



Minutes of Meeting

Gambling Products Working Group

TRIM ID:

Meeting details			
Meeting title:	Gambling Products Working Group	Meeting #:	3-2020
Date:	Wednesday 10 June 2020	Time:	10:30 am – 11:45 am
Location:	By Skype		

Attendees	Title / organisation
Jason Cremona	Manager, Licence Management & Audit (VCGLR) (Chair)
Corrie Cavarra	Principal Evaluations Officer, LMA (VCGLR)
Steve Thurston	Licence Manager, LMA (VCGLR)
Tim O'Farrell	Manager, Regulatory Strategy & Research (VCGLR)
Lindsay Shaw	Policy and Knowledge Officer (VRGF)
Tony Phillips	Head of Knowledge and Information (VRGF)
Brett Hetherington	Senior Industry Engagement Officer (VRGF)
Helen Miller	Principal Policy Officer, Liquor and Gambling Policy (DJCS)
Susan Graham	Principal Policy Officer, Liquor and Gambling Policy (DJCS)
Steven Lang	Manager, Gambling Policy (DJCS)
Apologies	Title / organisation
Craig Jenkins	Policy Officer, Legal Services (VCGLR)
Claire Edwards	Principal Policy Officer, Liquor and Gambling Policy (DJCS)
Note: Jessica Barrett is on secondment and will not be participating in these meetings until further notice	

Item	Subject
0.	<p>Opening/apologies</p> <p>Jason Cremona opened the meeting at 10:30 am and welcomed attendees.</p> <p>Minutes of previous meeting</p> <p>Minutes of the previous meeting on 22 April 2020 were accepted.</p>
1.	<p>Updates from last meeting.</p> <p>a) Proposed Vic Appendix Changes (RTP, LDW & Results Display)</p> <p>Jason Cremona provided an update on progress with the proposed Vic Appendix changes:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission has recently approved sending the proposed amendment to the Vic Appendix to the Minister to approve the amendment (“the making of the standard”), and the briefing note to the Minister is under development. • In relation to LDW and results display, the Commission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ noted the NSW literature search on this topic, and other proposed changes to LDW, and ○ noted the push for a more national standard, and was conscious of the need to avoid further progress with state-based requirements ○ agreed that this matter should therefore be referred to the National Standards Working Party (NSWP) to drive a national approach. • Jason further noted that the NSWP is now chaired by Victoria (he and Tim O’Farrell are co-chairs) – we are therefore well placed to get this on the national agenda • Members are asked to accept this update in confidence noting that the advice is yet to be sent to the Minister
	<p>b) Consultation on the RGAT</p>
	<p>Jason Cremona and Tim O’Farrell gave an update on the development of the Responsible Gambling Assessment Tool (RGAT) and in particular the consultation that is planned.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principles incorporated in the RGAT are already being applied by the VCGLR Approvals Team when assessing new gambling products • Consultation with the public is yet to happen, but will not take place until RGAT has been presented to the Commission, and then to DJCS and the Minister. • In response to a question from Tony Phillips, Tim explained that the “principles” in the RGAT includes a tabulated set of responsible gambling factors that are to be taken into account when assessing a new gambling product.
	<p>Tony Phillips expressed concern about how the principles will be presented to industry for consultation, noting that industry will be very quick to object to any factors or principles that they perceive to be not based on evidence of harm. A similar list was prepared by Helen Miller for the Emerging Products Group in RGMAC which met a lot of resistance from industry.</p>
	<p>Tim and Jason noted Tony’s advice, and Jason pointed out that:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consultation would be on key policies to be included in the RGAT, not the RGAT itself, and • the VCGLR will attempt to tread the fine line between providing too much or too little information for consultation.
2.	<p>Responsible gambling – update on latest population study</p>
	<p>Tony Phillips gave an update on the release of the latest population study 2018/19 (formerly referred to as the “Prevalence Study”, previously conducted in 2014 and 2008).</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study has been published on the VRGF website

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VRGF is also progressively publishing Fact Sheets on particular topics in the study for convenience and to save the general public having to read the whole report To date, five Fact Sheets have been published¹
	<p>Tony offered the following highlights:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> slight decline in gambling participation: adults who gamble declined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 73.1 per cent in 2008 70.1 per cent in 2014 and 69 per cent in 2018–2019. Continued decline in pokie players <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15.7% in 2014, and 14.1% in 2018 Participation rates continue to show gambling participation is skewed towards young people and towards males
	<p>The study also showed a high participation of problem gamblers (people with high PGSI) in Keno. Some discussion ensued about this finding, with Steven Lang pointing out the numbers involved in the sample may or may not be providing a statistically significant finding or a finding that reflects on the nature of the game itself.</p>
	<p>Tony also reflected on the characteristics of pokie players:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 688,000 people in Victoria played pokies during the survey period 33 % of these have a problem gambling PGSI rating 13% of these are in the worst PGSI category
	<p>“Regular gamblers” are defined in the study as those who gamble more than once a month, with older people being represented in this figure:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost 40% are 65 years of age or older Nearly 20% are 70 years of age or older
	<p>Most people spend, on average, less than half an hour on an EGM; problem gamblers typically spend more than 2 hours a day on EGMs.</p>
	<p>In relation to PGSI and harm correlation Tony noted that:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% of harm is inflicted on non-problem gamblers 10% of people with PGSI=0, experience harm.
	<p>Lindsay Shaw provided the following update from the study on eSports and online gambling.</p>
	<p>In relation to eSports, the study posed a new question, but:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> only a small number of the 20,00 surveyed had bet on eSports

