What then, apart from their greater participation in gambling activities, distinguishes young people who are labelled as probable or potential problem gamblers from other young people who may participate in gambling regularly, or not at all? Answering questions such as this, with an aim to understanding better why some young people develop gambling problems and how best to help them avoid this, has been the focus of a growing body of research that has been designed to identify the correlates of problem gambling among young people (see Box 3 for a discussion of the difference between correlates and predictors).

Participation in various gambling activities by adolescents may vary according to, among other things, whether they live in the city or the country (Australian Council of Social Service, 1997), how old they are (Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003; Griffiths & Minton 1997; Winters, Stinchfield & Kim, 1995) and their gender (Delfabbro, Lahn & Grabosky, 2005; Griffiths, 1989; Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a; Jacobs, 2000). Correlates of problem gambling among young people can include risk factors, variables or characteristics that are associated with higher rates or increased risk of problem gambling, or protective factors, variables or characteristics that are associated with lower rates or reduced risk of problem gambling.



**Box 3 – When is a predictor not *really* a predictor?**

Much of the literature that has investigated characteristics of the individual, the family, the environment or social situation, that distinguishes probable problem gamblers from other young people (may be regular non-problem gamblers or non-gamblers), or so-called *predictors* of problem gambling among youth, is inherently limited by the fact that the data – the measures of gambling activity, problem gambling criteria and characteristics – were collected at the same point in time. Strictly speaking, as the study is, in most cases, a cross-sectional design, none of the characteristics can truly be called predictors of problem gambling because there is no way of proving that they preceded the problem gambling in time. Instead, they are best described as *correlates* or associates of problem gambling.

The identification of correlates of youth gambling is still a valid research activity, though researchers should take care not to overstate the importance of the relationship or to make claims of prediction. According to Stinchfield (2000), the benefits of identifying correlates of youth gambling are threefold: 1) correlates can indicate which characteristics young problem gamblers are likely to exhibit and this information can contribute to our knowledge about the phenomenon of youth gambling problems; 2) correlates can be used to identify potential problem gamblers for targeting of prevention programs or as warning signs for what can be an “invisible” addiction; and 3) correlates can be further explored to see if they are actually risk or protective factors or predictors of the development of youth problem gambling.

Longitudinal or prospective studies that identify the existence of the characteristics shown to be correlates, prior to onset of gambling (problematic or at all) may be able to legitimately label these characteristics as predictors, depending on the type of analysis that is conducted (see Abbott & Clarke, 2007 for further discussion of the benefits of prospective, longitudinal studies of gambling behaviour). As these sorts of studies are extremely scarce in the youth gambling literature, the bulk of the following discussion is restricted to correlates of youth gambling.

Risk factors are those that are associated with greater probability of negative or undesirable outcomes, such as the development of a disorder, increased participation in behaviours that may compromise wellbeing or social choices or performance. The coexistence of these factors in individuals who display higher rates of problems, or in statistical terms a *correlation* between these characteristics and the outcome, particularly in large-scale or population studies, usually results in these characteristics being labelled risk factors for that particular outcome. Risk factors may be individual characteristics, such as gender, personality traits, genetic profiles or intellectual ability, or environmental factors, such as stressful life event, familial and cultural characteristics, residential location, or access to social support networks (Masten, Best & Garnezy, 1990).

Protective factors are those that appear to reduce or even negate the likelihood of an individual achieving a particular outcome. In other words, they are characteristics associated with *not* developing a disorder, participating in a risky behaviour or other adverse outcomes despite showing a number of risk factors or being exposed or at risk. They are not simply the opposite of risk or the absence of a risk factor, but may be independent and conceptually distinct variables. They may act directly by decreasing the likelihood of occurrence of problem behaviours (such as limiting access to gambling venues to those who are over a certain age) or by interacting with risk factors and moderating their relationships with the behaviour or outcome. For example, having a parent with a gambling problem has been identified by many researchers as a potential risk factor for young people developing a gambling problem. Not all young people whose parents exhibit problematic levels of gambling participate in gambling at all, let alone go on to develop a problem of their own, so

the relationship between this risk factor and the outcome is by no means perfect. There may be some protective factors involved that help these young people avoid following in their parents' footsteps. It may be that these young people had another parent or adult with whom they shared a supportive relationship that limited the effect of the other parent's behaviour, or that the young person did not have high levels of impulsivity, or that the young person subsequently moved to an area where there was very limited access to gambling; for example, a rural area with no race track or casino or EGM. The increase in Internet provision of gambling, however, may reduce any protective effect of living in a more remote location.

## **2.8.1 Individual factors in youth problem gambling**

### *2.8.1.1 A "male" activity?*

There is considerable evidence that gambling is more popular amongst male adolescents than female adolescents (e.g., Delfabbro, Lahn & Grabosky, 2005; Desai, Maciejewski, Pantalon & Potenza, 2005; MORI Social Research Institute, 2006; National Research Council, 1999), with *young* males also reporting participation in a greater number of gambling activities than young females (Delfabbro, Lahn & Grabosky, 2005; Jacobs 2000).

There also appear to be gendered patterns in preferences for particular types of gambling activities (Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003; Delfabbro, Lahn & Grabosky, 2005). Despite finding few gender differences in overall gambling participation, Delfabbro and Thrupp (2003) reported that males were more likely to gamble on cards and that females were more likely to gamble on bingo/scratch tickets. In contrast, Delfabbro and colleagues (2005) found that boys gambled significantly more frequently on card games, racing, sports events and scratch tickets, but that there were no significant gender differences for lotteries, EGMs, or the Internet. This gender pattern of preference for different gambling activities has been found in international studies as well, with females showing a preference for scratch ticket and lotteries while males prefer sports betting (e.g., horse or dog racing, betting on football games) and card games (Derevensky, Gupta & Della Cioppa, 1996; Griffiths, 1989; Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a; Jacobs, 2000; Ladouceur, Dubé & Bujold, 1994; National Research Council, 1999; Stinchfield, 2000; Volberg, 1994, 1996, 1998; Wynne, Smith & Jacobs, 1996).

The relationship between gender and gambling is not consistent across studies, however, with one of the major Australian studies finding that while males might be more likely to participate in particular types of gambling activities than females (and vice versa), there was no difference in their overall participation rates, that is, when considering participation in all gambling activities together (Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003). When probable problem gambling is the focus, however, gender is one of the most consistently identified factors, with many studies suggesting that problematic levels of gambling are at least twice as common amongst males as females (e.g., Chalmers & Willoughby, 2006; Delfabbro, Lahn & Grabosky, 2005; MORI Social Research Institute, 2006; Poulin, 2000; Stinchfield, 2000; Stinchfield & Winters, 1998). In a Canadian study of close to 2,500 young people between the ages of 11 and 19 years, it was found that males were five times more likely to be classified as probable

problem gamblers and three times more likely to be classified as being at risk (Hardoon, Gupta & Derevensky, 2004).

One of the few prospective studies of youth gambling found that gender was one of the few risk factors to retain its relationship with problematic levels of gambling once a number of other risk factors were included in a multivariate analysis.<sup>7</sup> Young males were more than four times as likely as young females to be gambling at levels considered to be at risk at the end of the study, and six times as likely to be considered problem gamblers (Winters, Stinchfield, Botzet & Anderson, 2002). Other researchers have suggested that gender may have an influence on gambling through an association with other risk factors, or that the risk factors may differ for males and females (e.g., Chalmers & Willoughby, 2006). For example, adolescent males tend to be more prone to risk-taking in general than adolescent females and studies have shown that young males exhibit more positive attitudes to risk-taking in relation to gambling (Delfabbro, Lahn & Grabosky, 2006b; Splevins et al., 2010). Moore and Ohtsuka (1997) reported that, while impulsiveness significantly predicts problem gambling for girls and boys, a tendency to overestimate the percentage of “big winners” in the population was a significant predictor for boys only. This tendency for young males to show signs of overconfidence in relation to the outcomes of gambling has also been reported in other Australian studies in which greater proportions of boys compared with girls agree that it is possible to make a living from gambling (e.g., Splevins et al., 2010).

#### 2.8.1.2 *Personality*

Studies have indicated that there are a number of personality characteristics that appear more often in probable problem gamblers than in their non-gambling peers. Young problem gamblers score higher on measures of impulsivity (Gupta & Derevensky, 1997; Vitaro, Arseneault & Tremblay, 1999), extroversion and state and trait anxiety (Blaszczynski & McConaghy, 1989) and lower on measures of conformity and self-discipline (Gupta & Derevensky, 1997, 1998a; Vitaro, Ferland, Jacques & Ladouceur, 1998).

Results from a number of studies have suggested that adolescents with gambling problems may also report higher rates of a range of mental health issues and emotional problems. Young problem gamblers have been found to report lower self-esteem (Gupta & Derevensky, 1998b; Delfabbro, Lahn & Grabosky, 2006b) and self-confidence (as measured by the Emotional problems sub-scale of the CASS:L, Hardoon, Derevensky & Gupta, 2002) and higher rates of depression (Desai et al., 2005; Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a; 1998b; Marget, Gupta & Derevensky, 1999) and suicide ideation and attempts (Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a; Ladouceur et al., 1994; Lesieur, Cross, Frank, Welch, White & Rubenstein, 1991; Nower, Gupta, Blaszczynski & Dervensky, 2004).

Some researchers have reported that the associations between these other problems and high levels of gambling are different for young males and females (Desai et al., 2005). Stinchfield (2000) reported that the relationship between depression and suicidal thoughts and behaviours decreases substantially once other factors are considered in the same analysis.

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<sup>7</sup> One instance in which a risk factor can legitimately be called a predictor because it was present and measured at time points prior to the final assessment of gambling behaviour

Hardoon and colleagues (2002) have also reported a relationship between problem gambling and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) with problem gamblers scoring higher on a measure of ADHD than other young people and greater proportions of problem gamblers reaching clinical levels of ADHD symptoms (Inattentive and Hyperactive subtypes, according to DSM).

### 2.8.1.3 *Coping styles and strategies*

It has been reported that adolescents with gambling problems display poorer coping skills in general (Getty, Watson & Frisch, 2000; Marget et al., 1999; Nower, Gupta & Derevensky, 2000) and exhibit more avoidance-focused or distraction-oriented coping styles and less task-focused coping than other adolescents (Bergevin, Gupta, Derevensky & Kaufman, 2006).

Other research has investigated whether participation in gambling may actually act as a coping mechanism, albeit a risky and less functional one, for some young people. Avoidance coping, in which a person deals with a stressful situation by distracting themselves by participating in substitute, distracter tasks or seeking out social diversions, is generally viewed as a maladaptive coping style in as much as it does not seek to change the stressful situation as problem-focused coping does, or even manage the person's emotional reaction to the situation as emotion-focused coping does (see Gupta & Derevensky, 2001 for further discussion). Instead, it simply distracts the person from reality, allowing them to escape from their problems temporarily, which of course returns once the distraction wanes. Studies have reported high rates of dissociative reactions among young gamblers, in which they lose track of time, personal or other problems, and even their sense of self (Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a; Gupta & Derevensky, 2001; Jacobs, 1989a; 1989b; Jacobs, Marston & Singer, 1985). These results have been used as supportive evidence for Jacobs' General Theory of Addiction (1986, 2000), which proposes that all addictive patterns of behaviour, including problem gambling, represent a person's chosen means of coping that is used to

- a) escape from highly stressful situations, whether these are internal situations, such as anxiety or mood disorders, or external, such as facing failing school or losing a job or relationship; and
- b) experience, through participating in these behaviours, an altered, much improved state of consciousness (Jacobs, 2004).

Further support for this theoretical model can be found in the results of research that has asked young problem gamblers why they continue to participate in gambling activities. Rather than focusing on financial reasons, such as to win back money lost or as a means of getting money quickly, young people in a number of studies have indicated that their primary reasons for gambling are enjoyment and excitement, while those with problematic levels of gambling are more likely to indicate that they gamble to relax and, importantly for this theory, to escape problems (Gupta & Derevensky, 2001) or to alleviate feelings of depression (Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a).

#### 2.8.1.4 *Delinquency and other undesirable activities*

A relationship between gambling related problems among adolescents and an increased risk of other undesirable behaviours, such as alcohol and other substance abuse, has also been reported by numerous researchers (e.g., Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a; Gupta & Derevensky, 1998b; Hardoon, Gupta & Derevensky, 2004; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Rohde, Seeley & Rohling, 2004; Wood, Gupta, Derevensky & Griffiths, 2004; Delfabbro et al., 2006b). Among a sample of Australian youth, aged 11 to 19 years, those young people who were identified as problem gamblers were between 10 and 20 times as likely to report having used “hard” drugs, such as heroin, speed or cocaine, while over three quarters of the problem gamblers reported drinking alcoholic beverages at least once a week, compared with half of the non-problem gamblers (Delfabbro, Lahn & Grabosky, 2005).

Problem gambling among young people has been found to relate to a number of other risky or delinquent behaviours, leading some researchers to propose an adolescent risk syndrome or “constellation of risky behaviours” (Rossen, 2001, p.23). Delinquent behaviours, including involvement in truancy, shoplifting, vandalism and conduct problems, and physical aggression towards others have been reported to be more common among groups of young gamblers than non-gamblers (Ladouceur et al., 1994; Stinchfield, Cassuto, Winters & Latimer, 1997; Stinchfield, 2000; Hardoon et al., 2004; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2004). Hardoon and colleagues (2004) reported that over half of those identified as problem gamblers and close to one-third of at-risk gamblers in their study of adolescents also met the clinical criteria for conduct problems, indicating that they are likely to have problems dealing with and accepting authority, and are thus more likely to break rules, engage in antisocial activities, and display oppositional behaviour. Rossen (2008) reported that young New Zealanders with problematic levels of gambling behaviour were more likely to report feeling alienated from peers and to have been suspended from school. This link between involvement in gambling and antisocial or delinquent behaviours, such as truancy, vandalism and violence, has been further explored as a potential sub-type of gamblers by researchers and labelled the “antisocialist-impulsive gambler” (Blaszczynski & Nower, 2002; see section on Pathways).

### 2.8.2 **Family factors in youth problem gambling**

#### 2.8.2.1 *Parents who gamble*

Parental gambling is one of the key risk factors investigated in the youth gambling literature, as problem gamblers (both youth and adult) are more likely to report that their parents gamble regularly or have gambling problems or other addictions (Browne & Brown, 1993; Delfabbro et al., 2005; Fisher 1993; Griffiths, 1995; Griffiths & Wood, 2000; Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a; Wood & Griffiths, 1998). Empirical findings suggest that gambling often begins at home, with young people modelling the gambling behaviours of their parents (e.g., Gambino, Fitzgerald, Shaffer, Renner & Courtage, 1993; Jacobs, 2000; Ladouceur & Mireault, 1998; Woods & Griffiths, 1998).

Some parents actually enable their underage children to gamble, by purchasing lottery tickets or scratchcards for them (Wood & Griffiths, 1998; Wood & Griffiths, 2004). There have been some indications that paternal patterns of gambling have greater influence on youth gambling behaviours than maternal gambling patterns, with greater proportions of problem gamblers reporting fathers/stepfathers with a gambling problem than other young people (Hardoon et al., 2002). Other research has suggested that the mode or type of parent gambling is an important factor in the relationship between parent and child gambling behaviours. Browne and Brown (1993) reported that young people whose parents purchased lottery tickets regularly were more likely to do so themselves, while others have suggested that parental involvement in gambling on EGMs or scratchcards relates specifically to young people's participation in these, but not other, gambling activities (Fisher, 1993; Griffiths & Wood, 2000). One of the few prospective studies of youth problem gambling found that parental history of gambling (as reported by the young participants during the first and second data collections) was a significant predictor of later gambling problems, with those young people who reported that either of their parents had a gambling problem being more than eleven times as likely to develop problematic levels of gambling by the follow-up collection (between five and eight years later) (Winters et al., 2002).

A recent study that focused on the children of problem gamblers in Australia reported that respondents with a family history of problem gambling (based on retrospective report) were between two and ten times as likely to show problematic gambling behaviours and between two and four times as likely to display gambling behaviour that was at the at-risk level compared with their peers (Dowling, Jackson, Thomas, & Frydenberg, 2010). While paternal gambling was found to be a stronger factor in problem gambling than maternal gambling, as has been reported in other research, having a female parent with a history of gambling still increased the risk of problem or at-risk gambling behaviours substantially. The authors concluded that having a family history of gambling had a unique effect on problem gambling in the child, as the relationship between family patterns of gambling and the likelihood of problem gambling remained significant after controlling for a number of other factors. It is interesting to note that some risk factors that were identified as being significantly associated with problem gambling among people with a family history of gambling problems, such as maladaptive coping styles, involvement with marijuana and other drugs, family structure and quality of family relationships, have also been identified as potential risk factors in the general population of young people.

#### 2.8.2.2 *Family structure and functioning*

Family structure has been identified by some researchers as a potential influence on youth gambling, with young people from single-parent families reportedly at greater risk of being classified as problem gamblers than other youth (Fisher, 1999; Volberg, 2002). The suggested relationship between family structure and youth gambling problems is not straightforward, however, with other researchers finding no relationship in their studies (e.g., Winters, Stinchfield & Fulkerson, 1993a).

The quality of family functioning has also been proposed as a potential influence on youth gambling. In one study, young people with high levels of gambling (problem and at risk gamblers) reported more familial problems and lower levels of family support than did other young people (Hardoon et al., 2004). In another study, parenting practices such as monitoring (knowing what adolescents were doing, who they were with, etc) and discipline (the extent to which hostile or inconsistent responses were used to change the behaviour of adolescents) were found to relate to youth gambling problems, above and beyond the impact of parental gambling behaviours. Low levels of parental monitoring and higher levels of inadequate disciplinary practices were found to relate to higher levels of adolescent problem gambling (Vachon, Vitaro, Wanner & Tremblay, 2004). Higher levels of family cohesion have been identified as a possible protective factor for gambling problems among young people, with Dickson and colleagues reporting that self-reported family cohesion decreased from non-gamblers across the spectrum of gambling involvement with problem gamblers reporting the lowest levels, and that the effect of family cohesion remained significant in the prediction of gambling problems when tested alongside other protective factors (Dickson, Derevensky & Gupta, 2008).

#### 2.8.2.3 *Socioeconomic circumstances*

There are some indications that family socioeconomic status has a complicated relationship with gambling, with one study of North American youth reporting that young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds were less likely to have gambled in the past year, but if they had gambled, were more likely to do so at problematic levels (Welte, Barnes, Tidwell & Hoffman, 2008). Measures of social capital are reported to be much lower among adult problem gamblers than in the general population, indicating an overrepresentation of those from lower socioeconomic circumstances, those who can least afford it, among problem gamblers (Thomas & Jackson, 2008). However, cause of this relationship remains unknown.

### **2.8.3 Environmental factors in youth problem gambling**

#### 2.8.3.1 *Peers*

It is widely acknowledged that peers can play a pivotal role in the introduction of young people to a number of risky activities, gambling included (e.g., Shead, Derevensky & Gupta, 2010). Gambling with friends, at cards or informal betting on the outcome of sports and games is one of the more common gambling activities among young people, particularly among young Australian males (e.g., Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003; Delfabbro et al., 2005, Delfabbro, King, Lambos & Puglies, 2009). The influence of peers on problem gambling has also been identified in international research, with some studies showing that over 40% of those identified as problem gamblers report having a friend with a gambling problem, compared with just 10% of social gamblers and 6% of non-gamblers (Dickson, Derevensky & Gupta, 2008). In addition, having a friend with a gambling problem had one of the strongest relationships, above all other risk and protective factors, with being a problem gambler.

The influence of peers on gambling involvement goes beyond the notion of peer pressure to participate or normalisation of gambling activity, as the quality of general peer relations has also been identified as a possible risk factor for the development of gambling problems. Delfabbro, Lahn and Grabosky (2006b) reported that, among their sample of Australian adolescents, those identified as problem gamblers reported poorer peer relations, disliking twice as many of their classmates as non-gamblers did, and that social alienation was a strong predictor of gambling severity.

#### 2.8.3.2 *Cultural background*

Some studies have found indications of relationships between gambling participation and cultural background. Internationally, the research has reported conflicting results, with some researchers claiming that rates are higher among some minority groups while others report higher rates among cultural majorities (Stinchfield, 2000; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2004). The focus of Australian research has usually been on the Vietnamese and Chinese communities (see Delfabbro, 2008b) but these studies and consultations have usually been conducted with adults, not adolescents or young people.

One Victorian study that compared the gambling behaviours of students from Asian backgrounds and students from Anglo-European backgrounds found that, while young Asian respondents were less likely to be involved in gambling than their peers of Anglo-European backgrounds, and tended to spend less money when they were gambling, they scored higher on measures of problem gambling (Moore & Ohtsuka, 2001).

Another small-scale Australian study focused on the gambling behaviours and attitudes of a group of young Thai youth residing in Melbourne. The results of this study suggested that although the participation levels of the respondents had indeed increased dramatically since their move to Melbourne (away from Thailand where their access to gambling was strictly limited), there was little evidence of problematic levels of involvement or of negative consequences – they did not report gambling to avoid depression (although they did indicate a tendency to gamble when bored), money was not the focus of their time spent at the casino and their involvement with gambling was more to do with socialising at the venue – they went to the casino to see and be seen and to partake in a range of activities, one of which might be gambling, rather than going to the casino with the sole aim of gambling and winning money (Tanasornnarong, Jackson & Thomas, 2004).

#### 2.8.3.3 *Indigenous status*

In Australia and New Zealand, studies of adult populations have reported that gambling problems are more common among people with Indigenous backgrounds (Delfabbro et al., 2005; Productivity Commission, 2010; Rossen, 2008). A recent study has reviewed the literature on gambling in the adult Australian Indigenous population, and attempted to estimate the level of gambling problems in Indigenous communities, both remote and non-remote, using data from large-scale surveys (Stevens & Young, 2009). The results of these analyses suggest that gambling problems are significantly more common among Indigenous Australians than among non-Indigenous Australians – by three to four times in non-remote



areas and higher again in remote areas, although the measure of gambling problems used in these surveys differs greatly from the formal measures used in other research reviewed here.<sup>8</sup> In an earlier study that focused on gambling in the population of the Northern Territory, estimated rates of problem gambling using the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS, 5-point cut-off) were found to be much larger among Indigenous respondents than among non-Indigenous respondents – close to 8% (7.8%) compared with less than 3% (2.5%), while non-regular and non-gambling rates were very similar (Young, Barnes, Stevens, Paterson & Morris, 2007).

Two of the larger studies of young gambling in Australia have also suggested that problem gambling rates may be higher among Indigenous youth than among their non-Indigenous classmates, with 28% of Indigenous students in the ACT study and 9% of Indigenous students in the South Australian study being identified as problem gamblers, compared with 4% and 2% (4.1% and 2.2%) of the non-Indigenous students in the ACT and South Australian studies, respectively (Delfabbro, Lahn & Grabowsky, 2005; Lambos & Delfabbro, 2007). More recent studies of young Australians gambling activities have similarly found that higher proportions of students who identify themselves as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent (ATSI) were gambling on a weekly basis compared with their non-Indigenous peers (Delfabbro, King, Lambos & Puglies, 2009).

#### 2.8.3.4 *Media influences*

Exposure to gambling through the media has been a heretofore little researched aspect of youth gambling, and yet this area was highlighted in the second International Think Tank of Youth Gambling Issues (2001) as being in need of urgent attention. Young people are exposed to a range of media every day, including television, movies, radio and the Internet. There is concern that the proliferation of advertising of gambling and gambling activities – on billboards, at public transport stations, on television and radio, and the sponsorship by gambling industries of various sports and other events not only acts to increase the availability of gambling in a community (by providing information about local opportunities or directions for access via the Internet), but also acts to normalise gambling (Shead et al., 2010). Recent advertising campaigns on Australian television appear to be directed to young males in particular, emphasising the desirability of winnings (with one man actually fondling his bag of winnings, made up to resemble a female) and the social nature of betting among friends.

Studies conducted to date that focus on advertising and youth gambling include one Australian study that asked young people in the ACT whether they recalled seeing any advertisements for gambling in the past week. The majority of young people could recall an example of gambling advertising, with problem gamblers being more likely to recall such an

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<sup>8</sup> Rather than using a formal measure, such as those mentioned in the section on measurement in this chapter, Stevens and Young (2009) used data from surveys that included a question as to whether gambling had “... been a problem for you, your family or close friends during the last year” – an indication of the extent to which gambling was seen as problematic for the respondent and his or her network but not a prevalence estimate of problem gambling.

advertisement – over 70% compared with 61% of other young people (Delfabbro et al., 2005).

Another source of exposure to gambling is through movies and television. This issue has not been studied widely but many movies have glamorised gambling, particularly table games in casinos, with a hero who is able to “beat the system” and win (e.g., in the movie *21*). The history of gambling as a glamorous activity goes back to the early Bond movies and continues in the most recent ones. While the ethics of depicting actors and other supposed role models for young people smoking cigarettes in movies has been questioned repeatedly, the public health issue of depicting gambling in the same air-brushed and idealised fashion does not appear to have received as much attention.

The rapid rise of the Internet and the subsequent increase in gambling activities that are available through the Internet has been a concern for many researchers involved in the area of youth gambling, though little research has been conducted (Griffith & Parke, 2010). Behind this concern is the acknowledgement that youth are usually early adopters of technology and, as such, may be at greater risk of exposure to gambling through new technologies, such as the Internet and mobile phone applications. As well, certain Internet games, much like video games, are designed to be particularly appealing to this market, with bright colours, music and noises (see King, Delfabbro & Griffiths, 2010).

One study that focused on young people playing the National Lottery on-line, found that 8% of their sample of 12- to 15-year-olds had at some time played a National Lottery game on the Internet; boys were more likely to have played than girls (Griffiths & Wood, 2007). Of those who did play on-line, around one-third played free games, with very few reporting that they had registered for an account themselves (18%) or that they had accessed their parents’ account with their permission (10%) or without it (7%). This take-up of the free or “demo” games by young people was highlighted by the authors as a particular area for concern in that there was no legal restriction on access to the free games and that they act as a means of introducing the principles as well as the excitement of gambling without the negative consequence (disincentive) of actually losing money (see also King, Delfabbro & Griffiths, 2010).

One Australian study reported that the majority of their respondents aged 12 to 18 years had never gambled on the Internet, and only one respondent reported frequently participating in on-line gambling (Splevins et al., 2010).

A recent review of the research that is available on this topic concluded that, while the majority of studies that have been conducted have indeed found a correlation between regular participation in gambling or problematic levels of gambling and gambling on various Internet activities, there does not appear to be a direct relationship between gambling on the Internet and an increased likelihood of having gambling problems. Rather, according to those studies that have explored the issue in greater depth, it seems that young people who have gambling problems tend to be involved in a wider range of gambling activities than those who gamble at non-problematic levels, and that this range often includes Internet gambling, possibly because it is relatively easy for them to access at home and at irregular hours, when they may not be able to pursue other gambling activities (Wood & Williams,

2009; Welte et al., 2007). In terms of accessing formal gambling, in which young people would need to provide evidence of their legal age, some researchers have suggested that the appeal of Internet gambling may lie with the fact that they need to do this only once on the Internet site in order to obtain access and set up an account, whereas to access a casino or place a bet in person, they would need to pass this test (proof of age) every time (Griffiths & Parke, 2010).

## 2.9 MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDES

Why young people become involved in gambling activities, their reasons or motivations for participating in these potentially risky (and illegal) activities, has been another area of research around youth gambling. As one might expect, given the range of gambling activities, involvement in different forms of gambling has different meanings for young people (for example, informal card games may be viewed as a way to socialise with friends or family, while attending horse races and participating in on-track betting may be viewed as a cultural or “grown-up” activity that can raise one’s social standing, and buying raffle tickets is something one does to support charity or fund-raisers).

The most commonly cited motivations for participating in gambling among adolescents are excitement, enjoyment, and winning money (e.g., Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a; Gupta & Derevensky, 1998b; Wood & Griffiths, 2002; Wood et al., 2004). There is evidence to suggest that motivations to gamble may also differ according to the level of involvement in gambling, with young people considered at-risk or problem gamblers more often citing the challenge, excitement and distraction (to forget about problems) of gambling than other young people (Wiebe, 1999).

Some research has investigated whether participation in gambling may actually be acting as a coping mechanism, albeit a risky and less functional one, for some young people. Avoidance coping, in which a person deals with a stressful situation by distracting themselves by participating in substitute, distracter tasks or by seeking out social diversions, is generally viewed as a maladaptive coping style in as much as it does not seek to change the stressful situation as problem-focused coping does or even manage the person’s emotional reaction to the situation as does emotion-focused coping (see Gupta & Derevensky, 2001 for further discussion). Instead, it simply distracts the person from reality, allowing them to temporarily escape from their problems, which of course return once the distraction wanes.

Studies have reported high rates of dissociative reactions among young gamblers, in which they lose track of time, personal or other problems, and even their sense of self (Jacobs, 1989a; 1989b; Jacobs et al., 1985; Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a; Gupta & Derevensky, 2001). These results have been used as supportive evidence for Jacobs’ *General Theory of Addiction* (1986, 1998, 2000) that proposes that all addictive patterns of behaviour, including problem gambling, represent a person’s chosen means of coping that is used to

a) escape from highly stressful situations, whether these are internal situations, such as anxiety or mood disorders, or external, such as facing failing school or losing a job or relationship; and

b) experience, through participating in these behaviours, an altered, much improved state of consciousness (Jacobs, 2008).

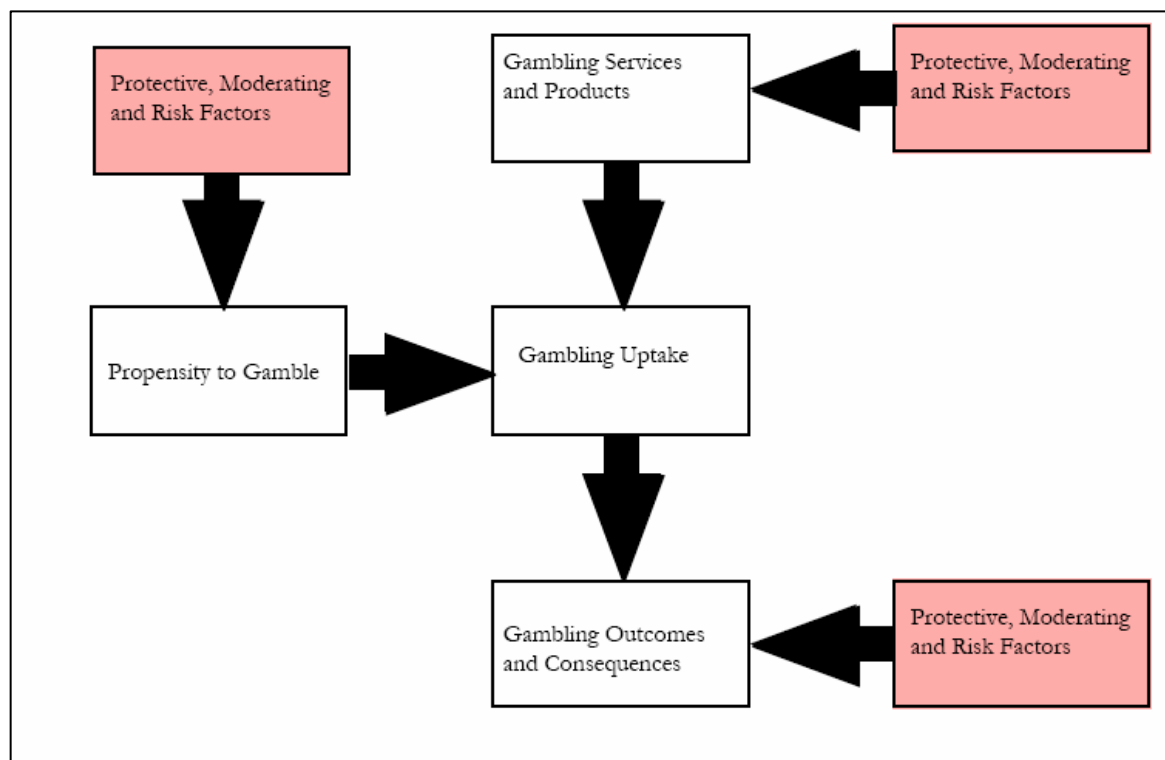
Further support for this theoretical model can be found in the results of research that has asked young problem gamblers why they continue to participate in gambling activities. Rather than focusing on financial reasons, such as to win back money lost or as a means of getting money quickly, young people in a number of studies have indicated that their primary reasons for gambling are enjoyment and excitement. Young people with problematic levels of gambling are more likely to indicate that they gamble to relax and, importantly for this theory, *to escape problems* (Gupta & Derevensky, 2001) or to alleviate feelings of depression (Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a).

For the most part, while the statistics are in agreement that the majority of young people have, at some point, participated in gambling, it seems that many young people do not support the notion that it is acceptable for them to be involved in gambling activities. In a series of UK surveys (MORI Social Research Institute, 2006), 62% of young people agreed with the statement that “gambling is not a good thing for someone my age to spend money on”. These attitudes can be contradictory, however, with Jackson et al. (2000) reporting that the majority of their respondents agreed with the statement “gambling is OK as long as you don’t overdo it”.

The attitudes young people display towards gambling activities have been associated with their levels of participation in gambling, the regularity of their gambling and the extent of gambling problems, with those young people who have never gambled holding much stronger beliefs about the risks and negative aspects of gambling (Chalmers & Willoughby, 2006; Splevins et al., 2010; Wood & Griffiths, 2004). In particular, problem gambling adolescents seem to hold stronger beliefs that gambling is a potentially profitable activity (Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003; Delfabbro et al., 2006a and b). There also appears to be a gender difference in young people’s attitudes toward gambling, whereby boys display more positive attitudes toward gambling and girls more negative attitudes. In a recent study of Australian adolescents, Splevins and colleagues (2010) found that males were significantly more likely than females to agree that people can make a living gambling, while females were more likely to agree that gambling is a risky activity, a waste of money, or a way of losing money.

## **2.10 MODELS OF RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS AND YOUTH GAMBLING BEHAVIOUR**

Along with the increasing amount of research identifying various risk and protective factors that might be involved in the development of problem gambling among young people, a number of researchers have developed models to attempt to explain how these factors might interact with one another and with external factors to influence young people’s gambling behaviour. Thomas and Jackson’s model of risk and protective factors (2004) (see Figure 2.2, reproduced from Thomas and Jackson, 2008) is a general model that identifies the various points at which risk and protective factors might have an impact on the outcome – problem gambling.



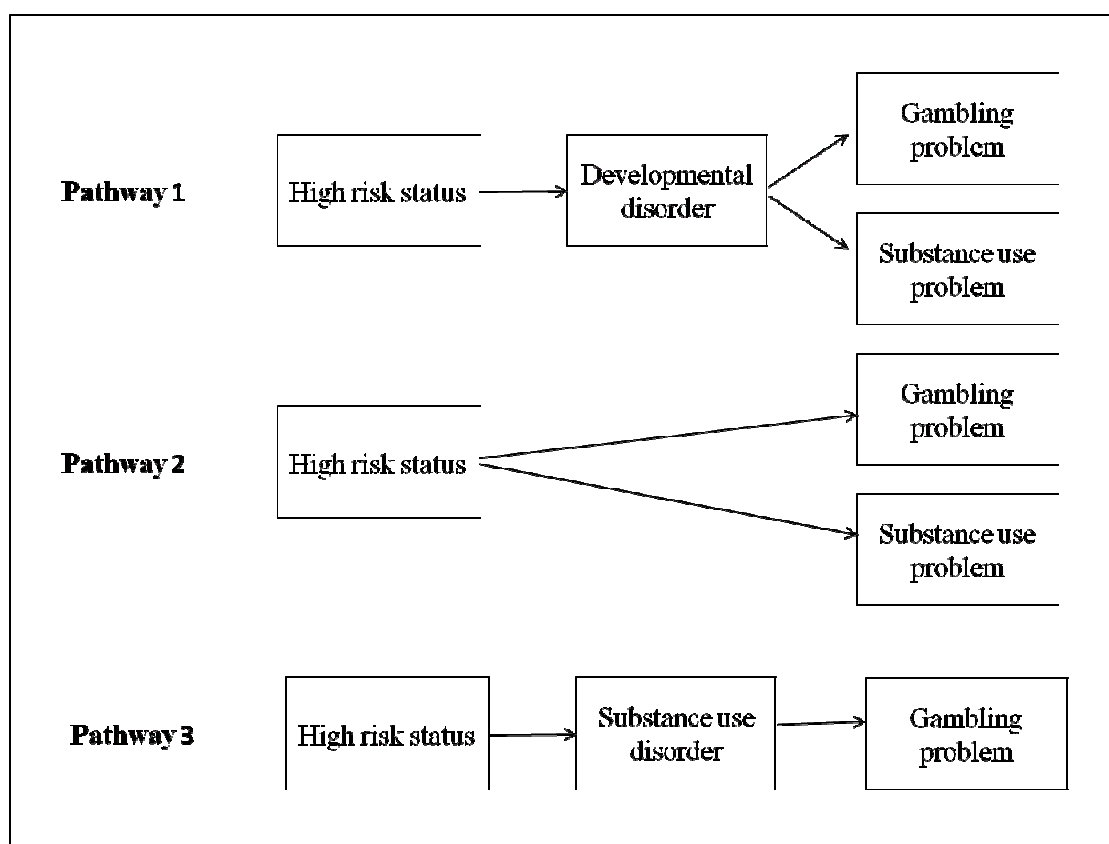
**Figure 2.2: Thomas and Jackson's model of risk and protective factors**

People vary in their propensity to gamble as well as in their access to gambling services and products. Risk and protective factors can influence both the propensity to gamble (e.g., those with a family history of gambling problems, young males, or those with impulsive personality traits may be more likely to participate in gambling) and the access to gambling products and services (e.g., living in a rural community with no EGMs at the local club and no casino would restrict access to these forms of gambling). Among young people, this access, at least to formal gambling activities, is supposed to be limited by legal restrictions on participation. Given the apparent high levels of youth participation in various forms of gambling, these limitations may not be as effective in restricting the access factor as intended. Gambling uptake – whether someone participates– and the level at which they do so, are all influenced both by the individual's propensity to gamble and by their access. The outcomes of their participation, such as whether they develop a gambling problem or suffer other adverse outcomes of their participation, are similarly influenced by a range of risk and protective factors. For example, gamblers often recall the first big win as being a particularly influential event that encouraged them to increase their frequency and level of gambling.

Alongside this general model, sit models that propose similarities between the development of gambling problems and substance-abuse problems, or different developmental pathways for different types of problem gamblers.

Given the strong relationships identified between gambling and other risky behaviours (e.g., Delfabbro, Lahn & Grabosky, 2005; Rossen, 2001; Griffiths & Wood, 2000), a number of possible shared developmental pathways for risk, substance abuse and problem gambling have been proposed. Winters and Anderson (2000) have suggested that one pathway may

reflect an indirect process, whereby an initial high-risk status may contribute to a developmental disorder, such as conduct disorder, which in turn places the young person at increased risk of developing a gambling problem, or a substance-abuse issue. A second pathway interprets the relationships between these variables as being independent and direct – being of high-risk status increases vulnerability for both gambling problems and substance use problems but does so directly and independently for each problem area. A third pathway posits that the relationship between high-risk status and gambling problems is filtered through the relationship between high risk and substance use problems. High risk youth are more likely to develop substance use problems, which may lead them to being at increased risk of developing a gambling problem (see Figure 2.3 for a diagrammatic representation of these proposed pathways, reproduced from Winters and Anderson (2000)).



**Figure 2.3: Developmental pathways for risk status, substance use disorders and gambling problems**

Other researchers have countered that, while there may be a common set of risk and protective factors involved in gambling and substance abuse problems or health risking behaviours among youth (similar to Pathway 2 in Figure 2.3) such as being male, low mood and self-esteem, peers involved in deviant behaviour, high risk-taking propensity, and difficulties with school work, there also exists a set of unique risk factors for adolescent problem gambling, which include paternal pathological gambling, access to gambling venues, depression and anxiety, high extroversion, low conformity and self-discipline, poor coping skills and adaptive behaviour, persistent problem behaviours, and early onset of gambling experiences (Dickson, Derevensky & Gupta, 2002).

Other researchers have gone even further and differentiated between types of problem gamblers, the pathways they follow into problem gambling, and the treatment recommendations for each of these. Blaszczynski and colleagues have identified at least three sub-types of problem gamblers, and although each of the three pathways into problem gambling may share common processes and symptomatic features, they have distinct clinical features and etiological processes (Blaszczynski, 2002; Blaszczynski & Nower, 2002). The ease of access to gambling and the social acceptability of gambling as a leisure activity are common ecological factors across the three types of problem gamblers. The differences in the psychological and biological profiles of the types are summarised in Box 4.

**Box 4 – Blaszczynski and colleagues typology of problem gamblers**

**Normal problem gambling:** absence of any specific pre-morbid psychopathology, can move in and out of problem gambling (backwards along continuum shown in Figure 2.1); problem gambling occurs as a result of poor decision making and bad judgement that are independent of any other psychological disturbance – in other words, a person is not gambling excessively because they are depressed or impulsive but because they “fell into the trap” of gambling. Symptoms such as preoccupation with gambling, chasing losses, substance dependence, and depression and anxiety may all result as a consequence of the problem gambling, but are not the cause. Individuals belonging to this group of gamblers are more likely to seek treatment and to comply with instructions and are generally able to achieve controlled levels of gambling post treatment.

