

Victorian Arabic Social Services (VASS) is a multicultural service that primarily, but not exclusively, works to support members of the Victorian community from Arabic Speaking Backgrounds (ASB). We provide a wide range of services including aged care and disability support, home care packages, family services, gambling harm support and settlement support. We have operated a specific gambling harm program since July 2015 and prior to that have assisted community members impacted by gambling harm through our other services and our generalised drop-in service.

Through our gambling harm program, we support Victorian community members who are experiencing the impacts of gambling harm, inclusive of affected others and those experiencing legacy gambling harm. We provide both in language therapeutic and financial counselling as well as undertaking community education about the impacts and responses to gambling harm. Through this program we have assisted numerous service users who have used Crown Melbourne as their primary gambling venue as well as affected others who identified Crown Melbourne as the primary gambling venue of the person they are connected to.

As part of our program we have assisted a number of service users in Self Excluding from Crown Melbourne. Through this process we have had service users relay to us their experiences and some issues they have encountered. Several service users stated that they found the current process both intimidating and off putting to engage with, especially where language barriers exist. As such several service users needed a VASS staff member to attend Crown Melbourne with them to support them in completing the self-exclusion process. The other primary issue that we have had reported is that whilst a number of service users have had a successful outcome from self-excluding some have informed us that even after completing the self-exclusion process they have still been able to enter the designated gaming areas of Crown Melbourne and gamble without being stopped or asked to leave by Crown Melbourne security.

Based on the feedback of service users who we have worked with VASS makes the following recommendations:

- Crown Melbourne reviews its current self-exclusion application process, focusing on identifying methods of increasing accessibility, particularly for members of CALD communities.
- Crown Melbourne reviews its current security measures around identifying self-exclusion program participants and identifies methods to improve their performance.