The Allen Consulting Group

THE SOCIAL RESEARCH CENTRE

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

MONASH University

The Problem Gambling Research and Treatment Centre

An initiative of the Victorian Government, the University of Melbourne and Monash University

Social and Economic Impact Study of Gambling in Tasmania

Summary Report

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Report to the Tasmanian Government Department of Treasury and Finance

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Contents

Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACG	Allen Consulting Group
AGC	Australasian Gaming Council
ARB	Australian Racing Board
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DTF	Department of Treasury and Finance
EGM	Electronic Gaming Machine
HCC	Hobart City Council
LGA	Local Government Area
PGRTC	Problem Gambling Research and Treatment Centre
PGSI	Problem Gambling Severity Index
RCG	Responsible Conduct of Gaming
SACES	South Australian Centre for Economic Studies
SEIFA	Socioeconomic Indexes for Areas
SES	Socioeconomic status
SRC	Social Research Centre

Key findings

Scale of the industry

Gambling in Tasmania comprises gaming and wagering and is undertaken in outlets and venues across the State, including 102 venues in which there were 3,663 EGMs and 46 on the two vessels operated by the TT line. In 2009-10:

- expenditure on gambling was $383 million;[1]
- an estimated 65.2 per cent of the adult population gambled in the 12 months to March 2011, spending on average about $1,000. The largest components of gambling spending were on EGMs at hotels, clubs, and in the two casinos; and
- the Tasmanian Government received $100 million in taxation and licence fees.

Gambling and the Tasmanian economy

Up to 4,780 people are directly employed in Tasmania's gambling industry — with many of these employees having duties beyond gambling, such as bar service.

The industry makes a positive contribution to the Tasmanian economy, with gross state product and household consumption higher than they would be, absent the gambling industry, by 0.5 to 1 per cent. The gambling industry exports to non-Tasmanians, including via the Internet. Without these exports, the overall economic contribution from Tasmania's gambling industry would be small, if not negligible.

Problem gambling

Measured by the Problem Gambling Severity Index, an estimated 0.7 per cent of Tasmanian adults are problem gamblers, and a further 1.8 per cent moderate risk gamblers. Problem gamblers spent an average of around $14,000 in 2010-11 (14.5 per cent of gambling spending), while moderate risk gamblers spent around $4,900 (10.8 per cent of gambling spending). Problem gamblers accounted for 22.9 per cent of EGM spending, with moderate risk gamblers accounting for 24.8 per cent.

Local Government Areas

EGMs tend to be concentrated in Local Government Areas that have low socioeconomic status (SES). Expenditure in low SES areas is significantly higher than in comparison areas. Problem gambling, moderate risk gambling and low risk gambling are all higher in low SES areas.

Harm minimisation measures

The harm minimisation measures currently in place in Tasmania satisfy a number of criteria — they are, for example, evidence-based, sensitive to context, and part of a comprehensive strategy. Support service providers favour mandatory pre-commitment for EGMs. The gambling industry supports voluntary pre-commitment for EGMs, but not mandatory pre-commitment.

[1] This figure includes significant expenditure by non-Tasmanians including over the Internet.

1. Background to study

A consortium comprising the Allen Consulting Group (ACG), the Problem Gambling Research and Treatment Centre (PGRTC) and the Social Research Centre (SRC) was engaged by the Tasmanian Government's Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) to undertake an updated *Social and Economic Impact Study of Gambling in Tasmania*.

The previous *Social and Economic Impact Study into Gambling in Tasmania* was completed in 2008 by the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies (SACES). The study included a general overview of gambling in Tasmania and an assessment of the broad economic, financial and social impacts. It also reported the findings of a prevalence survey of gambling and problem gambling in Tasmania. The 2008 study was the fifth gambling prevalence study conducted in the State since 1994.

This 2011 study builds on the previous study by featuring the social and economic impacts of gambling in selected low socioeconomic areas, with reference to a number of control areas. This study has a particular focus on electronic gaming machines (EGMs).

This study also develops a framework for assessing the effectiveness of harm minimisation measures — particularly measures introduced in response to the previous study. A baseline methodology for monitoring and evaluation has been developed, which can be used to inform policy responses targeting problem gambling.

2. Gambling industry trends and statistics

2.1 Industry size and characteristics

Gambling in Tasmania comprises gaming and wagering and is undertaken in outlets and venues across the State. Table 2.1 provides a broad overview of the industry.