**Emotionally disturbed gamblers:** presence of predisposing psychological vulnerability factors. Participation in gambling is motivated (perhaps subconsciously) by a desire to modulate affective states (increase arousal, distract from problems, feel “alive”) or to meet specific psychological needs, generally have a family history of problem gambling, negative life experiences, neurotic personality traits, which may contribute cumulatively to produce an emotionally vulnerable gambler. Higher levels of premorbid psychopathology, including depression, anxiety, substance dependence and difficulties in coping with and managing stress. Difficulty in dealing with and expressing emotions directly and effectively, tendency to engage in avoidance and passive-aggressive behaviours. Gambling is seen as a means to escape or dissociate (there is a feeling of “zoning out”), which leaves poor moods and external worries behind. Treatment tends to aim for abstinence as these gamblers are viewed as being too fragile to maintain sufficient control of their behaviour to return to controlled gambling. This sub-type of problem gambler shares similarities with Jacobs’ General Theory of Addiction, in that certain personality traits and life experiences interact with physiological states of arousal and then influence the development of gambling problems. Emotionally disturbed gamblers also align with Pathways 2 and 3 in the Winters and Anderson model (Figure 2.3).

**Antisocial-impulsivist gamblers:** defined by the presence of neurological or neurochemical dysfunction that results in impulsivity and attention-deficit features. Neurotransmitters that have been identified by preliminary investigations as being involved in impulsivity, mood disorders and impaired control include serotonin (mood regulation), norepinephrine (arousal mediation) and dopamine (reward response and regulation). Owing to their biologically-based impulsivity (theorised to result from neurotransmitter dysregulation in arousal and impulse control), these gamblers manifest differential responses to reward and punishment and have a marked propensity for seeking out rewarding activities, an inability to delay gratification, and a failure to modify their behaviour in response to punishment. Independent of their gambling problems, they may display substance abuse, suicidal behaviour, irritability, low tolerance for boredom, sensation seeking and criminal behaviours – they are the impulsive, risk takers who cannot seem to foresee consequences or think through their behaviour. They may display poor interpersonal relationships, have problems with alcohol and multi-drug experimentation, and have a family history of antisocial behaviour and alcoholism. Gambling usually occurs at an early age and escalates rapidly and is often associated with criminal activity (stealing so as to gamble). With regards treatment, they are reported as being less motivated to seek out treatment, have poorer compliance rates and poorer response to treatment.

(Derived from Blaszczynski, 2002; Nower & Blaszczynski, 2004)

## **2.11 ASSESSMENT AND MEASUREMENT OF PROBLEM GAMBLING AMONG YOUTH**

A number of instruments have been used in youth gambling research, with the most popular tools being the Diagnostic Statistical Manual-IV-Multiple Response-Adapted for Juveniles (DSM-IV-MR-J) and the South Oaks Gambling Screen Revised for Adolescents (SOGS-RA), both of which were derived from instruments originally designed for use with adult populations. Fewer studies have used the Gamblers Anonymous Twenty Questions (GA-20), or the Massachusetts Gambling Screen (MAGS) with younger populations, although some studies have used them in comparisons with the above. In Australia, some studies have used the Victorian Gambling Screen (VGS), the only instrument designed and developed in Australia. Internationally, the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI) has been accepted by many researchers as the best available instrument for use with the general population. At the time of writing, the Canadian Adolescent Gambling Inventory (CAGI), the adolescent colleague of the CPGI, had just been published and was thus not in wide use.

The range of instruments used in gambling research has been extensively reviewed in a number of recent publications (e.g., SA Centre for Economic Studies, 2003; and Rossen, 2001). The following discussion is limited to instruments that have been reviewed for use with adolescent and youth populations, particularly in Australian studies.

### **2.11.1 The South Oaks Gambling Screen-Revised for Adolescents (SOGS-RA)**

The South Oaks Gambling Screen-Revised for Adolescents (SOGS-RA) (see Table 2.2) was developed by Winters and colleagues (1993b), using the SOGS as its foundation, for use with adolescents between ages 15 and 18. In their original study, the screen was presented during a telephone interview and as a pencil and paper survey in school, and no significant differences were found between the two presentation formats. The SOGS-RA consists of 16 items, only 12 of which are actually scored and contribute to the final rating. The items focus on negative behaviours and feelings that arise from participation in gambling but they ignore cognitive aspects such as preoccupation with gambling and this has raised concerns among some researchers (Poulin, 2000; Derevensky & Gupta, 2000). Issues around interpretation and misunderstanding of items among young participants have been raised, with Ladouceur and associates (2000) reporting that a large proportion of the items are misunderstood by young people, and less than a third of participants correctly understand all of the items. When misunderstood items were clarified and the SOGS-RA completed a second time, the achieved prevalence statistic dropped substantially (by 29.4%). Some researchers have suggested that the process of clarifying the items may have led the participants to believe that they were supposed to be more conservative in their endorsement of the items (SA Centre for Economic Studies, 2003); however, it remains a possibility that the language used in this instrument is not clear enough to elicit accurate responses from younger people. It should be noted that other researchers have failed to substantiate Ladouceur's claims of significant misinterpretation of SOGS items (e.g., Thompson, Walker, Milton & Djukic, 2005) and that it appears likely that the studies were conducted using a French language translation of the SOGS-RA, not the original English language version, raising questions



about whether the findings are applicable to the original (Derevensky & Gupta, 2004). Nevertheless, the SOGS-RA remains a widely used screen for problematic gambling levels among adolescents, particularly in North America (Rossen, 2001).

**Table 2.2: South Oaks Gambling Screen Revised for Adolescents**

<b>SOGS-RA items</b>
<p>What is the largest amount of money you have ever gambled in the past 12 months?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. \$50-\$99</li> <li>2. \$100-\$199</li> <li>3. \$200 and more</li> </ol>
<p>Do you think that either of your parents gamble too much?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mother</li> <li>• Father</li> <li>• Both mother and father</li> </ul>
<p>In the past 12 months, how often have you gone back another day to win back the money you lost?</p>
<p>In the past 12 months when you were betting, have you ever told others you were winning money when you really weren't winning?</p>
<p>Has your betting, in the past 12 months, ever caused any problems for you such as arguments with family and friends, or problems at school or work?</p>
<p>In the past 12 months, have you ever gambled more than you had planned to?</p>
<p>In the past 12 months, has anyone criticized your betting or told you that you had a gambling problem, regardless of whether you thought it was true or not?</p>
<p>In the past 12 months, have you ever felt bad about the amount you bet, or about what happens when you bet money?</p>
<p>Have you ever felt, in the past 12 months, that you would like to stop betting money but didn't think you could?</p>
<p>In the past 12 months, have you ever hidden from your family or friends any betting skips, I.O.U.s, lottery tickets, money that you've won, or other signs of gambling?</p>
<p>In the past 12 months, have you had money arguments with family or friends that centred on gambling?</p>
<p>In the past 12 months, have you borrowed money to bet and not paid it back?</p>
<p>In the past 12 months, have you ever skipped or been absent from school or work due to betting activities?</p>
<p>Have you ever borrowed or stolen money in order to bet or cover gambling debts in the past 12 months?</p>

From Winters et al., 1993b

### **2.11.2 The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual – Fourth Edition – Adapted for Juveniles (DSM-IV-J and DSM-IV-MR-J)**

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Fourth Edition Adapted for Juveniles (DSM-IV-J) was based on the diagnostic criteria for pathological gambling for adults, as defined by the American Psychological Association (APA, 1994). The original instrument, a diagnostic checklist of criteria used by professionals during clinical interviews or over a number of interviews, was adapted to measure gambling behaviour in the past 12 months among 11 to 16 year-olds in the format of a questionnaire that could be administered in a classroom (Fisher, 2000). There are twelve items in the questionnaire, representing nine criteria for problem gambling, with dichotomous response options (yes or no), and endorsement of at least four of the nine criteria has been claimed as sufficient to identify “probably pathological gamblers” (see Box 2 for a short discussion of pathological versus problem gambling). On items that refer to gaining money for gambling, the juvenile version refers to using money allocated for activities such as buying school lunches or travel. Items that focus on illegal activities specify theft from home, theft from outside the family, and shoplifting, whereas the adult version of the instrument uses examples such as forgery, fraud and embezzlement.

This instrument was further revised to address concerns about the appropriateness of dichotomous responses in a non-clinical setting like a classroom, where there is no opportunity for further probing of responses. In the DSM-IV-MR-J (see Table 2.3), there are nine items with four response options: never, once or twice, sometimes or often. While the DSM-IV-MR-J has not yet been fully validated, there are reports that it demonstrates reasonable levels of reliability and validity (Fisher, 2000; Rossen, 2001; South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, 2003). In Australia, the DSM-IV-J has been used by Delfabbro and his colleagues in their investigations of gambling behaviour among young people in South Australia and the ACT (Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003; Delfabbro et al., 2006b). A recent review of the measurement of prevalence of youth gambling in Australia recommended that DSM-IV-MR-J be considered for use in any future national prevalence studies as its reported low reading age (estimated around fourth grade level, approximate age range of between 8 and 9 years) may help young people respond to the questions more accurately (South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, 2003).

**Table 2.3: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-IV measures: DSM-IV-MR-J items**

Diagnostic criterion	Item	Scoring
Preoccupation	In the past year, how often have you found yourself thinking about gambling or planning to gamble?	Never; once or twice; sometimes; often
Tolerance	During the past year, have you needed to gamble with more and more money to get the same amount of excitement you want?	Yes/No
Loss of control	In the past year, have you ever spent <i>much</i> more than you planned to on gambling?	Never; once or twice; sometimes; often
Withdrawal	In the past year, have you felt bad or fed up when trying to cut down or stop gambling?	Never; once or twice; sometimes; often; haven't tried to cut down
Escape	In the past year, how often have you gambled to help you to escape from problems or when you are feeling bad?	Never; once or twice; sometimes; often
Chasing losses	In the past year, after losing money gambling, have you returned another day to try and win back the money you lost?	Never; less than half the time; more than half the time; every time
Lies	In the past year, has your gambling ever led you to tell lies to your family?	Never; once or twice; sometimes; often
Illegal (unsocial) acts	In the past year have you ever taken money from the following <i>without permission</i> to spend on gambling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– School lunch or travel money</li> <li>– Money from your family</li> <li>– Money from outside the family</li> </ul>	Never; once or twice; sometimes; often
Risked job/education/relationships	In the past year, has your gambling ever led to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Arguments with family, friends or others</li> <li>– Missing school</li> </ul>	Never; once or twice; sometimes; often

### 2.11.3 Massachusetts Adolescent Gambling Screen (MAGS)

The Massachusetts Adolescent Gambling Screen (MAGS) (Shaffer, LaBrie, Scanlan & Cummings, 1994) was designed to assess the prevalence of problem gambling in a general adolescent population, rather than being based on diagnostic criteria for addictions like the DSM-IV-J and the SOGS-RA, although the MAGS does include the DSM-IV criteria posed as a set of survey items which are scored as a separate scale (using yes/no coding). It has been claimed that the instrument has good reliability and validity, but the MAGS has not

been used extensively in the literature (Shaffer et al., 1994; Derevensky & Gupta, 2004). One obvious limitation of the instrument is that, owing to its having been developed prior to the revisions of the DSM-IV criteria to make them more suitable for younger respondents, the DSM-IV-based items are not couched in terms that make them relevant to adolescents and the reading level of the MAGS appears to be relatively high (while the updated DSM-IV-J items could be used with the MAGS, the estimates of reliability and validity would thus need to be recalculated). All of the MAGS items are scored “Yes” or “No”, apart for Item 2 which uses a response set of “Less”, “About the same” or “More”.

**Table 2.4: Massachusetts Adolescent Gambling Screen (MAGS) items**

<b>Subscale items*</b>
Have you ever experienced social, psychological or financial pressure to start gambling or increase how much you gamble?
How much do you usually gamble compared with most other people?
Do you feel that the amount or frequency of your gambling is “normal”?
Do friends or relatives think of you as a “normal” gambler?
Do you ever feel pressure to gamble when you do not gamble?
Do you ever feel guilty about your gambling?
Does any member of your family ever worry or complain about your gambling?
Have you ever thought that you should reduce or stop gambling?
Are you always able to stop gambling when you want?
Has your gambling ever created problems between you and any member of your family or friends?
Have you ever gotten in trouble at work or school because of your gambling?
Have you ever neglected your obligations (e.g., family, work or school) for two or more days in a row because you were gambling?
Have you ever gone to anyone for help about your gambling?
Have you ever been arrested for gambling?

#### **2.11.4 The Victorian Gambling Screen**

The Victorian Gambling Screen (VGS), which focuses on pathological gambling, was commissioned by the Victorian Gaming Authority for use with Australian populations in response to concerns raised about the appropriateness of the South Oaks Gambling Screen. The VGS was developed by researchers from the Flinders Medical Centre (Bem-Tovim, Esterman, Tolchard & Battersby, 2001). The final instrument comprises 21 items, 3 items covering enjoyment of gambling, 15 focusing on harm to self and 3 on harm to partner, all of which have multiple response options of never, rarely, sometimes, often or always. Only the “Harm to self” items distinguish reliably between problem gamblers and non-problem gamblers, with a score of  $\geq 21$  out of a possible 60 on these items indicating a gambling problem. Comparisons between responses to the VGS and the SOGS have suggested that the VGS has quite a strong correlation with the SOGS, so that the majority of respondents who

would be identified as problem gamblers using the SOGS are similarly identified using the VGS. Towards the higher end of scores, the VGS may be more sensitive to differences in gambling problem severity among those who are problem gamblers, perhaps better reflecting the conceptualisation of gambling problems lying on a continuum than the SOGS (Delfabbro, 2008b). The language used in the VGS is relatively clear and simple, and items that refer to the respondent's partner or spouse could be readily changed to refer to family members or friends, suggesting that the items could be used with younger respondents, although a juvenile or youth version has not yet been published. At this stage, the major limitation to using the VGS in a national study of youth gambling is that it has not yet been tested or validated as a large-sample instrument, although it has been used as a secondary screening instrument in a study of Australian adolescent gambling (e.g., Delfabbro et al., 2005). In this study, the scale was reported to have good reliability and correlate significantly with the primary screener, the DSM-IV-J (Delfabbro et al., 2005).

**Table 2.5: The Victorian Gambling Screen**

<b>VGS items</b>
Have you ever felt that after losing you must return as soon as possible to win back your losses?
How often have you lied to others to conceal the extent of your involvement in gambling?
How often have you spent more on gambling than you could afford?
Have you and your partner criticised each other (about gambling)?
Have you felt guilty about your gambling?
Have you thought you shouldn't gamble or gamble less?
Have you hidden betting slips, and other signs of gambling from your spouse, partner or children or other important people in your life?
How often has anyone close to you complained about your gambling?
How often have you had to borrow money to gamble with?
Has gambling been a good hobby for you?
Nowadays, when you gamble, is it fun?
Have you gambled with skill?
Nowadays, when you gamble, do you feel you are on a slippery slope and can't get up again?
Has your need to gamble been too strong to control?
Has gambling been more important than anything else you might do?
Have you and your spouse put off doing things together because of gambling?
Has the thought of gambling been constantly on your mind?
Have you lied to yourself about gambling?
Have you gambled in order to escape from worry or trouble?
How often has your gambling made it harder to make money last from one payday to the next?
Has your partner had difficulties trusting you (about gambling)?

## 2.12 EDUCATION ABOUT GAMBLING

Financial literacy and money management education have been proposed as possible means of preventing the development of gambling problems among young people by the Australasian Gaming Council and Melbourne University School of Social Work (2007). Although the inability to control how much money is spent on gambling is a feature of problem gambling, there is no consensus among experts that this is a particularly salient feature for young people with gambling problems; the criterion of financial bail-out – reliance on others to provide money to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by gambling – is considered by many adolescent gambling researchers to be inappropriate for use with young respondents because many are not financially independent and are thus not as much at risk of suffering financial hardship as a direct result of their gambling as adults are (e.g., Fisher, 2000). To date, the influence of financial literacy on the likelihood of participating in gambling, at normal or problematic levels, has not been widely researched, although Delfabbro and Thrupp (2003) reported that young people's attitudes towards money management or whether money management was discussed in their families did not differ between those young people who were gambling regularly and those who did not gamble.

Another theme in education and prevention research has focused on mathematical understanding. Research has suggested that young people who gamble may hold irrational or erroneous beliefs about the mathematical odds involved in games of chance, overestimating their level of control over the outcome and their ability to “beat the system” (Moore & Ohtsuka, 1999). Delfabbro and colleagues (2005, 2006a) investigated the role of statistical knowledge and perception of risks among Australian students and found that young people who reported problematic levels of gambling were more likely to express strong beliefs in the role of skill in playing games of chance, and to agree with statements such as “Gambling is a good way to get rich quickly” than were non-gamblers or non-problematic gamblers. Despite these apparent differences in beliefs about their own chances, problematic gamblers were just as knowledgeable, if not more so, of the true odds of winning in a number of gambling activities. Compared with other young people, they had a similar level of understanding of randomness and they had a similar level of mathematical reasoning. Similar results were also found in a study of older subjects; although the problem gamblers scored higher than non-gamblers on a measure of cognitive bias, this was not due to differences in their levels of understanding of odds and probability or general numerical ability (Lambos & Delfabbro, 2007).

A possible explanation of this holding of conflicting beliefs and knowledge (“I believe I can beat the odds/I know what the odds are”) has been proposed by Ladouceur and colleagues (e.g., Sévigny & Ladouceur, 2004), who distinguish between “cold” or “hard” objective knowledge, and “hot” or “personally relevant” cognitions (which may also involve emotions). In this way, holding the cold knowledge of the objective odds of beating the house at a casino may lose out in the moment to the personal belief that you are “on a roll” and are likely to throw double sixes the next time as well.

This divergence between knowledge and behaviour has been reported in a number of other studies on youth gambling and has been proposed as an argument against relying solely on educating young people about mathematical odds as a means of preventing gambling (Delfabbro et al., 2006a).

If educating young people on probability theory is not likely to change their behaviour, perhaps changing their perceptions of how much luck is involved can. One inventive study that investigated cognitive perceptions regarding the level of skill and luck involved in various games of chance and other activities (e.g., whether drawing a higher card was more due to chance than to skill) did find that it was possible to change these perceptions and to maintain these changes over time by controlling the reinforcement schedules or the frequency of wins (Derevensky, Gupta & Baboushkin, 2007). Not only did children change their ratings of how much luck was involved in winning the game they played (children who were in the groups that lost consistently decreased their ratings of how much skill was involved and increased their ratings of how much luck was involved) but also these changes generalised to other games of chance. According to the authors this is a particularly important finding in relation to the design of prevention programs, given the impossibility of exposing children to all forms of gambling in order to change any inaccurate understandings about the role of skill versus luck.

A recent report from the Australian Productivity Commission (Productivity Commission, 2010) recommended that the Australian governments should not consider extending or renewing school-based gambling education programs, many of which include components on understanding probability and gambling odds as well as information about problem gambling, until the impact of existing programs is evaluated, as there is concern that although they may raise awareness of the issue, they may not reduce the behaviours, and may even increase the risk that some young people will participate in gambling. This conclusion appears not to be based on any evaluations or longitudinal studies (as they do not exist – another argument the Commission used against continuing school-based programs) but on (uncited) research on other risky activities, such as alcohol, drugs, and road safety that suggested that such programs may increase risk-taking behaviour among participants.

Given the volume of research that nominates a range of factors in the development of problem gambling, it is unlikely that any program that focuses *solely* on one aspect, be that mathematical understanding or resistance to peer pressure or managing money, will have a substantial impact on problem gambling amongst our young people. However, the Derevensky, Gupta and Baboushkin (2007) approach to changing and maintaining perceptions by controlling reinforcement schedules is worth further investigation.

## **3 – METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

### **OVERALL APPROACH**

The review of the literature described in Chapter 2 informed the development of a survey to obtain information about the current gambling behaviour of young people, including the extent and patterns of their gambling, contexts in which they gamble, and reasons for their gambling. Three formats of the survey were developed: on-line, pencil and paper, and computer assisted telephone interview (CATI).

Focus group interviews were conducted with a small sample of young people. The interviews were designed to probe more deeply into the reasons why young people gamble, their beliefs about gambling, contexts in which they gamble, and associated risk behaviours.

Analysis of the literature and survey data enabled (a) examination of the gambling behaviours of young people; (b) contexts for their gambling; the relationships between gambling and other risky behaviours; (c) levels and forms of problematic gambling amongst young people; (d) differences between young people who are problem gamblers and those who are not; and (e) gambling risk inhibitors and enhancers for young people.

The following sections provide further information about the development of the Young People and Gambling in Australian survey, the respondent sample (designed and achieved), and the data collection procedures. Focus groups were also conducted in a small number of schools after the on-line surveying was completed, and these are discussed in the final section of the chapter.

### **3.1 THE SURVEY**

#### **3.1.1 Content and structure**

The Youth Gambling Survey was designed by the ACER team with input from the Expert Reference Group (ERG), a team of international experts in the area of gambling and youth gambling. The questions included in the on-line, CATI, and paper surveys of young people were based on previous Australian and international research on youth participation in gambling and problematic levels of gambling.

Draft items were reviewed by the ERG, revised and then trialled with a class of 30 Grade 5 students (modal age of 10 years) to ensure that the reading load of the survey was appropriate for the youngest members of the targeted respondents and that the questions and instructions were clearly understood. Cognitive interviews were also conducted with number of Grade 5 students to ensure that the vocabulary and response categories were understood and considered appropriate. Cognitive interviews are a technique for testing and improving survey questions, with the aim of reducing misinterpretation of questions (and resulting poor data).



The “verbal probing” method, in which the participant is read aloud the target question and response options, answers, and is then asked other specific questions about the question and response categories themselves (e.g., “What did you understand that word to mean?” “Is there a simpler way to ask that?”) was used in the development of new questions for the current survey. Feedback from the students indicated that, except for a few problematic words and phrases (which were subsequently modified), the language used in the survey was clear and easily understood.

The final survey was divided into sections that focused on respondent demographic information (About you); participation in various activities, including gambling (About your activities); a measure of potential problematic gambling behaviour and questions about the context of gambling (About you and gambling); a question about significant others’ involvement with gambling (About other people and gambling); attitudes towards gambling (What you think about gambling); questions about involvement in other risky behaviours and exposure to advertising about gambling (Other activities and gambling)<sup>9</sup>; a measure of respondent self-esteem (How you feel); and questions pertaining to access to regular income and employment for those respondents old enough to have a job (About work and money). A copy of the survey is presented in Appendix 4. Further information about the questions developed for each of the sections is presented below.

#### **About your activities:**

Particular attention was paid to students’ understanding of what activities they considered to be gambling, in an attempt to ensure that only respondents who had participated in some form of gambling were presented with the measure of potential problem gambling. Picking numbers for a lottery ticket purchased by someone else and buying raffle tickets were not considered to be gambling by respondents in the trial and cognitive interviews. The most difficult item for respondents involved having taken part in a sweep or footy tipping competition; Grade 5 students did not seem to see this activity as being a version of betting on sports event or games or betting on races. Given the level of participation in sweeps and tipping competitions among Australian youth, however, it was considered appropriate to include this as a gambling activity in the survey, even if it is more socially or culturally acceptable than other activities.

#### **About you and gambling:**

Young people who indicated that they had gambled (e.g., placed bets, participated in sweeps, played card or table games, purchased lottery tickets, etc) were presented with a set of items to determine the extent of their involvement and any repercussions of gambling they had experienced. These items were based on the DSM-IV-MR-J questions developed by Fisher (2000). The items are included in Table 4.2 as well as in Appendix 3. According to Fisher (2000), these twelve questions correspond to nine diagnostic criteria for identifying problem

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<sup>9</sup> The questions pertaining to involvement with alcohol, drugs and participation in illegal or anti-social activities were not presented to respondents in some school sectors, at the request of the relevant Education Departments.

gambling – preoccupation, tolerance, loss of control, withdrawal symptoms, escaping problems, chasing losses, lies, illegal and antisocial acts and risk.

Two of these criteria – illegal and antisocial acts and risk – are measured with multiple items and it is at this stage that some researchers have made the error of counting all twelve responses when calculating a total score for the instrument and categorising their respondents based on the established cut-off of four points as being problem or non-problem gamblers. The method set out by Fisher (2000) instead calls for grouping the illegal and antisocial acts and risk items together so that endorsement of any one item in these two groups is interpreted as endorsement of that diagnostic criterion. For example, a respondent who indicated that they had argued with friends of family about their gambling but had not skipped school to gamble would still meet the criteria for risk.

One way in which the scoring of the questions in this survey deviated from Fisher's (2000) instructions was in reverting to the dichotomous response options of yes/no that were used with her initial revision of the DSM-IV criteria for gambling for use with youth populations (DSM-IV-J, Fisher, 1999). This step was taken because previous research with Australian youth (e.g., Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003; Delfabbro, Lahn & Grabosky, 2005) had used dichotomous responses with their samples, and because initial piloting and cognitive interviews with Grade 4 students suggested that, at least for the youngest respondents, the clear distinction between a yes or no response was less demanding than making a distinction between "less than half of the time/more than half of the time" or "once or twice/sometimes/often" as the DSM-IV-MR-J response options require. The instructions for the coding of the multiple response options allow for responses of sometimes, often, once or twice, more than half of the time, all of the time to all be counted as endorsement or a "yes", depending of the item, and that four "yeses" are sufficient for classification as a potential problem gambler.

The questions about respondent's motivations for gambling were based on those developed for the Canadian Gambling Activities Questionnaire (Derevensky & Gupta, 2001).

**About other people and gambling:**

The questions about who else is present when gambling takes place were based on those developed for the Canadian Gambling Activities Questionnaire (Derevensky & Gupta, 2001).

**What you think about gambling:**

The attitudes towards gambling questions were developed by Delfabbro and Thrupp (2003) for their investigations of gambling among Australian youth.

**How you feel:**

The measure of self-esteem was the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (1965) with the wording slightly modified to reflect current usage of young people in Australia.

### *Survey versions*

The survey was developed for on-line presentation, as this provided respondents with a greater degree of confidentiality. The paper version of the survey was produced for schools with restricted access to the Internet and contained the same questions with the same wording as was employed in the on-line version.

Given the different presentation modes (on-line and CATI) and different target age-groups, there were some slight differences between the on-line and CATI versions of the survey but the core content remained the same across modes. Changes to the CATI survey, and the subsequent on-line survey (B) conducted with the Wallis panels, included more age-appropriate rewording and additional questions relating to current activity (employment, study etc.), income, marital status, and living arrangements, as this were appropriate for the non-school based and older respondents. A copy of the CATI script for the gambling survey is presented in Appendix 5.

## **3.2 THE SAMPLE**

The target population for the gambling survey was Australian youth between the ages of 10 and 24 years. This wide age range takes in young people who may be at a variety of life stages – at primary school, secondary school, tertiary education, in the workforce and not in education or the labour force. A school-based sampling approach was the main mechanism for reaching 10–17-year-olds because a high portion of that age-group in Australia are students in schools. For the older youth (18–24-year-olds), a telephone-based sampling approach was adopted as the initial approach. This was supplemented by on-line surveying of panels of young people.

The following section details, in turn, the school-based and non-school-based sampling approaches.

### **3.2.1 School-based sample**

#### *3.2.1.1 Sample design*

A sample of schools was selected with probability proportional to size, and an intact class or classes was/were then selected from the sampled schools. This approach was designed to provide school-based youth from each state/territory with a more or less equal chance of being included in the sample. The participation of intact class groups is efficient and cost-effective, and it was our opinion that the approach would lead to higher response rates than would be possible with other approaches to surveying this population, and would therefore minimise the potential for non-response bias.

The frame used for sample selection was the ACER sampling frame. ACER maintains an up-to-date dataset of all Australian schools by state and territory and sector, with enrolment numbers by year level, as well as location and contact details. The ACER Sampling Frame is developed annually by ACER by coordinating information from multiple sources, including

the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Commonwealth, State and Territory education department databases.

The sampling frame enabled stratification of the population by State, sector, geographic location and socioeconomic status to ensure that the sample was representative of students across these variables.

The target age range includes students in the later years of primary school and all years of secondary school. According to data from the ABS<sup>i</sup>, most 10-year-olds have reached Grade 5 of primary school. Fewer than 20% of Grade 4 students are 10 years of age. Because of the difficulty and disruption to schools of trying to reach these 10-year-olds in Grade 4 (or below), it was decided to exclude this group from the target population, and focus on Grades 5 and above at the primary school level.

It was decided to divide the population into three age categories: youth in the compulsory years of schooling – aged 10 to 14 years (in Grades 5 and above); youth in post-compulsory years of schooling – 15 to 17 years; and youth who have left school – 18 to 24 years. As well as exploring the broad contextual factors that appear to shape decisions related to gambling, there was also an interest in exploring more closely the experiences of young people who could be classified as “frequent gamblers”. Based on previous research, it was estimated that up to 10% of young people might be classified as such. It was to be expected that the rates of “frequent gambling” would be lower amongst the younger age-groups compared with the older. With the aim of achieving a number of frequent gamblers within each age-group it was therefore decided to approach a larger sample of the 10–14 years age-group; a somewhat smaller sample for the 15–17-year-olds; and smaller again for the 18–24-year-olds. A relatively larger number of students were therefore sampled from Grades 5 and 6 and the early years of secondary school, and a smaller number of students were sampled from the later grades of secondary school.

The sample was also designed in a way to allow for exploration of possible state/territory differences in responses, where response rates were adequate. To this end, the sample design aimed for the sample sizes from each state/territory to be approximately equal. In other words, youth from the smaller states/territories were sampled at a higher rate than students from the larger states/territories. For analyses involving the aggregation of the jurisdictional data to the national level, it was therefore important to include weights, so that the contribution of the jurisdictions to the national results reflected the respective population sizes. Refer to Section 3.2.3 of this report for a discussion of the approach to weighing the collected data.

Table 3.1 presents the number of schools sampled by state/territory, and the estimated yield (number of students), allowing for school and student non-response.

**Table 3.1: Schools sampled**

State/Territory	Level	Number of schools sampled	Estimated yield
ACT	Primary	19	521
NSW	Primary	19	529
NT	Primary	19	443
QLD	Primary	19	525
SA	Primary	19	517
TAS	Primary	19	449
VIC	Primary	19	485
WA	Primary	19	500
<i>Total</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>152</i>	<i>3969</i>
ACT	Secondary	23	700
NSW	Secondary	23	916
NT	Secondary	24	675
QLD	Secondary	23	912
SA	Secondary	22	792
TAS	Secondary	23	386
VIC	Secondary	23	856
WA	Secondary	23	833
<i>Total</i>	<i>secondary</i>	<i>184</i>	<i>6070</i>

### 3.2.1.2 Outcomes of the school based sample

In reality, it proved to be very difficult to achieve the cooperation of schools to participate in the survey. The amount of survey activity occurring in schools has grown substantially in recent years, and schools are increasingly reluctant to participate in additional surveys. With respect to this particular survey, a number of factors seemed to work against a decision to participate:

- The survey happened to coincide with the first year of the national assessments in literacy and numeracy (NAPLAN). The high profile nature of these assessments would have added to the burden on schools with respect to survey work in general.
- The subject matter of the survey was sensitive in nature, particularly given the illegal nature of gambling activities for those respondents under the age of 18 and this made schools more reluctant to participate. It could for example be expected that the survey would have generated some parental concerns that would need to be addressed, adding to the burden on the school.
- Schools are increasingly reluctant to participate in surveys where there is no clear and direct connection to an area of the curriculum.

Because of the low response rates from the initial sample of schools, it was decided, in consultation with GRA, to sample more schools with the aim of boosting the achieved sample size from the school-based component of the survey. It was also decided to include any school-based youth revealed during the telephone sampling process.

The total number of schools that agreed and finally did participate in the survey by state/territory and level is presented in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2: Number of schools by level and state/territory**

State/Territory	Participating schools (primary)	Participating schools (secondary)
ACT	1	4
NSW	7	12
NT	1	1
QLD	3	3
SA	1	5
TAS	7	4
VIC	6	3
WA	2	5
<i>Total</i>	28	37

Comparing these numbers with those in Table 3.1, that rate of refusal among schools is apparent: in Queensland, for example, three primary schools out of an original 19 sampled agreed to participate. Participation of schools was higher in NSW, Tasmania and Victoria, and lower in Western Australia, South Australia, Northern Territory and the ACT.

### 3.2.2 Non-school-based sample

#### 3.2.2.1 Sample design

*Telephone interviewing (CATI).* The starting sample source was random digit dialling (RDD). It soon became apparent, however, that the number of calls required to locate and engage appropriate young people was very time-consuming and much less efficient than originally anticipated. As a result, a major component of the study involved the use of a snowballing<sup>10</sup> technique to locate in-scope respondents. Later in the fieldwork period, because of continuing difficulties encountered in finding sufficient numbers of qualifying young Australians, some interviews were obtained through the use of an on-line methodology through pre-recruited panels.

<sup>10</sup> In sociology and statistics research, snowball sampling is a technique for developing a research sample whereby existing participants recruit more participants from among their acquaintances.

A pilot test was conducted in April 2009 and this foreshadowed the difficulties described above. The original aim for the pilot test had been to complete 50 CATI interviews. The quota for 18–24 year olds had been completed at about the expected rate, but the achievement rate for the younger age-group was unacceptably low. On the fourth day of interviewing, 1,536 calls (8.4 hours of interviewer time) were made to obtain one interview. The pilot test was terminated when 41 of the planned 50 interviews had been completed.

*On-line survey (B).* The impetus for the on-line approach was the number of calls required for each telephone interview and the time and resources that this was using. Each completed interview averaged 14 minutes duration, but required a total of 116 minutes of interviewer time to make (on average) 348 calls in the search for a qualifying young person who agreed to be interviewed. In consultation with ACER and GRA, it was agreed that the Wallis Group would initiate an on-line data collection methodology for the survey. These on-line surveys were conducted with two pre-recruited panels, using respondents in the relevant age-groups only. One of the panels only included people over the age of 18, but the other included some in the 15–17 age-group.

The on-line survey (B) was developed using a combination of questions and presentation styles from both the Wallis CATI version and the on-line survey (A) being used in schools by ACER. When the modifications were agreed, the survey was prepared for presentation on-line and it was thoroughly tested prior to going “live”.

Email invitations were sent to panel members in the relevant age-groups, with instructions for them to log in and complete the survey. One disadvantage of this method was that not all participants were known to have left secondary school and, as a result, some responses were received from secondary school students. The advantage of it, however, was that the in-school responses were available as a boost to ACER’s data collection efforts across the school population. To avoid duplication across sample sources, each on-line respondent was screened for any participation in a gambling survey within the previous six months.

The first sample in the on-line survey remained in field from 15 to 29 October and yielded 1,374 surveys with respondents aged between 15 and 24 years of age. Nearly one in four (39% or 530 respondents) were still attending secondary school. The second on-line sample covered the period from 1 to 18 December 2009, yielding 778 completed surveys with respondents aged 18 and over, of whom 25 were still at school.

#### 3.2.2.2 *Outcomes of non-school-based sample*

Table 3.3 shows the age distribution and schooling status for the achieved non-school-based sample by each of the data collection methodologies.

(The reader is reminded that young people in the age-group 10–14 were not targeted in the non-school-based sample.)

**Table 3.3: Achieved responses by age and mode of conduct**

	Age-group	At school or left school		Total
		At school	Left school	
Telephone	15–17	0	98	98
	18–24	0	1,225	1,225
On-line survey (B)	15–17	473	60	533
	18–24	82	1,549	1,631
	<i>Total</i>	<i>555</i>	<i>932</i>	<i>3,487</i>

### 3.1.3 Indigenous sample

An aim for the project had been to add additional responses from 300 Indigenous Australians to the sample. This proved to be an extremely time-consuming component of the project.

The Indigenous sample was recruited in a variety of ways. We sought assistance from ACER's advisory body of 10 prominent Indigenous leaders in education and health who have close links with Indigenous communities and organisations across Australia. The ACER project researchers also had their own strong Indigenous networks that had been developed through research and development activities in the last decade or so. Assistance from individuals in these networks was also sought. Information about the project and an invitation to participate was distributed to over 500 organisations and groups in an effort to boost the Indigenous sample. For instance, letters were sent to all Indigenous student centres at Australian universities and TAFEs and to a range of community centres that Indigenous people attend. Schools with known high enrolments of Indigenous students were targeted for recruitment.

The combination of strategies resulted in recruiting a convenience sample of 241 Indigenous young people (99 in the 10 to 14 years age-group; 65 in the 15 to 17 years age-group; and 77 in the 18 to 24 years age-group).

### 3.2.4 Overall sample outcomes

Table 3.4 presents the total achieved sample size arising from the school-based and telephone-based sampling approaches, organised by state/territory, age-group and sex.

Table 3.4 shows that the number of participating students fell short of the number originally intended, particularly for the school-based sampling for some states/territories as indicated in earlier in Section 3.2.1.2, and particularly in the younger age categories. This reflects the issues of school burden and the sensitivity of the subject matter of the survey, as discussed previously. Nevertheless, the total sample size of nearly 6,000 youth is quite substantial, and participating students were included from each combination of state/territory and age-group.



**Table 3.4: Achieved sample by jurisdiction, age-group, gender, school-base status**

State/Territory	Age-group	Female (school)	Male (school)	Female (not at school)	Male (not at school)	Missing	Total
ACT	10–14	23	117	–	–		140
	15–17	57	137	2	3		199
	18–24	4	11	127	107		249
	missing					9	9
<i>ACT Total</i>		84	265	129	110	9	597
NSW	10–14	377	415	–	–		792
	15–17	260	339	21	25		645
	18–24	18	17	356	273		664
	missing					16	16
<i>NSW Total</i>		655	771	377	298	16	2117
NT	10–14	10	14	–	–		24
	15–17	4	10	3	0		17
	18–24	2		33	22		57
<i>NT Total</i>		16	24	36	22		98
QLD	10–14	37	26	–	–		63
	15–17	80	55	18	18		171
	18–24	8	3	279	191		481
<i>QLD Total</i>		125	84	297	209	0	715
SA	10–14	51	33	–	–		84
	15–17	81	69	8	7		165
	18–24	7	5	173	141		326
<i>SA Total</i>		139	107	181	148	0	575
TAS	10–14	122	96	–	–		218
	15–17	34	29	2	0		65
	18–24	7	1	88	72		168
<i>Tas Total</i>		163	126	90	72	0	451
VIC	10–14	55	51	–	–		106
	15–17	94	83	7	15		199
	18–24	15	6	352	257		630
	missing					1	1
<i>VIC Total</i>		164	140	359	272	1	936
WA	10–14	42	48	–	–		90
	15–17	34	24	12	17		87
	18–24	2	1	182	121		306
<i>WA Total</i>		78	73	194	138	0	483
<b>Grand Total</b>		1,424	1,590	1,663	1,269	26	5,972

Note: Totals include a small number of students who did not provide information on their gender.

Given the considerable non-response, it is not possible to determine the extent to which the youth participating in the survey represent the full range of views and experiences of youth from the population subgroups to which they belong. It would be unwise for example to read too much into differences of a few percent in outcomes from the survey. However, the overall sample size and the broad representation of females and males across the age-groups should be sufficient to provide a good picture of prevailing attitudes and practices with respect to youth gambling.

### 3.2.5 Weighting

The sample design involved an approximately equal-sized sample from each of the states/territories, and consequently weights were required for analyses which aggregated data to the national level, so that the contribution of the states/territories to the national results reflected the respective population sizes. As also discussed previously, a considerable degree of non-response was experienced, particularly in the younger age-groups, and particularly for some states/territories. The 10–14 year age-group, for instance, included a much smaller sample of participants from Queensland (63 participants) compared with Tasmania which had 218 students. As Queensland is a much larger jurisdiction than Tasmania, it was therefore important that any analyses which aggregated the Queensland and Tasmanian data (in particular, analyses at the national level) were weighted to reflect the fact that the participants from Queensland were representing a much larger group of youth than were those from Tasmania.

The approach taken for weighting was to take each age-grouping separately and, within each age-group, compare the distribution of the achieved sample by jurisdiction and sex, with the population distribution. The population distributions were drawn from data from the ABS<sup>11</sup>. For example, there were 415 male participants from the 10–14 age-group in NSW, which was 27.3% of the sample for this age-group. This compares to the population of 10–14 year olds, of which 15.7% are males from NSW. If the results were left unweighted, the contribution of NSW 10–14-year-old males to the national estimates would be nearly twice what it should be given their population size. To correct for this, a weight of  $15.7/27.3 = 0.574$  was constructed and applied to each participating student's data. The weighted contribution of NSW 10–14-year-old males now reflects their prevalence in the population. For another example, approximately 5.47% of the population of 10–14-year-old females come from Western Australia, but only 2.8% of sample participants came from this group. These participants were each given a weight of  $5.47/2.8 = 1.98$ , so that their contribution to national estimates better reflected their prevalence in the population.