¹ See VRGF website <https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/resources/publications/victorian-population-gambling-and-health-study-20182019-759/>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a smaller number (20) had bet on fantasy sports, and they were all male ○ all eSports betters had high PGSI scores <p>Lindsay noted the recent publicity given to the surge in eSports or online gambling due to Covid-19, but the reports indicate this has more recently declined.</p> <p>Online gambling participation rates show the following approximate rates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ about 78% bet on eSports ○ 33% on racing ○ 22% on lotteries ○ only 1 or 2% on online pokies. ○ High income earners are more likely to gamble online. <p>After further discussion about the Keno results from the study, Tony Phillips and Steven Lang agreed to have a further discussion offline. Tony suggested that VRGF might consider a Fact Sheet on this topic to clarify the results in relation to Keno.</p> <p>Helen Miller further cautioned about conclusions about correlation between high PGSI scores with particular games is risky where the survey numbers and sample size is low.</p>

3. New products/innovations

Product requests post Covid-19 closures (eSports, interactive gaming/online bingo etc)

Jason Cremona spoke about the initial interest in these types of gambling products as a result of the Coronavirus restrictions, but this has not translated into product approval applications.

The VCGLR is expecting an esports application shortly, and a big consideration is establishing which organisation would be the “peak body”. Jason noted that eSports has been an approved betting activity for some time in the Northern Territory and was also recently approved in New South Wales.

Four or five queries have been received about conducting interactive/online bingo. Legal advice has been received and a response will be sent soon.

The legal advice was that the answer is different according to whether the organisation running the bingo game is a community and charitable organisation. The use of a telecommunications device would potentially make this an interactive game.

If the game is run for profit, it would be illegal under the *Interactive Gambling Act* at the federal level.

Lindsay Shaw noted that some bingo centres have been running free online bingo, where players view the game online. This is not considered a legal issue.

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4.	<p data-bbox="240 365 754 398">Regulatory considerations/concerns</p> <p data-bbox="240 434 512 468"><i>Coronavirus impacts</i></p> <p data-bbox="240 483 1445 548">Despite rumours about TAB agencies re-opening, meeting participants did not have any firm updates on re-opening of retail gambling venues or gaming venues.</p> <p data-bbox="240 564 619 598"><i>Cashless gaming / Tap n Go</i></p> <p data-bbox="240 613 1437 712">Jason Cremona reported to the meeting on the preliminary discussions and queries from gambling industry participants about the potential introduction of cashless gaming and tap n go facilities (using debit cards) on self-service terminals and for casino table games.</p> <p data-bbox="240 728 786 761">A formal submission is yet to be received.</p> <p data-bbox="240 777 1453 913">Tony Phillips expressed concern about the use of the cashless option or tap n go if there wasn't going to be consideration at the policy level. Tony suggested that if gaming venues sought to introduce cashless gaming on the basis that cash was "dangerous" venues without cashless would logically have to stay closed.</p> <p data-bbox="240 929 1422 994">Tony added that there are a number of responsible gambling policy issues associated with this proposal, and suggested that it needed Government level consideration.</p> <p data-bbox="240 1010 1342 1043">Jason Cremona said he would keep the group informed about further developments.</p>
5.	<p data-bbox="240 1081 778 1115">Commission Standards (new/existing)</p> <p data-bbox="288 1151 815 1184">a) National Standards Working Party</p> <p data-bbox="240 1200 1445 1265">Jason Cremona spoke further about the NSWP, which is now co-chaired by himself and Tim O'Farrell.</p> <p data-bbox="240 1281 1469 1346">The NSWP, when it meets next, is to plan a review of the National Standards at the request of the Australasian Gambling Regulator CEOs. There are two objectives for the review:</p> <ul data-bbox="336 1361 1465 1686" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="336 1361 1465 1532">• The CEO request to drive down jurisdictional differences in the standards, and move away from (either minimise or remove) state based appendices. All jurisdictions have adopted the National Standards, but most have their own appendices (Victoria has the Vic Appendix) which include additional requirements and/or variations from the National Standards which apply just in that jurisdiction. <li data-bbox="336 1547 1465 1686">• Reforms to the National Standards in light of technological and policy developments – for example, the introduction of requirements for skill-based games (new technology) and the proposed national adoption of LDW requirements (a policy development) <p data-bbox="240 1702 1453 1800">Jason noted that the previous review took place over a couple of years, and that the national alignment of differences in the standards that emanate from policy and legislative differences between jurisdictions is not a matter that can be addressed overnight.</p> <p data-bbox="240 1816 1422 1915">The next meeting of the NSWP would normally occur at the same time as the Australasian Gaming Exhibition, but that has been cancelled this year. Therefore, the next meeting will need to be arranged at a mutually convenient date some time over the next few months.</p> <p data-bbox="240 1930 1406 1995">Tony Phillips noted the VRGF's interest in summarising jurisdictional differences and how helpful it would be to have these differences tabulated in a comparison table.</p>

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6.	Other business No other business was raised.			
7.	Close / next meeting The Chair closed the meeting at 11:45 am. The next scheduled meeting is at 10:30 AM on Wednesday 5 August 2020.			
No	Action to be taken	Assigned to	Due date	Status
1.	No new Action Items recorded			