Table 2.1

GAMBLING PRODUCTS AND OUTLETS IN TASMANIA

Activity	Venue type	Venues/Outlets	Number[a]
Electronic Gaming Machines	Casinos	2	1,270
	Clubs	10	173
	Hotels	90	2,220
	Spirit of Tasmania vessels	2	46
	Total	**104**	**3,709**
Casino table games	Wrest Point Hotel Casino		24
	Country Club Casino		16
	Total		**40**
Lotteries	Tatts outlets	86	
	Intralot outlets	20	
	Total	**106**	
Keno	Casinos	2	
	Clubs	28	
	Hotels	139	
	Total	**169**	
Race wagering	TOTE Tasmania outlets[b]	133	
	Bookmakers	11	
	Total	**144**	
Minor gaming	Permits issued in 2009-10		371
	Total		**371**

Note: [a] Number of EGMs, table games or permits. [b] At the time of preparation of this report, TOTE Tasmania Pty Ltd has been a Tasmanian Government business operating totalizator and other wagering services in the State. On 1 December 2011, the Tasmanian Government announced that TOTE Tasmania had been sold to Tattsbet Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Tatts Group Limited. This change of ownership does not affect the findings in the report. The new owners have bought the shares in the TOTE and will continue operate it under the existing totalizator licence terms and conditions and it is expected that the business will continue to operate similar totalizator and other wagering services in Tasmania.

The *Gaming Control Act 1993* limits to 3,680 the total number of EGMs permitted in Tasmanian casinos, clubs and hotels. This excludes EGMs on the Spirit of Tasmania vessels. Within this broad cap, a total of 2,500 EGMs is permitted within clubs and hotels. Within venues, EGM numbers are limited to 40 per club and 30 per hotel.

Table 2.2 shows the number of EGMs per 1,000 persons in Tasmania and Australia.

Table 2.2

EGMS IN CASINOS, HOTELS AND CLUBS (TASMANIA AND AUSTRALIA)

		Casinos	Hotels	Clubs	Total
Tasmania	Number of EGMs	1,270	2,220	173	3,663
	Per 1,000 persons	2.5	4.4	0.34	7.2
Australia less WA[a]	Number of EGMs	10,507	69,649	115,820	195,976
	Per 1,000 persons	0.5	3.5	5.8	9.8

Note: [a] For comparative purposes it is more accurate to exclude Western Australia as EGMs are only permitted within the Burswood Casino in that State.

Overall, Tasmania has a lower number of EGMs per 1,000 persons compared with Australia as a whole (excluding Western Australia).

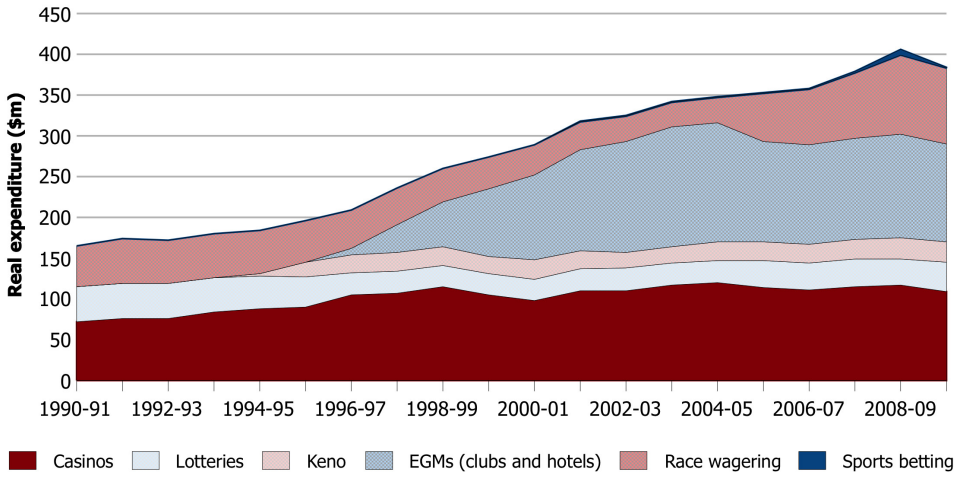
2.2 Gambling expenditure

Gambling expenditure represents the total amount gambled (turnover) less the total amount won by players (winnings) over a period. When expressed in 'real' terms, figures from previous years are adjusted to account for the effects of inflation. This allows for a more accurate comparison of changes in expenditure over time.