While the above approach is appropriate for relatively small variations in weights, it is common practice in situations where very large variations to weights are required, to trim these large weight adjustments. For example, when a subgroup is represented by a very small number of participants relative to its prevalence in the population as a whole, then making an excessively large weight adjustment may result in this small group of students having an

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<sup>11</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010, *Australian Demographic Statistics, Dec 2009* (catalogue number 3101.0)

inappropriately large influence on the overall estimates. The approach adopted for this survey was that if the weight was more than four times the median weight of youth from the same jurisdiction and sex, the weight was trimmed to be equal to four times the median weight for that group. This approach was drawn from methods used in the OECD *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)*<sup>12</sup>. With respect to the Youth Gambling Survey, weights were trimmed for 10–14-year-old males and females from Victoria and Queensland. Trimming of weights was unnecessary for the jurisdictions in this age-group, and was not required for any of the jurisdictions in the older age-groups.

An assumption behind the weighting approach described above is that the participating students adequately represent the population subgroup to which they belong.

Comparisons were made between unweighted and weighted results across the survey outcome variables. Across both approaches, results appeared to fall within expectations. However, it is not possible to accurately determine the extent to which the responding sample truly represents the population as a whole and, as already noted, small differences in survey outcomes should be treated with caution.

### **3.3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURES**

#### **3.3.1 The survey**

##### *3.3.1.1 School-based sample*

###### *Recruitment of schools*

Jurisdiction permission to conduct research in schools was required for all government and Catholic schools. Independent schools granted permission on a school by school basis. Survey clearance through the Commonwealth Government Statistical Clearing House was sought for data collection in Catholic and Independent Schools.

Applications to conduct research forms were progressively completed and sent to each of the relevant jurisdictions from July 2008. Final permissions could not be granted until the survey had been developed and submitted to jurisdictions for approval. Most jurisdictions granted permission with no requests for changes to the survey. However, lengthy negotiations were required between the contractor and several jurisdictions, with all final permissions not being obtained until the end of July 2009. Contact with schools and data collection components of the project were thus significantly delayed.

Principals of the schools to be sampled were sent letters of invitation to participate. Non responses were followed up with emails and phone calls. Recruitment of schools continued progressively until the end of 2009. Some schools who initially agreed to participate were unable to organise for students to complete the surveys by the end of the year but agreed to undertake the survey at the beginning of 2010.

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<sup>12</sup> OECD, PISA 2006 Technical Report, p. 136

Recruitment of schools was much more difficult than anticipated, with schools citing the focus on literacy and numeracy curriculum, The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), and involvement in too many other research projects as major reasons for not participating. Many principals did not think the *Gambling and Young People* study was core business for schools although we did point out that the project had links with multiple aspects of the school curriculum, including curriculum related to values education, student health and wellbeing, and mathematics education.

Because response from schools was lower than expected, an additional sample was drawn at the beginning of 2010. In addition, all non-participating schools from the 2009 sample were contacted again at the beginning of 2010. Approaches to several other sources to assist with school recruitment (the Australian College of Educators, the Australian Council of Educational Leaders, and the Australian Education Union) were made but did not result in an increased the sample size.

Information packages for schools and parents/carers were developed (see Appendices 1, 2, and 3). Parents/carers were required to provide informed consent for school-aged participants.

#### 3.3.1.2 *Non-school-based sample*

*Telephone interviewing (CATI).* Telephone interviewing commenced in July 2009 using a RDD sample. This was followed with contact being attempted with some of the “snowball” leads that had been generated on the first night of interviewing. The RDD sample and the snowball sample were run concurrently until late August when it was decided that snowballing would be stopped.

The original intention for the snowballing approach was to generate leads for eligible young people – in particular, the elusive 15–17-year-olds who had left school. This was not as effective as hoped and was adding unproductive time to the primary calls. It had been of some value in yielding 117 completed interviews, but only 10 of them were 15–17-year-olds. It was decided that the approach was not cost-efficient and had the potential to create mistrust in the community because respondents were reluctant to provide another person’s contact details or simply did not know any young people who would qualify for the survey. The telephone interviewing continued until December 2009, with a hiatus in October when an on-line approach was introduced.

*On-line interviewing.* The impetus for the on-line approach was the multiple calls required for each telephone interview and the time and resources that this was using up. Each completed interview averaged 14 minutes’ duration, but required a total of 116 minutes of interviewer time to make (on average) 348 calls in the search for a qualifying young person who agreed to be interviewed. In consultation with ACER and GRA, it was agreed that the Wallis Group would initiate an on-line data collection methodology for the survey. The on-line interviews were obtained through the use of two pre-recruited panels, using respondents in the relevant age-groups only. One of the panels included people over the age of 18 only but the other included some in the 15–17 age-group.

The on-line questionnaire was developed using a combination of questions and presentation styles from both the Wallis CATI version and the hard-copy version being used in schools by ACER. When the modifications were agreed, the questionnaire was prepared for presentation on-line and it was thoroughly tested prior to going “live”.

E-mail invitations were sent to panel members in the relevant age-groups to log in and complete the survey. One disadvantage of this method was that not all participants were known to have left secondary school and, as a result, some responses were received from secondary school students. The advantage of it, however, was that the in-school responses were available as a boost to the school-based sample. To avoid duplication across sample sources, each on-line respondent was screened for any participation in a gambling survey within the previous six months.

The first sample in the on-line survey remained in field from two weeks in October 2009 and yielded 1,374 interviews with respondents aged between 15 and 24 years of age. Nearly one-quarter (39% or 530 respondents) were still attending secondary school. The second on-line sample completed the survey in the first half of December 2009. A further 778 completed interviews with respondents aged 18 and over, of whom 25 were still at school.

*Interviewer training.* A team of about fifty interviewers were briefed to work on the project. Four separate briefing sessions were held as new interviewers were introduced to the study. Each briefing lasted approximately an hour, and took place immediately before the commencement of interviewing for the day.

The briefing included an overview of the survey, with discussion relating to questionnaire design, confidentiality, and sample management protocols. The remaining time was spent going through an on-screen display of an interview, in an interactive session in which interviewers take an active part in asking and answering questions as they occur on screen. Responses used in this exercise are designed to highlight different aspects of the questionnaire content and to initiate discussion amongst the interviewers and team members. At the conclusion of the briefing session interviewers were required to practise alone before ‘going live’.

All interviewers were provided with a copy of the questionnaire and detailed briefing notes for reference during fieldwork.

### 3.3.1.3 *Data analysis*

Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the characteristics of the survey participants (gender, age, Indigenous status, employment status, whether attending school or not), frequency of engagement in a range of gambling activities, extent of engagement in gambling, contexts for gambling (motivation to gamble, company in which they gambled, persons who influenced their gambling behaviour), attitudes (to self and to gambling), and engagement in other risky behaviours (e.g., use of substances such as drugs, alcohol and cigarettes, and engagement in delinquent behaviours such as “graffiti-ing”, stealing, and

fighting). Participants were grouped according to demographic variables, including gender, age, and Indigenous status, and group differences in participation in various gambling activities were evaluated using chi-squared analyses and analysis of variance (ANOVA). In addition, responses to the DSM-IV-J gambling items were used to group respondents into four groups (see Section 4.4.1), and the responses of these groups were also compared to investigate any statistical differences in their responses.

In order to investigate the multivariate relationships between gambling behaviour, self-esteem, attitudes towards gambling and respondents' other characteristics, including demographic information as well as information about involvement of family and friends in gambling, *structural equation modelling* was employed.

Differences in the relationships between respondent characteristics and self-esteem and attitudes towards gambling were also explored separately for the four gambling groups – non-gamblers, social gamblers, at-risk gamblers and problem gamblers – using these techniques. Further details on the modelling are presented in Section 4.8.

### **3.3.2 Focus groups**

#### *3.3.2.1 Participants*

The original intention was to select the focus group sample following initial analysis of the survey data. We planned, where possible, to draw a subsample from the group of students identified in the survey data as either regular, non-problem gamblers or those identified as problem gamblers. However, education jurisdictions and individual schools would only provide permission to conduct this aspect of the research with groups of students selected as convenience samples by the schools (to fit with school timetabling and student availability and willingness to participate, and those who had returned parental permission forms).

Nine focus groups were conducted in NSW and Victoria. Group composition was 3 to 12 students. The size of the focus groups was originally planned to be 4–6 for primary school children and 6–8 for secondary school students. In practice, we were required by schools to accept whichever students had been selected by them for participation, and the modal number of participants was six. In eight of the focus groups, students were in the same year level as each other (the Year 5 and 6 students were members of a composite class). In the smallest focus group, there were two Year 10 females and a single Year 6 male, due to the availability of students at that particular school on that day. It is possible that this group composition impacted on the views presented by these respondents.

The group interviews were conducted by project staff with experience in focus group methodology. Further details about the focus group composition and results are presented in Chapter 5.

#### *3.3.2.2 Data analysis*

The focus groups generated descriptive data. These data were analyzed to describe behaviours, beliefs, and contexts rather than to develop theory, which was in accordance with the stated purposes of the research as outlined in GRA's project specification. However,

techniques such as those associated with grounded theory were used to assist in making sense of the qualitative data. For instance, the techniques of coding, memo-ing, and the construction of concept maps are traditional grounded theory tools that were applied to our qualitative data. Iterative processes and co-researcher checks were conducted to enhance the reliability of the qualitative data analysis

## **4 – RESULTS OF SURVEYS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the results of the analyses of the survey data. Results reported are for the weighted sample (see Section 3.2.3). The average weight was approximately 0.95, which had the effect of reducing the sample size from 5,977 to 5,685 young people.

The analyses were designed to address the six purposes of the study as outlined in Section 1.2.

Sections 4.2 to 4.7 of the chapter contain descriptive results pertaining to:

- survey participants – gender, Indigenous status, age (group), school attendance, and employment status;
- current gambling behaviours of the participants – what they do and the extent to which they do it;
- contexts of young people’s gambling – why they gamble, who they gamble with, the extent of problem gambling in the family and amongst peers, and their participation in antisocial and risky behaviours; and,
- participants’ attitudes – to self (self-esteem) and towards gambling.

Section 4.8 presents the results of modelling the relationships between background variables (gender, age), influences from others (family, peers), engagement in risky behaviours (substance use, delinquent behaviour), and attitudes (to self, towards gambling).

### **4.2 SURVEY PARTICIPANTS**

The weighted sample, in a demographic breakdown, is described in Table 4.1. Within this weighted sample, 2,865 were males and 2,820 were females. The sample was split into three age-groups for analysis with just over half in the 18 and over age-group. This group was the only one of the three that could participate legally in gambling activities. The remaining young people were divided into two further groups, the youngest aged between 10 and 14 years which made up 22% of the survey respondents, and those that were aged between 15 and 17 years which made up 27% of the survey respondents. There were 251 young people who identified themselves as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background (4%).



**Table 4.1: Characteristics of survey participants**

	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	2,865	50.4
Female	2,820	49.6
<b>Indigenous status</b>		
Indigenous	251	4.4
Non-Indigenous	5,402	95.0
Unknown	31	0.6
<b>Age-group</b>		
10–14 years	1,253	22.0
15–17 years	1,551	27.3
18 years or older	2,881	50.7
<b>School attendance</b>		
At school	2,688	47.3
Not at school	2,997	52.7
<b>Employment (including part-time after school)</b>		
Employed	2,095	36.9
Not-employed	3,590	63.1

Note: Unweighted sample is 5,972 as in Table 3.4; weighted sample is 5,685 as in Table 4.1.

### 4.3 CURRENT GAMBLING BEHAVIOURS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

To gauge the current gambling behaviour of young people, the survey asked about participation in a range of gambling and non-gambling activities over the previous twelve month period. Participants were asked about the frequency of their participation (never, less than once a month, about once a month, about once a week, and every day or almost every day).

Overall, the most common gambling activities were purchase of instant prize-tickets or scratch cards, and lottery tickets, and playing cards games at home or in the homes of friends or relatives.

It was found that, overall, 77.1% of young people had participated in at least one gambling activity at one of the four rates of frequency described above. Table 4.2 shows the percentage of young people who had participated in none through to all thirteen of the gambling activities included in the survey.

**Table 4.2: Number of gambling activities selected**

Number of Gambling Activities	% <i>n=5685</i>	Number of Gambling Activities	% <i>n=5685</i>
0	22.9	7	4.0
1	17.0	8	2.3
2	13.3	9	2.2
3	11.7	10	1.4
4	9.2	11	1.3
5	6.6	12	1.1
6	5.0	13	1.9

The gambling reported by the participants did not occur particularly frequently. Very few participants reported that they participated in any of the gambling activities on a daily or even weekly basis. More common was occasional (less than once a month) participation in lotteries, purchase of scratch cards, playing cards at home, and gambling on horse or dog races. The reported gambling by occurrence is described in Table 4.3

**Table 4.3: Frequency of gambling activities**

	<i>n</i>	% Never	% Less than once a month	% About once a month	% About once a week	% Every day or almost every day
Played bingo for money or prizes	5,667	84.2	11.9	2.4	1.0	0.5
Played card games for money or prizes at your own home, or at the homes of your relatives or friends	5,664	66.8	22.3	7.5	2.6	0.8
Played on poker-machines (pokies)	5,656	71.1	18.0	7.2	2.9	0.7
Taken part in a football tipping competition or sweep to win money or prizes	5,659	67.3	16.9	4.8	9.8	1.3
Bet money on horse or dog races	5,656	72.9	20.4	4.1	2.0	0.6
Bet money on sports games, like football, rugby or cricket	5,662	81.9	10.9	4.0	2.4	0.8
Had someone else place a bet for you	5,661	78.5	16.1	3.6	1.2	0.6
Bought a lottery ticket	5,660	64.1	24.2	7.5	3.6	0.6
Bought an instant-prize ticket or scratch card	5,665	56.3	29.3	9.9	3.8	0.6
Played card games at a casino	5,648	86.2	8.5	3.4	1.3	0.7
Played other games at a casino, like craps, roulette or baccarat	5,659	84.2	10.2	3.8	1.1	0.6
Played two-up	5,653	85.9	9.0	2.5	1.8	0.8
Placed a bet or gambled for money or prizes on the Internet	5,659	87.8	5.6	3.0	2.3	1.3

### 4.3.1 Gambling by gender

Table 4.4 shows the percentage of males and females who have gambled in the previous twelve months. Overall, there was no significant difference according to gender in terms of gambling experience in the previous twelve months with 78% of males and 76% of females having participated in a gambling activity. The odds ratio (OR) was 0.927 (95% CI = (0.819, 1.049) CI contains the value 1).

**Table 4.4: Gambling by gender**

Gambling status	%	%
	Male <i>n</i> = 2,864	Female <i>n</i> = 2,820
Has not gambled	22.2	23.6
Has gambled	77.8	76.4

Stratified analysis was performed using the Mantel-Haenszel technique to assess association between gender and gambling while controlling for age-group. Table 4.5 shows the percentages of males and females by age-group who had gambled in the previous twelve months. The association between gender and gambling remained non-significant after controlling for age-group ( $\chi^2_{MH}=1.278(1)$ ,  $p=0.258$ ).

**Table 4.5: Gambling by gender by age**

Gambling Status by Age-group		%	%
		Male	Female
Age 10-14 Years	Has not gambled	23.5	25.2
	Has gambled	76.5	74.8
Age 15-17 Years	Has not gambled	36.1	35.8
	Has gambled	63.9	64.2
Age 18-24 Years	Has not gambled	14.3	16.2
	Has gambled	85.7	83.8

### 4.3.2 Gambling by Indigenous status

Table 4.6 shows the percentage of indigenous and non-Indigenous young people who had gambled over the previous twelve months. Overall, there was no significant difference between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people with 82% of Indigenous and 77% of non-Indigenous young people having gambled in the previous twelve months (OR= 0.754, 95% CI=(0.544, 1.045) CI contains the value 1).

**Table 4.6: Gambling by Indigenous status**

Gambling status	%	%
	Indigenous <i>n</i> = 251	Non-Indigenous <i>n</i> = 5,402
Has not gambled	18.3	22.9
Has gambled	81.7	77.1

Table 4.7 shows the percentage of Indigenous young people who had gambled by age-group. When stratified analysis was performed using the Mantel-Haenszel technique to assess association between Indigenous status and gambling while controlling for age-group, the association between Indigenous status and gambling was significant indicating that the proportion of Indigenous gamblers is significantly different across the three age-groups ( $\chi^2_{MH}=4.832(1)$ ,  $p=0.023$ )

**Table 4.7: Gambling by Indigenous status by age**

Gambling status by Age-group		%	%
		Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Age 10-14 Years	Has not gambled	16.8	24.6
	Has gambled	83.2	75.4
Age 15-17 Years	Has not gambled	29.7	36.1
	Has gambled	70.3	63.9
Age 18-24 Years	Has not gambled	11.3	15.3
	Has gambled	88.8	84.7

### 4.3.3 Gambling by Age

Table 4.8 shows that there were different proportions of gamblers according to age with 76% of the 10-14 year age-group, 64% of the 15-17 year age-group and 85% of the 18-24 year age-group having gambled at least once in the past year. It was not unexpected that the older group, for whom gambling is a legal activity, should have a higher percentage of gamblers, but interestingly, a higher percentage of the youngest group (75.6%) than the middle age-group (64.1%) had gambled at least once in the previous twelve months.

**Table 4.8: Gambling by age**

Gambling status	%	%	%
	10-14 Years <i>n</i> = 1253	15-17 Years <i>n</i> = 1550	18-24 Years <i>n</i> = 2881
Has not gambled	24.4	35.9	15.2
Has gambled	75.6	64.1	84.8

#### 4.4 CLASSIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS BY GAMBLING STATUS

Young people who indicated that they had participated in at least one form of gambling activity in the past twelve months were asked to respond to a set of twelve items based on the DSM-IV-MR-J. This was done in order to gain an indication of the extent of their involvement in gambling activities and to ascertain whether they could be classified as problem gamblers or potential problem gamblers.

As discussed in Section 2.9.2, these twelve items aligned with nine diagnostic criteria. To classify gambling behaviour, we used Fisher's (2000) classification, whereby a score on four of the nine is considered to be indicative of problematic levels of gambling.

##### 4.4.1 Classification

In this study, those who were not considered to be problem gamblers were divided into three further groups:

- (a) non-gamblers (those who had not gambled at all in the past twelve months);
- (b) social gamblers (those who had gambled at least once in the past twelve months but who did not endorse any of the diagnostic criteria/reported no problems or negative effects); and
- (c) potentially at-risk gamblers (those who had gambled in the past twelve months and who reported problems in at least one of the areas covered by the diagnostic criteria).

Table 4.9 presents the classification of young people into the four groups of non-gambler, social gambler, at-risk gambler, and problem gambler.

The majority of young people were classified as social gamblers (56%); nearly one-quarter were non-gamblers (23%); 16% were as-risk gamblers; and 5% were problem gamblers.

**Table 4.9: Gambling groups**

Gambling Group	Gambling activities in past 12 months	Number of DSM-IV-MR-J criteria endorsed	% in sample
Non-gambler	None	Not presented	22.9
Social gambler	Yes	None	56.1
At-risk gambler	Yes	One to three	16.5
Problem gambler	Yes	At least four	4.5

By definition, the non-gambler and social gambler groups were not included in the analysis that considered the extent to which the nine diagnostic criteria were endorsed. The extent to which the at-risk and problem gambler groups endorsed each of the criteria is presented in Table 4.10.

**Table 4.10: Percentage endorsement of diagnostic criteria by gambling group (at-risk and problem gambler)**

Diagnostic criterion	%	%
	At-risk gambler <i>n</i> = 940	Problem gambler <i>n</i> = 254
Preoccupation	81.8	83.1
Tolerance	10.2	67.5
Loss of control	4.7	71.7
Withdrawal	6.5	66.5
Escape	8.4	68.1
Chase	13.5	79.1
Lies	3.5	67.3
Illegal acts	4.8	48.0
Risk	8.0	68.1

Except for the *Preoccupation* criterion, where the percentages were roughly even, the groups differed, by inspection, on endorsement of each of the remaining criteria. The problem-gambler group had a higher percentage endorsement of all criteria and substantially higher percentages for all but the *Preoccupation* criterion.

#### 4.4.1.1 Classification by gender

Table 4.11 shows the breakdown of males and females into the four groups (non-gambler, social gambler, at-risk gambler, and problem gambler). The percentage of females who were non-gamblers or social gamblers was higher than for males, and the percentage of at-risk and problem gamblers was higher for males than for females.

**Table 4.11: Classification by gender**

	%	%
	Male <i>n</i> = 2,864	Female <i>n</i> = 2,821
Non-gambler	22.2	23.6
Social gambler	52.9	59.3
At-risk gambler	19.1	13.9
Problem gambler	5.7	3.2

#### 4.4.1.2 Classification by age

A higher percentage of 18-24 year olds were classified as problem gamblers than for either of the other age-groups and a higher percentage of at-risk gamblers. The 15-17 year olds had the highest percentage of non-gamblers and the 10-14 year olds had the highest percentage of social gamblers.

**Table 4.12: Classification by age**

	% 10–14 years <i>n</i> = 1,254	% 15–17 years <i>n</i> = 1,551	% 18–24 years <i>n</i> = 2,880
Non-gambler	24.4	35.9	15.2
Social gambler	63.8	53.0	54.4
At-risk gambler	8.2	8.4	24.5
Problem gambler	3.6	2.7	5.8

#### 4.4.1.3 Classification by Indigenous status

Table 4.13 shows the percentage of Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people in each gambling classification group. A higher percentage of Indigenous young people were observed to be at-risk or problem gamblers than non-Indigenous young with 21.9% of Indigenous participants at-risk gamblers compared with 16.4% non-Indigenous. For problem gambling the difference was larger with 23.1% of Indigenous participants in that category compared with 3.6% of non-Indigenous participants. It is important to keep in mind the small number of Indigenous people who participated in the survey overall.

**Table 4.13: Classification by Indigenous status**

	Indigenous <i>n</i> = 251	Non-Indigenous <i>n</i> = 5,402
Non-gambler	18.3	22.9
Social gambler	36.7	57.1
At-risk gambler	21.9	16.4
Problem gambler	23.1	3.6

#### 4.4.2 What gambling activities are young gamblers participating in?

This section presents the percentages of young people taking part in each of the presented gambling activities. The percentages in the three groups of gamblers for each activity are presented in Table 4.14.

**Table 4.14: Gambling activities by gambler classification**

Gambling Activity	%	%	%
	Social <i>n</i> = 3,189	At-risk <i>n</i> = 940	Problem <i>n</i> = 254
Bingo	18.0	22.0	45.7
Card games (at home)	36.4	56.4	76.8
Poker machines	29.2	58.1	64.1
Football tipping/sweep	40.3	42.9	67.2
Horse/dog racing	29.5	46.8	63.6
Sports betting	17.6	33.1	62.7
Had someone else place a bet	24.1	32.9	56.3
Lottery ticket	40.9	58.2	74.2
Scratch cards	52.1	65.7	79.6
Card games (casino)	10.3	32.7	59.1
Casino games (other than cards)	12.8	35.3	61.9
Two-up	14.2	23.1	52.0
On-line gambling	10.1	23.2	60.5

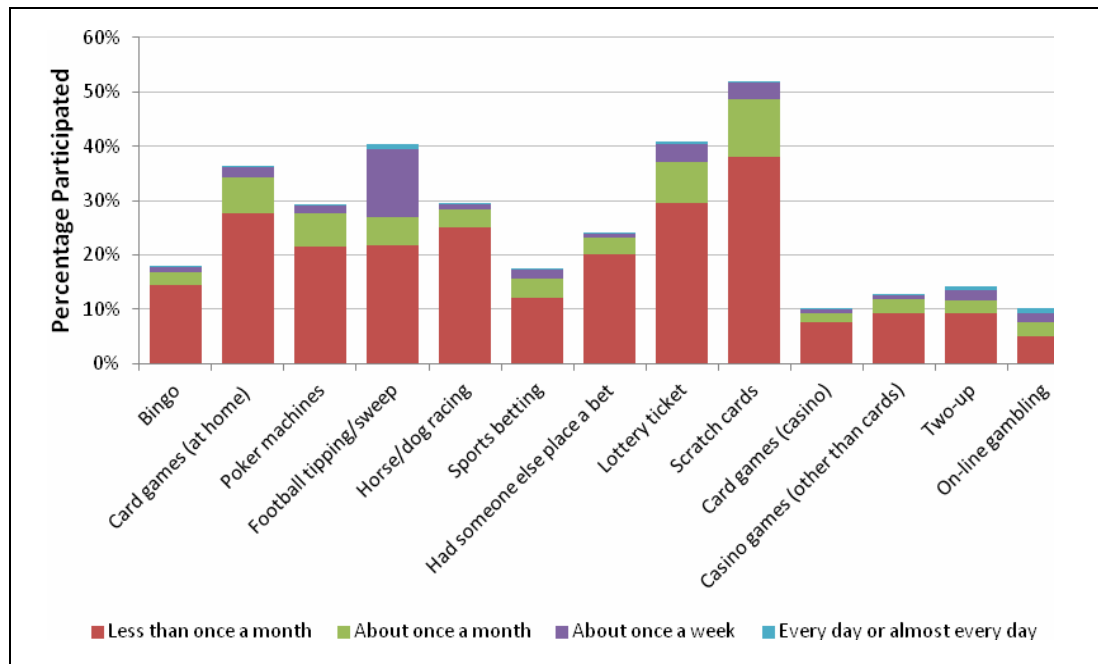
For all gamblers the most common activity was the purchase of scratch cards (or instant win tickets).

Amongst social gamblers, the next most common gambling activities were purchase of lottery tickets (41%), and participation in football tipping or sweeps (40%).

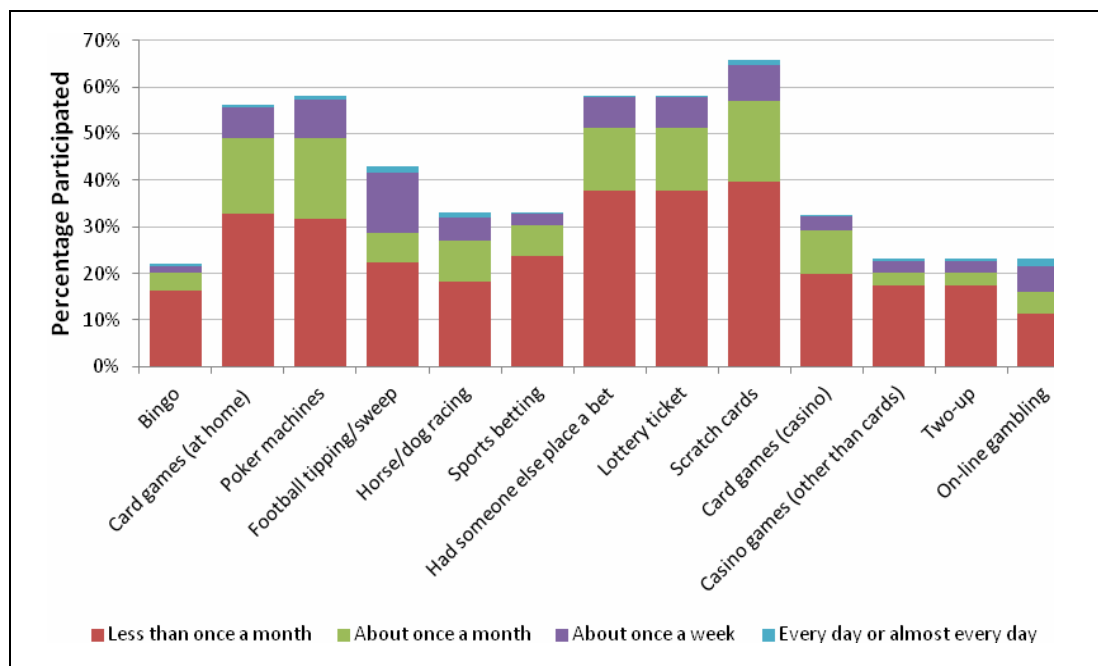
At-risk gamblers were also involved in lotteries (58%) and fifty percent of young people in this group were also using poker machines (58%) and playing card games at home (56%).

As expected, problem gamblers had a greater involvement than the other two groups of gamblers in all types of gambling activities. Over fifty percent of problem gamblers were involved in all gambling activities presented with the exception of bingo (46%). After scratch cards, problem gamblers played cards at home (77%), and purchased lottery tickets (74%). Figures 4.1 to 4.3 show the percentage participation in each gambling activity by category of regularity.

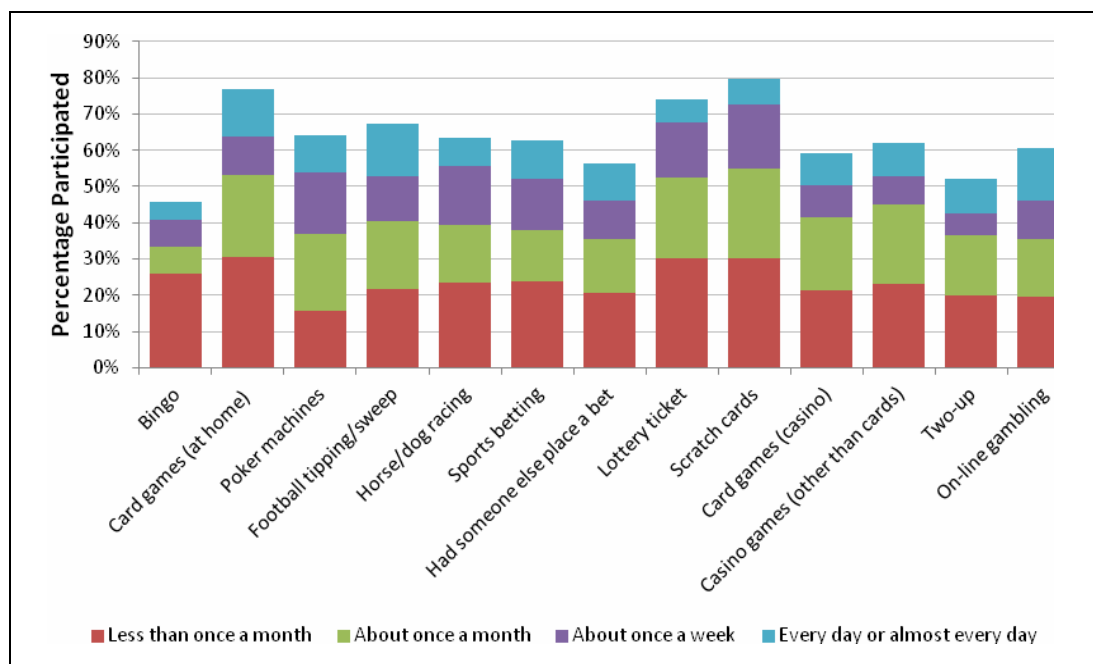




**Figure 4.1: Social gambler participation in gambling activities**



**Figure 4.2: At-risk gambler participation in gambling activities**



**Figure 4.3: Problem gambler participation in gambling activities**

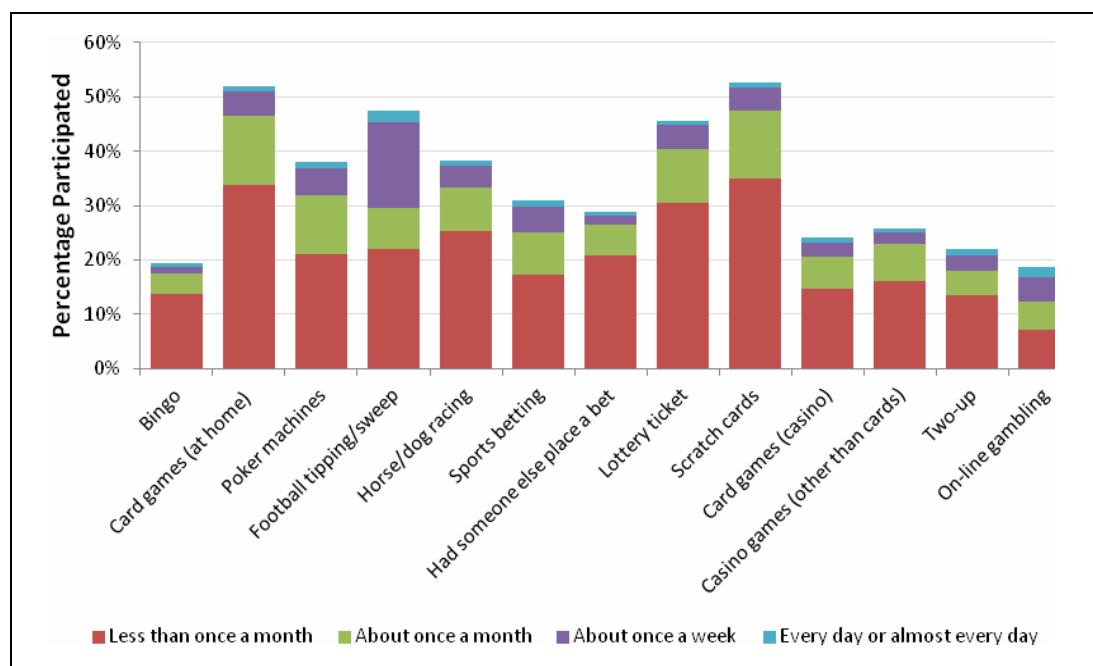
#### 4.4.2.1 Gambling activities by gender

The most common gambling activities for males were scratch cards (53%) and card games (52%). For females, the most common activity was also scratch cards (60%); however, unlike the males, the next most common activity was lottery tickets (47%). The percentage participation for males and females in each of the gambling activities is shown in Table 4.15.

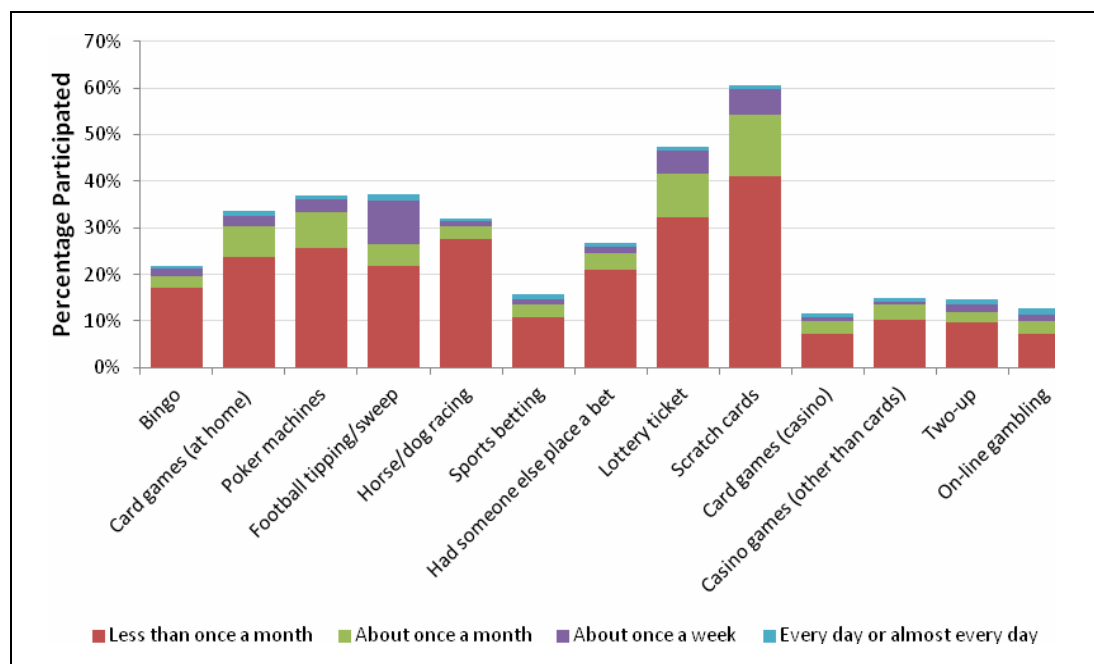
**Table 4.15: Gambling activities by gender**

Gambling Activity	%	%
	Males <i>n</i> = 2,222	Females <i>n</i> = 2,148
Bingo	19.3	21.7
Card games (at home)	52.0	33.8
Poker machines	37.9	36.9
Football tipping/sweep	47.4	37.2
Horse/dog racing	38.2	32.0
Sports betting	30.9	15.8
Had someone else place a bet	28.9	26.7
Lottery ticket	45.6	47.4
Scratch cards	52.6	60.7
Card games (casino)	24.1	11.5
Casino games (other than cards)	25.8	14.9
Two-up	14.2	23.1
On-line gambling	10.1	23.2

Figures 4.4 and 4.5 show the percentage participation in gambling activities by males and females respectively. The patterns are noticeable different with females participating less regularly in many activities than males.



**Figure 4.4: Male gambler participation in gambling activities**



**Figure 4.5: Female gambler participation in gambling activities**

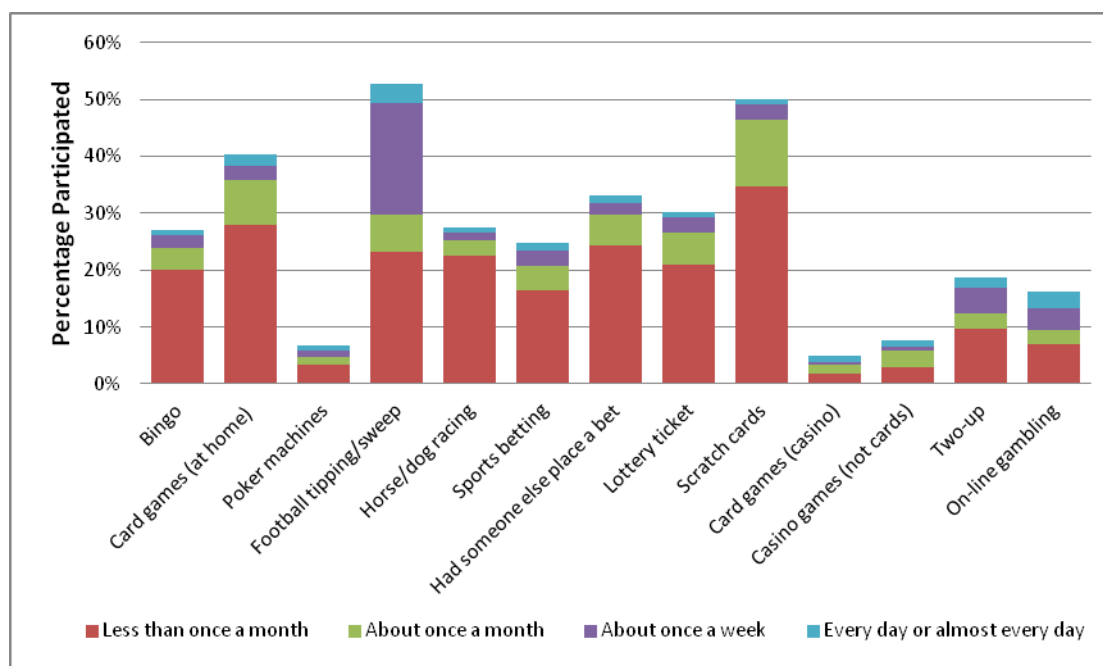
#### 4.4.2.2 Gambling activities by age

There were differences in the gambling activities in which each of the three age groups participated. The most common activity for the oldest group, those who were legally able to participate in gambling, was still scratch cards (62%). Additionally, a large proportion of this group also indicated that they participated by purchasing lottery tickets (61%) and using poker machines (61%). For the 15–17 year olds, the most common activity was scratch cards (49%); for this group there was also a substantial proportion taking part in football tipping (46%) and playing cards at home (42%). For the youngest group, aged 10–14 years, the most common activity was participation in footy tipping or sweeps (53%), and scratch cards (50%). The percentage participation for the three age-groups in each of the gambling activities is shown in Table 4.16.

