

The Committee also requests further information to answer the following questions:

1. How are children and young people impacted by online gambling? What does online gambling look like for children and young people?

While gambling online is illegal for people under the age of 18, it is still accessible via parents and other known adults to gamble using their accounts or setting up accounts using an adult's ID. Importantly, it is the normalisation of gambling online via young people's exposure to advertising and sponsorship that encourages informal gambling such as betting between friends and family at a young age. The high level of exposure to gambling products also gives children a false impression that gambling is normal and a social norm which leads to risky behaviours once they turn 18.

Gambling-like features such as loot boxes and virtual casinos are also available in video games played by children and teenagers. Although this isn't legally classified as gambling, loot boxes are a game of chance that requires money to participate so have very similar elements. Children have been found to both experience harm and also been encouraged to gamble due to use of such products.

Online gambling is normalised for young people and the risks associated are not thoroughly taught in schools or explored in community settings such as sporting clubs. It is instead the opposite; often gambling is subtly endorsed in these settings through sports sponsorships or school events or scholarships and awards provided by gambling venues. It is not only the increased online gambling exposure that has led to a new generation of young people with the potential to be harmed, but also that poker machines and sometimes horse racing are so ingrained in our communities. Online gambling and land-based gambling must not be only considered in silos.

Education is necessary to prepare young people for the risks associated with gambling when they are legally able to participate and also for parents in highlighting the risks of placing bets for their children. This especially happens on big events such as the Melbourne Cup or AFL grand final. A holistic public health approach needs to be taken to build young people's resilience against gambling harm in Australia.

2. Can you provide a breakdown of the most harmful types of gambling including the following forms:
 - a. Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs)
 - b. Horse/Greyhound Wagering (in person)
 - c. Horse/Greyhound Wagering (online)

- d. Sports betting (in person)
- e. Sports betting (online)
- f. Lotteries
- g. Bingo
- h. Raffles
- i. Any other forms of gambling you are aware of.

EGMs have been considered the most harmful form of gambling available in Australia for many years due to the high intensity nature of the machine alongside harmful features that exist to keep people gambling beyond their means. However online gambling, which we consider to be horse/greyhound wagering, sports betting and lotteries due to their online availability is rapidly growing. According to the VGCCC, losses on EGMs (except the casino) in the 2022/23 financial year were \$3.02 billion and wagering losses were \$2.6 billion (although this number also includes in-venue wagering and trackside wagering). With the rapid increase in online gambling, we may see those losses overtake those of EGMs in the next financial year.

While the technology of EGMs and the high intensity in which money can be lost is extremely concerning, so is the accessibility and ability to lose large amounts of money through online wagering. It is difficult to know which type of gambling is more harmful in general as both have a unique ability to cause harm and wagering has grown at such a rapid rate along with the advertisements and sponsorships. Research that investigates which forms of gambling are most harmful will need to be swiftly updated due to dramatic changes, particularly post-pandemic.

While bingo has previously been a low-risk harm gambling activity, there have been technological developments which mean people are able to gamble at a higher intensity. Personal Electronic Tablets are available at bingo centres and some RSLs and can be loaded with 200 games at once and can automatically cross off numbers. These tablets allow people to purchase more books and play more games of bingo than you would be able to on paper. The prize money available for bingo has also increased. There is a need for the Victorian Government to keep across these technological developments and monitor the levels of harm being experienced by people playing bingo.

As mentioned earlier, gambling products must not be considered in silos. More often than not, more than one gambling product is available to Victorians at any one time. For example, in a pub there may be EGMs, a sports bar with capabilities to gamble on horse or greyhound racing, trackside and Keno. At home people can gamble on sports, Keno, lotteries and raffles. We are exposed to all forms of gambling constantly and technology is growing for gambling forms to compete with other gambling forms which increases that exposure and risk.