Over the period 1990-91 to 2009-10 real expenditure (in 2009-10 prices) on gambling in Tasmania grew from $165 million to $383 million, with positive growth in every year other than 2009-10. Real expenditure peaked at approximately $405 million in 2008-09 — a peak that was likely triggered by the Australian Government's stimulus package delivered during the latter part of that financial year. Figure 2.1 depicts real expenditure growth in Tasmania, as well as the composition of that growth, according to the different gambling activities.

Figure 2.1

REAL EXPENDITURE AND COMPOSITION: TASMANIA'S GAMBLING INDUSTRY, BY GAMBLING ACTIVITY, 1990-91 TO 2009-10



Notes: Figures for sports betting and race wagering exclude expenditure on services provided by Betfair Australia as this information was not provided to the authors of the report. Figures are expressed in 2009-10 prices.

The range of gambling activities provided by Tasmania's gambling industry has increased from a narrow focus on casino table games, lotteries and race wagering in the early 1990s, to one that now also includes EGMs, Keno and sports betting — all introduced around the mid to late 1990s. Despite the fact that expenditure on these new activities was largely a result of substitution for traditional gambling activities, their introduction resulted in an overall net increase in real expenditure on gambling. This increase was predominantly driven by expenditure on EGMs in clubs and hotels which peaked in 2003-04 at $147 million in real terms — representing 43 per cent of total gambling expenditure.

More recently, real expenditure on EGMs in clubs and hotels has trended downwards ($120 million in 2009-10), with a significant decrease in 2005-06 — most likely due to the introduction of smoking bans during that year. Real expenditure on race wagering has trended upwards from a low of $30 million in 2003-04 to a high of $97 million in 2008-09. This upward trend in real expenditure on race wagering is the key driver of growth in overall expenditure on gambling in Tasmania since 2006-07.

This recent increase in real expenditure on race wagering is largely explained by the strong growth of Internet wagering by non-Tasmanians. In particular, Tasmanian thoroughbred wagering turnover from Internet wagering increased from $3.6 million in 2004-05 to $367 million in 2009-10.[2]

In relation to the other gambling activities, real expenditure on Keno, lotteries and casino table games has been relatively flat since the late 1990s. Although real expenditure on sports betting has increased significantly in recent years, the data reported in Figure 2.1 understates this growth, as expenditure on services offered by Betfair is excluded.

In per capita terms, real annual expenditure on gambling in Tasmania increased from $501 in 1983-84 to $1,037 in 2008-09[3]. Relative to other jurisdictions, Tasmania's real per capita gambling expenditure was high in the mid 1980s due to Tasmania being only one of the two Australian jurisdictions with legalised casinos. However, per capita expenditure declined over the following years and was the lowest in Australia in the mid 1990s — and has remained among the lowest since then. This decline aligns with the introduction of EGMs in most other jurisdictions during the early 1990s (noting that they were already present in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory). Once EGMs were introduced to clubs and hotels in Tasmania in 1996-97, real per capita expenditure increased steadily before plateauing in the early 2000s.

2.3 Government revenues from taxes and fees

Over the period 1990-91 to 2009-10, real gambling taxation and licence fee revenue to the Tasmanian Government increased from $62 million to $100 million. In 2009-10, revenue from gaming activities was approximately $86 million (86.6 per cent of the total), while race wagering accounted for $13 million (12.7 per cent) and sports betting $0.7 million (0.7 per cent).

[2] Note that turnover is the total amount staked by backing customers, whereas expenditure is equivalent to the commission retained by the betting operator after winnings are paid out to customers.

[3] These data come from *Australian Gambling Statistics* and are prepared by the Office of Economic and Statistical Research in the Queensland Treasury.

Gambling taxation and licence fee revenues form a significant share of total revenues to the Tasmanian Government. Over the period 2005-06 to 2009-10, gambling taxation and licence fees accounted on average for around 11.3 per cent of yearly taxation revenue. If government revenues from other sources are included, most notably Australian Government grants, gambling revenues accounted on average for around 2.2 per cent of total yearly revenues over the same period. Tasmania's share of total state taxation revenue from gambling is slightly higher than the average for other jurisdictions, but not as high as Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

A number of significant changes to Tasmania's gambling taxation arrangements have been made over recent years — most notably, the introduction from mid 2009 of the Totalizator Wagering Levy, and in September 2010 and February 2011 changes to Betfair Australia's taxation and licence fee rates.