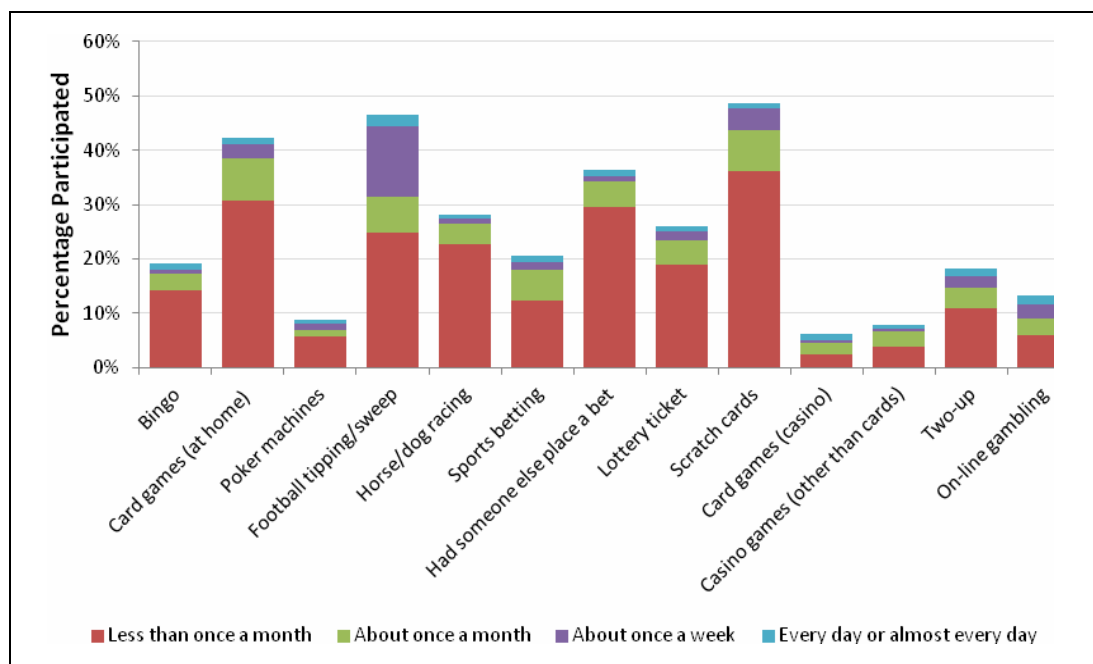
**Table 4.16: Gambling activities by age**

Gambling Activity	%	%	%
	10–14 years <i>n</i> = 947	15–17 years <i>n</i> = 993	18–24 years <i>n</i> = 2442
Bingo	27.0	19.2	18.5
Card games (at home)	40.4	42.4	44.3
Poker machines	6.7	8.8	60.9
Football tipping/sweep	52.8	46.4	36.8
Horse/dog racing	27.5	28.2	40.9
Sports betting	24.7	20.7	24.2
Had someone else place a bet	33.1	36.4	22.3
Lottery ticket	30.3	26.0	61.0
Scratch cards	50.1	48.7	62.3
Card games (casino)	5.0	6.3	27.6
Casino games (not cards)	7.6	7.8	30.5
Two-up	18.8	18.3	18.1
On-line gambling	16.3	13.4	16.6

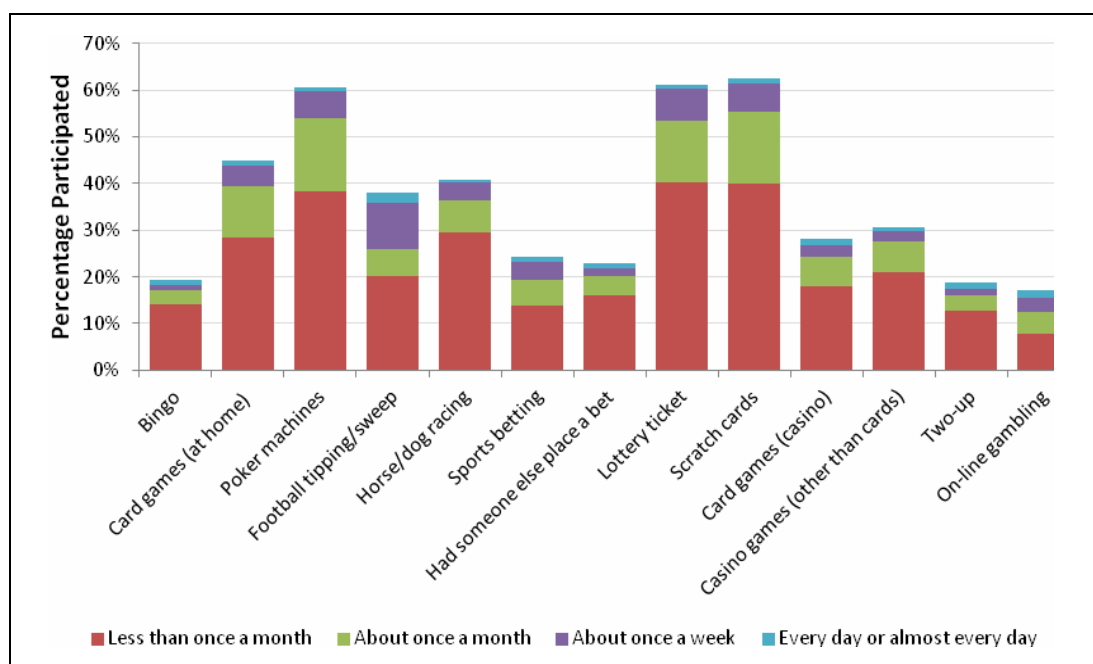
Figures 4.6 to 4.8 show the percentage participation in gambling activities by age-group. Those in the older age-group appear to participate in activities more regularly than both groups of younger people.



**Figure 4.6: 10–14-year-old gambler participation in gambling activities**



**Figure 4.7: 15-17-year-old gambler participation in gambling activities**



**Figure 4.8: 18-24-year-old gambler participation in gambling activities**

4.4.2.3 Gambling activities by Indigenous status

The purchase of scratch cards was the most common gambling activity amongst both Indigenous (60%) and non-Indigenous (56%) young people. For Indigenous young people, the next most common activity was card games at home (55%), followed by lottery tickets (48%), and having someone else place a bet on their behalf (46%). For non-Indigenous young people, the next most common activity was lottery tickets (46%), followed by card

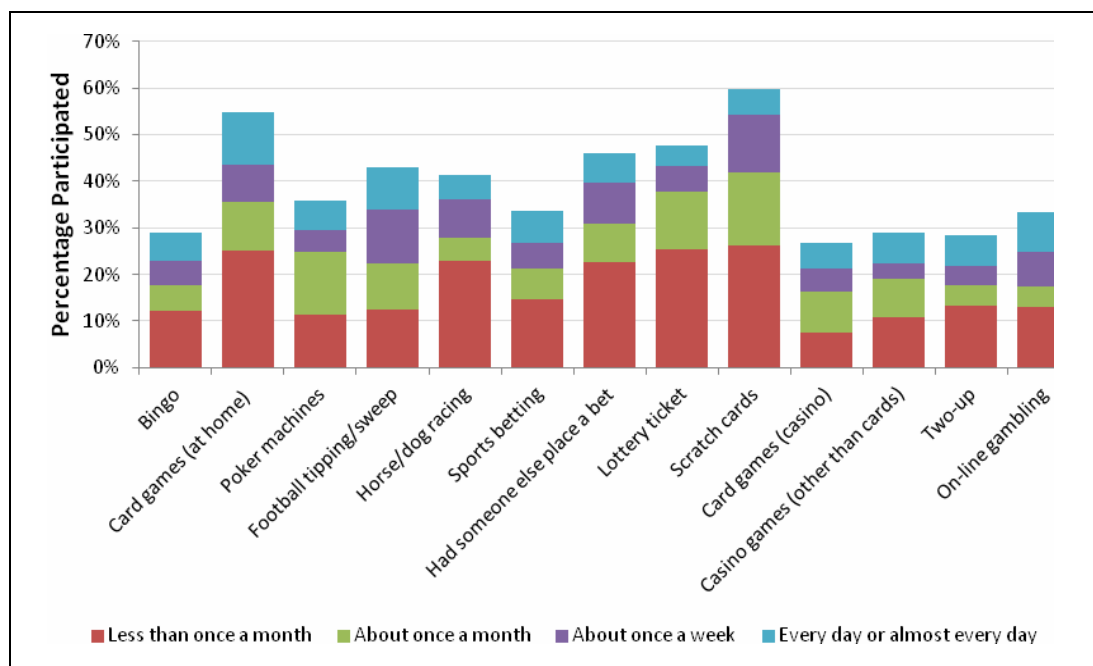
games at home (42%), and football tipping or sweeps (42%). The reported gambling activity for having someone else place a bet was 46% for Indigenous youth compared with 27% for non-Indigenous youth.

The percentage participation for Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people in each of the gambling activities is shown in Table 4.17.

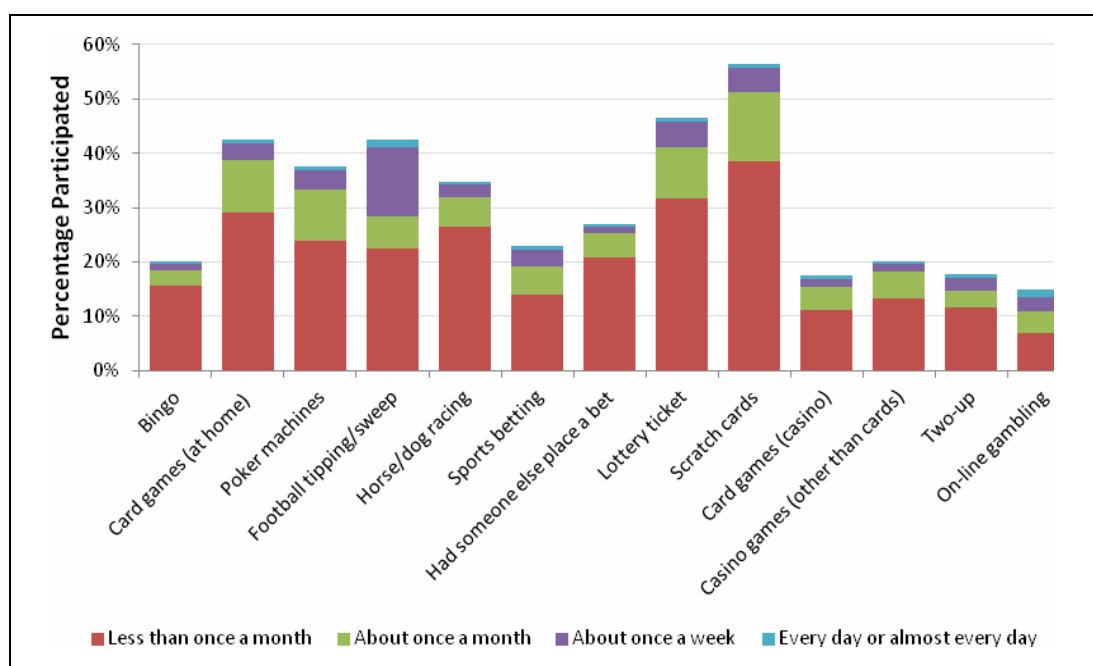
**Table 4.17: Gambling by Indigenous status**

Gambling Activity	%	%
	Indigenous <i>n</i> = 205	Non-Indigenous <i>n</i> = 4,163
Bingo	29.1	20.0
Card games (at home)	54.9	42.5
Poker machines	35.9	37.6
Football tipping/sweep	42.9	42.4
Horse/dog racing	41.4	34.8
Sports betting	33.7	23.0
Had someone else place a bet	46.0	26.9
Lottery ticket	47.8	46.5
Scratch cards	59.8	56.4
Card games (casino)	26.7	17.6
Casino games (other than cards)	29.0	20.0
Two-up	28.4	17.8
On-line gambling	33.3	15.0

Figures 4.9 and 4.10 show the participation in gambling activities by Indigenous status. The percentage of Indigenous youth participating in these activities on a daily to almost daily basis is noticeably higher here than for the non-Indigenous group.



**Figure 4.9: Indigenous gambler participation in gambling activities**



**Figure 4.10: Non-Indigenous gambler participation in gambling activities**

#### 4.5 CONTEXTS FOR YOUTH GAMBLING

The contexts for youth gambling were investigated by asking the survey participants why they gambled (motivation), with whom they gambled, and about the presence of problem gamblers in their immediate families, amongst peers, and amongst other people they knew.



### 4.5.1 Motivations for gambling

Amongst young people who were identified as having gambled, their reasons for doing so were varied. Overall, the most common reasons were for enjoyment (47%) and to win money (42%). The least common reasons were loneliness (2%), to escape from problems (2%), and unhappiness (2%).

The reasons for gambling varied between the groups of gamblers, although the most common reason across all three groups was for enjoyment. Over half of the problem gamblers (56%) and almost three-quarters of the at-risk gamblers (74%) reported that they gambled for enjoyment; 37% of social gamblers also reported that they gambled for enjoyment. Across all three groups, winning money was the second most frequent motivation for gambling (61% of problem gamblers, 67% of at-risk gamblers, and 33% of social gamblers).

Table 4.18 shows the extent of endorsement of reasons for gambling of the three gambler groups.

**Table 4.18: Reasons for gambling by gambling classification**

Reason for gambling	% Social gambler	% At-risk gambler	% Problem gambler	% All
For enjoyment	37.4	74.2	55.7	46.6
To relax	7.2	23.2	31.2	12.0
For excitement or to get a “buzz”	16.2	40.6	41.1	22.9
To be with or make new friends	18.6	34.8	28.6	22.7
Because I am unhappy	0.9	3.4	17.0	2.4
To escape from problems at home or school	0.7	2.8	19.8	2.2
Because I’m lonely	1.0	2.7	13.0	2.1
Because I’m bored	11.5	29.3	34.3	16.7
To feel older or more mature	2.0	3.9	7.9	2.7
To win money	32.7	67.3	61.3	41.8
To beat the machine	5.0	8.4	17.0	6.4

### 4.5.2 Who is gambling with young people?

When asked who else was present when they gambled, the responses varied slightly between the social gamblers, at-risk gamblers, and problem gamblers.

Overall, 30% reported that they gambled with their friends, and 20% reported that they gambled with more than one of the people listed in the survey. A further 12% said that they gambled alone.

Parental company whilst gambling was relatively low, with only 1% reporting that they gambled with a parent present. Gambling with siblings was also low (1%).

Interestingly, although some participants indicated that they had participated in a gambling activity in the past twelve months, a reasonably large percentage of social gamblers (35%) and a smaller percentage of at-risk (8%) and problem gamblers (3%) went on to state that they did not gamble, in response to this survey item. This may be a labelling issue: To say that one bought a lottery ticket is not the same as admitting to gambling

Table 4.19 shows with whom young people in the three gambler classification groups reported they gambled.

**Table 4.19: Company whilst gambling**

When you gamble, who else is usually with you?	%	%	%	%
	Social gambler <i>n</i> = 3,155	At-risk gambler <i>n</i> = 937	Problem gambler <i>n</i> = 252	All gamblers <i>n</i> = 4,344
No one – I gamble alone	10.7	12.0	24.6	11.8
Friend(s)	25.9	41.4	32.1	29.6
Parent(s)	0.9	2.7	1.2	1.3
Partner	3.7	5.5	8.7	4.4
Sibling(s)	0.9	1.1	0.8	0.9
Relative(s)	3.7	3.6	0.8	3.5
Stranger(s)	1.1	0.1	2.0	0.9
More than one of these groups of people	18.1	26.0	26.6	20.3
I don't gamble	35.1	7.6	3.2	27.3

#### 4.5.3 Influences from others

Participants were asked about the gambling habits of people close to them and whether, in their opinion, anyone in their immediate or extended family or social circle gambled too much.

Generally speaking, members of the non-gambling group, the social gambling group, and the at-risk gambling group said that they did not know anyone who gambled too much (81%, 72%, 53%, respectively); however, amongst problem gamblers only 23% said that they did not know any problem gamblers.

For the problem gambler group, the most common response was that they had a friend who gambled too much (33%). The problem gambler group also reported a higher percentage of parents (mother 18%, father 12%) who gambled too much than those in the other groups.

Table 4.20 shows the extent to which young people in each of the three gambler groups reported knowing someone who gambles too much.

**Table 4.20: Friends or relatives who gamble too much by gambler classification**

	% Non- gambler <i>n</i> = 1,302	% Social gambler <i>n</i> = 3,189	% At-risk gambler <i>n</i> = 940	% Problem gambler <i>n</i> = 254
People you know who gamble too much				
Mother/Step-mother	2.1	1.5	4.7	18.1
Father/Step-father	2.1	3.1	5.4	12.1
Partner	0.1	0.3	1.9	5.9
Brother/sister	0.9	1.7	2.5	10.0
Other relative	5.8	7.0	9.5	17.1
Friend	4.8	10.7	24.5	32.7
Neighbour	1.6	1.0	0.6	11.3
Someone else you know	4.1	5.7	9.6	13.0
I don't know anyone who gambles too much	81.3	71.6	52.9	22.6

The different relationships presented in Table 4.20 were combined to form three variables, to indicate whether the respondent had an immediate family member who was a problem gambler (any one or more of mother, father or sibling), peer problem gamblers (any one or more of partner or friend) or someone else (any one or more of neighbour, other relative or someone else) in their lives whom they would describe as a problem gambler. The relationship with a partner was considered analogous to a friendship or peer relationship, the family relationship was considered to be one with the members of the survey participants' original or current immediate families; that is, their parents/step parents and siblings.

Table 4.21 shows the cross-tabulations of family problem gambling, peer problem gambling and problem gambling amongst others and the gambling risk categories. Thirty-one percent of problem gamblers reported having a family member who gambled too much as compared with 10.9% for the at-risk group and smaller percentages for both social and non-gamblers. The group with the highest percentage of peer problem gamblers was the at-risk group with 26.1%. The group with the highest percentage of other problem gamblers in their acquaintance was again the problem gamblers with 32.3%.

**Table 4.21: Cross-tabulations of family, peer and other problem gambling with gambling classification**

	% Non-gambler	% Social gambler	% At-risk gambler	% Problem gambler
No immediate family member problem gambler	95.3	95.6	89.1	68.9
Immediate family member problem gambler	4.7	5.4	10.9	31.1

	% Non-gambler	% Social gambler	% At-risk gambler	% Problem gambler
No peer problem gambler	95.1	89.0	73.9	63.2
Peer problem gambler	4.9	11.0	26.1	11.3

	% Non-gambler	% Social gambler	% At-risk gambler	% Problem gambler
No other problem gambler	89.6	87.0	81.9	67.7
Other problem gambler	10.4	13.0	18.1	32.3

## 4.6 ATTITUDES AND SELF-ESTEEM

### 4.6.1 Self-Esteem

As some studies have indicated that young problem gamblers tend to report lower self-esteem, the survey contained ten items measuring self-esteem based on items from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSE) scale. These items were rated on a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree<sup>13</sup>. The percentage responses in each category for these items are shown in Table 4.22.

<sup>13</sup> Items in the original Rosenberg instrument are rated on a four-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree). The school-based version of the survey asked respondents to respond on the same four-point scale. An error in construction of the CATI version of the survey introduced an extra (mid-) point, which resulted in a five-point scale.

**Table 4.22: Self-esteem item responses for entire sample**

Self-Esteem Item	%	%	%	%	%
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Generally, I am satisfied with myself	3.3	6.9	5.3	57.7	26.8
2. At times, I think I am no good at all	19.1	36.6	8.8	30.6	4.8
3. I feel I have a number of good qualities	1.9	5.4	4.7	63.2	24.9
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people	2.2	7.1	5.3	61.8	23.7
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of	26.0	49.3	7.8	13.6	3.3
6. I feel useless at times	18.1	34.9	8.4	34.0	4.5
7. I feel that I am a worthwhile person, just as good as other people	2.5	8.0	6.5	59.0	24.1
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself	15.5	38.5	9.7	29.5	6.8
9. In general, I feel that I am a failure	35.5	46.4	6.7	8.7	2.7
10. I have a positive attitude about myself	2.6	8.9	8.7	55.2	24.5

Overall, the participants displayed a positive attitude to self. Generally, there was agreement with positive statements (five items) and disagreement with negative statements (five items). Three of the five negatively worded items attracted slightly more agreement than did the others – Item 2 (35% agreement), Item 6 (38% agreement) and Item 8 (36% agreement). Examination of Item 8 led to the conclusion that someone who might otherwise report high levels of positive self-esteem could nonetheless wish that they had more respect for themselves.

The RSE was scored according to the original Guttman scoring scheme which involves a method of combined ratings. Low self-esteem responses are disagree (D) or strongly disagree (SD) on positively worded items: 1, 3, 4, 7 and 10; and strongly agree (SA) or agree (A) on negatively worded items 2, 5, 6, 8 and 9. Scoring on any of the groups or individual items is indicative of low self-esteem.

The items are grouped and scored as follows:

- Score 1 for low-self esteem indicated by two or more of items 3, 7 and 9
- Score 1 for low-self esteem indicated by one or more of items 4 and 5
- Score 1 for low self esteem indicated by one or more of items 2 and 6
- Score 1 for low self esteem indicated by item 1
- Score 1 for low self esteem indicated by item 8
- Score 1 for low self esteem indicated by item 10

The maximum possible score is 6. The RSE demonstrates a Guttman scale coefficient of reproducibility of .92, indicating excellent internal consistency. Table 4.23 shows the percentage of respondents with each *low self-esteem* score from 0 (high) to 6 (low) within the four classification groups.

**Table 4.23: Percentage of respondents for each low self-esteem score within gambling classification**

Category of gambler	Low self-esteem score						
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never gambled <i>n</i> =1254	40.4	23.8	15.7	9.8	6.1	2.0	2.3
Social gambler <i>n</i> =3090	40.4	25.0	16.2	10.9	4.0	2.7	.9
At-risk gambler <i>n</i> =927	33.2	29.4	20.3	8.3	4.5	3.6	.6
Problem gambler <i>n</i> =250	19.2	13.2	20.4	15.2	21.6	6.4	4.0

The proportion of young people in each of the gambling categories decreases as the measure of low-self esteem increases. The proportion of problem gamblers with the lowest self-esteem (score=6) is almost seven times the proportion of at-risk gamblers with the same score. At the other end of the low self-esteem scale (score=0), the proportion of problem gamblers is slightly more than half of the proportion of at-risk gamblers.

#### 4.6.2 Attitudes towards gambling

The survey also contained ten items for measuring attitudes towards gambling – both positive and negative. These items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Table 4.24 shows the percentage responses in each category for these items.

**Table 4.24: Attitudes towards gambling item responses**

Attitude towards gambling item	% Strongly disagree	% Disagree	% Neither agree nor disagree	% Agree	% Strongly agree
Item Score	0	1	2	3	4
1. Gambling is a risky activity	3.7	2.7	12.3	42.4	38.9
2. You can lose all your money gambling	3.3	2.6	9.0	36.4	48.6
3. Gambling is a waste of money	3.2	6.9	20.1	36.1	33.8
4. Gamblers usually lose	2.9	6.3	23.4	40.0	27.4
5. Gambling is just throwing money away	3.4	10.0	21.2	36.7	28.7
6. You can make a living from gambling	35.5	28.8	15.8	15.0	4.9
7. Gambling is a good way to get rich quickly	39.4	35.1	14.9	7.3	3.3
8. Gambling is a better way to make money than working	54.6	31.9	7.2	3.4	2.8
9. Gambling is designed to give high returns (let you win lots of money)	43.4	35.1	12.5	6.0	3.0
10. It is hard to stop gambling	7.9	11.7	27.0	33.9	19.5

Overall, the participants displayed a negative attitude towards gambling with higher percentages of participants agreeing with negatively worded items and disagreeing with positively worded items. A slightly higher percentage of people disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was hard to stop gambling (item 10, 19.6%) than for the other negatively phrased items. Similarly, a higher percentage of people agreed or strongly agreed that you could make a living from gambling (item 6, 19.9%) than for other positively phrased items.

Rasch partial credit modeling (Masters, 1982) was used to evaluate the fit of data to the model and for the construction of the overall attitude towards gambling measures. Item 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10 were reverse coded so that higher scores on all items would indicate positive attitude towards gambling.

Two items, item 6 and item 10 did not fit the model well (infit mean square = 1.28; 1.49 respectively). Upon examination of the items, it was concluded that even those who may have a negative attitude towards gambling could possibly agree with these two statements. These items were removed from the scale.

The attitude towards gambling score was estimated for each respondent based on their responses to the remaining eight items. The reliability for these scores, as measured by coefficient alpha, was 0.79.

Table 4.25 shows the mean attitude towards gambling score for each of the four classification groups.

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for significant differences in mean endorsement of gambling scores across the four groups. Attitude scores differed significantly,  $F(3, 5613) = 90.07, p < .001$ . A post-hoc Scheffe test showed that the problem gambler group had a significantly higher mean endorsement of gambling (Positive Attitude) score than each of the other three groups. The at-risk group had a significantly higher mean endorsement of gambling score than the social gambler and never gambled group. The social gambler group had a significantly higher mean endorsement of gambling score than the never gambled group.

**Table 4.25: Positive attitude to gambling mean scores and standard deviations by gambling classification**

Category of gambler	Endorsement of gambling score	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Never gambled	-1.69	1.52
Social gambler	-1.50	1.41
At-risk gambler	-1.09	1.17
Problem gambler	-0.32	1.42

#### **4.7 RISKY BEHAVIOURS**

Young people were asked about their involvement in risk-taking behaviour over the previous six months. Nine activities were presented. Table 4.26 shows the percentage of young people who agreed that they had done each of these things in the previous six months.



**Table 4.26: Frequency of risky behaviours**

Risky Behaviour	%	%	%	%	%
	Non-gamblers	Social gamblers	At-risk gamblers	Problem gamblers	Total
Used public transport without a ticket	17.6	21.3	23.4	42.4	17.5
Been out without parents' permission	14.3	10.9	6.4	13.9	8.8
Drunk alcohol (more than a sip)	43.8	65.9	88.1	77.1	52.6
Graffitied or "tagged"	3.4	4.6	3.0	25.2	3.9
Smoked cigarettes	13.5	25.1	39.0	57.1	21.2
Trespassed on private property	9.1	14.8	20.3	29.5	12.2
Used illegal drugs	5.7	12.2	22.3	37.2	11.0
Punched/kicked someone in a fight	8.0	10.0	14.3	28.4	9.0
Shoplifted or stolen	4.0	4.9	5.6	22.7	4.5

Overall, of the risky behaviours that survey participants had engaged in, use of alcohol was the most frequent (53%) followed by use of cigarettes (21%). Least common was graffiti (4%) and shoplifting or theft (5%).

Alcohol use was the most frequent for each of the four groups. For non-gamblers the next most common activity or behaviour was using public transport without a ticket (18%). For social gamblers, at-risk gamblers and problem gamblers the next most common behaviour was cigarette smoking (25%, 39% and 57% respectively). For the problem gambling group, the next most common risky behaviour was use of illegal drugs (37%).

For the subsequent analyses it was decided to ignore the variable "been out without parents' permission" because going out without parents' permission would not necessarily be risky behaviour if parents did not require that their children seek permission in the first place and is not of concern for those in the oldest age-group.

Two composite variables were constructed, substance use and delinquent behaviours.

### Substance Use

The variables "smoked cigarettes", "drunk alcohol" and "used illegal drugs" were combined to create the variable "substance use" and indicates whether a young person had used alcohol, drugs or cigarettes in the previous six months. This combination of variable was selected because while smoking and drinking are generally socially acceptable – at least for the oldest of three age-groups and often amongst younger people, regardless of illegality for those under the age of 18 – young people might be inclined to under-report on the use of illegal drugs. Furthermore there are other more risky behaviours of young people not canvassed here. A score of 0 was given for use of none of these three substances, a score of 1 for use of one substance, a score of 2 for use of 2 substances and a score of 3 for use of all three of alcohol, drugs and cigarettes in the previous six months.

## Delinquent Behaviours

Engagement in delinquent behaviour comprises participation in the risk activities: used public transport without a ticket, graffitied or “tagged”, trespassed on private property, punched or kicked someone in a fight or shoplifted or stolen. A score of 0 was calculated if none of these activities were indicated, a score of 1 was given if one or two activities were indicated and a score of 2 was given if three or more of these activities were indicated.

The Pearson correlation between these two composite variables was .38,  $p < .01$ .

## 4.8 MODELLING RELATIONSHIPS

This section describes the investigation of the following two research questions:

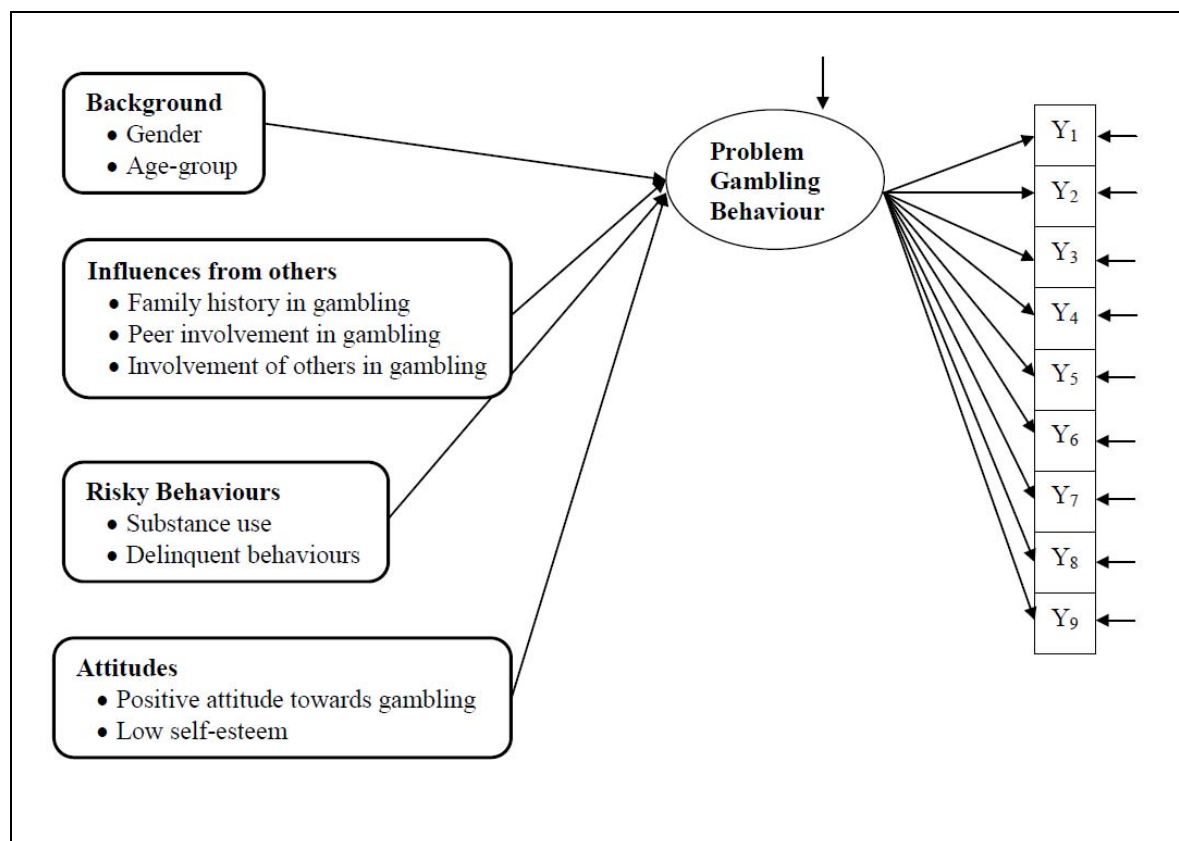
- RQ1: What are the relationships of the following groups of variables with problem-gambling behaviour?
  - a) Contextual variables (gender, age-group, attitude towards gambling, low self-esteem, family history of gambling, peer involvement in gambling, and involvement of other relatives in gambling);
  - b) Risky behaviours (delinquent behaviours and substance use);
  - c) Positive attitude towards gambling and low self-esteem.
- RQ2: How strongly are the contextual variables and risky behaviours associated with positive attitude towards gambling and low self-esteem? How are these relationships different for the four groups: non-gamblers, social gamblers, at-risk gamblers, and problem gamblers?

### The Models

A gambling classification (non-, social, at-risk, problem) was developed in accord with Fisher (2000) on the basis of nine diagnostic criteria derived from twelve survey questions. These same nine diagnostic criteria were then used as indicators for a latent variable, called *problem-gambling behaviour*. The goodness of fit indices for the latent factor model shows a close fit ( $n = 4642$ ,  $\text{Chi-sq}(27) = 74.12$ ,  $\text{RMSEA} = 0.019$ ,  $\text{CFI} = 0.997$ ) with an average R-square of approximately 0.79 for the nine items. This shows that it is reasonable to model the *problem-gambling behaviour* as a unidimensional factor using the nine diagnostic criteria as indicators.

### Model 1

To address RQ1 above, the *problem-gambling behaviour* latent factor was regressed on the contextual variables (gender, age-group, family history in gambling, peer involvement in gambling, and involvement of other relatives in gambling), risky behaviours (substance use and delinquent behaviour), positive attitude towards gambling and low self-esteem. This model is depicted in Figure 4.11.



**Figure 4.11: Modelling relationships of background, attitudes, risky behaviours, family and peer influences on problem-gambling behaviour**

Figure 4.11 displays the path diagram of the model. The square boxes labelled Y<sub>1</sub> to Y<sub>9</sub> represent the nine diagnostic criteria that were derived from the survey. The elliptical shape, labelled Problem Gambling Behaviour, represents the latent variable with the nine diagnostic criteria as indicators. The direction of the arrow specifies that problem-gambling-behaviour influences the level of the diagnostic criteria. The remainder of the diagram to the left represents the influence of the variables grouped under Background, Influence of others, Risky behaviours, and Attitudes on the latent variable Problem-Gambling Behaviour.

The estimated coefficients of the regression of *Problem-Gambling Behaviour* factor from Model 1 are shown in Table 4.27. The regression coefficients are all statistically significant at the 0.001 level.

**Table 4.27: Influences on problem-gambling behaviour (Model 1)**

<i>Regression of Problem Gambling Behaviour (latent variable/factor)</i>	
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient estimate (std. error)</i>
Gender (Male=1, Female=2)	-0.363 (0.066)***
Age-group	0.574 (0.062)***
Family history in gambling	0.641 (0.107)***
Peer involvement in gambling	0.365 (0.071)***
Involvement of other relatives in gambling	0.405 (0.075)***
Substance use	0.131 (0.036)***
Delinquent behaviours	0.173 (0.051)***
Positive attitude towards gambling	0.239 (0.025)***
Low Self-esteem	0.189 (0.023)***

*Notes: \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\* p<0.00 All coefficients are unstandardised.*

As expected, problem gambling-behaviour is more common in males than in females, more common in older age-groups than in the younger ones, and more common in respondents who have family history in gambling.

The results show that after the effects of gender, age-group, involvement in gambling of immediate family and other relatives are taken into account, important conclusions that can be drawn are:

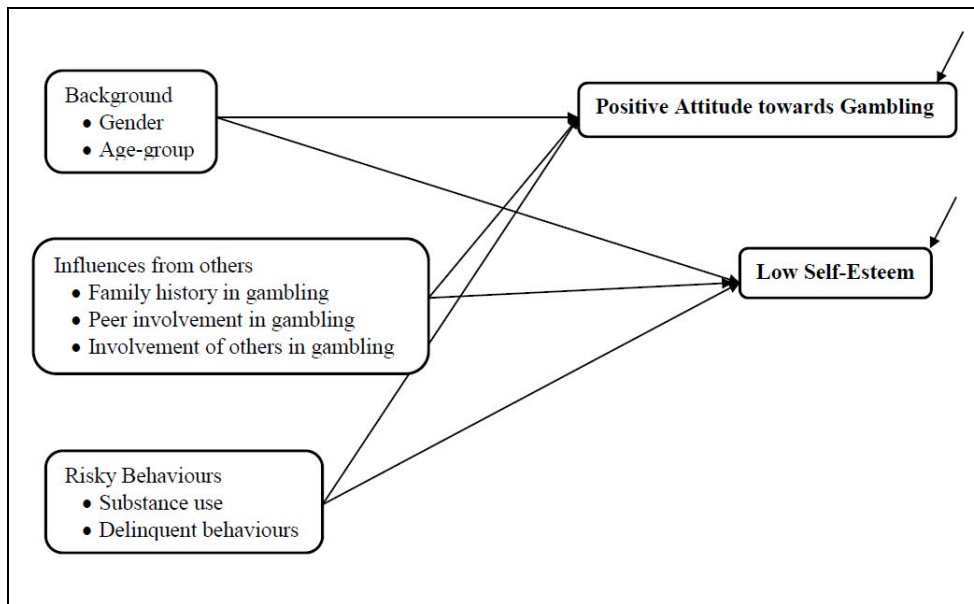
- Peer involvement in gambling significantly predicts greater problem-gambling behaviour;
- Substance use and delinquent behaviours significantly predict higher levels of problem-gambling behaviour;
- Positive attitudes towards gambling significantly predicts greater problem-gambling behaviour; and,
- Low self-esteem significantly predicts higher levels of problem-gambling behaviour.

## **Model 2**

As positive attitudes towards gambling and self-esteem are constructs that may be influenced with direct intervention, they may be potential initial intervention pathways for reducing problem gambling behaviours. RQ2 investigates this notion.

In order to explore these relationships outlined in RQ2, Positive attitudes towards gambling and Low self-esteem were regressed on the contextual variables (Gender, Age-group, Family history in gambling, Peer involvement in gambling and Involvement of other relatives in gambling) and Risky behaviours (Substance use and Delinquent behaviour).

This model is depicted in Figure 4.12 and the contextual variables influence the variables Positive attitudes to gambling as well as Low self-esteem. The model was estimated separately for the various gambling classifications – non-gambler, social gambler, at-risk gambler, and problem gambler.



**Figure 4.12: Relationship of background, risky behaviours, family and peer influences and attitudes**

The estimated coefficients of the regression of *Positive attitudes towards gambling* and *Low Self-Esteem* for each of the four gambling groups are shown in Table 4.28. The regression coefficients that are not statistically significant at the 0.05 level are not shown in the table.

**Table 4.28: Influences on positive attitudes towards gambling and low self-esteem**

	Group=1 (non gamblers)	Group=2 (social gamblers)	Group=3 (at-risk gamblers)	Group=4 (problem gamblers)
<b><i>Regression of Positive Attitudes towards Gambling</i></b>				
<b><i>Coefficient estimate (std. error)</i></b>				
Gender	-0.350 (0.117)**	-0.411 (0.062)***	-0.215 (0.092)*	
Age-group	-0.276 (0.075)***	-0.257 (0.044)***		
Family history in gambling				
Peer involvement in gambling				
Involvement of other relatives in gambling				
Substance use				
Delinquent behaviours		0.221 (0.057)***		0.502 (0.130)***
<b><i>Regression of Low Self-esteem</i></b>				
<b><i>Coefficient estimate (std. error)</i></b>				
Gender	0.383 (0.108)***	0.251 (0.058)***	0.343 (0.101)***	
Age-group	-0.209 (0.079)**	-0.358 (0.046)***	-0.311 (0.144)*	
Family history in gambling	0.883 (0.337)**	0.341 (0.152)*		
Peer involvement in gambling	-0.399 (0.170)*	0.246 (0.094)**		
Involvement of other relatives in gambling	0.390 (0.167)*	0.280 (0.088)**		
Substance use	0.192 (0.088)*			
Delinquent behaviours	0.434 (0.115)***	0.210 (0.056)***		

Notes: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$  All coefficients are unstandardised.

The results show that the effects of gender, age-group, family history in gambling, involvement in gambling of peers and other relatives, substance use and delinquent behaviours are not all similar in the four gambling groups.

Important results observed for the relationships with *Positive attitude towards gambling* are:

- Males have more favourable attitudes towards gambling than females for the first three groups (the non gamblers, the social gamblers and the gamblers who are at risk of developing gambling problems). However, for the fourth group (the problem gamblers), there are no gender differences shown in terms of attitudes towards gambling.

- Older age-groups have less favourable attitudes towards gambling than the younger ones for the first two groups (the non gamblers and the social gamblers). For the third and the fourth groups (the gamblers who are at risk of developing gambling problems and the problem gamblers), there are no age-group effects in terms of attitudes towards gambling.
- Family and peer involvement in gambling shows no significant influence on Positive attitudes towards gambling in all four groups.
- Substance use does not show significant influence on Positive attitudes towards gambling in any of the gambling groups.
- Delinquent behaviours significantly predict favourable positive attitudes towards gambling for the social gamblers and the problem gamblers but not for the non-gamblers and the at-risk gamblers.

Important results observed for the relationships with *Low self-esteem* are:

- Females have lower self-esteem than males in the first three groups (non-gamblers, social gamblers and at-risk gamblers). However, in the fourth group (problem gamblers), there are no gender differences in terms of self-esteem.
- The older age-groups have higher self-esteem than the younger ones in the first three groups (non-gamblers, social gamblers, and at-risk gamblers). There are no significant differences in self-esteem across age-groups for problem gamblers.
- Gambling history in immediate family members and involvement in gambling of other relatives is associated with lower self-esteem for non-gamblers and social gamblers. Peer involvement in gambling is associated with higher self-esteem among non-gamblers but lower self-esteem among social gamblers. Family and peer involvement in gambling have no significant effects on self-esteem of at-risk gamblers and problem gamblers.
- Substance use lowers the self-esteem of non-gamblers but does not show significant influence on the self-esteem of social gamblers, at-risk gamblers or problem gamblers.
- Delinquent behaviour is significantly associated with lower self-esteem for non-gamblers and social gamblers but not for at-risk gamblers and problem gamblers.

## 5 – RESULTS OF FOCUS GROUPS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights the key points derived from the focus group discussions held following analysis of the qualitative data.

A total of nine focus group interviews were conducted with school students aged between ten and eighteen years in primary and secondary schools in NSW and Victoria. Each group comprised at most 12 students. Students who participated in each group were selected by their teachers and schools and were typically in the same class or year level. The exception is Focus Group 8 which was comprised of three young people, one in Year 6 and two in Year 10 who were not recruited through schools but through a call from the researchers for additional volunteers.

Focus groups were initially selected from schools that had agreed to complete the survey and were schools in Queensland, Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria were approached. Ultimately only schools in New South Wales and Victoria agreed to participate. Many of the schools approached cited difficulties in obtaining parental consent for students to participate, lack of suitable time for students to be withdrawn from their regular classes, pressing curriculum commitments and unwillingness to “introduce” children to the concept of gambling in the first instance. To broaden the range of focus groups, researchers’ networks were used to recruit a small focus group of young people (Focus Group 8) and a larger focus group at a Victorian school that had not participated in the survey but was willing to allow their older students to participate in the interviews (Focus Group 9).

The composition of the focus groups is detailed in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1: Focus group participation**

	State/Territory	Year levels	No. of students
Focus Group 1	Victoria	5-6	12
Focus Group 2	New South Wales	7	8
Focus Group 3	New South Wales	8	6
Focus Group 4	New South Wales	9	6
Focus Group 5	New South Wales	10	8
Focus Group 6	New South Wales	11	6
Focus Group 7	New South Wales	12	6
Focus Group 8	Victoria	6 & 10	3
Focus Group 9	Victoria	12	7
			Total: 62

The interviews were designed to probe more deeply into young people’s understandings and experiences of, and attitudes towards gambling, and the reasons why they gamble or why they believe other people gamble.



The interviews were scheduled to run for approximately 45 minutes. A structured series of questions was used to initiate conversation. These questions were aimed at encouraging students to discuss their own gambling experiences as well as those they were aware of in their families and communities. They were asked about their exposure to gambling and their understanding of gambling habits. Discussion was led by the interviewer, although participants were able to introduce their own ideas as the discussions progressed.

The discussions were arranged around five themes: definition of gambling; motivation for gambling; contexts in which gambling is most likely to occur; awareness of young people regarding gambling in their communities and in Australia generally; and where young people would go to seek help either for themselves or for someone they know.

See Appendix 5 for interviewers' notes of the focus groups.

## 5.2 DEFINING GAMBLING

The interviews opened with a discussion about the types of activities that young people consider to be gambling activities. In all focus groups, the responses to this question generally revolved around the notion of betting. Specific gambling activities such as "the pokies", "scratchies", betting on horse and dog racing, and casino games were mentioned. Broad definitions were provided and very specific ideas were discussed in each group.

*Yeah, like anything to do with betting on money is gambling isn't it?*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 8

Some participants characterised gambling in terms of obsession and compulsion. Gambling was considered by many to be a stupid activity and a waste of money. In these responses, the activities themselves were not important to the participant, but the motivation and consequences were the key factors in defining gambling.

*People betting on stupid things for money. Sometimes people bet on stupid things because they get obsessed. You waste your money and you end up poor and everyone gets angry at you. Except for the casinos. They get lots of money and business.*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 8

Other young people characterised gambling as an opportunity to gain money – in some cases as a sense of investment or a means of growing wealth.

*Spending your own money to win money ... Basically, like using money to get more money*

Year 5/6 Student, Focus Group 1

Members of all the focus groups discussed the difference between problem gambling, which they universally considered to be dangerous, and gambling that could be characterised as unproblematic. Generally, their understanding of problem gambling emphasised the notion of wasting money, especially money intended for other purposes being used for gambling and resulting in losses.

Of the range of problem gambling activities nominated by the focus group participants, the most common were slot machines or pokies, lotteries, horse racing, casino games like blackjack, and card games, most commonly poker.

Participants were often unsure about how to characterise some activities. Activities that have a cultural resonance and were part of their daily routines were discussed but often dismissed as not real gambling.

*Mum buys a lotto ticket, but that's not (real) gambling because it's just \$2.*

Year 5/6 Student, Focus Group 1

*Raffles are ok. You can't go over the top with them. The games where you win toys and stuff are ok. Buying a lottery ticket is ok. A bet on the Melbourne Cup is ok.*

Year 7 Student, Focus Group 2

*Sometimes you buy them (raffle tickets) because it's just little kids and you buy them to help them out. You buy them to raise money. But the prize is attractive.*

Year 9 Student, Focus Group 4

*My dad buys lottery tickets and we just stick them on the fridge, and we barely even get them checked.*

Year 8 Student, Focus Group 3

Participants were also asked to think about how they would describe the typical gambler. In most cases, they described a middle-aged to elderly male. This person could generally be found in a pub or club and was often struggling financially and may have had a problem with alcohol or their mental health.

*Old guys, you know, who don't work anymore ... what do you call them? ... retired people. They got nothing else to do so they go to the TAB or play the pokies. Put all their money in the machines.*

Year 12 Student, Focus Group 9

*Someone who regularly goes to the TAB, and does not go anywhere because they've run out of money because they've been gambling. It becomes less like an entertainment or a fun thing and more like a necessity.*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 8

*They probably drink a lot or do drugs.*

Year 9 Student, Focus Group 4

During the discussion about a typical gambler, many young people came to the conclusion that the initial stereotypical view was probably not correct and that gamblers could be anyone, of either gender and of any socioeconomic background.

*It's kinda both rich, you're either rich and have lots of money to throw away or you're kinda like a bit low in cash and you're dying to have more money.*

Year 9 Student, Focus Group 4

Examples from the media of female gamblers, such as the Marge character in the animated television series "The Simpsons" were used to illustrate this idea that a gambler might not necessarily fit the initial idea that participants had about gamblers. Despite this acknowledgement, the focus did remain on people who might have a problem with excessive gambling and the typical gambler described by the members of the groups tended not to be someone who participated in the occasional gambling activity.

Participants were also asked about how they defined a gambling situation that had become a problem for somebody. Typically they described situations in which the losses suffered exceeded what was considered necessary to live normally and provide for one's family. Participants also described situations in which people became isolated from friends and family as a result of gambling as the point at which gambling had become problematic.

*(When) they start not hanging out with family and friends they just gamble by themselves*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 8

*Well I guess if you lose your house and your car. I know someone who lost his house and his car and his family left. That's way too much.*

Year 12 Student, Focus Group 9

Some students made reference to the frequency at which someone gambled, but many concluded that this could not be the sole factor that determined whether the gambling was problematic. Whilst it might be habitual – for example, a weekly lottery ticket, it would only be considered a problem if the money spent on the habit was more than the gambler could afford.

*It's still a problem if you're spending all your time gambling, even if it's only small amounts of money. It's time you should be spending with family. You make this effort to go down to the club and play pokies – that's the thing. You should be doing better stuff with your life.*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 5

*It's ok to do like for a fundraiser, and raffle tickets and tatts lotto it's ok, but casinos and stuff, well, then people can get addicted.*

Year 5/6 Student, Focus Group 1

### 5.3 MOTIVATION FOR GAMBLING

A wide range of reasons for gambling were suggested by participants in each of the focus groups. Motivations discussed in the groups included: the sense of pleasure that one derives from successful gambling; the desire to increase personal wealth; the desire to make up for an earlier loss; and to pay for something that would be out of reach unless a person's usual income was supplemented by a gambling success.

*I wanted to get some extra money, and I had to catch up on my losses from before.*

Year 12 Student, Focus Group 9

*Yes, definitely. If you have a big loss, then you want to go back and try and win your money back, otherwise it's just wasted.*

Year 12 Student, Focus Group 9

Other motivations included boredom, and the fact that many gambling games were fun and entertaining.

*(People gamble) to do something.*

Year 7 Student, Focus Group 2

*Fun. But then after a while, obsession. Could be like a social thing with mates and you'll bet on the horses or something.*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 8

*People just use it to burn time but they end up burning their money. You could put in \$20 and only get 50 cents, the odds aren't good for winning the lottery.*

Year 8 Student, Focus Group 3

Many young people made an initial connection between gambling and depression and alcohol. Some made a connection between gambling and other addictive behaviours that they had been warned against in school, like smoking and illicit drug use.

*Maybe they don't have a job or they go to the pub a lot and it looks like something that might be fun.*

Year 8 Student, Focus Group 3

*If you're an alcoholic or a druggie ... junkie ... you might gamble more. I don't know. You got to have money to start with.*

Year 12 Student, Focus Group 9

When asked specifically about what motivates gambling in young people, the participants tended to discuss peer pressure and the desire to fit in with friends. They almost universally said that gambling was a common activity amongst their friends and that they did not personally feel a sense of peer pressure in relation to gambling.

*Conformity, trying to fit in*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 8

*If all their mates go, they'll go too.*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 8

It was frequently mentioned that it might be something that parents or relatives do and that is what motivates younger people to become involved.

*Their mother and father might be doing it.*

Year 8 Student, Focus Group 3

When asked if they had ever gambled themselves, almost all participants in the focus groups at first said that they had not. A brief discussion about the kinds of activities that could be considered gambling generally revealed that almost all members of the group had participated in a gambling activity to some extent – whether that was helping their parents choose lottery numbers, scratching an instant win ticket, choosing a horse in the Melbourne Cup and having their parents place the bet for them, or entering a footy tipping competition for a cash prize.

*I started going to the TAB with my dad when I was like 9 or 10. I still go with him.*

Year 12 Student, Focus Group 9

Those who had gambled at least once were asked why they gambled. For many it was part of a family lottery ticket or a cultural event like the Melbourne Cup. In almost all cases it was done under the supervision of an adult, usually a parent, or facilitated by an adult. For example, it was rare that a participant had not placed a small bet via a parent or guardian on the Melbourne Cup.

Many participants, particularly the males, were participating in footy tipping competitions, some of which required an entry fee and others which provided no prize and charged no entry fee.

They characterised this kind of gambling as a culturally acceptable part of Australian life and betting on the Melbourne Cup and buying a weekly lottery ticket were considered to be normal activities that the majority of people would engage in from time to time. The participants described a sense of expectation that one would participate in such events, no matter what the age and this is what motivated their participation.

*Some of us are in a footy tipping competition for money. We're allowed to have like \$2 for the Melbourne Cup. Our parents put the money on for us.*

Year 7 Students, Focus Group 2

*I think it's just something that everyone does. It's a normal Australian tradition that you have a bet and get dressed up for the Melbourne Cup. It's not like it's \$100; it's more like 50 cents.*

Year 7 Students, Focus Group 2

Poker was a game that was played by some of the male participants. Many claimed that they played just for fun using chips but for no stake; others had gambled using money both by themselves and with parental supervision. This did not have the same cultural expectation of participation that the students had identified with regards to footy tipping.

*I bet on poker, I sometimes bet money but sometimes I don't. Not always with money ... at after school care (it's) with chips.*

Year 5/6 Student, Focus Group 1

*I play poker with chips and on-line poker, and Wednesday nights and Friday nights my step-dad's friends come over and sometimes my mum plays too.*

Year 5/6 Student, Focus Group 1

Students were also asked about whether they thought gambling was a risky activity for young people. Opinion on this was divided with some participants feeling that if gambling was begun at an early age then the potential for addiction and the development of problem gambling would be higher in later life. Others felt that older gamblers had more to lose, that they have responsibilities that young people do not have, and that when an older gambler suffers losses the consequences are more dire. They also discussed the significant effect that an older person's gambling can have on their family, particularly their dependents. Whereas gambling for a young person might have a deleterious effect on their social lives, it was not thought to have a strong impact on the lives of other people.

*(Yeah, it's risky) You get influenced into gambling at a young age and you'll do it again and again and when you get older you will have lost lots of money.*

Year 5/6 Student, Focus Group 1

*No. Well it depends. It's normal. It's more like, practically everyone. It's harmless fun and we can't go put the bets on ourselves.*

Year 7 Student, Focus Group 2

*It's like that ad, when you ask your dad if you can have a drink of alcohol, and then when he's older, his kid asks and it just goes on and on ...*

*It's not an issue that we really have to deal with. We don't pay a lot of attention to it, I mean we play cards and we do footy tipping and stuff but we don't use money for that, we just play the games and it's not real gambling.*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 5

#### **5.4 CONTEXTS FOR GAMBLING**

When initially asked if they spent any time with or knew anyone amongst their friends and families who gambled, many focus group participants said no. Probing this response a little more deeply revealed that most of them did in fact know people who gambled, many of them in their own households. This question was interpreted as one that asked if they knew of any problem gamblers. The gamblers that these young people knew did not engage in excessive gambling in the opinion of the focus group members. They participated in culturally acceptable gambling, for example a bet on the Melbourne Cup, a one-off visit to the horse races, or the family's weekly lottery ticket.

Gambling was typically defined as a social or group activity when it was at safe levels. Focus group participants described social trips to the horse races, card games amongst groups of friends, and pooled lottery tickets in families and workplaces. When discussion turned to problem gambling, however, the participants were more likely to describe a gambler as acting alone and often as someone whose behaviour had excluded them from any previous social activities that they might have participated in. These activities included playing the pokies, and gambling at the TAB or at a race course.

*It's normally social I reckon, with friends and family.*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 5

*If I was going to gamble it would be a social thing.*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 5

*Problem gamblers can all join up and play every week and stuff. But they are mostly gambling by themselves.*

Year 7 Student, Focus Group 2

*People who play the pokies just sit there and play by themselves.*

Year 9 Student, Focus Group 4

*You'd go on your own, you play with your own money so it doesn't matter what anyone else is doing. If you go to the casino to have fun with mates then you're probably going to watch the footy in the bar or something. You're not going to stand at the pokies.*

Year 12 Student, Focus Group 9

Participants' first gambling experiences tended to be one of the events that was characterised as a safe form of gambling. Typically it was a bet placed on their behalf on the Melbourne Cup, participation with parents in a footy tipping competition, or a card game played with a parent or guardian.

*Mine was probably the Melbourne Cup.*

Year 9 Student, Focus Group 4

*Scratchie. Someone bought me one.*

Year 6 Student, Focus Group 8

## 5.5 AWARENESS OF GAMBLING

Overall, participants in the focus groups were not particularly conscious of gambling in their communities. When asked about advertising that promoted gambling or gambling activities very few could think of specific examples without some prompting. Most readily recalled were television advertisements for lotteries and sporting bets during NRL and AFL football telecasts. Participants also recalled some poster advertisements at point of sale for lottery items.

*On the football, they say if you want to have a bet go to Sportsbet but bet responsibly.*

Year 7 Student, Focus Group 2

The only other advertisements that the young people who were interviewed could recall, were in the form of pop-up advertising while browsing the Internet. For the most part the participants were not particularly interested in the type of gambling being advertised via these pop-ups; however, the most often recalled type of on-line advertisement, was for on-line poker and some lotteries, often based overseas. On-line advertising was also conflated with scams and the spread of computer viruses for these students.

*Sometimes (I see) pop-ups on the computers and on the side of the page. Awesome games, slot machines, free*

Year 7 Student, Focus Group 2

*It's on the Internet everywhere.*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 5

None of the participants indicated that the advertisements had influenced them to be interested in the activity being promoted. In fact some participants claimed that the life changing success depicted in advertisements for lotteries as an example were exaggerated and preyed on people who did not know how slim their chance of winning a lottery really was.

*It doesn't make me want to go out and bet on the horses or the footy or whatever.*

Year 12 Student, Focus Group 9

*It seems like it's more for older blokes. And Aussie blokes to get on line and have a bet. Keep them out of the TAB because that is supposed to be weird and scary or something (referring to a current television advertisement).*

Year 12 Student, Focus Group 9

*You notice it (advertising) but you just don't care about it.*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 5

Some participants were aware of anti-gambling advertising campaigns and could recall television advertisements that attempted to educate the public on the low odds of winning the lottery and a campaign that emphasised the effects of gambling addiction on families. While they could recall these advertisements, they did not think that they were directed at young people; neither did they think there was much information in them that was useful to people in their age-groups. Participants were generally more conscious of advertisements and awareness campaigns on the dangers of drinking, taking drugs, and smoking.

*We see lots of ads for anti-drinking and smoking but haven't seen anything anti-gambling.*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 5

*Haven't seen any anti-gambling advertising ... oh well they've got the gamble safely thing at the bottom of the ads (promoting gambling).*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 5

Participants did not recall any lessons at school that had dealt with gambling, either as an exploration of gambling as a potentially dangerous activity or more generally as something that occurs in society. Some participants mentioned that they had done units on chance and probability as part of mathematics but that gambling itself was not directly addressed at school. Many students indicated that they thought this was appropriate, as they believed issues like drug use and alcohol consumption were more important and difficult challenges for young people. They said that gambling was not a matter that they ever worried about and they did not feel that they needed to be educated about gambling or problem gambling in the same way as they needed information about the dangers of smoking, drug use, and alcohol use.

*It doesn't really influence people our age. It influences older people but it doesn't really have an effect on us. The majority of people don't need the help at our age. It might be needed by a few people but not most of us.*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 5

## **5.6 SEEKING HELP**

The focus group participants were asked to whom they would turn for help if they thought they might be developing a problem with gambling or if they knew someone who had a problem and wanted to help. In most cases focus group participants said they would turn to their parents in the first instance, although some said they would probably try to hide the problem from their families owing to embarrassment and shame.



*Family because you trust them. They're there to look after you.*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 8

*I don't know about telling my parents. I reckon they'd be pretty angry about it.*

Year 12 Student, Focus Group 9

Others suggested that a school counsellor or teacher would be an appropriate person to approach for help along with their parish priest or a trusted older friend if parents were unable to help or the embarrassment was too great. When asked if they would consider calling a hotline or seeking help from a qualified stranger, almost all participants said that this was not an appealing option for them and that they would prefer to deal with someone that they knew and who knew their specific circumstances.

*No way. I'm not going to call up some number.*

Year 12 Student, Focus Group 9

*Maybe I would see a counsellor. That would probably be ok.*

Year 12 Student, Focus Group 9

*The gambler's helpline – they don't know the kid. The people on the other end of the phone don't know what the kid does on a day-to-day basis, but their parents do so you'd be better off telling the parents.*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 5

There was not a great deal of awareness regarding existing services to assist with gambling addiction and the notion that such services were mainly for older people was reiterated by a number of participants during these discussions. Generally speaking, young people were not particularly aware of where they could seek more information or advice about problem gambling. Some suggested that they might look up the problem on the Internet but they were unaware of any groups or bodies that might be available to them for advice or help on this subject.

*(Would seek help on the) Internet; (also) other people who have had a gambling obsession and gotten over it.*

Year 10 Student, Focus Group 8

## **5.7 SUMMARY**

The young people interviewed in the focus groups broadly defined gambling as any activity that involved using money in an attempt to acquire more money. The definitions also generally involved the notion that gambling activities were in some way harmful, imprudent or reckless activities with potentially damaging financial outcomes. There was, however, a set of gambling activities that were not viewed negatively – in fact participants tended to view them as culturally accepted and, in some cases, expected. These activities included activities like the purchase, regular or otherwise, of a lottery ticket, usually by a family member for the whole family; a once-a-year wager on the outcome of the Melbourne Cup; or the purchase of raffle tickets for a charitable event. Furthermore, these activities were not considered to be of a kind that could or would result in problem gambling, in a sense they were considered to be “safe” gambling activities. This distinction

was evident in all of the focus group interviews. Overall, the young people interviewed did not consider gambling to be of particular concern for them or their peers, but they did have a reasonably clear idea of what gambling and problem gambling was.

### **Gambling behaviour of young people**

The majority of focus group participants did not consider themselves to be gamblers, despite their participation in some gambling activities. The activities that the participants were involved in were typically sanctioned by a family member or considered culturally acceptable or expected and outside the definition of gambling that these young people typically provided. These included such things as a family lottery ticket, a bet on the Melbourne Cup and participation in raffles and other games of chance with a fundraising or charitable background.

Furthermore, they did not consider problem gambling or the effects of problem gambling to be an issue of relevance for them. Other addictive behaviours, like alcohol consumption and drug use, were identified as being of more pressing importance for young people and addictions that were likely to be more common in people of their age. This was also reflected in the lack of awareness amongst those interviewed of advertising for gaming and gambling activities and for services to assist in problem gambling. With the exception of some on-line advertising, young people did not feel that they were amongst the target audience for gambling advertising and they were largely unaware of anti-gambling advertising messages.

### **Gambling contexts**

So-called “safe” gambling was characterised as something done socially and for entertainment or for reasons other than pure financial gain. These safe gambling activities were the activities that the focus group participants themselves were likely to have been involved in and centred around the purchase of a lottery ticket (occasionally or regularly) or one off wagering activities. These activities were also strongly associated by the participants with their families and were not undertaken alone but rather in the context of a family outing or sanctioned by parents or guardians. It should be noted however that there were young people interviewed, including some under the age of 18, who had participated in gambling activities that did not fall within the range of safe activities, but these too all occurred in the presence and with the approval of family members. These activities included things like poker playing and horse and dog race wagering.

Problem gambling was strongly associated by the young people with other addictive habits like the use of alcohol or drugs. In particular, those interviewed linked their concepts of problem gamblers and gambling with gambling venues that served alcohol – pubs, clubs and casinos, and gambling activities that could be undertaken alone – playing the pokies, betting on the races, and betting on the outcome of other sports. Importantly, the focus group participants did not view problem gambling such as this as something that affected people in their age-groups. This kind of behaviour was typically associated for them with older people and particularly with older men. Problem gambling was also considered to be something that

isolated the gambler from others, a lone activity undertaken solely for the potential financial reward.

### **Factors associated with gambling in young people**

There was no clear idea in the focus group discussions about associated risk or protective factors that were particularly relevant to young people. This is reflective of the general belief that problem gambling was not an issue that particularly affected young people. More generally, the kinds of factors that the focus groups associated with an increased likelihood of problem gambling were depression and mental illness, social isolation and money worries. Problem gambling was also associated with time spent in gambling venues, particularly clubs, and there was some notion that gambling would be associated with venues where alcohol was served, but this association was somewhat vaguely expressed by the participants.

In terms of factors that protected young people from developing problem gambling habits there were no clear outcomes from the focus groups. Gambling education was not something that these young people had been exposed to at school, nor had they noticed or taken in anti-gambling advertising messages.

## 6 – DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarises and discusses the findings of research undertaken to investigate the issue of *gambling and young people* in Australia.

Section 6.1 reiterates some fundamental information contained in the main body of the report. Section 6.2 describes limitations of the study. Sections 6.3 to 6.7 summarise and discuss the findings in relation to the questions outlined in Section 6.1.1. Concluding comments make up Section 6.8.

### 6.1 RECAPITULATION

#### 6.1.1 Research questions

The purposes of the research are restated as six research questions.

1. What is the current gambling behaviour of young people?
2. What is the context in which young people's gambling occurs, including presence of other risk-taking behaviours?
3. How and to what extent is gambling similar to, or distinct from, other risk-taking behaviours?
4. At what levels and in what forms does young people's gambling become problematic or an indicator of future pathology?
5. What are the differences between young people who gamble and become problematic gamblers and those who do not develop a problem?
6. What are possible risk inhibitors and risk enhancers relevant to gambling for young people?

#### 6.1.2 Definitions

##### *Young people*

Young people in this study were those between 10 and 24 years of age, whether attending school or not. The current study involved respondents aged 10 (Year 4 in most Australian primary schools) through to 18 (Year 12 at secondary school), as well as a non-school-based sample of young people aged 15 to 24. The age-groups for analysis were 10–14; 15–17; and 18–24.

##### *Problem gambling*

The definition of problem gambling used in this study was: "Problem gambling is characterised by difficulties in limiting money and/or time spent on gambling, which leads to adverse consequences for the gambler, others or for the community"<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> *Problem Gambling and Harm: Towards a National Definition* prepared for the National Gambling Research Working Party by the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies together with the Department of Psychology, University of Adelaide, December 2005

### *Gambling activities*

Thirteen gambling activities were investigated in this study and they are listed below in order of overall reported participation rate:

1. Scratch cards (80%)
2. Card games at home (77%)
3. Lottery ticket (74%)
4. Football tipping/sweep (67%)
5. Horse/dog racing (64%)
6. Poker machines (64%)
7. Sports betting (63%)
8. Casino games other than cards (62%)
9. On-line gambling (61%)
10. Card games (casino) (59%)
11. Had someone else make a bet (56%)
12. Two-up (52%)
13. Bingo (46%).

Poker machines, casino games other than cards, and card games (casino) have reported participation rates of 64%, 62% and 59% amongst young people, not all of whom are over 18. In fact, 5% of 10–14 year-olds reported that they had played card games in a casino in the past 12 months and 7.6% of them reported that they had played other games in a casino. It might be possible that these figures are an overestimate, at least among the younger survey participants: perhaps bravado influenced some responses; perhaps some questions were misunderstood. Nevertheless, the possibility of children gambling in casinos where gaming laws are circumvented cannot be ruled out.

#### **6.1.3 Legality and availability of gambling activities in Australia<sup>15</sup>**

The legal age for gambling in Australia is 18.

The following gambling activities are available in all states/territories of Australia: Lotto/Powerball, football pools, lotteries, instant lotteries (“scratchies”), casino gaming, horse/dog racing, and sports betting. Gaming machines are available in all states/territories, although this access is restricted to hotels and clubs in the ACT, and to casino venues in Western Australia. Numerous gambling activities, from card games to betting, are now available via the Internet. Access to these on-line gambling activities is also restricted to those over the age of 18.

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<sup>15</sup> Source: Office of Economic and Statistical Research – Queensland Treasury, 2010. *Australian Gambling Statistics 1982-1983 to 2007-08*, 26<sup>th</sup> edition

Legalities aside, the availability of gambling services and access to gambling activities are not the same thing. For example, a gambling activity in a casino may be available in Brisbane, the Gold Coast, and Cairns but not easily accessible to people living in other parts of Queensland except when they are on holidays and/or travel specifically to gamble.

#### 6.1.4 The research literature

The research literature cited in this report focused on the research available on participation in gambling among young people under the age of 18 (and summarised in Table 6.1). Reviews of the international and Australian research available on gambling rates among young adults (those over the age of 18) were taken from Delfabbro, 2008a; Delfabbro, 2008b; and Productivity Commission, 2010.

**Table 6.1: Gambling frequencies reported in research**

Study	Frequency of gambling				
ACT Yrs 7–12 Delfabbro et al., 2005	Never 30%	Infrequently 60%	Frequently (weekly or more) 10%		<i>3–4% classified as problem gamblers</i>
Oregon 13–17-year-olds Carlson et al., 1998	Less than monthly 55%	Monthly 28%	Weekly 13%	Daily 4%	<i>3–4% classified as problem gamblers</i>
South Australia Yr 10 Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003	Never 33%	Infrequently 48%	Frequently (weekly or more) 20%		<i>3.5% classified as problem gamblers (no difference between age- groups)</i>
South Australia Yr 11 Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003	Never 41%	Infrequently 43%	Frequently (weekly or more) 16%		
South Australia Yr 12 Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003	Never 38%	Infrequently 55%	Frequently (weekly or more) 7%		
Alberta Grades 7–12 AADAC, 2005	Non-gamblers 59%	Non-problem gamblers 32%	Hazardous 6%	Problem 4%	<i>3.8% classified as problem gamblers</i>
Canada 12–18-year-old Boys Ellenbogen et al., 2007	Never 17%	Less than monthly 32%	1–3 times/month 25%	Weekly+ 26%	<i>5% classified as problem gamblers</i>
Canada 12–18-year-old Girls Ellenbogen et al., 2007	Never 21%	Less than monthly 45%	1–3 times/month 21%	Weekly+ 13%	<i>1.4% classified as problem gamblers</i>

### 6.1.5 Classification of young people as gamblers

Classifying young people according to gambling status (see Table 6.2) was based on twelve items aligned with nine diagnostic criteria in DSM-IV-MR-J, with a score of 4 out of 9 locating the young person in the category “problematic” and 1 to 3 out of 9 “at-risk”. By definition, the non-gambler and social gambler groups were not included in the analysis that considered the extent to which the nine diagnostic criteria were endorsed.

The criteria were *preoccupation with gambling, tolerance, loss of control, withdrawal, escape, chase, lies, illegal acts, and risk*. Preoccupation with gambling (thinking about and planning gambling activities) was the most commonly endorsed item in each of the three age-groups (10–14; 15–17; 18–24), with no significant difference between age-groups. The problem-gambler group had a higher percentage endorsement of the remaining eight criteria than did the at-risk gambler group. Table 6.2 presents the schema for classifying young people into four gambling groups (one of which is “non-gambler”).

**Table 6.2: Schema for classification of young people into gambling groups**

Gambling Group	Gambling activities in past 12 months	Number of DSM-IV-MR-J criteria endorsed
Non-gambler	None	Not presented
Social gambler	Yes	None
At-risk gambler	Yes	One to three
Problem gambler	Yes	At least four

The majority of young people were classified as social gamblers (56%), nearly one-quarter were non-gamblers (23%), 16% were as-risk gamblers, and 5% were problem gamblers (see Figure 6.1).

## 6.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research presents a number of findings related to the gambling behaviour of young people in Australia. It pays particular attention to those young people who can be classified as problem gamblers. The limitations of the study are now described before the findings are presented.

### 6.2.1 The sample

The target population for this study was young people aged 10–24 who live in Australia. Within this definition of the target population there were issues to consider about the appropriate population of young people to be approached to participate in the survey (e.g., with respect to young people with special needs, young people not reachable via telephone, young people who are schooled at home, young people who are in Australia on exchange programs or other temporary arrangements). The inclusion of young people in very remote locations was also a consideration in the context of the overall objectives of the survey and the survey resources available.

ACER maintains an up-to-date dataset of all Australian schools by state/territory and sector, with enrolment numbers by year level, as well as location and contact details. The ACER Sampling Frame is developed annually by ACER by coordinating information from multiple sources, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Commonwealth, State and Territory education department databases.

The detailed information already available through the ACER Sampling Frame meant that the project researchers had a good start in recruiting school-aged participants for the study. Strong links with relevant education authorities for permission to approach the sampled schools was anticipated to facilitate the recruitment process. Enrolment data in the Sampling Frame also facilitated the construction of weights to improve the precision of the estimates from analysis of the data collected.

Notwithstanding these initial perceived benefits, recruitment of the school-based sample proved difficult. Schools resisted engaging in research activities, particularly if that research was perceived as not being directly related to the school curriculum. Schools also excused their non-participation on the basis of an already crowded curriculum (i.e., full timetable).

Recruitment of the non-school sample was also problematic. Individuals resisted participating in the survey citing “being busy” as the reason. This state of affairs compounded the difficulty already experienced by researchers in making successful contact given the increased use of mobile phones in the general population.

One of the emerging issues facing telephone survey researchers is the proportion of the population residing in “mobile-phone-only” households. This population (currently estimated to be around 13% of adults) is not contactable via traditional telephone interviewing methods, which include only those households with landline telephone connections. Recent data from the Australian Communications Media Authority (ACMA, 2010) show that the proportion of households without a landline telephone connection has doubled from 5% to 10% in the past five years. This means that the proportion of households contactable via traditional telephone interviewing methods is somewhat less than 90%, and declining.

This gap in the coverage of traditional telephone surveys is a problem because, potentially, it is a new source of bias in results from telephone surveys.

### **6.2.2 The instrument**

The main source of descriptive information in this study was young people’s responses to a questionnaire. It is acknowledged that this method (self-reporting) has its limitations: How motivated were the young people to give serious attention to the questions? What were the levels of honesty and accuracy of their responses? Did the wording of the questions convey meaning in a way that the questions measure what they were intended to measure?

The readability and comprehension of self-report measures for young people have been scrutinised with many researchers concluding that survey questions are not readily understood by young people as evidenced in their revision of their responses after having had the questions explained to them.



Regardless of these limitations the questionnaire enabled the researchers to gather a large volume of data from a large number of young people simultaneously and of eliciting specifically focused information which was amenable to statistical analysis.

Diagnostic criteria for problem gamblers are supposed to be presented and probed in a clinical interview. For this research study they were translated into pencil-and-paper surveys. Testing of a psychiatric nature (e.g., for obsessive-compulsive disorder, clinical depression and so on) would complement the understanding of problem gambling in young people. In fact much of the literature on gambling and many of the comments made by young people on the topic echo the language of mental disorders (e.g., depression, compulsion, obsession, suicide, inability to concentrate) and are therefore appropriately situated in the psychiatric research paradigm.

Some researchers query whether diagnostic criteria or questions on self-report measures that are used with adults, such as those pertaining to the financial consequences of gambling, are appropriate for use with young people who may not be financially independent, and thus not at risk of suffering financial hardship as a direct result of their gambling to the same extent as adults are (e.g., Fisher, 2000).

The message for researchers designing studies and policy-makers and others using the results of studies is that there is no simple test for gambling problems and that self-reports are not necessarily the best means of diagnosing individual problems although they are at least a relatively efficient means of gaining estimates of possible problem levels of gambling in youth populations.

### **6.2.3 Focus groups**

The survey was administered to young people in all states and territories but focus groups were held in Victoria and NSW only. Therefore, no conclusions can be drawn about the other six jurisdictions in relation to, say, gambling awareness advertising because that varies across jurisdictions. The research design did not limit the focus groups to two jurisdictions only; the case was that the level of interest in participating was minimal in most jurisdictions. This limited coverage had two disappointing consequences: first, some separation rather than complete integration of discussions about quantitative and qualitative findings; and, second, a diminished volume of comments (this is disappointing because it dilutes the importance that might otherwise have been attached to the commonsense attitude observed in the young people who did participate).

## **6.3 CURRENT GAMBLING BEHAVIOUR OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **6.3.1 Participation in a gambling activity**

Seventy-seven per cent of young people in Australia participated in a gambling activity at least once in the 12 months preceding the administration of the questionnaire.

International and Australian research both indicate that participation in various forms of gambling is relatively common among young people under the age of 18 years, with approximately 77% of adolescents having participated in some form of gambling in the

past year and some researchers suggesting that up to 90% of adolescents will gamble at some point in their lives.

### 6.3.2 Group differences in current gambling participation

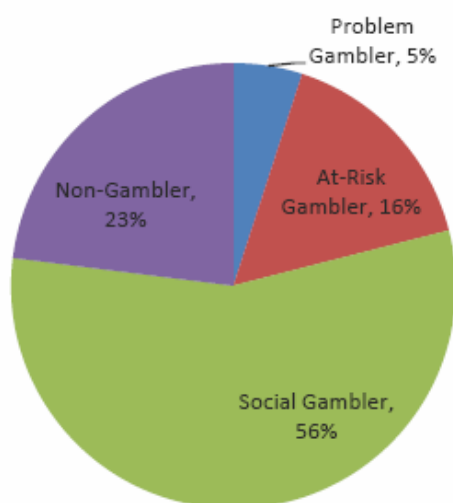
There were some differences according to age with 76% of the 10–14 year age-group, 64% of the 15–17 year age-group, and 85% of the 18–24 year age-group having gambled at least once in the past year.

There was no significant difference according to gender in terms of gambling experience in the previous twelve months with 78% of males and 76% of females having participated in a gambling activity, OR = 0.927, 95% CI = (0.819, 1.049).

There was no significant difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people in terms of gambling experience with 82% of Indigenous and 77% of non-Indigenous young people having gambled in the previous twelve months, OR = 0.754, 95% CI = (0.544, 1.045).

### 6.3.3 How many young people appear to have a gambling problem?

On the basis of the schema in Table 6.2, the majority of young people were classified as social gamblers (56%); nearly one-quarter were non-gamblers (23%); 16% were at-risk gamblers; and 5% were problem gamblers as depicted in Figure 6.1.



**Figure 6.1: Proportion of young people in each of four gambling categories**

Thus the finding here – that 5% of young people in Australia are problem gamblers – is not unexpected. Research with young people in the Americas, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia suggests that levels of problem gambling are higher among young people than among adults, with between 4% and 8% of participants being identified as problem gamblers.

### 6.3.4 Group differences in gambling classification

There were significant differences according to age-group in terms of the classification of gamblers. Young people in the older age-group were three times more likely to be at-risk gamblers than their younger counterparts. They were also twice as likely as the 15–17-year-olds to be problem gamblers and one and a half times as likely as the 10–14-year-olds. Surprisingly, participants in the youngest age-group were more likely to be social gamblers, whereas those in the middle age-group were most likely to be non-gamblers.

There is a possibility that the 10–14 year olds were applying specific childish interpretations of some of the activities they were asked about. For example, games modelled on bingo, but without any outlay or return of money or goods, are sometimes used as class activities within a larger unit of work (perhaps a unit on a class novel); and a version of two-up, also without any outlay or return of money or goods, has been played in schools on Anzac Day as part of Australian History activities. Being rewarded with access to higher and higher levels in arcade-style games, whether on a computer or in a games parlour, might be considered a “prize”. If such activities were indeed being counted in the youngest age-group’s responses, it might help explain the findings that 10–14 year-olds were more likely than 15–17 year-olds to be social gamblers, and that the 15–17 year-olds were more likely than 10–14 year-olds to be non-gamblers. Perhaps this represents a simple outgrowing of childish pursuits, without particular relevance to a consideration of gambling.

There was a difference according to gender in the classification of gamblers. Males were more likely to be at-risk or problem gamblers than females with 5.7% of males problem gamblers as opposed to 3.2% females, and 19.1% of the males at-risk gamblers compared with 13.9% females.

While males were more likely than females to be problem gamblers, this difference by no means renders the prevalence of female problem gamblers negligible: 3.2% of females are problem gamblers compared with 5.7% of males. In a Canadian study in 2007 (refer back to Table 6.1) the number of male problem gamblers was 3.6 times the number of female problem gamblers.

There was a difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people in terms of the gambling classification. Indigenous young people were 6.4 times more likely to be problem gamblers than non-Indigenous young people. They were also more likely to be at-risk gamblers. It is important, however, to keep in mind the small number of Indigenous people in this study ( $n = 251$ ).

## 6.4 PROBLEM GAMBLING

### 6.4.1 Gambling activities with young people as participants

Thirteen types of gambling were investigated in this study.

The most common activity across all groups of young gamblers was the purchase of scratch cards (or instant-win tickets).

Amongst social gamblers, the most common gambling activities were purchase of scratch cards (52%), purchase of lottery tickets (41%), and participation in football tipping or sweeps (40%).

At-risk gamblers were also involved in purchasing scratch cards (66%), and in lotteries (58%). In addition, over fifty percent of young people in this group were also using poker machines (58%) and playing card games at home (56%).

As expected, problem gamblers had a greater involvement than the other two groups of gamblers in all types of gambling activities. For example, 13% of social gamblers and 35% of at-risk gamblers reported playing casino games other than cards whereas 62% of problem gamblers reported doing so.

Over fifty per cent of problem gamblers were involved in all gambling activities presented, with the exception of bingo (46%). After scratch cards (80%), problem gamblers played cards at home (77%), and purchased lottery tickets (74%).

Table 6.3 shows the three most popular and three least popular forms of gambling across all three categories of gamblers.

**Table 6.3: Popularity of forms of gambling, highest and lowest, overall and by gambling category**

Popularity of activity	Overall	For social gamblers	For at-risk gamblers	For problem gamblers
1 (most popular)	Scratch cards	Scratch cards	Scratch cards	Scratch cards
2	Card games at home	Lottery ticket	Lottery ticket	Cards at home
3	Lottery ticket	Football tipping/sweep	Poker machines	Lottery ticket
4–10	Not displayed in this table			
11	Had someone else make a bet	Casino games (not cards)	On-line gambling	Bet placed by another
12	Two-up	Card games at casino	Two-up	Two-up
13 (least popular)	Bingo	On-line gambling	Bingo	Bingo

The “top” three forms of gambling were the same for Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people who gamble: scratch cards, lottery tickets, and cards at home or in the home of

friends or relatives, although football tipping or sweeps shared third place for non-Indigenous young people.

The patterns of participation in gambling activities are noticeably different for males and females although the most common activity was the same for both (i.e., scratch cards). The second-most common for females was lottery tickets (47%) and for males, card games (52%). Young males in the current study reported greater participation in sports-related betting and cards than did young females, whether at home or in a casino environment, as has been found in previous Australian (Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003; Delfabbro, Lahn & Grabosky, 2005) and international (e.g., Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a; National Research Council, 1999) studies.

Whether grouping the young gambler population by Indigenous status or gambling category or gender, scratch cards and lottery tickets are popular in all three gambler groups. These activities are, generally speaking, socially acceptable in Australia. Buying scratch cards is a ritual not unlike buying a weekly bus pass. Buying lottery tickets is viewed by many to be a harmless activity, even a non-gambling activity, perhaps because of the vacuum in which it exists (no face-to-face transactions except for the purchase of a ticket), the public “congratulations” that are bestowed on winners (as if they had some part in their success), and a realisation that state governments and other organisations use lotteries to raise money (e.g., for an opera house). Views expressed by the young people who participated in the focus groups also reflect the notion that lotteries are not “real” gambling.

On the other hand, lottery tickets and scratch cards are “a common means by which young people are introduced to ... gambling ... and their attitudes towards lotteries and their beliefs about the role of luck and their chances of one day winning the jackpot are an area of concern” (Felsher, Derevensky et al., 2004b; Wood & Griffiths, 1998; Wood & Griffiths, 2002; Wood & Griffiths, 2004). The research literature tells us that ensuring that students understand the area of probability in mathematics does not seem to be effective in changing attitudes to gambling. This suggests the need for innovative ways of incorporating this field of mathematics in the curriculum, possibly through a multi-disciplinary approach (i.e., drawing on a variety of school subjects).

## **6.5 CONTEXTS FOR GAMBLING**

### **6.5.1 Gambling and other risk-taking behaviours**

Overall, in the previous six months, 53% of young people had imbibed more than a sip of alcohol, 21% had smoked cigarettes, and 11% had used illegal drugs. Only 5% reported that they had been involved in shoplifting or other forms of theft, and only 4% in graffiti or tagging.

Alcohol was the most frequent type of risky behaviour reported in all four groups (non-gamblers and the three gambler groups) with the next most common for all (except non-gamblers) being cigarette smoking.

Non-gamblers reported using public transport without a ticket as their second most frequent type of risky behaviour.

For the problem gamblers, using public transport without a ticket was number three on the list (42%) ahead of using illegal drugs (37%).

Of concern, but not unsurprising given previous research that has linked participation in delinquent behaviour with gambling, is the finding that greater proportions of the problem gamblers reported involvement in such risky activities as graffiti or tagging, smoking cigarettes, trespassing on private property, using illegal drugs, fighting and theft, compared to the other groups of young people. While the data from this study do not allow investigation of the pathway (see Figure 2.3 and Box 4) that may have led to this constellation of gambling, delinquent behaviours and substance use among some young people, it does add weight to the argument that gambling among young people carries with it a high degree of risk, not only for developing gambling problems, but also for involvement in other risky behaviours. This is because, as the level of gambling problems reported by young people increased (from none to social gambling to at-risk gambling to problem gambling), so too did their involvement in these other behaviours.