2.4 Employment

Estimates suggest that as many as 4,780 people are employed in Tasmania's gambling industry — noting that a subset of these employees has duties extending beyond gambling, such as bar and food service. The majority (97 per cent) are employed in the gaming, casino and race wagering industries. The remainder are employed by Betfair Australia or in businesses selling lottery products.

Based on this estimate, Tasmania's gambling industry employs up to 2 per cent of Tasmania's labour force.

2.5 Community contributions and investment

There are no public statistics on either voluntary gambling industry contributions to the community (for example, through sponsorships) or investments in venues and other forms of entertainment. However, industry stakeholders have argued that Tasmania's gambling industry does provide a positive contribution in these areas.

In its submission to this study, Federal Group highlighted its support and sponsorship to 200 organisations in Tasmania, valued at more than $2 million per year. However, it was acknowledged by some venue operators that these contributions were often part of a broader venue marketing and advertising strategy.

The Tasmanian Hospitality Association highlighted that EGMs lead to increasing hotel property values, and to increasing revenues, which flow through to improved standard of venues and cross-subsidisation of less profitable hotel areas, such as restaurants. Other industry stakeholders consulted also suggest that venues with gaming are more entertainment-oriented than venues without gaming.

The benefit of community contributions and investments in venues is reflected in the quantitative analysis of benefits and costs of Tasmania's gambling industry, undertaken as part of this study.

3. Characteristics of gamblers

As part of this study, a telephone-based survey of more than 4,300 adult Tasmanians was undertaken. The survey covered the whole State, but had a detailed focus on eight specific local government areas (LGAs). A statistical analysis of the survey results was also undertaken to determine whether differences between subpopulations were statistically significant. Point estimates are reported below, noting that confidence intervals are provided in Volume 2 of the report. The discussion below only reports differences between subpopulations that were found to be statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level or above.

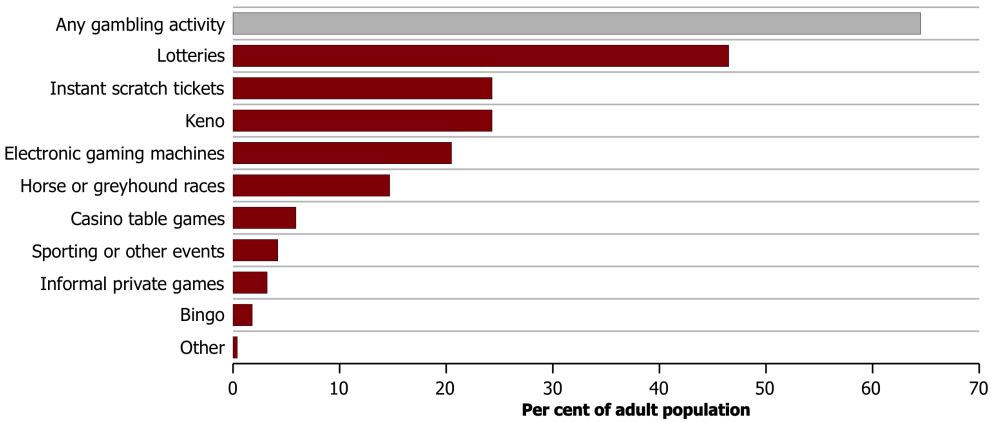
3.1 Participation

Overall gamblers

Gambling participation represents the proportion of the adult population who gamble. Figure 3.1 presents survey estimates of gambling participation by gambling activity and gambling as a whole (that is, gambling on any activity).

Figure 3.1

GAMBLING PARTICIPATION, BY GAMBLING ACTIVITY, 2010-11



Source: 2011 *Social and Economic Impact Study of Gambling in Tasmania* survey

Survey estimates are that 65.2 per cent of Tasmanian adults participated in some form of gambling in the 12 months prior to March 2011. The most common forms of gambling were lotteries (46.5 per cent of adults), instant scratch tickets (24.3 per cent), Keno (24.3 per cent) and EGMs (20.5 per cent).