Of note is the finding that the number of problem gamblers who endorsed the diagnostic criterion “risk” in the DSM-IV-MR-J (see Section 6.1.5) was more than eight times the number of at-risk gamblers who did so.

The sixteen shaded cells in Table 6.4 highlight the commonality of the three highest-frequency risky behaviours (alcohol, cigarettes, and using public transport without a ticket) across the four youth gambling categories, and indicate the behaviour that is in fourth “place” for each category (actually going out without parental permission is equal third for the non-gamblers). Being out without parental permission is just as common in non-gamblers as it is in problem gamblers (14%). However, being out without parental permission would not be a concern for the oldest age-group (18–24) and, also, there would be families/households where parental permission is never sought or is never required even for the youngest age-group (10–14): unlike using illegal drugs, being out without parental permission cannot automatically be designated as risky behaviour.

**Table 6.4: Risky behaviours over past six months, selection according to rank for each gambler category**

Recent risky behaviour	% of sample	Overall position	Problem gamblers	At-risk gamblers	Social gamblers	Non-gamblers
Alcohol	53	1	1 (77%)	1 (88%)	1 (66%)	1 (44%)
Cigarettes	21	2	2 (57%)	2 (39%)	2 (25%)	3 (14%)
Using public transport w/out ticket	18	3	3 (42%)	3 (23%)	3 (21%)	2 (18%)
Trespassed on private property	12	4	(30%)	(20%)	4 (15%)	(9%)

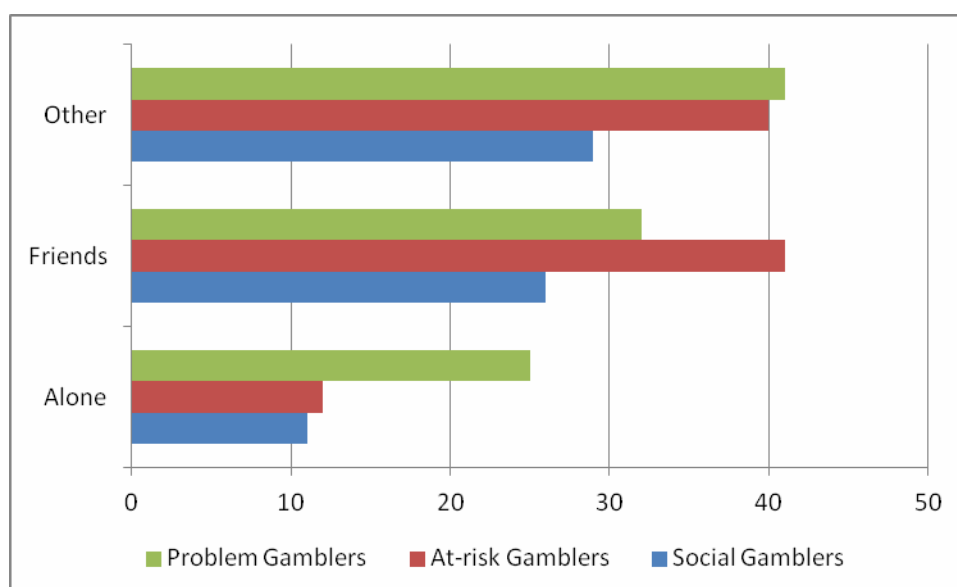
Recent risky behaviour	% of sample	Overall position	Problem gamblers	At-risk gamblers	Social gamblers	Non-gamblers
Illegal drugs	11	5	4 (37%)	4 (22%)	(12%)	(6%)
Punched/kicked someone in a fight	9	6	(8%)	(10%)	(14%)	(8%)
Been out without parents' permission	9	6	(14%)	(6%)	(11%)	3 (14%)
Shoplifting/theft	5	8	(23%)	(6%)	(5%)	(4%)
Graffiti, tagging	4	9	(25%)	(3%)	(5%)	(3%)

Note: The unscreened cells in the four gambler types give frequency only (not rank).

The research literature suggests that there is a relationship between under-age gambling, an illegal activity, and other risky or anti-social behaviours. Researchers have reported links between problem gambling and alcohol and other substance abuse, participation in a range of delinquent and anti-social behaviours, including truancy from school, vandalism and shoplifting. It may be that problematic levels of gambling place young people at greater risk of participating in these other behaviours, that participating in risky behaviours such as under-age drinking or drug taking increases the likelihood of participating in gambling, or that certain characteristics and experiences place young people at risk in a general sense, and that this may then result in problems with substance use and/or gambling. Indeed, a number of individual and familial characteristics that have been identified as potential risk factors for developing gambling problems have also been identified as risk factors for developing conduct or substance use problems, while other factors seem to relate specifically to problematic levels of involvement with gambling.

### 6.5.2 Company kept

Thirty per cent of young people have gambled with their friends, and 20% with more than one, out of friend, parent, partner, sibling, relative, or stranger. A further 12% have gambled alone. Only 1% have gambled with a parent present and 1% with a sibling. The figures for problem gamblers are noteworthy in that 35% of them have gambled with friends (this is in the same ballpark as for other categories of gambler) but 25% of them have gambled alone, which is more than twice the rate for social and at-risk gamblers. Information about the company kept by problem gamblers is summarised in Figure 6.2.



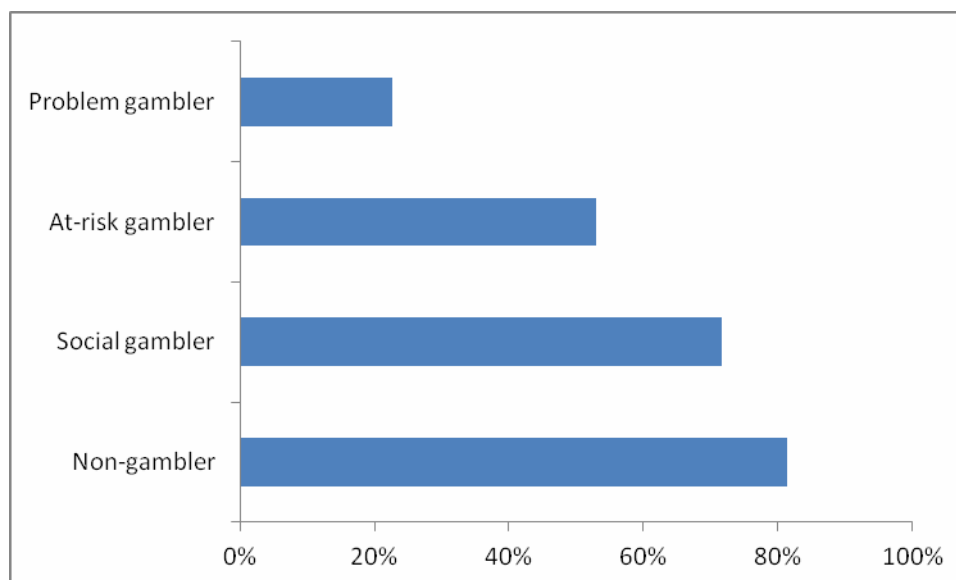
**Figure 6.2: Company kept when gambling for three gambling types**

Gambling in the company of a friend and having a friend with a gambling problem are not the same thing. However, in this discussion about “friends of gamblers”, it is worth noting Dickson, Derevensky and Gupta’s (2008) finding that having a friend with a gambling problem has one of the strongest relationships, above all other risk and protective factors, with being a problem gambler.

### 6.5.3 Influence of others

Only 23% of young people classified as problem gamblers did not know any problem gamblers in contrast to the other groups of young people (81% of non-gamblers, 72% of social gamblers, and 53% of at-risk gamblers) who did not know any problem gamblers. Among those young people classified as problem gamblers, 33% had friends who gambled too much and 6% had partners who gambled too much compared with only 0.1% overall. (Connotations of the word “partner” would be different for 10-year-olds at school and 24-year-olds at work.)

Young people with problem gamblers in their family (mother/step mother, father/step father, brother, sister) are more likely to be at-risk or problem gamblers. Young people who have a peer who is a problem gambler, and young people who know someone else who is a problem gambler are all more likely to be at-risk or problem gamblers than are young people who do not know anyone who gambles too much.

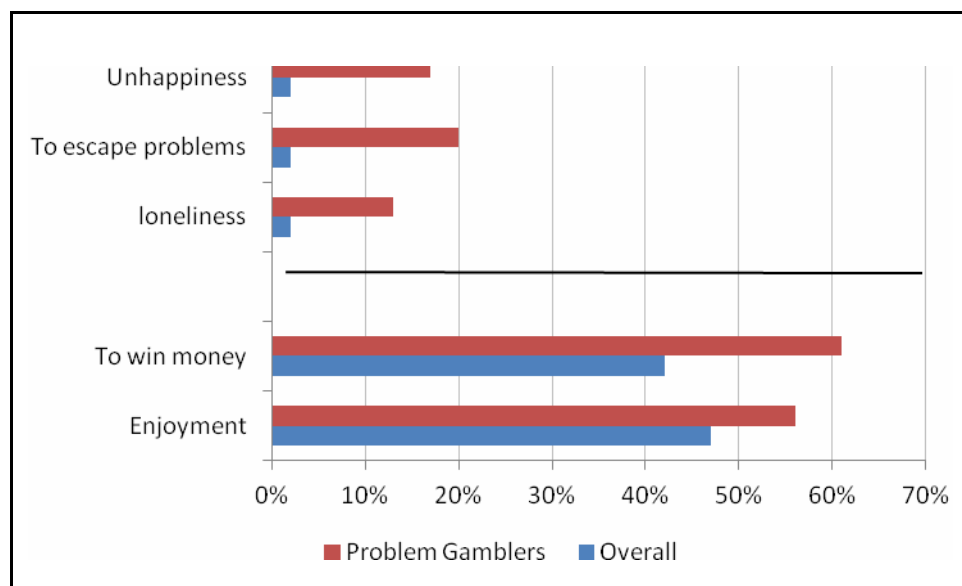
**Figure 6.3: Young people with no knowledge of any problem gamblers, by gambling category**



Of note is that 81% of non-gamblers did not know anyone who gambles too much whereas 23% of problem gamblers did not know anyone who gambles too much. One obvious explanation for this big difference between problem gamblers' and non-gamblers' knowledge of other problem gamblers is that problem gamblers know many people of their own kind and recognise them as such whereas non-gamblers do not mix with, and therefore are not aware of, many gamblers in their midst. Another consideration here is whether problem gamblers judge the behaviour of other gamblers (in terms of their gambling "too much") in relation to their own participation in gambling and thus set a high benchmark for assigning others to the "gambling-too-much" category.

### 6.5.4 Motivation for gambling

Reasons given by young people for their gambling varied across gambling groups. Overall, the most common reasons were enjoyment (47%) and to win money (42%). These were also the most common reasons given by problem gamblers (56% and 61% respectively). The least common reasons overall were loneliness (2%), to escape from problems (2%), and unhappiness (2%). For the problem gamblers, however, loneliness, escapism and unhappiness levels were much higher: 13%, 20% and 17%, although still amongst the least common reasons reported. Figure 6.4 displays some of the reasons that problem gamblers gave for gambling compared with those given by young people overall.



**Figure 6.4: Most and least common reasons for gambling, problem gamblers and overall**

The link between gambling alone (as in company kept) and gambling because of loneliness (as in reasons for gambling) is telling. Fifty-six per cent of problem gamblers gambled for enjoyment (overall 47%), 17% because they were unhappy (overall 2%) and 13% because they were lonely (overall 2%). The lonely young person in our midst obviously requires special attention. Being lonely and gambling in the company of friends are not mutually exclusive. That loneliness, escaping from problems and being unhappy are reasons, albeit not the most common ones, for problem gambling is of itself a finding of note for mental health professionals especially if combined with low self-esteem. These same factors are often associated with youth suicide.

On the other hand, nearly half of young people overall nominated enjoyment as a reason for their gambling. The notion that gambling could be legitimate entertainment for people over the age of 18 is a challenge to those (particularly parents and teachers) who advise young people on life skills. Arguably, there is a difference between a negative portrayal of gambling *per se* and a portrayal of gambling as an entertaining adult pastime that requires a disciplined approach.

## 6.6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PROBLEM GAMBLERS AND OTHERS

For young people in Australia who can be classified as **problem gamblers**, there is a significant association of their gambling behaviour with the following:

- a positive attitude to gambling
- low self-esteem
- peer involvement in gambling, and substance use
- delinquent behaviour.

In essence, these findings about what distinguishes problem gamblers from others suggest that young people gamble because their mates do, because they are risk-takers, because they do not believe gambling is a bad thing, and because they do not have a healthy sense of self. Some of these characteristics are more susceptible to change than are others.

Removal of peer-group influence is an unrealistic expectation in a young person's environment (beyond changing homes and schools and leisure activities) and, again, without longitudinal data and analyses, it is difficult to determine the direction of this relationship between peer-group involvement and gambling and a young person's own problematic gambling behaviours. Do young problem gamblers find themselves associating with other gamblers their own age, accidentally or purposefully, or do those young people who associate with peers who gamble find themselves participating at increasing levels over time?

Similarly, it is not possible from the current study to determine the direction of the association between participation in risky activities, substance use, and higher levels of gambling but the strength of the association between these behaviours, all of which carry a degree of risk, warrants further attention from researchers and those involved in the health and welfare of young people. The risky behaviours investigated in this study do not encompass sexual activity, speeding (when driving), drug abuse (as opposed to substance use), family structures (or lack of them), mistreatment at home, psychiatric disorders and so on.

Table 6.5 presents the four individual characteristics that are linked to problem gambling and highlights two of them as being susceptible to intervention.

**Table 6.5: Individual characteristics associated with problem gambling**

Characteristic of individual linked to problem gambling	Susceptible to intervention?
Peer involvement in gambling	
Substance use and delinquent behaviours	
Positive attitudes towards gambling	Yes
Low self-esteem	Yes

Important results observed for the relationships with *Positive Attitudes towards Gambling* show that the effects of gender, age-group, family history in gambling, involvement of peers and other relatives, substance use and delinquent behaviours are not similar in the four gambling groups.

- Males have more favourable attitudes towards gambling than do females for the first three groups (non-gamblers, social gamblers, and gamblers who are at risk of developing gambling problems). However, for the fourth group (the problem gamblers), there are no gender differences shown in terms of attitudes towards gambling.
- Older age-groups have less favourable attitudes towards gambling than the younger ones for non-gamblers and social gamblers. However, there are no age-group effects in terms of attitude to gambling for problem gamblers and gamblers who are at risk of developing gambling problems
- Family and peer involvement in gambling shows no significant influence on attitude towards gambling in all four groups.
- Substance use does not show a significant influence on attitudes toward gambling in any of the gambling groups.
- Delinquent behaviours are strongly associated with favourable attitudes towards gambling for social gamblers and problem gamblers, but not for non-gamblers and at-risk gamblers.

These results are summarised in Table 6.6.

**Table 6.6: Relationship with positive attitude to gambling, problem-gambling group highlighted**

	<b>Problem gamblers</b>	<b>At-risk gamblers</b>	<b>Social gamblers</b>	<b>Non-gamblers</b>
Gender	No	Yes; M > F	Yes; M > F	Yes; M > F
Involvement of family or peers	No	No	No	No
Substance use	No	No	No	No
Delinquent behaviours	Yes	No	Yes	No

Important results observed for the relationships with *Low self-esteem* are:

- Females have lower self-esteem than do males in the first three groups (non-gamblers, social gamblers and gamblers who are at risk of developing gambling problems). In the fourth group (problem gamblers), there are no gender differences in terms of self-esteem.
- The older age-groups have higher self-esteem than the younger ones in the first three groups (non-gamblers, social gamblers, and at-risk gamblers). There is no association between self-esteem and age-group for the problem gamblers.

- Family and peer involvement in gambling has no significant effects on the self-esteem of the at-risk gamblers and the problem gamblers.
- Gambling history in immediate family members and involvement in gambling of other relatives is associated with lower self-esteem for the non-gamblers and the social gamblers.
- Substance use is associated with lower self-esteem for non-gamblers, but not with lower self-esteem for social gamblers, at-risk gamblers or problem gamblers.
- Delinquent behaviours are strongly linked to lower self-esteem for non-gamblers and social gamblers, but not for at-risk gamblers and problem gamblers.

These results are summarised in Table 6.7.

**Table 6.7: Relationship with low self-esteem, problem-gambling group highlighted**

	<b>Problem gamblers</b>	<b>At-risk gamblers</b>	<b>Social gamblers</b>	<b>Non-gamblers</b>
Gender	No	Yes; F > M	Yes; F > M	Yes; F > M
Involvement of family or peers	No	No	Yes	Yes
Substance use	No	No	No	Yes
Delinquent behaviours	No	No	Yes	Yes

### **Gender**

From Tables 6.6 and 6.7 it can be seen that, for the problem gambler group, gender is not linked to a positive attitude to gambling, or to low self-esteem. It is easy to overlook the research finding that there is no gender difference because it is gender differences and their interpretations that usually attract attention. However, the finding in this study that there is no gender difference in problem gamblers' self-esteem or attitude towards gambling is a finding of note. Gender neutrality warrants further research.

### **6.7 RISK INHIBITORS AND RISK ENHANCERS**

Not all young people who gamble do so at problematic levels or have a gambling problem, as indicated by the finding that approximately 77% of young people in the current study have gambled in the year just past, but fewer than one in ten of those have done so at problematic levels.

### 6.7.1 Risk inhibitors and risk enhancers for young gamblers

Factors identified in the research that appear to be associated with a greater risk of problem gambling for young people include:

#### *Having*

- Low self-esteem
- A positive attitude to gambling
- Parent(s) involved in gambling
- Peers involved in gambling
- Access to gambling services and products;

#### *Being*

- Male
- Impulsive and lacking in self-discipline
- A participant in other risky behaviours
- In a family that functions at sub-optimal levels.

In the current study, there were indications that low self-esteem, positive attitudes to gambling and other risky behaviours, and involvement in delinquent activities were indeed associated with problematic levels of gambling among young people.

Protective factors are those that appear to reduce or even negate the likelihood of young people becoming problem gamblers because they are not simply the opposite or risk or the absence of a risk factor. Some other factors that might reduce the risk of problem gambling for young people, and which should be investigated further, are social capital and a healthy academic self-concept. Other factors such as media/advertising and mathematical knowledge were not investigated here. The literature does not provide the definitive answer on the influence of media/advertising and mathematical knowledge on a young person's gambling behaviour but does provide the basis for a new set of research questions.

### 6.7.2 Young people's notions of problem gambling

Problem gambling was strongly associated with other addictive behaviours such as the use of alcohol or drugs. In particular, those interviewed linked their concepts of problem gamblers and gambling to gambling venues that served alcohol – pubs, clubs and casinos, and gambling activities that could be undertaken alone – playing the pokies, betting on the races, and betting on the outcome of other sports. It was also considered to be a factor that isolated the gambler from others, a lone activity undertaken solely for the potential financial reward.

Conversely, so-called “safe” gambling was characterised as something done socially and for entertainment or for reasons other than pure financial gain. These safe gambling activities were the activities that the focus group participants themselves were likely to have been involved in and centred around the purchase of a lottery ticket (occasionally or regularly) or one-off wagering activities. These activities were also strongly associated by the participants

with their families and were not undertaken alone but rather in the context of a family outing or sanctioned by parents or guardians. However, there were young people interviewed, including some under the age of 18, who had participated in gambling activities that did not fall within the range of safe activities, but these too all occurred in the presence and with the approval of family members. These activities included things like poker playing and horse- and dog-race wagering.

Importantly, the focus group participants did not view problem gambling such as this as something that affected people in their age-groups. This kind of behaviour was typically associated for them with older people and particularly with older men.

The majority of young people do not consider themselves to be gamblers, despite their participation in some gambling activities. The activities that the participants were involved in were typically sanctioned by a family member or considered culturally acceptable or expected and outside the definition of gambling that these young people typically provided. These included such things as a family lottery ticket, a bet on the Melbourne Cup and participation in raffles and other games of chance with a fundraising or charitable background.

Furthermore, they did not consider problem gambling or the effects of problem gambling to be an issue of relevance for them. Other addictive behaviours such as alcohol consumption and drug use were identified as being of more pressing importance for young people and addictions that were likely to be more common in people of their age. This was also reflected in the lack of awareness amongst those interviewed of advertising for gaming and gambling activities and for services to assist in problem gambling. With the exception of some on-line advertising, young people did not feel that they were amongst the target audience for gambling advertising and they were largely unaware of anti-gambling advertising messages.

Participants' understanding of what constitutes gambling, their perceptions about gamblers, and their judgments of others are important aspects of further discussion on devising intervention procedures that might be feasible in reducing levels of youth gambling in Australia.

## **6.8 CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

This study is the first national study of gambling behaviour among young people in Australia. The need for such a review is high, given the effects of gambling on the wellbeing of individuals, relationships and society, and the interest of Government in developing an effective interventions framework.

The findings are not unexpected. They are similar to those from smaller studies in Australia and larger studies in Canada. Nevertheless, the revelation that 5% of Australian youth are problem gamblers calls for a more intense study of the background and psychological characteristics of that particular group.

Two of the factors shown to be associated with problem gambling – positive attitude towards gambling and low self-esteem – have the potential for targeted intervention pathways. It is possible to change attitudes to gambling (from positive to negative) and to elevate levels of self-esteem (from low to high). Psychologically valid in its own right because of its more general usefulness would be an intervention program to treat young people who exhibit low self-esteem. Also demanding attention are programs designed to provide young people with strategies for coping with alienation that might prevent them resorting to gambling when/if they are lonely or in search of a “buzz”.

Given the volume of research that nominates a range of factors in the development of problem gambling, it is unlikely that any program that focuses solely on one aspect, be that coping strategies, mathematical understanding, resistance to peer pressure or managing money, will have a substantial impact on problem gambling amongst our young people.

The literature review identified “difficulties with school work” as a possible risk factor. Difficulty with school work was not examined in this study as a potential risk factor for gambling. A follow-up study might be worthwhile. This study could be related to another suggested study – the relationship between academic self-concept and problem gambling.

Analyses undertaken in this research study show that the effects of gender, age-group, family history in gambling, involvement in gambling of peers and other relatives, substance use and delinquent behaviours are not all similar in the four gambling groups. One pattern, however, is striking: While most of these variables have an effect in at least one of the gambling groups, an effect is not observable among the problem gamblers for any of these variables.

#### *For problem gamblers*

- There are no gender differences in terms of attitudes towards gambling.
- There are no age-group effects in terms of attitudes towards gambling.
- Family and peer involvement in gambling shows no significant influence on positive attitudes towards gambling.
- Substance use does not show significant influence on positive attitudes towards gambling.
- There are no gender differences in terms of self-esteem.
- There are no significant differences in self-esteem across age-groups.
- Family and peer involvement in gambling have no significant effects on self-esteem.
- Substance use does not show significant influence on self-esteem.
- Delinquent behaviour is not significantly associated with lower self-esteem.



Hence, while self-esteem and a positive attitude to gambling are associated with problematic levels of gambling among young people, low self-esteem is not age-specific or gender-specific; nor is a positive attitude to gambling age- or gender-specific.

Although a psychological profile of young problem gamblers is beyond the scope of this study, these findings do suggest that problem gambling among young people may be something other than simply non-problem-gambling taken to the next stage. The influences that most readily present themselves to the mind as being associated with the problem – gender, age, family and peer involvement, substance use and delinquent behaviour – seem to operate differently (if they operate at all) on young problem gamblers than on other young people. It is possible, then, that an intervention that focuses on these influences could have beneficial effects on most young people without having the same effects on young problem gamblers. (There may be other influences that have not been captured in the current research.) Interventions might need to be tailored to take into account the divergence of young problem gamblers from the rest of the young population.

Findings in a study such as this may be of several kinds – they may bring to light interpretations that have never been considered before; they may tend to confirm a familiar view of an issue; and/or they may tend to discredit a familiar view of an issue. While the first of these kinds may be the most radical, the value of the other two kinds should not be underestimated.

One familiar view of gambling that the current study tends to *discredit* is that problem gambling is a male problem. While males are more likely than females to be at-risk or problem gamblers, this difference by no means renders the prevalence of female at-risk or problem gamblers negligible: 13.9% of females are at-risk gamblers (compared with 19.1% of males), and 3.2% of females are problem gamblers (compared with 5.7% of males).

The main source of descriptive information in this study was young people's responses to a questionnaire. Given that children as young as 10 years old were surveyed, the limitations of this method (acknowledged earlier), are likely to be more pronounced. An alternative method is worth considering: Referrals from teachers, parents and peers of young people, and young problem gamblers themselves as volunteers, may be useful in successfully deriving a research population for further investigating problem-gambling behaviour in young people in Australia.

The landscape of gambling is radically changing with the introduction of new forms of gambling (e.g., Internet gambling). Thus, there are more opportunities for gambling and so comparisons with the past are not as relevant as they used to be. A fresh approach to research about gambling in young people is recommended that takes account of the technologically rich society in which these young people exist; for example, contacting young people via social networking (Facebook and Twitter).

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## 8 – APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

Dear Principal

**Re: Invitation to participate in an important national study – Gambling and Young People**

We wish to seek your support on a project of national significance. The project, commissioned by Gambling Research Australia (GRA), is designed to identify the attitudes of young people to gambling and their current gambling behaviours. It is considered to have national importance and provide governments with valuable data and research-based evidence to direct future policy considerations for this group of young people.

Your education jurisdiction has granted approval for the project to proceed in your school and the approval letter is enclosed. Your school will be participating with other schools in your state.

Information will be collected via an on-line survey. No special software or equipment will be needed for students to complete the on-line survey, which will take about 20 minutes to complete. If it is not possible for students to access computers at school, a pencil and paper version of the survey will be available upon request.

Only one class from each year level is required to participate (only Grade 5 and Grade 6 for Primary Schools).

The project fits in well with schools' responsibility regarding social and emotional wellbeing and many participating schools plan to run the survey in their health or maths class. Lesson plans will be made available covering issues such as probability, chance, decision making and peer group pressure after the report is finalised.

ACER would like to extend to your school the opportunity to participate in this valuable project.

Please complete the **Agreement to Participate Form** attached and return to Gina Milgate via fax on 03 9277 5500 by ..... 2009.

You will also find enclosed a letter from Gambling Research Australia which outlines this project and seeks your cooperation.

Following receipt of your Agreement to Participate Form, more detailed information about the project will be forwarded to you, including specific details of your role (or nominee) in the project.

If you have any further queries regarding this project please call Dr Nola Purdie (03 9277 5481, [purdie@acer.edu.au](mailto:purdie@acer.edu.au)) or Ms Kylie Hillman (03 9277 5476, [hillman@acer.edu.au](mailto:hillman@acer.edu.au)).

We rely on your response for the effectiveness of this project. Thank you for your assistance.

## **APPENDIX 2: LETTER FROM GAMBLING RESEARCH AUSTRALIA**

### **NATIONAL GAMBLING RESEARCH STUDY – GAMBLING AND YOUTH**

*Australian Council for Educational Research commissioned to undertake a national Gambling and Youth research study.*

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Gambling Research Australia (GRA) has recently commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to undertake an Australia wide study into young people's perceptions of and participation in various gambling and wagering activities. Your support is being sought for this major study, the first of its kind in Australia. This is the first national study to be undertaken that will investigate the gambling attitudes and behaviours of young people (aged 10 – 24 years) and will provide governments with valuable data and research-based evidence to direct future policy considerations for this group of people.

GRA is responsible for managing and implementing a national research program on behalf of the Ministerial Council on Gambling. GRA is comprised of Departmental Officers of member jurisdictions of the Ministerial Council on Gambling, including a representative from the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council Gambling Working Party. The website address for GRA is: [www.gamblingresearch.org.au](http://www.gamblingresearch.org.au)

This study is being funded by GRA from its Trust Fund, to which each of the States and Territories and Australian Government make agreed contributions. The management of the project will be undertaken by the GRA Secretariat located in the Victorian Department of Justice, Office of Gaming and Racing.

As part of this project, GRA seeks the cooperation of educational institutions (i.e., primary, secondary and tertiary, mainstream and alternative) for this important study. ACER, who is undertaking the research study, has extensive experience in survey work in schools and is highly experienced in the work required to obtain permissions from school authorities to conduct research. In addition to obtaining the necessary ethics approvals to undertake studies within the educational system, ACER also has its own code of ethics under which all survey work involving students is conducted. All participants will be afforded complete confidentiality in their responses.

Your support for this project is critical to its success in helping to identify current levels of participation in gambling in our youth population and their attitudes towards their own and others' gambling behaviours. The study will provide governments with research-based evidence with which to inform future policy directions.

## APPENDIX 3: LETTER TO PARENTS

### Gambling and Young People Project

#### Information Sheet for Parents

Dear Parent/Carer/Legal Guardian,

Gambling Research Australia (GRA) has recently commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to undertake an Australia wide study into young people's perceptions of and participation in various gambling and wagering activities. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is a non-governmental educational research organisation established in 1930.

Your support is being sought for this major study, the first of its kind in Australia. This is the first national study to be undertaken that will investigate the gambling attitudes and behaviours of young people (aged 10 – 24 years) and will provide governments with valuable data and research-based evidence to direct future policy considerations for this group of people.

The principal of your child's school has provided consent for the school students to participate in the study. The research will involve, with your consent, your child participating in an on-line or pen and paper survey. Some of the participating children will also be invited to be part of follow-up group discussions with ACER researchers. What students say in these groups will be confidential.

The content of the survey will be designed to obtain relevant personal information (e.g., age, gender, cultural background); details of gambling participation and frequency; money spent and time devoted to gambling; engagement in out of school leisure activities and information about students attitudes towards gambling. A report will be written about young peoples' perceptions of and participation in gambling. We anticipate that this report will be publicly available through Gambling Research Australia.

Follow-up group discussions will allow for more in-depth discussion with young people about their attitudes towards gambling and the reasons why young people gamble or don't gamble. Students who are willing to participate in the follow up activities will be asked to provide their contact details at the end of the survey. This information will be used only to arrange the follow up activities.

All data collected will be kept strictly confidential. Students will be able to withdraw from the project at any time without penalty, and no individual student or school, will be identified in any data sets or reports. Details of ACER's privacy policy can be found on our website at <http://www.acer.edu.au>.

This research has been approved by the ACER Ethics Committee and the educational jurisdictional authority in your state/territory. If you are prepared for your child to participate in the project, a *Parent Consent Form* and *Student Consent Form* are attached for you and your child to complete and return to your child's home room teacher.

Please contact Dr Nola Purdie, Project Director on (03) 9277 5481 or by email ([purdie@acer.edu.au](mailto:purdie@acer.edu.au)) if you have any questions regarding the project.

**APPENDIX 4: ACER SURVEY****YOUNG PEOPLE AND GAMBLING**

The questions in this survey are about young people and gambling. Gambling means playing games or betting to win money or prizes.

We are interested to know what you think about gambling. The questions ask if you have ever gambled, what types of gambling you might have done, such as lottery scratch tickets, playing cards and betting on sport games, and where you might have seen gambling advertised lately. We are also interested in how you spend your time outside of school and what other activities you are involved in.

Please read through each question carefully and pick the answer that best fits you.

If you need to change an answer, please put a big cross through your old answer and then tick your new one.

All of your answers to your questions are private and confidential, so you can be completely honest.

The first questions are about you and your background.

## About you

1 Are you...

- Female  
 Male

2 Are you...

- Aboriginal  
 Torres Strait Islander  
 Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
 Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander

3 How old are you?

- Under 10 years old  
 10 years old  
 11 years old  
 12 years old  
 13 years old  
 14 years old  
 15 years old  
 16 years old  
 17 years old  
 18 years old  
 19 years old

4 Where were you and your parents born?

Countries	Where you were born	Where your mother was born	Where your father was born
Australia			
Bosnia and Herzegovina			
Canada			
China (excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan Province)			
Croatia			
Egypt			
Fiji			
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia			
Germany			
Greece			
Hong Kong			
India			



Indonesia			
Iraq			
Ireland			
Italy			
Japan			
Korea, Republic of (South)			
Lebanon			
Malaysia			
Malta			
Netherlands			
New Zealand			
Papua New Guinea			
Philippines			
Poland			
Serbia and Montenegro			
Singapore			
South Africa			
Sri Lanka			
Thailand			
Turkey			
United Kingdom (including Northern Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland, Channel Island, Isle of Man)			
United States of America			
Vietnam			
Other			
I do not know			

5 What is the name of your school?

Please write your answer here:

---

6 Please select the *STATE* or *TERRITORY* you go to school in from the list below

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ACT
- New South Wales
- Victoria
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Western Australia
- Tasmania

Northern Territory

7 *Is your school a government or State school? Please check with your teacher if you are not sure*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes, it's a government or State school  
 No, it's not a government or State school

### About your activities

8 *In the past year, how often have you done any of the following activities?*

	Never	Less than once a month	About once a month	About once a week	Every day or almost every day
Played bingo for money or prizes					
Played card games for money or prizes at your own home, or at the homes of your relatives or friends					
Exercised (went to a gym, went running, etc)					
Played on poker-machines (pokies)					
Taken part in a football tipping competitions or a sweep to win money or prizes (a sweep is where you are given the name of a horse, a team or a player and if they win, so do you)					
Bet money on horse or dog races					
Bet money on sports games, like football, rugby or cricket					
Had someone else place a bet for you					
Gone to a meeting of a club (Scouts/Guides, Skateboard club, fan club)					
Bought a lottery ticket (Lottery tickets can have different names, for example Keno, Crosslotto, Powerball or Tattslotto)					
Bought an instant-prize ticket or scratchie card (these are cards that you rub away or scratch off stuff to see if there is a prize underneath)					

	Never	Less than once a month	About once a month	About once a week	Every day or almost every day
Played computer games or games on a Playstation or X-box, etc					
Picked numbers for a lottery ticket (but did not buy the ticket yourself)					
Bought raffle tickets					
Played card games at a casino					
Played other games at a casino, like craps, roulette or baccarat					
Gone to the movies					
Played video or arcade games					
Played two-up					
Played sport in a team or on your own (e.g., athletics, netball, hockey, football or tennis)					
Gone to church, temple, synagogue or mosque					
Placed a bet or gambled for money or prizes on the Internet					
Watched TV for longer than two hours at a time					
Been on the Internet for more than two hours at a time					

### About gambling and you

The next few questions are about you and gambling. Even if you have never gambled, please answer the questions

9: *Did you ever gamble regularly (more than once a week) but have since stopped?*

- Yes  
 No

10: *In the past year, have you found yourself thinking about gambling or planning to gamble?*

- Yes  
 No

11: *In the past year, have you needed to gamble with more and more money to get the same amount of excitement you want?*

- Yes  
 No
- 

12: *In the past year, have you spent much more than you planned to on gambling?*

- Yes  
 No
- 

13: *In the past year, have you felt bad or fed up if you tried to cut down or stop gambling?*

- Yes  
 No
- 

14: *In the past year, have you gambled to help you escape from problems or when you are feeling bad?*

- Yes  
 No
- 

15: *In the past year, have you gone back another day after losing money gambling to try to win back the money you lost?*

- Yes  
 No
- 

16: *Have you told lies to your family about you having gambled?*

- Yes  
 No
- 

17: *Have you used your school lunch money or transport fare money to spend on gambling?*

- Yes  
 No
- 

18: *Have you taken money without permission from your family to gamble?*

- Yes  
 No
- 

19: *Have you taken money from someone outside your family to gamble with?*

- Yes  
 No
- 

20: *Have you argued with your family, friends or other people about you having gambled?*

- Yes
  - No
- 

21: *Have you ever missed school to gamble?*

- Yes
  - No
- 

22: *When you gamble, who else is usually with you?*

- No one - I gamble alone
  - Friend(s)
  - Parents(s)
  - Brother(s) or sister(s)
  - Other relative(s)
  - Other people I don't know (strangers)
  - I don't gamble
- 

23: *How old were you when you first gambled for money or placed a bet?*

- Less than 10 years old
  - 10 years old
  - 11 years old
  - 12 years old
  - 13 years old
  - 14 years old
  - 15 years old
  - 16 years old
  - 17 years old
  - 18 years old
  - 19 years old
  - I have never gambled
- 

24: *Why do you gamble? Please select all reasons that apply to you from the list below*

- For enjoyment
- To relax
- For excitement or to get a 'buzz'
- To be with or make new friends
- Because I'm unhappy
- To escape from problems at home or school

- Because I'm lonely
- Because I'm bored
- To feel older or more mature
- To win money
- To beat the machine

Other:

### About other people and gambling

25: Do any of the following people you know gamble too much?  
Please select all that apply.

- Mother/Step-mother
- Father/Step-father
- Brother or sister
- Other relative
- Friend
- Neighbour
- Someone else you know
- I do not know anyone who gambles too much

### What you think about gambling

26: Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about gambling

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Gambling is a risky activity					
You can lose all of your money gambling					
Gambling is a waste of money					
Gamblers usually lose					
Gambling is just throwing money away					
You can make a living from gambling					
Gambling is a good way to get rich quickly					
Gambling is a better way to make money than working					
Gambling is designed to give high returns (let you win lots of money)					
It is hard to stop gambling					

### Other activities and advertising

27: Have you done any of these things in the past six months?  
Please select any that apply to you.

- Used public transport without a valid ticket
- Been out without your parents' permission
- Drunk alcohol (more than just a sip)
- Graffitied or 'tagged'
- Smoked cigarettes
- Trespassed on private property
- Used illegal drugs
- Punched or kicked someone in a fight
- Shoplifted or stolen
- None of these things

28: From the list below, please select all of the places you can remember seeing advertising about gambling in the past year

- At the movies, before the show
- On TV
- On billboards
- At tram or bus stops or train stations
- On the sides of trams or buses
- On the Internet (e.g., in 'pop-ups')
- In junk emails or spam
- In newspapers
- In magazines
- I don't remember seeing any advertising about gambling
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### How you feel

29: Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about how you feel about yourself

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Generally, I am satisfied with myself				
At times, I think I am no good at all				
I feel I have a number of good qualities				
I am able to do things as well as most other people				
I feel I do not have much to be proud of				

I feel useless at times				
I feel that I am a worthwhile person, just as good as other people				
I wish I could have more respect for myself				
In general, I feel that I am a failure				
I have a positive attitude about myself				

### About work and money

30: *What types of money do you get regularly (e.g., every week or every month)?*

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Pocket money or allowance from family
- Gifts of money (regularly, not just once a year like birthday money)
- Income from shares or investments
- Winnings from bets or other gambling
- Income from own business
- I don't get any money of my own regularly

Please answer the next questions if you are age 14 or older.

If you are younger than 14, please go to page 14.

31: *Do you have a part-time or casual job that you do after school or on weekends during the school year?*

- Yes
- No

32: *If you have a job, what kind of job is it? What do you do in the job?*

Please write your answer here:

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33: *How many hours a week do you usually work at this job?*

- 1-5 hours per week
- 6-10 hours per week
- 11-15 hours per week
- 16-20 hours per week



- 21-25 hours per week
- 26-30 hours per week
- More than 30 hours per week

34: *How much money do you usually earn each week at this job?*

- \$1 to \$25 per week
- \$26 to \$50 per week
- \$51 to \$75 per week
- \$76 to \$100 per week
- \$101 to \$150 per week
- \$151 to \$200 per week
- More than \$200 per week

### **Your contact details**

We would like to invite you to participate in some further activities for this project.

If you would like to participate in these activities, please complete the following questions about your contact details.

If you do not wish to participate in any further activities for this project, please hand your survey to your teacher.

Thank you for completing our survey 😊

Please fill in your FIRST NAME

---

Please fill in your SURNAME or FAMILY NAME

---

Please fill in your STREET ADDRESS (e.g., house or apartment number, street name)

---

Please fill in your SUBURB or TOWN name

---

Please fill in your POSTCODE

---

Please fill in your EMAIL ADDRESS

---

**APPENDIX 5: CATI SURVEY**

**YOUNG PEOPLE AND GAMBLING SURVEY**  
(for use with the non-school based sample)

**INTRODUCTION**

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is (...) from Wallis Consulting Group. We are conducting a study on behalf of the Australian Government on young people's attitudes to gambling.

IF NECESSARY ADD: The study is being conducted for Gambling Research Australia. Gambling Research Australia is an initiative of the Ministerial Council on Gambling. The Council is comprised of the Ministers responsible for gambling in each State and Territory Government and the Australian Government.

IF NECESSARY ADD: Your telephone number has been computer generated from all possible telephone numbers in your area. We find that this is the best way to obtain a representative sample for surveys of this type.

S1 How many people aged 15 to 24 years of age currently live in your household?

- |   |               |             |
|---|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | One           |             |
| 2 | More than one |             |
| 3 | None          | TERMINATE 1 |
| 3 | REFUSED       | TERMINATE 1 |

S2 How many, if any, of those people are aged 15 to 17 years?

- |   |                      |           |
|---|----------------------|-----------|
| 1 | One                  | GO TO S2a |
| 2 | More than one        | GO TO S2b |
| 3 | None (all are 18-24) | GO TO S4  |
| 3 | REFUSED              | GO TO S4  |

S2a Has that person left school or is s/he still attending secondary school?

S2b Have either of them left school or are they still attending secondary school?