Around 38 per cent of those who gambled in the 12 months prior to March 2011 participated in only one gambling activity, with the remainder participating in two or more activities.

Relative to Tasmanian adults as a whole, the proportion of adults who gambled in the 12 months prior to March 2011 was statistically lower (that is, the difference was statistically significant) among people with postgraduate qualifications and people who were not born in Australia.

EGM gamblers

Relative to Tasmanian adults as a whole, the proportion of adults who gambled on EGMs in the 12 months prior to March 2011 was:

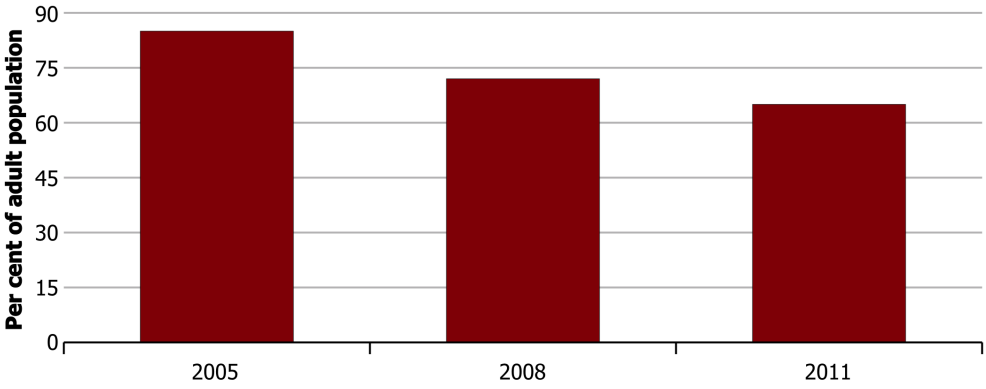
- statistically higher among people aged 18-34, and people who started but did not complete secondary school; and
- statistically lower among students, people with incomes between $80,000 and $129,000, people who were not born in Australia, and people with postgraduate qualifications.

Comparison with previous survey results

Figure 3.2 presents the results of Tasmania's gambling participation rate from the last three gambling surveys conducted in the State.

Figure 3.2

TREND FOR TASMANIA'S GAMBLING PARTICIPATION RATE



Source: 2005, 2008 and 2011 *Social and Economic Impact Study of Gambling in Tasmania* surveys

The gambling participation rate has decreased from 85 per cent in 2005, to 71.7 per cent in 2008, and then to 65.2 per cent in 2011. Analysis suggests that these decreases are statistically significant.

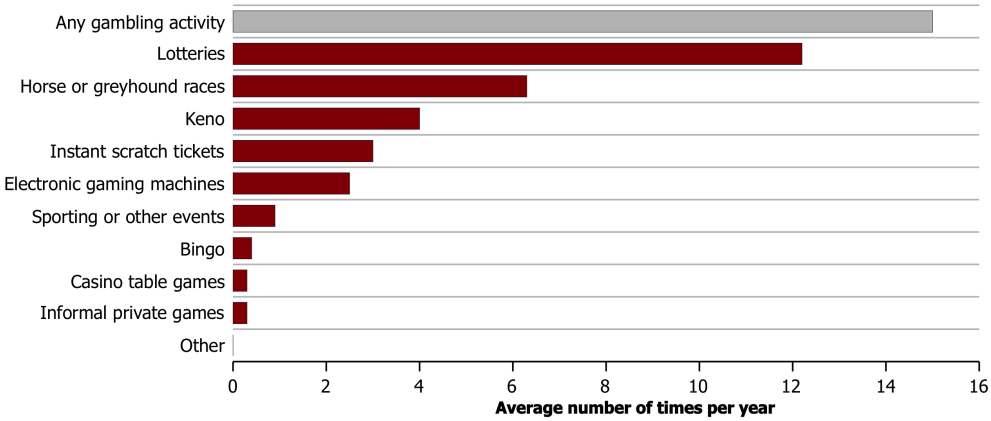
A comparison of the results from the 2008 and 2011 surveys suggests that participation rates for EGMs, horse and greyhound racing, scratch tickets, lotteries, table games and informal games have all decreased since 2008, and that these decreases were statistically significant. The only gambling activity where participation increased since 2008 was sports betting, albeit only to a small degree.