- |   |                 |          |
|---|-----------------|----------|
| 1 | Still at school | GO TO S4 |
| 2 | Left school     | CONTINUE |
| 3 | REFUSED         | GO TO S4 |

(PARENTAL PERMISSION IS REQUIRED TO CONTINUE THE SURVEY.)

S3. May I please speak to a parent or guardian of (that person?/the one who has left school?)

WHEN SPEAKING TO PARENT, SAY:

Gambling Research Australia is conducting a survey on young people and gambling.

IF NECESSARY ADD: Gambling Research Australia is an initiative of the Ministerial Council on Gambling. The Council is comprised of the Ministers responsible for gambling in each State and Territory Government and the Australian Government.

CONTINUE:

All information supplied is confidential and no identifying material is used in the analysis of survey results. In order to obtain a representative sample of young people it is important to gain approval for your son/daughter to be available to answer some simple questions over the phone.

We are going to ask questions about a range of activities that young people engage in, including gambling activities.

To protect the confidentiality of the answers, we are not recording the name of any family, friends or acquaintances referred to during the interview.

All survey participants are free to not answer any or all of the questions and to terminate the interview at any time.

Do you give permission for your son/daughter to participate in this survey? The interview should take about 20 minutes.

- |   |                                    |           |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Yes                                | GO TO S5a |
| 2 | No                                 | GO TO S4  |
| 3 | Up to son/daughter                 | GO TO S5a |
| 3 | make appt to speak to son/daughter | GO TO SMS |

S4 Then how many 18 to 24 year olds are currently living in your household?

- |   |               |             |
|---|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | One           | GO TO S5a   |
| 2 | More than one | GO TO S5b   |
| 3 | None          | TERMINATE 1 |
| 3 | REFUSED       | TERMINATE 1 |

S5a May I please speak to that person?

S5b May I please speak to the 18-24 year old who most recently had a birthday?

WHEN SPEAKING TO YOUNG PERSON, SAY:

Gambling Research Australia is conducting a survey about young people and gambling.

IF NECESSARY ADD: Gambling Research Australia is an initiative of the Ministerial Council on Gambling. The Council is comprised of the Ministers responsible for gambling in each State and Territory Government and the Australian Government.

CONTINUE:

All information supplied is confidential and no identifying material is used in the analysis of survey results.

I'm going to ask questions about a range of activities that you may or may not engage in, including gambling activities.

To protect the confidentiality of your answers, you should not tell us the name of any family, friends or acquaintances referred to during the interview.

You are free to not answer any or all of the questions or to end the interview at any time. This interview should only take about 20 minutes but will depend on your answers.

- |   |                                 |             |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Continue                        |             |
| 2 | Refusal                         | TERMINATE 2 |
| 3 | Make appt to complete interview | GO TO SMS   |

This interview may be monitored for quality purposes. Please advise if you do not want this call to be monitored.

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | Monitoring allowed       |
| 2 | Monitoring not permitted |

## SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

The first questions are about you, and a little about your background

D1 NOT ASKED – Interviewer to record respondent gender at close of interview.

D2 Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Aboriginal                                    |
| 2 | Torres Strait Islander                        |
| 3 | Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander    |
| 4 | Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander |

D3 How old are you?

\_\_\_\_\_ (RECORD NUMBER)

D4 Were you born in Australia or elsewhere?

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | Australia                 |
| 2 | Elsewhere (SPECIFY _____) |

D5 Where was your mother born?

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | Australia                 |
| 2 | Elsewhere (SPECIFY _____) |

D6 Where was your father born?

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | Australia                 |
| 2 | Elsewhere (SPECIFY _____) |

D7 What would you say is your current MAIN activity?

(IF NECESSARY ADD:

For example are you mainly working, studying or doing something else?)

- |   |                                      |               |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Working full time                    | GO TO D10     |
| 2 | Working part time                    | GO TO D10     |
| 3 | Study / training                     |               |
| 4 | Home duties / looking after children | GO TO D9      |
| 5 | Looking for work                     | GO TO PRE D13 |
| 6 | Travel or holiday                    | GO TO D9      |
| 7 | Ill / Unable to work / study         | GO TO PRE D13 |
| 8 | Other (SPECIFY _____)                | GO TO PRE D13 |

D8 Is this...? (READ OUT)

- |   |   |           |
|---|---|-----------|
| 1 | An apprenticeship   | GO TO D10 |
| 2 | A traineeship   | GO TO D10 |
| 3 | Other study or training at University, TAFE, or other educational institution |           |
| 4 | Something else  |           |

D9 Do you currently work in a job?

- |   |                      |               |
|---|----------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Yes                  |               |
| 2 | No                   | GO TO PRE D13 |
| 3 | Waiting to start job | GO TO PRE D13 |

D10 Altogether, how many hours do you usually work each week in your present job? (**IF HOURS VARY ASK:** In your last four weeks of work, how many hours per week, on average, have you worked, including paid holidays?)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | _____ (RECORD NUMERIC RESPONSE 1 TO 100) |
| 2 | 999 Don't know                           |

D11 How often do you get paid in that job?

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | Weekly                |
| 2 | Fortnightly           |
| 3 | Monthly               |
| 4 | Other (SPECIFY _____) |

D12 And how much is your usual (weekly/fortnightly/monthly) take home pay from that job?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | _____ (RECORD NUMERIC RESPONSE \$1 TO 8000) |
| 2 | 9999 Don't know                             |

**PRE D13 INCLUDE (OTHER) IF D10 IS ANSWERED**

D13 Are you receiving (other) income from...? (READ OUT)

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Pensions                             |
| 2 | Shares or investments                |
| 3 | Winnings from bets or other gambling |
| 4 | From your own business               |
| 5 | DO NOT READ - None of these          |

**PRE D14 IF D3 < 18 GO TO PRE D15  
ELSE CONTINUE**

D14 Now some questions about your living arrangements. What is your marital status?  
Are you...? (READ OUT)

- 1 Married
- 2 Living with a partner (e.g., de facto, or boyfriend/girlfriend)
- 3 Single, that is, never married
- 4 Separated (still legally married)
- 5 Divorced
- 6 Widowed

**PRE D15 IF D14 NOT ASKED, INCLUDE INTRO IN D15  
IF D14 =1/2  
INCLUDE (OR YOUR PARTNER'S PARENTS) IN D15**

D15 (Now some questions about your living arrangements.) Do you usually live with your parents (or your partner's parents) or somewhere else?

- 1 Yes (with parents / partner's parents) GO TO NEXT SECTION
- 2 No (somewhere else)

D16 Are you living in: ...(READ OUT)

- 1 A shared house or flat?
- 2 A place you are renting?
- 3 A place you are buying?
- 4 A place you own outright?
- 5 A private house as a boarder?
- 6 A University or TAFE residence?
- 7 A hostel or boarding house?
- 8 Somewhere else? (SPECIFY)

**SECTION 2: ABOUT YOUR ACTIVITIES**

A1 The next questions are about activities.  
In the past year, how often have you done any of the following activities?

a.	Played bingo for money or prizes
b.	Played card games for money or prizes at your own home, or at the home of your relatives and friends
c.	Exercised (went to the gym, went running, etc)
d.	Played on poker-machines (pokies)
e.	Taken part in a football tipping competition or sweep to win money or prizes (IF QUERIED 'sweep': A sweep is a competition in which you are given the name of a horse, team or player and if they win, so do you)
f.	Bet money on horse or dog races
g.	Bet money on sports games, like football, rugby or cricket
h.	Had someone else place a bet for you

i.	Been to a meeting of a club (scouts/guides, skateboard club, sports club)
j.	Bought a lottery ticket (Keno, Crosslotto, Powerball, Tattslotto, etc)
k.	Bought an instant-prize ticket or scratchie card (IQUERIED: These are cards that you scratch or rub off a covering to see if there is a prize underneath)
l.	Played computer games or games on a Playstation, X-box or Wii
m.	Picked numbers for a lottery ticket (but did not buy the ticket yourself)
n.	Bought raffle tickets
o.	Played card games at a casino
p.	Played other games at a casino, like craps, roulette or baccarat
q.	Been to the movies
r.	Played video games or arcade games
s.	Played two-up
t.	Played sport in a team or on your own (e.g., athletics, netball, hockey, football or tennis)
u.	Been to Church, Temple, Synagogue or Mosque
v.	Placed a bet or gambled for money or prizes on the Internet
w.	Watched TV for longer than 2 hours at a time
x.	Been on the Internet for more than two hours at a time

- 1 Never  
 2 Less than once a month  
 3 About once a month  
 4 About once a week  
 5 Everyday or almost everyday

A2 Did you ever gamble regularly (more than once a week) but have since stopped?

- 1 Yes  
 2 No

### SECTION 3: ABOUT YOU AND GAMBLING

**PRE G1 IF HAVE ENGAGED IN ANY GAMBLING IN LAST 12 MONTHS  
 ((A1a, A1b, A1d, A1e, A1f, A1g, A1h, A1j, A1k,  
 A1o, A1p, A1s, A1v) > 1)) CONTINUE  
 ELSE GO TO G5**

G1 In the past year, have you.....(READ OUT)?

a.	have you found yourself thinking about gambling or planning to gamble
b.	have you needed to gamble with more and more money to get the same amount of excitement you want?
c.	have you attempted to cut down or stop your gambling and failed?
d.	have you felt restless or irritated when trying to cut down or stop gambling?
e.	have you gambled to help you escape from problems or when you are feeling bad?



f.	have you gone back another day after losing money gambling to try to win back the money you lost?
g.	have you lied to your family, employer, friends or other people about how often you are gambling?
h.	have you committed an illegal act, such as forgery, fraud or embezzlement or stolen money to use for gambling?
i.	has your gambling ever led to arguments with your family, friends or employer?
j.	has your gambling ever led to missing classes or work?
k.	have you had to ask your family, friends or other people for money for essentials, such as bills, rent, fees or food, because you have lost yours gambling?

- 1 Yes  
2 No

G2 When you gamble, who else is usually with you?

- 1 No-one – I gamble alone  
2 Friend(s)  
3 Partner(s)  
4 Brother(s) or Sister(s)  
5 Other relative(s)  
6 Other people I don't know (strangers)

G3 How old were you when you first gambled for money or placed a bet?

- 1 Younger than 10 years old  
2 10 years old  
3 11 years old  
4 12 years old  
5 13 years old  
6 14 years old  
7 15 years old  
8 16 years old  
9 17 years old  
10 18 years old  
11 19 years or older

G4 I'm going to read out a list of reasons that young people might have for gambling. Please tell me which, if any, of these apply to you?  
(MULTIPLE RESPONSE) (READ OUT)

- 1 For enjoyment  
2 To relax  
3 For excitement or to get a 'buzz'  
4 To be with friends or make new friends  
5 Because I'm unhappy  
6 To escape from problems at school or work  
7 Because I'm lonely  
8 Because I'm bored

- 9 To feel older or more mature
- 10 To win money
- 11 To beat the machine
- 12 Other (SPECIFY \_\_\_\_\_)

**ASK ALL**

G5 Do any of the people you know gamble too much?  
(MULTIPLE RESPONSE) (PROBE FULLY)

- 1 Partner or husband / wife (DISPLAY ONLY IF D14 = 1/2)
- 2 Mother / step-mother
- 3 Father / step-father
- 4 Brother or sister
- 5 Other relative
- 6 Friend
- 7 Neighbour
- 8 Someone else you know
- 9 No - I do not know anyone who gambles too much

**SECTION 4: WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT GAMBLING**

T1 Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:  
PROBE FOR STRONGLY AGREE/DISAGREE  
OR JUST AGREE/DISAGREE

a.	Gambling is a risky activity
b.	You can lose all your money gambling
c.	Gambling is a waste of money
d.	Gamblers usually lose
e.	Gambling is just throwing money away
f.	You can make a living from gambling
g.	Gambling is a good way to get rich quickly
h.	Gambling is a better way to make money than working
i.	Gambling is designed to give high returns (lets you win lots of money)
j.	It is hard to stop gambling

- 1 Strongly disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly agree

**SECTION 5: OTHER ACTIVITIES AND ADVERTISING**

O1 Now some questions about other types of activities that some young people engage in.

Which, if any, of these things have you done in the past SIX MONTHS?

(READ OUT – CODE ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1 Used illegal drugs
- 2 Drunk alcohol (more than just a sip)
- 3 Smoked cigarettes
- 4 Been out without parents' permission (SUPPRESS IF AGED 18+)
- 5 Used public transport without a valid ticket
- 6 Graffiti or tagged
- 7 Trespassed on private property
- 8 Punched or kicked someone in a fight
- 9 Shoplifted or stolen
- 10 None of these things

O2 Please tell me whether you can remember seeing advertising about gambling in the past year, in any of the following places

(READ OUT – CODE ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1 At the movies, before the show
- 2 On TV
- 3 On billboards
- 4 At tram or bus stops or train stations
- 5 On the side of trams or buses
- 6 On the Internet (e.g., in 'pop-ups')
- 7 In junk emails or spam
- 8 In newspapers
- 9 In magazines
- 10 Somewhere else (SPECIFY \_\_\_\_\_ )
- 11 DO NOT READ – Have not seen gambling advertising

## SECTION 6: HOW YOU FEEL

F1 Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about how you feel about yourself:

PROBE FOR STRONGLY AGREE/DISAGREE

OR JUST AGREE/DISAGREE

a.	Generally, I am satisfied with myself
b.	At times, I think I am no good at all
c.	I feel I have a number of good qualities
d.	I am able to do things as well as most other people
e.	I feel I don't have much to be proud of
f.	I feel useless at times
g.	I feel that I am a worthwhile person, just as good as other people

h.	I wish I could have more respect for myself
i.	In general, I feel that I am a failure
j.	I have a positive attitude about myself

- 1 Strongly disagree  
 2 Disagree  
 3 Neither agree nor disagree  
 4 Agree  
 5 Strongly agree

**INTERVIEWER – RECORD RESPONDENT GENDER**

- 1 Male  
 2 Female

**CLOSE** That's the end of the survey.

Thank you for answering these questions about young people and gambling. We appreciate you giving time to this important research.

If you, or anyone you know, are experiencing problems related to gambling, you can call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800, or

Gamblers Help on 1800 858 858

If you would like more information about this survey you may call the Wallis Group on 1800 241 271.

**TERMINATE 1** Thank you – we need to speak with people aged 15 to 24 years who have left secondary school.

**TERMINATE 2** Thank you anyway. Enjoy your day/evening.

## APPENDIX 6: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW NOTES

### Focus Group 1: Year 5 and 6 Students

Interviewers: Kylie Hillman & Clare Ozolins

#### *Location, Population and Demographic*

The school is located in Melbourne's outer east in a very mixed social demographic, with around 30% of families entitled to receive an Education Maintenance Allowance. At the other extreme, the school caters for an equally significant number of families where one or both parents/guardians are relatively high income professionals and/or business proprietors. Parental expectations are generally high, although a small proportion of parents choose minimal connection with the school. The area continues to see subdivision to the east and is likely to at least maintain current enrolment levels. Most children come to the school from Mount Evelyn, although some 25% of the enrolment comes from surrounding suburbs including Lilydale, Seville, Silvan, Wandin Yallock and Montrose. The school enjoys a very strong, positive reputation in the community and enrolments have grown steadily from 350 to over 450 over the past 14 years. At the time of the interviews, the school was undergoing substantial building works and expansion.

#### *Definition of Gambling*

While some students gave examples of specific activities (such as Tattslotto), other students focused on the idea of money and particularly the notion of 'wasted' money, money that was supposed to be used for other purposes but was directed towards gambling instead, often with the result that the money was lost:

"Pretty much paying like bills except wasting family's money on stupid stuff."

"Right into bribes and scam and stuff that take your money."

"Scams and sometimes it's rigged."

"Lose a lot of money and you don't get it back."

Not all students saw the losses as an inevitable part of gambling, however, as some described gambling more as a type of investment:

"Spending your own money to win money."

"Basically, like using money to get more money."

Quite a range of activities were offered as examples of gambling. The most commonly offered activities were card games (poker and the variations of the game in particular, and blackjack or 21), lottery games like Keno and Tattslotto, slot machines and poker machines (pokies).

"Mum buys a lotto ticket but that's not (real) gambling because it's just \$2."

Russian roulette with pretend guns was also offered as an example of gambling, but presumably not for money.

The Claw machines, or skills tester machines, were an interesting example that would probably not be considered gambling in the traditional sense, but were viewed as such by the students, and as a form that targeted them in particular - "it's like gambling for kids". This comment was explored further and a situation described in which children whose parents were at a venue could relax and play the pokies while the kids were playing the Claw game and that this was an acceptable arrangement for everyone, until the money ran out. The appeal of these machines and the difficulty of winning the prizes (and whether the games are rigged) was a topic that was revisited later in the discussion.

As none of the students had offered up raffles or buying raffle tickets, the interviewer asked the question:

What about raffle tickets – is that gambling?

The responses were interesting because the students offered a distinction between what they considered 'good gambling' and 'not good gambling' –

"...it depends on what it's for, if it's a sausage sizzle, or... but if it's for a charity, it's still gambling but it's for a good reason, it's good gambling."

Dog racing and horse racing were also offered as forms of gambling and the interviewer asked how many of the students had placed a bet on the (recently held) Melbourne Cup. All of the students in the session has placed a bet, whether formally (through a bookmaker) or informally among family or friends. When the interviewer pointed out that this meant that everyone present had gambled, some of the students who had earlier indicated that they, personally, had never gambled (and their survey responses mirrored this) appeared quite surprised at the idea that having a bet on the Melbourne Cup would be considered gambling.

### *Motivation*

The main themes in the discussion that followed this question were the ideas of the first win or chasing losses drawing people in to continue gambling, a link between depression and gambling and gambling as entertainment.

The students nominated initial wins and initial losses as being a motivation for continuing gambling, as in the following:

"Sometimes people say that going to the casino twice a week is ok but then it goes too far."

"They do it once and they go oh well I'll win next time so they keep going."

Chasing losses was a theme that was picked up again in discussion around why it might be hard for some people to stop gambling.

The link between depression and gambling was initially raised by one student whose mother works in the health industry and then quickly picked up by other students and gambling was likened to other addictions, like smoking:

"My mum has done this before at work and they found that people who did this (gambling) are suffering a big depression and it (gambling) makes it worse."

"Mum works at hospital, people there have depression and want to stop (gambling)."

"There are ads that are like 'stop gambling' and 'stop smoking.'"

The 'gambling as entertainment' theme flowed out of the discussion about depression and gambling, as students began to suggest that people who were depressed might be using gambling as a way of masking their depression:

"You don't always know, they are sad but they gamble to make themselves look happy."  
"Well, if they're already depressed and they waste heaps of money, but they're not bored."  
"They're sad, think their life is over, and sometimes people are drunk."  
At this point, one student objected:  
"cos it's fun, not everyone (who gambles) is sad!"

The interviewer then asked the students whether any of them gambled. Around half of the students volunteered that they gambled regularly, as in, not the once a year on the Melbourne Cup race discussed earlier, and a range of activities were offered as examples. Card games, both in person and on-line, were a popular activity with the male students and the Claw games again made an appearance.

"Sometimes me and friends will bet (like, I bet I'm right) - sometimes we bet money but not always."

Interviewer: *why?*

"It's a way of proving that you're right."

"I bet on poker, I sometimes bet money but sometimes I don't. Not always with money..at after school care (it's) with chips."

"I play poker with chips and on-line poker, and Wed nights and Fri nights my step dad's friends come over and sometimes my mum plays too. And I confess I play on those claw things- they're addictive!"

"I bet sometimes on the Brownlow....and I'm addicted to those game (claw things) too!"

"My friend won me an iPod once on one of those games. Makes you feel like you've got good luck."

Among the male students, participating in card games was related to spending time with male relatives and friends, while the female student who gambled regularly did not appear to see it as a social activity, she placed bets with her sister or accompanied her mother to buy the lottery tickets but did not see her gambling in the same social light that the males seemed to. For one of the male students, playing on-line card games was what he did with his step father and he enjoyed the times they played together, boasting that his step dad had shown him a cheat for another on-line game that had allowed him to progress to the next level.

"My step dad is really good at texas hold 'em and he goes to Crown or friends places to play."

The notion of gambling being a potential 'risky' activity was not understood by the students at first. When the interviewer asked whether they thought that gambling is a risky activity for young people, the first response focused more on the short term risk of losing your money rather than any potential long term risks:

"Yeah definitely! Say me for example I'm not good at bluffing so sometimes I lose all my chips!"

After this initial response, the students quickly moved on to discuss the notion of escalating involvement as a risk of participating in gambling, as well as modelling behaviour seen in others:

“(Yeah, it’s risky) You get influenced into gambling at a young age and you’ll do it again and again and when you get older you will have lost lots of money.”

“It’s like that ad, when you ask your dad if you can have a drink of alcohol, and then when he’s older, his kid asks and it just goes on and on.”

When asked if they could describe a ‘typical’ gambler, none of the students responded with a description of someone their own age. Some indicated that a gambler could be any age but more thought it would be someone older, in their forties or the same age as their grandparents. A gambler would also be someone sad or depressed, who had suffered in their life and turned to gambling:

“Somebody who was depressed, wasn’t too happy- could be any age.”

“My grandma, if she goes to the pokies, she keeps winning, so maybe someone lucky?”

“Depressed, someone who has had something bad in their life happen.”

“Bad things happen so they think gambling will make everything better.”

“Probably sad but don’t always have to be, maybe in their 40s.”

“Depressed but could be happy as well.”

“Ages I reckon would most likely be, going to the pokies and stuff, is people over 18 cos we can’t get in but there’s a lot of stuff that we can do, we can ask our parents and stuff for scratchies.”

“On Bucks nights- they go to strip clubs (sshhhh!) and pokies and then poker.”

“Nan and Pop go to the pokies a lot.”

Who has won- have you won more than you lost?

“I bet \$5 on a horse and it came first and I won \$38, but this year we both put in and my sister put in 15 and we won 600 and I only put in 5 – but I got \$300!”

Interviewer: Did this make you want to bet again?

“No, not really (won’t bet again) I don’t get that influenced into gambling more cos I want to spend it on clothes!”

“It’s mood change, cos you might win but then someone else might win back what you’ve already won (playing cards).”

### *Awareness*

When the students were asked if they had seen any advertising of gambling, on TV or somewhere else, the discussion initially focused on the story line of a early evening drama, in which one character had had a gambling problem that had re-emerged after a relationship break-up, before one of the students pointed out that this was not really advertising. Examples of ads seen included the Tattsлото ad “where the guy wins and all the girls are dancing” as well as helpline ads for gambling.

When asked about the influence of advertising on behaviour, some students thought that the ads might “make people think I’ll go try it” but they were more concerned about the influence of subliminal messages (allegedly) telecast during shows – “It will make you go and do stuff



without knowing why” and the influence of celebrities behaviour on young people, the example offered being Brendan Fevola’s drunken behaviour during the Brownlow Medal night.

Students were asked at what point do you think gambling becomes a problem for a person and the responses to this question again focused on the amount of money lost, as well as some hints of loss of control over behaviour:

“When they lose a lot of money.”

“When they realise they’re losing their families money, like they say they were going to get a really good present but they wind up with socks!”

“When they get addicted, then they can’t stop....maybe four times a week?”

Not having a problem appeared to mean having a set limit to spend, or control over your decisions, or not playing with ‘real’ money:

“My dad does Tattsлото every week, he will always spend the same amount so it’s every week but he never spends more money- he doesn’t look like he has a problem, but I don’t know.”

“Full tilt on-line, that’s real money and my step dad is really good and he’s taught me how to play and it’s real money but on the PSP it’s not real money.”

When asked why they thought it might be difficult for some people to stop gambling, most students responded that it was because they were addicted. What ‘being addicted’ meant was not really clear to them, although their responses tended to focus on chasing losses. Other students likened it to smoking or Internet compulsions.

“Cos you just get addicted and you want to keep on playing, you might want to keep on getting money.”

“Some people go, I’ve lost some money, I’ll get it back and if they win then they think they’ve got luck.”

“They think they’re good and so they think they’ll keep going.”

“The way they get addicted if they’ve won a bit of money like twice in a row and they think they’ve got luck and then they lose 10 times in a row.”

“I think it would be hard to stop because if you see people on FB or MySpace all the time, like me, it’s just like smoking and stuff, kids get addicted to it.”

“You should just tell them to pull their head in, like my mum smoked and my sister and I would just throw them out so eventually she quit, so you need help (to stop gambling) .”

### *Help Seeking*

If you thought you were gambling too much and wanted to stop what would you do?

“Cut down how many times you do it a week.”

“Counselling.”

“Buy nicorette.”

“Who would you go to for help? Why?”

“Relative or someone you can trust.”

“Really close friends or family.”

“Sometimes you could go to a complete stranger, cos even if you trust them (really good friends) they might talk about it, cos if you tell a total stranger, like one of those help thingies cos they deal with that sort of thing, like help gamblers and stuff.”

The students were asked whether gambling and problem gambling had been discussed at school. None of the students recalled the topic being raised at school or hearing about where people can go for help with problem gambling from their school. They did volunteer that they played gambling type games at school, and that they saw their schools behavioural reward system as being a bit like gambling:

“We have bank books (behavioural reward system) and auctioning- like slave for the day, like you bid for stuff, going higher, they you are like pushing people into losing their money, it’s still like showing us how to gamble.”

“We play 21 with 5c coins.”

“It’s kind of like blackmail and stuff, making you be good to get money.”

As a conclusion to the session, the students were asked if they had any final thoughts about gambling they wanted to share with the interviewer, and whether they saw gambling as a problem for the community.

Again, the students highlighted the idea of money being directed towards gambling that should be spent elsewhere, particularly on families, and the impact this would have on problem gambler’s families:

“I just reckon its way of wasting money sometimes you win, but you can lose.”

“It depends on how your using it and some people go to the casino a lot and a lot and its wasting their families money but if its once a week, I s’pose its ok.”

“Use your wife or husbands money, wrecks your life...even if someone in your family gambles you never see them cos they’re gambling, and you waste the money.”

The students were also aware of the risks of entry level activities leading to increased involvement in gambling for some people and the influence of role models that could prove problematic:

“Little kids see older kids do it and, just like smoking, you get influenced in to it, so I think they should stop it...(there should be) no casinos.”

“Go on to bigger gambling things, instead of just scratchies.”

However, they continued to make a distinction between what they viewed as ‘ok’ or even ‘good’ gambling, and ‘bad gambling’, a simple distinction between whether you won or lost - “(Gambling) can be good and bad, sometimes you lose and sometimes you win” - or a more complicated distinction that had to do with the amounts at stake, the activities themselves, where the money lost went, as well as the level of involvement.

“It's ok to do like for a fundraiser, and raffle tickets and tattslotto its ok, but casinos and stuff, well, then people can get addicted.”

“Depends how much you are doing it, tatts ticket doesn’t matter, even going to casino once or twice, but if you get depressed or suicidal.”

Another interesting distinction was hinted at by a couple of students who did not appear to see their own, relatively high level of involvement in gambling activities (both betting on races and regularly playing on-line card games) as particularly risky for them:

“It’s not with like pokies and stuff, gambling doesn’t always wreck your life- my life is fine, his (indicates another student) life isn’t wrecked.”

At this point, another student interrupted and muttered “Yeah, but that’s cos he’s a kid” and the conclusion appeared to be made that as children, their access to different gambling activities was restricted (although this apparently wasn’t hindering the involvement of these two) and that they were therefore at lower risk of problematic gambling:

“Yeah, like when you’re older you can do much more and it’s worse.”

## **Focus Group 2: Year 7 Students**

Interviewer: Clare Ozolins

### *Location, Population and Demographic*

The school is located outside of Wollongong in New South Wales. It is a co-educational Catholic secondary school for students in years 7 to 12. Students come from a variety of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. The student population is drawn primarily from the local area, although also takes in students from neighbouring suburbs. There are over 1000 students enrolled at the school.

### *Defining Gambling*

The definition of gambling provided by the Year 7 students tended to revolve around the idea of acquiring money from an initial outlay.

“Gambling is where you put in money and you have a bet to see if you can get money out of it.”

“Sometimes it’s a waste of money.”

One student compared gambling to investment in the stock market

“Investing in the stock market can be gambling, depends on if you know what you are doing.”

Students were able to quickly identify a number of gambling activities, including pokies, horse races, Sportsbet, dog racing, casinos games, card games and slot machines, Tattsлото, Keno and scratchies.

When asked to describe the typical gambler, the students struggled with a stereotypical description that they could all agree on.

“A drunk.”

“Sometimes I picture somebody young, like 18 or that, trying to get some money for fuel or something.”

“People at the pub.”

“Even our parents probably. They put money on tatslotto and stuff. Every now and then, like once a year with the horses on the Melbourne Cup.”

When asked if a gambler was more likely to be male or female the group consensus was that it could be either and it was more dependent on personality than gender.

### *Motivation*

A range of motivations for gambling were offered by the students

“To get money.”

“Pleasure ... it’s pretty fun to win.”

“Addiction.”

“To relax.”

“To do something.”

“Maybe a group influence, like peer pressure.”

“Sometimes at people’s work they have a lotto and everyone plays.”

Students were asked if they had ever gambled, and if so why they chose to participate.

“Some of us are in a footy tipping competition for money.”

“We’re allowed to have like \$2 for the Melbourne Cup. Our parents put the money on for us.”

“There’s a lot more competitiveness about being in the footy tipping. It’s different from having a bet about who is going to win one game. You have to try and pick all the winners and it’s not really about winning the money but doing better than your friends or the other people in the competition.”

“I just like it. Not because of the being better part but it’s something to remember and footy tipping makes you keep up with the games each week. Makes it more interesting when your teams not playing.”

“I think it’s just something that everyone does. It’s a normal Australian tradition that you have a bet and get dressed up for the Melbourne Cup. It’s not like it’s \$100 it’s more like 50 cents.”

“I saw on a game once where you could gamble, there was money to buy clothes and stuff, you could go to a pokie machine and have a guess.”

“There was this thing on the computer and it asked me a dumb question, like how many dots on the screen and when you got that right you got to answer more questions all hoping to get the prize at the end.”

“Once I was playing this game and it would spin a wheel and if you win you get an iPod of some sort. We did it, it landed on, it was on the top level and the machine blacked out. We only got our money back, we didn’t get the prize. The stacker game – you get to one block away and the machine goes weird.”

“The machines are a bit like poker machines, but unless you win I don’t think you go back. No but you do go back. How many goes does it take to win the prize, there is a bit of skill involved but it mostly seems to be pretty lucky.”

“I just did it a few times because I was in this pub on holidays in Queensland and my parents just gave us all \$5 to spend on whatever we wanted at the pub place so we went and did these skill tester machines and stackers and stuff. My brothers and I thought we should just have a go.”

“When I was younger I was into collecting footy cards and stuff and there was a game we used to play where you had to flip the cards and you got to keep the other person’s card.”

The students were asked if the motivation for young people to gamble was different in some way to the reasons why older people gambled.

“It’s a bit of risk taking.”

“Stress. Their parents might be divorced, they might have problems at home.”

“They might have depression or problems in their life.”

Students were divided over how risky gambling was for young people. When asked if the kind of gambling activities they had described earlier were dangerous at all they were unsure and there were also unsure about how risky and activity gambling was generally.

“No. Well it depends. It’s normal. It’s more like, practical everyone. It’s harmless fun and we can’t go put the bets on ourselves.”

“It depends on how much you put on. If you plan to spend a certain amount of money and you don’t spend any more than that then it’s ok.”

The interviewer asked *Ok. What if I set myself a limit of \$50 to spend on gambling – let’s say at the pokies – and I did that every weekend. I never spent more than that \$50 though. Do you think I would have a gambling problem?*

“Yeah. It depends on how much income you have and whether you can pay off the bills as well.”

“It all adds up. It depends on your income. It’s a bit like smoking, what the government’s doing with it – like raising the amount of money. It’s like if you have 10 a day that adds up to more than \$1000 in the year.”

“We only do it (gamble) once a year.”

“My friend places footy bets, but it’s only with her family.”

*So it’s in a safe environment?*

“Yeah. Your parents still have restrictions so you can’t go out and get into trouble with it.”

“The tipping comp is like free to join on the Internet and the sports bet you have to pay money to get a bet. In the tipping comp it’s only like a certain group. You pay like \$5 to get in, if you go to the horse racing you might put in \$5 for every race.”

“It’s more risky for younger people ... The more you bet when you’re younger, the more it becomes an addiction.”

“Not necessarily – it depends on the circumstances. If you’re a kid you wouldn’t have as much money, you wouldn’t be working as much and you have less responsibilities.”

*Are some forms of gambling ok and others not so much?*

“Raffles are ok. You can’t go over the top with them. The games where you win toys and stuff are ok. Buying a lotto ticket is ok. A bet on the Melbourne Cup is ok.”

“Most of the time the ones (raffles) that have the big cars and prizes and stuff, you’re never going to win those.”

“But they have to give out the prizes coz it’s illegal to have a raffle and not give the prize. They have to get a licence.”

“Sometimes for charities and stuff, it’s more just giving money to charity – or school fete. You’re doing it to do something good but there’s a chance that you might get something out of it.”

“Oh and there’s lucky dips and stuff to raise money for the school.”

“My dad likes to go with his mates to the pub and have a bet and that’s ok. As long as it’s not every day or every week.”

### *Context*

Even following a discussion about the types of gambling activities the students themselves had been involved in, none said that they knew of friends or family who gambled. After prompting and asking specifically about gambling problems a couple of students volunteered that they might know someone who gambled too much.

“They are always, you try and talk to them and they just brush you off. They are too competitive and just a bit selfish.”

“The person I know isn’t selfish, they just don’t pay attention when you’re talking to them. It’s like wait a minute I’m doing something.”

“The feel really good when they win, oh but, well with the person that I know it’s like if they don’t get the amount they were expecting to get then they’re in a bad mood.”

The students thought that gambling became a problem when it was compulsive and when it overwhelmed other commitments.

“Like when you don’t stop. It’s consistent, day after day.”

“When it become more important than family and friends.”

“When you waste too much money that you can’t afford it.”

The students thought that safe gambling was a social activity, whereas when addiction had developed gamblers were more likely to gamble alone.

“Groups ... but sometimes by themselves. If you buy a lotto ticket you’re not going to be buying it in a big group. Unless it’s in a workplace.”

“Problem gamblers can all join up and play every week and stuff. But they are mostly gambling by themselves.”

The kinds of gambling that were most addictive were identified as poker machines, slot machines and card games.

“It’s because they’re rigged to addict people. The people who invent them want to get more income. There’s been lots of things in the news about the mechanical ones that are rigged to lose and a loss is disguised as a win.”

“A problem with the pokies is that like on the apple iTunes store its free to anyone, so like anyone can go and get them. That’s how kids can get to it.”

### *Awareness*

The students were not generally very conscious of gambling being advertised. The most prominent advertisements for them were found on-line but they were not tempted to investigate these links and ads.

“ Sometimes popups on the computers and on the side of the page. Awesome games, slot machines, free.”

*Are you ever tempted to click on those ads?*

“Nah, not really. They’ll probably give you viruses.”

“On the football they say if you want to have a bet go to Sportsbet but bet responsibly.”

They were aware of gambling overseas and identified Las Vegas as a place where gambling was readily accessible to all.

“Um well I went to Vegas last year and they’ve got... you walk through the airport and there’s all these pokies and everything so they are everywhere. So you have to walk through and you can find them everywhere.”

When prompted, the students could recall advertising for lotteries, and mentioned that they are on during children’s programming, but these advertisements did not appear to have a large impact on the students and they in fact found them difficult to recall. They were slightly aware of gambling in popular movies and music videos, but they did not consider these to be a strong influence on them.

“Yeah they are always on when we’re watching TV. My sister watches, she’s 5 and watches cartoons and sometimes they pop-up.”

“You don’t really notice it. “

“There probably has been movies about gambling but I haven’t realised it. The main storyline, like in movies like what happens in Vegas. Some storylines have things like

gambling to get people to watch it – it’s an interesting story to see people lose things and give you awareness.”

“Also one of the Katie Perry video clips has gambling in it – waking up in the Vegas.”

The most common places for the students to see advertisements turned out to be around venues and outlets where gambling was possible

“Billboards .... That’s it. Maybe in the newspapers. Outside shops – newsagents.”

“Some places like the pubs and that are trying to get your to gamble. I don’t think they’re like trying to hook you on it, but they are trying to get the income.”

“Also I think like the Rugby League is sponsored by Sportsbet.”

The students said that they never discussed gambling in their social groups and that it was never raised as a topic in any of their classes in school. Some students recalled some maths games to do with chance and probability but they did not recall a specific gambling focus and no classes in health or social sciences about gambling as a pastime.

### *Help Seeking*

All students said that if they thought someone had trouble with a gambling problem they would try to help, but they were unsure what they could do as young people.

“I’d tell them to stop.”

“Maybe tell someone that can help them. If my mum’s friend was a gambler then I’d tell my mum.”

When asked how they would know if they had a gambling problem themselves they mentioned going into debt and the anger of family and friends. If they felt they needed help their first point of contact would be their parents. They also nominated a councillor as someone who would be able to assist them. No students said they would consider calling a gamblers helpline or seeing out information from a specialist body. In fact they were unaware that such services existed.

“No. Didn’t know there was one.”

### **Focus Group 3: Year 8 Students**

Interviewer: Clare Ozolins

#### *Location, Population and Demographic*

The school is located outside of Wollongong in New South Wales. It is a co-educational Catholic secondary school for students in years 7 to 12. Students come from a variety of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. The student population is drawn primarily from the local area, although also takes in students from neighbouring suburbs. There are over 1000 students enrolled at the school.



### *Defining Gambling*

Students started off by defining gambling in terms of risk and money, however the discussion quickly turned to the addictive nature of gambling for some people and the damaging consequences of a gambling addiction.

“Gambling is when you take an unnecessary risk, which isn’t needed and the turnout is bad and results in loss of money.”

“If you get close to winning then you try again so it gets addictive.”

“Gambling is addictive and people use it as a sport and as something to take their minds of something. Usually they are trying to win for a certain amount of money.”

“Usually they lose a lot of things, not just possessions, but relationships with people.”

“Yeah, like they lose their life.”

“But I don’t think you’d say you always use. People would stereotype it like with the pokies coz they are probably rigged and stuff like that but if you’re having a bet, like I’ll bet ya that he’s going to win the cross country or something, that’s not really a rigged bet.”

The students were asked when they thought gambling became a problem and once again they raised the issue of addiction and when money that ought to be used for things like food and shelter was not available due to gambling losses.

“When it gets to appoint when you’re leaving your family at home.”

“When it gets addictive. Yeah.”

“When you’re spending money you should keep for food. When it’s like maybe I could double my winning but there’s a chance I might have to move out of my house.”

“That pushes away family if you lose heaps of your money and you can’t feed your family then people will walk out on you.”

“When you spend money you don’t have and you get into debt.”

Their description of a typical gambler quickly acknowledged that anyone could be a gambler. There was some discussion about the relative wealth of gamblers and they reached a conclusion that gamblers were most like to be either particularly wealthy or particularly poor and that the middle class was not overly affected by gambling.

“It could be an average household person.”

“It could be anyone.”

“The gambler that you’d see on the pokies or at the horse races – they’d either be pretty wealthy or not so wealthy. You don’t see people from the middle class.”

“Sometimes people, poor people, they might gamble to make the money higher.”

“They might have started off rich and become poor. So it sort of varies in what you think about as a person who’s a gambler.”

“Stereotypically they are males. But it’s sort of just about the same. It can be anyone.”

“Well there is an episode of the Simpsons where it’s a woman. Yeah it’s Marge that’s the gambler in that. She’s sitting there all night at the pokies and forgetting about her daughter and her family and she doesn’t come home for ages. She just stays at the casino.”

The students in this group were aware of a range of gambling activities and listed as many of common ones like scratch cards, poker machines, betting on horse racing, lotteries, jackpots and poker or blackjack. Some also mentioned bets that are made in fun between friends and family activities

“And your friends! I’ll bet you that you can’t do something or whatever.”

“And families, down at the club.”

When asked about things like raffles they were less sure.

“Well yeah I guess. Like at the pubs they have the sections for pokies and all that but then they have the meat raffles.”

They drew a distinction between gambling and games that were more and less dangerous in terms of addiction

“Because sometimes with raffles they are a bit less extreme. With pokies you don’t know how much you’re putting, but with a raffle you’re just getting a ticket.”

“You can’t rig a raffle really – usually they pick it in front of a crowd you and might only put in five bucks and you get a five tickets and it might be fundraising, so it might be going to a good cause. But with gambling it just goes to some rich guy.”

### *Motivation*

The key motivations for gambling for this group seemed to be to escape worries in other areas of like

“Maybe they just have problems with their family.”

“They could be depressed.”

“Sometimes they’re not that bright, so they think if I keep doing it I’ll get money.”

“Maybe they don’t have a job or they go to the pub a lot and it looks like something that might be fun.”

They were then asked about the circumstance of someone who buys a lotto ticket every other week, would those people have the same motivation

“No it might be something that they’ve just done or they might get it for their birthday.”

“I know people who just limit themselves to just using \$20 every week. That’s ok. I wouldn’t say they have a problem because they are doing it within reason.”

“My dad buys lottery tickets and we just stick them on the fridge and we barely even get them checked.”

“If you’re struggling, if you’re struggling for money and you might be paying \$20 a week that might be a problem.”

“It’s a problem if you can’t afford it.”

“It’s also a problem, it doesn’t matter if you’re poor or rich it’s just, the money doesn’t matter ... you’re just wasting it.”

“People just use it to burn time but they end up burning their money. You could put in \$20 and only get 50 cents, the odds aren’t good for winning the lottery.”

The students were also asked if the motivation for young people to gamble is different, once again they references peer pressure and social expectations to join in with what others are doing.

“Their friends are doing it.”

“They might think it’s cool”

“Their mother and father might be doing it.”

“They could just start by having a bet with mates or ... we just play blackjack for fun because it’s a cool game. But if people put in money it would get more serious.”

“It’s like addiction, if you’re doing it with your mates and you’re winning a lot you can think oh this is fun and keep doing it.”

The students were asked if they had gambled and after some prompting admitted that they had participated in the purchase of lottery tickets with their parents and had been allowed to place bets, also through their parents, on special events like the Melbourne Cup. They commented that their motivation didn’t have much to do with winning money. They were participating because it was the done thing and it was for the fun of joining in. They were asked when they thought it might change to being motivated by money

“When they become ... when they leave home. If they are struggling with their job or they don’t get too many shifts or they’re struggling at uni then they might start, they might play one game at the pub and win quite a bit of money and then think they can keep doing that to live.”

“It coincides with smoking for instance. No one in our grade smokes or gambles and they wouldn’t do that, but this school is more educated and it has to do with their environment at home. If they are from an uneducated home and their parents are doing it and there’s only one member of the household then they can find ways to get into gambling.”

“And also there are a lot of ads on TV against those things for young people.”

“The bad family and school environment, then when you finish school you turn out, not bad, but messed up and it’s harder to get ahead.”

“When you turn 18 you have a big party and go out with all your friends to the pub, there could be hundreds of people and you might get drunk and think oh yeah that (gambling) looks fun, you might go overboard.”

“When you’re on the verge of adulthood you might start gambling.”

“You might start to live on your own, you might start to drive and be further away from your parents and then you would gamble.”

“In the one of the books, called *The Outsiders*, a lot of them they all smoke but that’s because they’re all neglected. They have alcoholic parents or they’ve died. I think gambling is kind of the same.”

“With a broken family and a bad home, it sort of wants to drive you towards something like that.”

“The people in your neighbourhood might be like that and you might be accustomed to being with them when they are doing those things. You might have a go from peer pressure.”

The students tended to agree that gambling was riskier for younger people

“Well yes. When you’re older you’re more knowledgeable. When you start at a younger age it can become more of a habit, you might start to do it every week. But if you start at an older age you might do it more occasionally.”

“When you look at older people, they’ve had experience. They could have experienced being not so wealth or being really poor. They can see when they should stop something. Younger people have no idea what’s going to happen.”

### *Context*

The students, despite the earlier conversations about people they knew and even themselves participating in gambling said that they didn’t know anyone who was a gambler initially. With some further discussion however it emerged that many of them knew people in their families and amongst friends who gambled occasionally.

“My grandfather goes to the pokies once every week or every two weeks. But that’s not problem gambling. He’s just going for entertainment.”

“My parents go with their friends, on like social occasions, to the races and things. They might just put some money on horses but it’s not anything serious.”

“My dad would buy a lottery ticket like once a week, but we don’t get them checked. The chances of winning are highly unlikely.”

“We haven’t really been a big gambling family, but the time we won we won like a thousand dollars because we had a ticket on the first, second and third horse. We knew it was lucky because it was so unlikely to happen.”

The group agreed that gambling tended to begin as a social activity; however problem gamblers were more like to hide their habit and gamble alone.

“It depends. I think it might start off as a social thing.”

“If I was to, I’d probably do it socially, not to win anything.”

“It might start off socially just as a bit of fun and it might become, you might think oh I was so close, you guys can go and I’m going to stay and try and win.”

“You might lose relationships doing stuff like that.”

“I think you could get bored just sitting. “

“But that’s not the only type of gambling. If it’s a full on casino then there’s lots of different types not like the pokies.”

“I reckon it can work like a sport, like you get the adrenalin rush and think oh I was nearly there and just want to keep going, oh maybe one more go.”

“It starts to get a lot worse when you lose your friends, when it’s not social.”

Students were asked what they thought were the most addictive types of gambling and the overwhelming response was the pokies and card games were more likely to become addictive. The discussion returned to concepts of relative wealth and whether it was ok to gamble to excess if you were wealthy.

“Yeah but it depends on where you live. Where we live gambling isn’t that big but if you live somewhere like Vegas in America you see the huge gambling casinos and they build more. Also if you go to Macau in China you do it more because you see more people do it and more people win.”

“It might be a trend in some places.”

“It all has to do with education. It has to do with the hierarchy – the people higher up with a better job, most of the time they are less likely to be that desperate.”

“Millionaires can do what they like with their money.”

“If you have a business and it’s doing really well if you gamble too much you can have separate money like your business money and your social money and food money. If you use all the money properly then you can do it properly but you shouldn’t dip into your business money. If you keep to your budget and make a lot of money.”

“It’s just as bad for everyone – if you’re Bill Gates and you’re really wealthy, the rules still apply. But I think once you start and you’re really wealthy then the long term effects could be a lot worse because instead of \$50 you would use thousands.”

“If you’re not as wealthy the scale would be smaller but it’s just as bad.”

“It involves all different kinds of people. It varies between everyone because they could be poor or they could be rich.”

### *Awareness*

The participants had seen a lot of advertising for gambling, particularly on television but also at locations where gambling activities could occur.

“Yeah the Lotto.”

“On TV they have Powerball jackpot and there is the guy in the truck and he puts in the last load of money and the wheels fall off and you think oh maybe I should have a go at that because it’s a lot of money. It makes it look really, really, really good.”

“It makes it look like the odds are better.”

“It doesn’t say that that money is going to be split between 50 people. They advertise it really well so that more people buy tickets, but they don’t say that the more people who buy tickets the less chance you have of winning.”

“The ads, when he’s driving away the money is flying away so it makes you think that if you the money can fly off the truck and you don’t care then that could mean that some of that money could be used to try and win again.”

“Another advertisement on the news they had the American family that were really poor and they bought one lotto ticket and they won 100 million, an extremely large amount of money. They became really rich. That could bring the incentive a bit closer.”

“With the races it’s sort of advertised, but it’s in your subconscious. People in their twenties like go there for a social occasion, like my cousin she went there for her twenty first. It was what she wanted.”

“Even on the news they have the people all dressed up for the races. And they show the history of it, some of the famous people all dressed up and the designers with the hats.”

“When you’re at the club say, there are posters around. On the TV for the Keno TVs are showing that.”

The students were unaware of any anti-gambling advertising and could not recall seeing anything of that sort. One student said that he was made himself aware of the problems that gambling to excess can lead to when he wondered about people he saw and speculated about their personal situations.

“Well only if you’re going to Sydney and sometimes you see people sitting there and you think how have they gotten there and you think the most popular reasons are alcohol, smoking, drugs or gambling.”

### *Help Seeking*

The students were not aware of any formal avenues for help for problem gambling. Time for the interview was running short at this stage. They suggested that if they had a problem with gambling or one of their friends was suspected of being involved in gambling or smoking or illicit drug use that they would speak to their friend themselves and then call in parental help. A second option canvassed by this group was to approach their Parish Priest or a school councillor for assistance, but this would only be done if parents were not able to help for some reason.

## **Focus Group 4: Year 9 Students**

Interviewer: Clare Ozolins

### *Location, Population and Demographic*

The school is located outside of Wollongong in New South Wales. It is a co-educational Catholic secondary school for students in years 7 to 12. Students come from a variety of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. The student population is drawn primarily from the local area, although also takes in students from neighbouring suburbs. There are over 1000 students enrolled at the school.

### *Defining Gambling*

“They’re wasting their money.”

“Taking a risk to get more money.”

### Activities

- Horse racing
- Pokies
- Betting
- Scratchies

### Raffle tickets?

“To an extent. Not really. Sometimes you buy them because it’s just little kids and you buy them to help them out. You buy them to raise money. But the prize is attractive.”

“It’s normally fundraising, so it’s different from buying a lottery ticket.”

“People don’t usually buy them obsessively.”

“The prize makes a difference.”

“If you buy lots and you don’t win, then yeah you’ve wasted that money and I suppose it’s still gambling.”

#### *Typical gambler*

“It’s kinda both rich, you’re either rich and have lots of money to throw away or you’re kinda like a bit low in cash and you’re dying to have more money.”

“People who are addicted to trying to win. They believe that they’ll win the next time.”

“They’re greedy people.”

“Maybe people who don’t have anyone to be with. They’re lonely.”

“They probably drink a lot or do drugs.”

#### *Motivation*

“People who are obsessed with money.”

“It’s addiction.”

What about the motivation of someone who buys a lotto ticket once or twice a year?

“Just to see, take a chance and have some fun.”

All students admitted that they had placed a bet at least once on the Melbourne Cup. Motivation for this was generally that it was fun.

“For fun, to watch and see if your horse wins.”

“It’s a cultural thing and that makes a difference.”

“It depends on how in with the sport you are. If you’re a fan of the rugby, like a major fan then you’d probably gamble on those games because you want them to win. You’d be more tempted to have a bet on a footy match if your team was playing.

“I’ve been to the horse races, I went with a friend and it was on tv. That was my first time and my friend was teaching me how to do it, how to look at the stats and everything and how to choose a horse to bet on.”

Would you have gone to the races and not gambled?

“No ... that’s the reason why you go.”

“Most people want to go and support a horse.”



“As long as it’s not obsessive, then going to the horse races and betting is an acceptable form of gambling for most people. If you’re only throwing in a few dollars then its fine.”

“It’s become this thing, that if you go to the horse races, people just accept it.”

“Everything is ok in small doses.”

Is gambling prevalent amongst young people?

“Not so much our age. It’s more once you hit 18. Usually at our age your parents might let you do something from time to time but it’s nothing major and we don’t buy the stuff ourselves.”

Motivation for young people who gamble.

“Money and bribes – you’d get someone to do it for you. You’d not have the best background if you’re gambling illegally – like with a fake ID.”

“They could be trying to help their parents out.”

Is it risky?

“Riskier for young people – if you do it lots when you’re younger it’s more likely to be addiction when you’re older.”

“If you do it when your older, and you have a job, you have more money to support your addiction. If you’re younger you wouldn’t have as much money. But then when you’re older you have more to lose.”

### *Context*

Students immediately said that they didn’t know anyone who gambled, but then changed their minds.

The activities were sporting – rugby and lottery betting.

“I think they do it through work.”

“Footy tipping as gambling? Only if there is a big prize.”

Nobody knew anyone who gambled to excess.

Gambling was overwhelmingly something that people did by themselves.

“People who play the pokies just sit there and play by themselves.”

“You might start off with friends but once you get to addiction, that’s when you start doing it by yourself.”

“Your friends would get concerned if you gambled or wanted to gamble with them all the time.”

*First gambling experiences*

“Scratchies.”

“Mine was probably the Melbourne Cup.”

These early experiences didn't encourage further participation.

“When I won I was pretty happy, but then when I saw there were bigger prizes that I missed out on I wasn't so happy.”

“I felt bad when I found out the big prizes had already been won. No one told us that when we bought our tickets. Most of the time it's just oh I'll give the money but I don't care.”

“You don't really expect to win a lot of money when you're young. You like to just play the games and win a prize and get something small. Like the toy machines where you just try and win a prize in the arcades.”

“I don't know if that's gambling though.”

*Awareness*

“There are games on-line, like poker and roulette and lotteries and things where you don't actually use any money, but you use points and things and you get stuff inside the games when you win. That's like encouraging people, especially kids to gamble later on I think.”

*Help Seeking***Focus Group 5: Year 10 Students**

Interviewer: Clare Ozolins

*Location, Population and Demographic*

The school is located outside of Wollongong in New South Wales. It is a co-educational Catholic secondary school for students in years 7 to 12. Students come from a variety of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. The student population is drawn primarily from the local area, although also takes in students from neighbouring suburbs. There are over 1000 students enrolled at the school.

*Defining Gambling*

“Betting money on a particular event or thing.”

“Losing stuff, like playing games that risk stuff.”

“I could be horses or like a fight or something.”

Horses

Footy Tipping  
Scratchies  
Betting on fights and stuff  
Pokies  
Bingo

Raffles?

“Yes it can be gambling.”

“Because you’re putting money in to see if you win.”

Same level as a lottery ticket?

“Well what happens if it’s a raffle to get a donation? If it’s for charity it’s not gambling. If it’s for a good cause then it’s not gambling.”

What about shares? Would that be gambling?

“Maybe because you’re imparting confidence in someone else. It’s not at the same level as buying a lotto ticket.”

“It’s like 1:1B for a lottery ticket, chances are better with investment.”

“Typical gambler is someone who’s probably desperate. Someone who’s wasting all their money.”

“Usually male, in their 20s, 30s. Old guys who don’t have families, single guys.”

### *Motivation*

“Easy money – well that’s what some people think.”

“Fun.”

“Pass time.”

“Exciting.”

“Social.”

### *Context*

Is it always social?

“It’s normally social I reckon, with friends and family.”

“If someone is in a fight then everyone bets on who is going to win.”

“Umm yes. Well if you count lollies, then yes.”

“Yeah my Dad puts the bet on for the Melbourne Cup, but it’s my money and it’s my choice. My horse always comes last.”

Why did you choose to gamble on the Melbourne Cup?

“I just wanted to see if my horse would win.”

But you could do that without placing a bet, so why do you think people do gamble on the Melbourne Cup – is it cultural?

“It’s only one day, it’s a bit of fun between friends and family.”

Does gambling affect young people in particular?

“No. People our age don’t really get into gambling.”

“It’s not an issue that we really have to deal with. We don’t pay a lot of attention to it, I mean we play cards and we do footy tipping and stuff but we don’t use money for that, we just play the games and it’s not real gambling.”

“When we do gamble, our parents are involved.”

Where have you seen gambling occurring?

“Clubs and pubs. Casino.”

On-line?

“Yeah, lots of advertisements.”

“We don’t gamble on-line though. There are some games, like poker, but you don’t play for money. I don’t play those either, but I know they are there.”

“I see it but I don’t play it.”

“Friends and family do gamble regularly.”

“I’ve got a cousin who gambles regularly, it’s pretty bad. He plays the pokies. He’s gone into massive debts.”

“You have a problem when you’re losing more than you make.”

“It’s still a problem if you’re spending all your time gambling, even if it’s only small amounts of money. It’s time you should be spending with family. You make this effort to go down to the club and play pokies – that’s the thing. You should be doing better stuff with your life.”

“If I was going to gamble it would be a social thing.”

“I’ve won if you count the lucky dip.”

“I won the Melbourne Cup but I didn’t really care. I just got an extra \$5 so it didn’t really make much difference.”

“There’s a few big events, like World Cup that I would want to have a bet on. Your parents can control how much you gamble so they might like let you have a bet on these things, but when you’re older you can choose for yourself. It’s not like I’m keen or anything, but it

would be good to say oh I want to bet on this game and be able to do it without talking to my parents or anyone else about it.”

“The suspense is what is addictive. The excitement of being so close. Like with the scratchies it’s like 40k and 40k and then one is missing, so you think next time you might get all three.”

### *Awareness*

“Advertising can bring about addiction.”

How much advertising have you seen?

“A lot. It’s like on every second page.”

“It’s on the Internet everywhere.”

“When you, see on TV, there’s this ad where there is a question and you have to answer A or B and then you go into the chance to win money or iPhones or iPods and stuff.”

“Keno ads and Betfair on TV all the time.”

“Scratchies and Powerball get on the TV all the time.”

When reminded that the odds for the teams playing in a Rugby match are shown on the screen and discussed by the commentators the students said that they hadn’t really noticed that happening.

“I just don’t notice it.”

“You notice it but you just don’t care about it.”

“Haven’t seen any anti-gambling advertising ... oh well they’ve got the gamble safely thing at the bottom of the ads.”

“We see lots of ads for anti-drinking and smoking but haven’t seen anything anti-gambling.”

No lessons in school about gambling?

“We play the game greedy pigs in maths but nothing about gambling really.”

“It doesn’t really influence people our age. It influences older people but it doesn’t really have an effect on us. The majority of people don’t need the help at our age. It might be needed by a few people but not most of us.”

“It depends on what background you come from, if you see your parents going down to the club every weekend then it might be something that rubs off on the kids, but still it’s not a big issue for most of us.”

“The influence of parents is important when it comes to whether young people have a problem with gambling.”

*Help Seeking*

“You’d have to talk to someone you thought had a problem.”

“You could go to your parents or their parents if it’s a kid and tell them.”

Would you call the gambler’s help line?

“Yeah I guess. The gambler’s helpline – they don’t know the kid. The people on the other end of the phone don’t know what the kid does on a day to day basis, but their parents do so you’d be better off telling the parents.”

“But wait, they are professionals so they could have the experience. But they’d probably tell you to talk to the parents.”

Where would you get advice?

“Probably a parish priest or something.”

“Parents – if it’s not them.”

“I’d look on the Internet.”

**Focus Group 6: Year 11 Students**

Interviewer: Clare Ozolins

*Location, Population and Demographic*

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*Defining Gambling*

“Gambling is when you use money in order to win prizes or gain more money. It’s using money to gain more through competition.”

“Like a chance or an outcome that isn’t certain.”

“It can involve skill, like card games and stuff, but there’s always the element of risk.”

“It depends on what you’re gambling on, like footy tipping, that requires some skill. Some people with knowledge of the teams make a better judgement than other people.”

Typical activities include pokies, horse racing scratchies. Poker, blackjack, roulette, horse tipping.

Environments for these activities:

“You might be under the influence of alcohol, or drugs.”

“There’s a lot of other people gambling, like at the races and stuff, so you feel justified.”

Typical Gambler

“Smoker.”

“Drinker.”

“Old.”

“Yeah, typically old I think.”

“Male, but there are females.”

“Poker machines.”

“Usually poorer people I think, trying to win back money that they’ve lost.”

“I’m going to be judgemental here and say your typical bogan.”

“There’s a difference between the typical gambler ... like most people don’t even realise that buying a lottery ticket is gambling, or a scratchy. So it could really be anyone.”

“They probably have a mortgage, or a debt to pay, and so they choose a quick way to make money, gambling.”

Are some gambling activities worse than others?

“It depends on the extremity. If you go to the pokies every single day, or you buy a lottery ticket once a week or once a month, that sort of thing.”

“And also big amounts of money on something that isn’t certain.”

“Yeah, like if you bought a whole reel of scratchies.”

*Motivation*

Does motivation change for different activities?

“You want to win your money back. If you spend \$2 on a scratchie then you’d be happy to win that back.”

“Nah you want to end up with more money than you started with.”

“I wouldn’t buy a scratchie, it’s ok when you get given them.”

“You would find people asking others to place a bet for them, but not a scratchie. On the horses or greyhounds or something like that.”

“With the scratchies there are like the offers that if you buy one you get one free and I think that motivates people to buy one in the first place, and then to buy more.”

“They think they are getting something for free so why not.”

“Or you come heaps close to winning, like you get two \$50,000 things but you just don’t get the third one to actually win the money.”

“Sometimes I think you just in it for the fun.”

Do you know young people who gamble?

“I don’t know any serious gamblers, but I know people who go in the lotto every week but not anyone who is down at the pokies every night.”

“No, not really.”

“No excessively.”

“A family friend for a while had a problem with gambling, so now none of the family will go to events where he is going knowing there is going to be gambling.”

“I’m not tempted, but I don’t think it’s if you try it once, like on the pokies, just for fun, not intense or anything.”

More risky for young people?

“Yeah you can develop a bad habit if you start young.”

“You might not have as steady an income if you’re younger.”

“You won’t have anyone to support either, young people just think ... like older people have families and stuff, so younger people don’t have anyone to look after so they can just go and gamble.”

“(Older people with responsibilities) Have a bit more perspective, they know how much money they have for things and what can go towards something for their family.”

Any gamblers in the groups and why did you get involved?

“Scratchies.”

“Melbourne Cup.”

“Footy tipping (for money) .”

“I get scratchies from my Nan for my birthday.”

“Everyone knows how to play poker and blackjack” .... “I don’t!”

“We got taught it; we were doing probability at the time.”

“I learnt blackjack first, not for money, but we had one of the chip sets so we played for fun.”



“I won on the Melbourne Cup.”

“In primary school we used to have sweeps and I won that a few times.”

“I won a red frog, we did the sweep out of the newspaper and I got Makybe Diva and I won a red frog.”

Does the experience of winning encourage you to have another go?

“No, it wasn’t a massive amount of money, so it doesn’t really influence you.”

### *Context*

“On-line gambling.”

“There is like fake money, on MySpace and I totally got addicted to it, and I put in all my fake money but lost.”

“There’s like poker on Facebook but it’s not real money.”

“I don’t know if makes you more likely to play with real money.”

“If you win a lot on-line you might think it’s worth playing for real, but then you’d come up against the real guys and get smashed.”

“There are some websites, for poker, that I saw where if you join up you get \$100 or £100 free to gamble with. And I’m like well if you get that for free there’s got to be some catch, like they’ll let you win enough to get you sucked and putting your own money in and then you’d start losing.”

“There’s heaps of ads on-line, in the sides.”

“It would be heaps easier to gamble on-line. There’s no person to ask you for ID.”

“I don’t know anyone who plays on-line, but it’s totally possible if someone has a credit card or steals a credit card.”

“I don’t think anyone our age is good enough to gamble on-line.”

“My aunty plays bingo, and she comes home with a big tray of meat every now and then.”

“My uncle is heaps into the horseracing and sports bet.”

“Footy tipping, if you’re in a competition, you’re only putting a certain amount of money in at the start. You’re prepared to lose that. But other gambling you can keep betting as much money as you want.”

Discussion moved on to talk about whether setting limits for gambling was useful and whether that was an acceptable way to gamble.

“There should be a limit.”

“It’s better to have a limit than to go and not realise how much you are spending. I think it’s a problem when you start to lose a lot of money and it becomes regular.”

“If you’re prepared to lose your limit and you can afford to lose your limit then it’s fine. It’s useless if you set your limit to \$1000 but you only have \$20 you can really afford to spend though.”

“It’s no different really if you play with say \$100 and that’s your entertainment for the night to play poker or whatever or if you went out for dinner and movies and stuff and spent \$100.”

“There can still be people who only spend their limit on the pokies where it’s a still a problem, where it’s more a need that they have to go to pokies than that they are going for entertainment.”

### *Awareness*

Participants were asked about the gambling advertising they could recall.

“I’ve seen those ads where they are, like gambling help, those sort of ones.”

“There’s lotto and scratchie ads on all the time.”

“And the races.”

“They have those phone things but they are like betting because you end up using all your credit.”

“And the footy now, they are sponsored by Keno and they always say what each team is at on the TAB, like constantly.”

“It’s only recently that they’ve done that.”

“You see more pro-gambling ads.”

“There are heaps of ads promoting gambling, but when you see them there’s always the line at the end about gambling responsibly (in really small print) .”

“Down at the bowling club they do, they have little signs about gambling near the pokies.”

“You walk past the sign that says minors may not go past this area.”

“I think there are signs on the machine saying if you need help call this number.”

“My Nan says that there are stickers, but that everyone scrapes them off, they don’t want to see them.”

### *Help Seeking*

Who would you go to for help?

“Probably a friend, well if you didn’t feel comfortable talking to your parents about it, I guess a friend would be like, more understanding.”

“I’d probably go to my older sisters, because they wouldn’t tell my parents. They would help me but if it got worse then they would tell them (parents).”

“I would probably speak to my parents.”

“My parents would find out anyway. If my money disappeared they would know.”

“My parents would notice that something was happening, I’m not sure if they would know what it was, but they would see the difference.”

“I think I would (call the gamblers helpline).”

“There are trained people there but they don’t know me. I wouldn’t think my problem was serious enough that I would need to call them. That’s something that older people need to do.”

“The problem is that people don’t want to admit they have a problem, and if you don’t think you have a problem why would you call gamblers help?”

How would you help someone?

“Talk to them.”

“I’d just confront them and ask them if they had a financial problem and try and bring them back to reality.”

“I’d get them to see a psychologist or something.”

“Gambling isn’t really a big issue for us. It’s not something that we’re really conscious of.”

“We have had classes in PE and maths, more in PE.”

“It’s more to do with alcohol and gambling as a pair.”

### **Focus Group 7: Year 12 Students**

Interviewer: Clare Ozolins

#### *Location, Population and Demographic*

The school is located outside of Wollongong in New South Wales. It is a co-educational Catholic secondary school for students in Years 7 to 12. Students come from a variety of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. The student population is drawn primarily from the local area, although also takes in students from neighbouring suburbs. There are over 1000 students enrolled at the school.

#### *Defining Gambling*

“You bet your own money to try and win some more money.”

“Casino.”

“Pokie, roulette, blackjack, games and stuff.”

“Lottery.”

“Betting, sportsbetting.”

#### Typical Gambler

“Obsessive.”

“More worried about money than other things.”

“Everyone, majority male but definitely women too.”

“Age doesn’t matter. 18 to 50 maybe.”

“Almost everyone could be a gambler.”

“You get teenage boys, as soon as they turn 18 they gamble a lot at first but they’re not serious. A lot of the serious gamblers are a bit older.”

“Obsessive, more worried about money than other things.”

“I’d say majority male.”

“I’d say mixed.”

“Well yeah, definitely mixed, but more male.”

“Everyone, 18 and like 50.”

“The stereotype is the old guy at the pub, but everyone gambles. I know you were asking about the stereotype but that’s not really helpful for gambling because everyone does it.”

“Pokies are the most common.”

“Old people just sit there and play the pokies.”

“There are not that many casinos, so we don’t really think they would play.”

“If you lived in Sydney you might coz there is one right there.”

“Young people, like underage people would probably do horse betting or something like that. Or something on the Internet where you don’t have to show ID.”

“Or they might play poker with friends; you don’t have to go out somewhere to do that.”

#### *Motivation*

“I’ve gambled on the horses, but not the pokies or anything like that.”

“I’ve gambled just on the horses and stuff. I’ve had a go at the pokies. I went with friends and family and we also gambled on the Melbourne Cup with family, and yeah, my mate and stuff.”

“I wouldn’t have gone if there wasn’t gambling. What’s the point of just watching the race? The thing that makes it exciting is having some money on it.”

“Raffles aren’t the same as gambling, but I guess it is. I mean it’s still for luck.” “You buy them for a different reason. You don’t feel like you’re going to win much anyway and it’s mostly for charity. Like you can’t just go and buy a random raffle ticket and win a million dollars”.

“People are in it for the money, and for something to do.”

“It’s addictive for some people, like when they’re bored.”

“If when you’re out and you’re drunk and stuff people are careless and go out and gamble their money.”

### *Context*

“My mate is like full into horses and he goes ... but he’s good at it. His dad does it and he does it and they are good at it. It’s still a risk for them, but they know what they are doing. Like if I was going to go I would just bet on any random horse, but they full on know stats and stuff like that.”

“My parents go in the lotto every week.”

“I’d probably have a go on the pokies or something when I turn 18, but I’m not that into it. It’s not like it’s the first thing I’ll do when I’m legal.”

“In different situations you’ll do it by yourself or with mates. Like Casino type gambling you interact with people and you usually go as a group. Whereas pokies are more individualised.”

“Going out once a week to the pokies isn’t too much. It’s to do with how much you spend. If you do dollar hits, like a dollar a day, then that’s fine. It’s only a dollar. But if you blow thousands, like money you can’t afford to lose then it’s a problem. Maybe it’s ok if you do that once, but if you back again and do the same thing then that’s pretty bad.”

“If someone goes to the club at the same time every day and does hundred dollar hits then that’s pretty bad too.”

### *Awareness*

“On the Internet I see advertising in sidebars and stuff.”

“On TV they always have the sports where you can see it.”

“Keno, there’s ads for that.”

“And ads for powerball and scratchies at newsagents.”

“You see some anti-gambling ads, like under the pokies and stuff at the clubs.”

“Gambling is not something that we worry about. We play poker with our mates and stuff but it’s not an issue for us like getting drunk or doing drugs is.”

### *Help Seeking*

“You probably wouldn’t want to stop gambling if you’re addicted, I guess if you did think it was a problem though I’m not sure if you’d want to call one of those helplines. You’d just be talking to a stranger.”

“You’d probably try and deal with it themselves.”

“I’d talk to my family; my closest people to see if they could help me, but if they couldn’t then I might get some professional help.”

“Not everyone gets addicted, but I think there should be more advertising about not gambling because a lot of people do it because it’s part of their night and it’s social.”

“If your mate was in trouble with gambling you’d have to try and help them, talk to them and tell them that what they were doing was dumb.”

### **Focus Group 8: Mixed Year Levels**

Interviewer: Kate Reid

#### *Location, Population and Demographic*

Focus group with two Year 10 girls aged 16 and one Year 6 boy aged 13.

#### *Defining Gambling*

What do you think gambling is?

Yr 6: Betting

Yr 10: Obsession

Yr 10: People betting on stupid things for money. Sometimes people bet on stupid things because they get obsessed. You waste your money and you end up poor and everyone gets angry at you. Except for the casinos. They get lots of money and business.

What are some activities that you consider to be gambling activities? (Use paper to create a list if necessary)

Yr 10. Betting on horses.

Yr 6. Slot machines. Pokies. Poker.

Yr 10. Card games/ black jack.

Have you ever thought about Footy Tipping or Scratchie Tickets as gambling?

Yr 10: Yeah

Yr 10: Yeah like anything to do with betting on money is gambling isn’t it?

Yr 10: Yeah that’s still gambling, like paying money to get money.

Tattslotto?

Yr 6: Yes and no.

Yr 10: because there are some people who buy tickets every week and that’s still giving money in the hopes of getting money and that’s what gambling is.

Can you describe a typical gambler?

Yr 10: Someone who regularly goes to the TAB, and does not go anywhere because they’ve run out of money because they’ve been gambling. It becomes less like an entertainment or a fun thing and more like a necessity.

Yr 10: and they will stop hanging out with mates to gamble.

Yr 6: Exactly what they said!

### *Motivation*

What are the reasons people gamble generally?

Yr 6: To get money.

Yr 10: Fun. But then after a while, obsession. Could be like a social thing with mates and you'll bet on the horses or something.

Yr 6: Competition.

Why do you think young people in particular gamble?

Yr 10: Conformity, trying to fit in.

Yr 6: To impress people. Peer pressure.

Yr 10: If all their mates go they'll go too.

If you've gambled why did you do it?

Yr 6: Scratchies. We do footy tipping at school but not to bet on money. We do it for fun.

Yr 10: Horse tipping but only in the family. Scratchies are addictive because I wanted to go back and see if I could win more.

Yr 10: they're fun I like the scratchies. It's fun betting on some.

Do you think gambling is a risky activity for young people? If so, why do you think it's risky?

Yr 6: Yes, it's risky because it is usually in the other person's favour. If it's like cards or something it's usually in the other person's favour not in yours.

Yr 10: if you start young you're most likely going to continue doing it when you're older so you're going to lose money, your friends and your social life.

Yr 10: same as the others.

### *Context*

Do you or anyone you spend time with (friends/family) gamble?

Yr 6: No

Yr 10: nothing more than scratchies or footy tipping or horse racing. Nothing like pokies or anything or blackjack.

Yr 10: Yes betting on footy and stuff.

Do you know many people who gamble? Think about your friends, family and other people in your community.

Yr 6: No

Yr 10: I know of people who've just turned 18 at my school and they go out to the casino.

Yr 10: Yeah a lot of people who've just turned 18 every weekend they go out. They actually go to play the pokies. They seem to do it every weekend so I don't know if it is going to be one of those things that grow into an obsession.

Is gambling something that you do by yourself or do you do it with friends, family or other people?

Yr 6: Both.

Yr 10: Both. I do the horse tipping in the family.

Yr 10: Both.

What was your first gambling experience? You can talk about when you gambled for the first time or when you were with someone while they gambled.

Yr 6: Scratchie. Someone bought me one.

Yr 10: Scratchie

Yr 10: Betting on footy.

Have you ever won a gambling game?

Yr 6: I've won a scratchie. I got one at Luna Park so I got a free Pepsi.

Yr 10: I've won a scratchie. My horse came first in the Melbourne Cup once so I got \$20 from my family. We all put in.

Yr 10: No I haven't.

Did the win encourage you to gamble again?

Yr 6: Yes

Yr 10: Yes. For the want of more money.

### *Awareness*

Have you seen any advertising promoting gambling or gambling activities?

Yr 6: No. I've seen the opposite though.

Yr 10: yeah they usually just have ads, if you know a gambler get them help.

Yr 10: There's that radio that doesn't promote it, his mate calls up and you can hear the pokie machines in the background.

What kind of gambling was it advertising?

*When prompted all agreed that they had seen ads for Tattsлото draws and betting on the horses.*

Where did you see the advertisement(s)?

Yr 10: TV, radio, Internet. There'll be pop ups and stuff sometimes. They have advertising on the sidebar of Facebook sometimes for gambler's help and you can play poker games.

Yr 10: .....

Yr 6: Poker pops up a lot on the Internet.

Did it make you more interested in gambling?

Yr 6: No

Yr 10: No

Yr 10: you don't see many positive ones about gambling.

Have you seen any advertising about help for problem gambling?

*They had all seen and mentioned earlier ads related to problem gambling on TV, radio and Internet.*

Yr 10: that's more advertised than the go gambling ads.

What did you think about those ads?

Yr 10: They're fairly influential. When you see them you think, I don't want to end up like that.

Yr 10: Yes

Yr 6: Yes



Do you ever have lessons at school about gambling?

Yr 6: No

Yr 10: No, nothing about gambling

Yr 10: No, we've only had stuff about drinking and driving and drugs, nothing about gambling. They might think we're too young.

Do you ever talk about gambling in your classes?

Yr 6: No

Yr 10: No

Yr 10: Not really. Useless it is coming up to Melbourne Cup and friends ask if you're betting on the horses. It's social.

*When prompted they all agreed that gambling scenarios were sometimes used as the basis of problems in Maths e.g., probability of winning Tattslotto.*

### *Help Seeking*

At what point do you think gambling becomes a problem for a person?

Yr 6: When they're about 20, mid 20s or something. They're doing in too often it becomes a necessity.

Yr 10: they start not hanging out with family and friends they just gamble by themselves.

Yr 10: It's less of fun and more for need. A habit.

If you thought you were gambling too much and wanted to stop what would you do?

Yr 6: Talk to family.

Yr 10: Get help. Call the helpline.

Yr 10: Talk to someone about it. Intervention. Try to get your family to stop you you're not allowed to leave the house unsupervised.

Who would you go to for help? Why?

Yr 10: Family because you trust them. They're there to look after you.

Yr 6: Family and friends.

Yr 10: If you didn't want to go to family because you didn't want them to know you had a problem you could go to the Helpline.

Would you look for advice on how to help a friend or family member who was gambling too much?

Yr 6: Maybe. I'd talk to them first.

Yr 10: Yeah. I'd probably talk to them first to see if they acknowledged that they had a problem, or if they were still unaware that they were obsessed with it.

Yr 10: Yeah probably.

Where would you go for that advice?

Yr 6: Internet.

Yr 10: Internet. Other people who have had a gambling obsession and gotten over it.

Yr 10: Internet. Helpline. Things in the phonebook.

## Focus Group 9: Year 12 Students

Interviewer: Clare Ozolins

### *Location, Population and Demographic*

The school is state government school with a specialist focus on technology in the traditional trades and is located in Melbourne's western suburbs. It provides for students in Years 10, 11 and 12 who undertake focussed VCE or VCAL and Australian School-based Apprenticeships in a range of areas including metals and engineering, automotive, building and construction and commercial cookery. The students participating in the focus group were in Year 12 and were all male, aged 17 and 18 years. They came from a number of different ethnic groups and lived close to the school, a modern building with open plan layout of communal spaces and classrooms. There was continuing construction work on site.

### *Defining Gambling*

Students were quite clear about how gambling was defined, for them it was any activity that involved winning or losing money in a game of chance. They also pointed to the effects of gambling on families and individuals.

"It involves winning money ... and losing it! It's like games and stuff but when you gamble you take a chance on winning extra money"

"It affects families, stuffs up lives"

A range of activities were offered as examples of gambling activities. The pokies were the most common response followed by the casino and TAB. On further prompting the participants named the TAB, sportsbet, tattsлото and scratchies as other forms of gambling.

There was some doubt expressed over whether horse and dog racing was gambling, before it was confirmed that it was by members of the group. This was not in reference to whether betting on these races was gambling, but whether the races themselves could be considered a gamble for the owners/trainers.

When asked about who they would consider a typical gambler they nominated older people, and generally males.

"Old guys, you know, who don't work anymore ... what do you call them? ... retired people. They got nothing else to do so they go to the TAB or play the pokies. Put all their money in the machines"

One participant pointed out that anyone could be a gambler and suggested that everyone in the group was probably involved in gambling.

### *Motivation*

The main theme to emerge when asked why people gamble were that it was a good way to make easy money, although you had to beware of losses.

"It's better than going to work, but you have to start off with some money to bet with so you would probably have to have a job to begin"

Others suggested that you would be motivated to gamble because it was something that friends or relatives did. That gambling was a fun activity and kept you entertained.

One participant said that it was something that people who were bored would do, if you didn't have things to occupy your time you would be more likely to gamble for the bit of excitement that you could get from a win.

The participants thought that the motivation for young people would be slightly different to what motivates an older gambler.

“Well they'd really just want to try it out wouldn't they? I mean they got no experience so they would want to have a bet or buy a tats ticket just to see what it's like”

The group were asked if they had gambled themselves. The majority of the group were 18 and had participated in some form of gambling activity in the recent past, including betting at the TAB on horse and dog races, card games at the Casino and on-line poker tournaments. All indicated that their first gambling experience had been earlier.

“I started going to the TAB with my dad when I was like 9 or 10. I still go with him”

“When I was a kid we played this game at home and at schools, it's a Chinese game and you flip coins and stuff. That was my first gambling game. I've had a go on the pokies, put the money in and had a shot but nothing serious.”

“I've bought the scratchies. I wanted to with the car!”

When asked about the reasons they had gambled it was generally in a social context or accompanying their parents.

Those who has gambled recently were asked about their motivation

“I wanted to get some extra money, and I had to catch up on my losses from before”

When asked if trying to catch up on losses was an important reason for gambling the participant said

“Yes, definitely. If you have a big loss then you want to go back and try and win your money back, otherwise it's just wasted.”

### *Context*

All of the participants knew someone in their immediate or extended family who gambled. Several said that they knew people who gambled too much. When asked how much is too much the participants were unsure.

“Well I guess if you lose your house and your car. I know someone who lost his house and his car and his family left. That's way too much.”

“If you've got no money, then it's too much”

“When you’re not doing it for fun anymore. When you’re like addicted.”

They described gambling as a social activity in some respects.

“Well you can’t play cards on your own”

But said that playing games like the pokies or using Internet gambling sites was something you’d probably do by yourself.

“Even going to the casino to gamble. You’d go on your own, you play with your own money so it doesn’t matter what anyone else is doing. If you go to the casino to have fun with mates then you’re probably going to watch the footy in the bar or something, you’re not going to stand at the pokies”

The participants’ first gambling experiences were all done with adult supervision, with the exception of one person who had had his first experience betting against other students at primary school in a coin game.

“Your parents kinda get you into it, if you like go with them to the TAB or buy the tatts ticket with your dad”

The participants were asked if there were any characteristics of a person or non-gambling activities that they do that might stop them from wanting to gamble.

“If you’re religious you wouldn’t gamble” ... “Nah that’s not true, I know people who go to church and they still go to the TAB as well”

“If you’ve got a job and you work hard and you’re not bored then you’re not going to need to gamble. Gambling is for people who have too much time and nothing to do.”

“People should just get a job and then they won’t need to go chasing money at the pokies”

“If you’re an alcoholic or a druggie ... junkie ... you might gamble more. I don’t know. You got to have money to start with.”

“If you’ve got no job, if you’re on the dole, then you’d gamble more I think.”

### *Awareness*

Participants could recall several different kinds of advertisement for gambling. They nominated the tattslotto ads and sportsbet, particularly for on-line betting as something that they saw regularly and could readily recall.

They did not feel these ads were targeted particularly at young people and commented that they were not of much interest to them.

“It doesn’t make me want to go out and bet on the horses or the footy or whatever”

“It seems like it’s more for older blokes. And Aussie blokes to get on-line and have a bet. Keep them out of the TAB coz that is supposed to be weird and scary or something”

The participants were asked if they were aware of anti-gambling messages and some could recall television advertising showing the consequences of gambling for families.

“They should make the ads like the drugs ones where they show people getting really screwed up”

“They sort of do, they show the wife getting upset at the supermarket because her husband has gambled all the money for medicine for the kid”

“Yeah it’s not the same though. People aren’t getting killed in those ads”

“It’s just not as big a problem as alcohol and drugs. What are you going to show, no one gets killed because they play tattsлото too much.”

When asked if they thought that gambling was a big problem for society they didn’t think that it was.

“It’s not as big a problem for young people our age as drugs. It’s more important to find out about alcohol, drinking for young people. And drugs. We already know about smoking and stuff but kids still do drugs”

### *Help Seeking*

Participants said that they were unlikely to seek help from parents if they got into trouble with gambling.

“I don’t know about telling my parents. I reckon they’d be pretty angry about it”

When asked if they would call a gambler’s help line they were even less interested

“No way. I’m not going to call up some number.”

“Maybe I would see a counsellor. That would probably be ok.”