3.2 Frequency

Gambling frequency represents the average number of times a person gambles on a particular activity over a certain period. Figure 3.3 presents survey estimates of gambling frequency by gambling activity, and gambling as a whole, for the average Tasmanian adult.

Figure 3.3

GAMBLING FREQUENCY FOR THE AVERAGE TASMANIAN ADULT, BY GAMBLING ACTIVITY, 2010-11



Source: 2011 *Social and Economic Impact Study of Gambling in Tasmania* survey

Gambling activities undertaken most frequently by Tasmanian adults in the 12 months prior to March 2011 were lotteries, horse or greyhound racing, Keno and instant scratch tickets.

Regular (weekly) gambling was most common among those who gamble on lotteries, horse or greyhound racing and bingo.

Relative to Tasmanian gamblers as a whole, the average number of times people gambled in the 12 months prior to March 2011 was:

- statistically higher among males, people aged 65 or more, pensioners, and people who are unable to work; and
- statistically lower among females, people aged 18-24, couples with children at home, single people with children at home, people living in group/shared households, people who primarily engage in household duties, students, people who report annual personal incomes of between $80,000 and $129,999, and people with a tertiary education.

Relative to Tasmanian gamblers as a whole, the average number of times people gambled on EGMs in the 12 months prior to March 2011 was:

- statistically higher among people aged 55 or over, and retirees; and
- statistically lower among people aged 18-24, people aged 35-54, couples with children at home, people living in group/shared households, people who primarily engage in household duties, students, people looking for work, people with annual personal incomes of between $65,000 and $79,999, people with annual personal incomes of $130,000 or more, and people who have completed secondary school only.

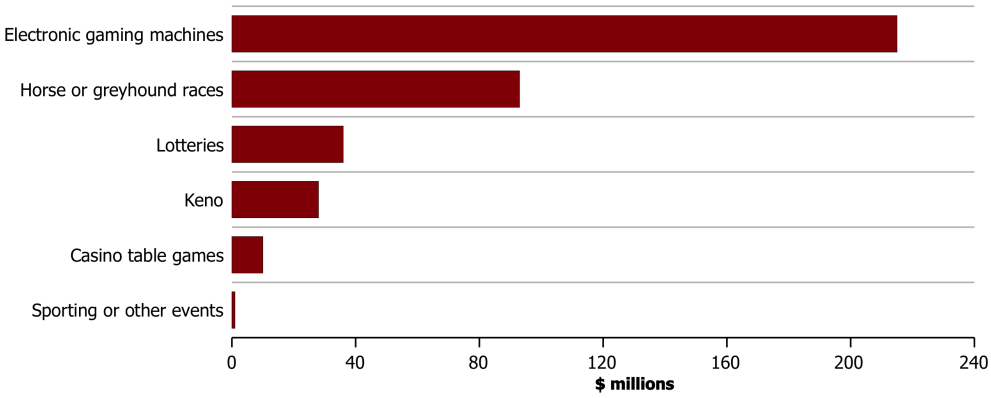
3.3 Expenditure

Figure 3.4 presents figures for total expenditure on each gambling activity in Tasmania in 2009-10. Note that, rather than using the survey results on expenditure, these figures are based on data collected by the Tasmanian Government, as it is more accurate than the survey results.

The overall level of expenditure on each activity is highest for EGMs, with horse/ greyhound races and lotteries being second and third highest.

Figure 3.4

TOTAL GAMBLING EXPENDITURE, BY GAMBLING ACTIVITY, 2009-10



Notes: Estimates for horse or greyhound races and sporting or other events exclude expenditure on services provided by Betfair Australia. Expenditure on instant scratch tickets is included in the lotteries figure. Figures for Bingo and informal games are not collected by the Tasmanian Government.

In analysis of gambling expenditure recorded by the computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI), it was found that relative to the average for Tasmanian gamblers as a whole, average annual gambling expenditure was:

- statistically higher among males; and
- statistically lower among females, people aged 18-24, people aged 35-44, single people with children at home, people living in group/shared households, people who primarily engage in household duties, students, and people whose highest level of education is primary school.

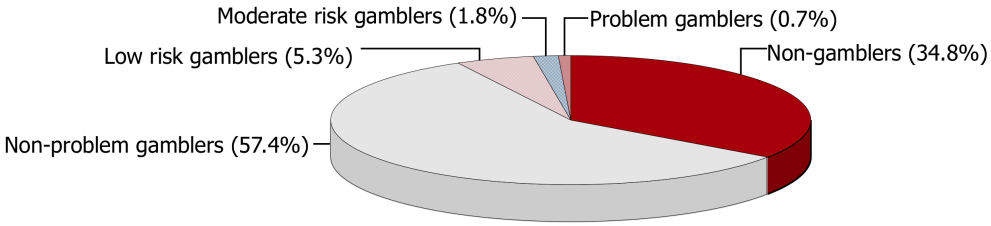
Relative to the average for Tasmanian EGM gamblers as a whole, average annual expenditure on EGMs was statistically lower among people aged 18-24, couples with children at home, people living in group/shared households, people who primarily engage in household duties, students, people with annual personal incomes of less than $25,000, people with annual personal incomes of between $80,000 and $129,999, and people who were born in a country other than Australia.

3.4 Problem gambling prevalence

Problem gambling prevalence rates were estimated according to the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) categories. Figure 3.5 presents survey estimates of the proportion of Tasmania's adult population in each PGSI category.

Figure 3.5

GAMBLING PREVALENCE, BY PGSI CATEGORY, 2011



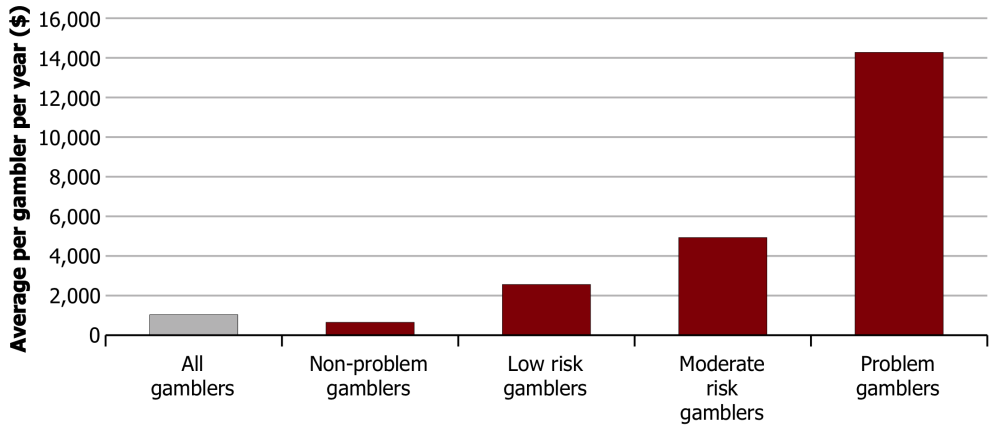
Source: 2011 *Social and Economic Impact Study of Gambling in Tasmania* survey

Of Tasmania's total population, 34.8 per cent are estimated to be non-gamblers, 57.4 per cent are non-problem gamblers, 5.3 per cent are low risk gamblers, 1.8 per cent are moderate risk gamblers, and 0.7 per cent are problem gamblers.

Figure 3.6 presents survey estimates of average expenditure per gambler per year for all gamblers and by PGSI category.

Figure 3.6

AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER GAMBLER PER YEAR, BY PGSI CATEGORY AND ALL GAMBLERS, 2010-11



Source: 2011 *Social and Economic Impact Study of Gambling in Tasmania* survey

Average annual expenditure on gambling in the 12 months prior to March 2011 was by far the highest among problem gamblers ($14,300), followed by moderate risk gamblers ($4,900), low risk gamblers ($2,600), and non-problem gamblers ($700). Average annual expenditure among Tasmanian gamblers as a whole was around $1,000.

Table 3.1 presents survey estimates of the proportion of total expenditure on each gambling activity, and gambling as a whole, by PGSI category. Note that estimates for some gambling activities are provided at the aggregated PGSI level (for example, moderate risk and problem gamblers are merged into one category). This is due to small sample sizes for some gambling activities when split according to PGSI category.

Table 3.1

PROPORTION OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE FOR EACH GAMBLING ACTIVITY, BY PGSI CATEGORY, 2011

Gambling activity	PGSI category			
	Non-problem gambler	Low risk gambler	Moderate risk gambler	Problem gambler
Electronic gaming machines	27.5%	24.8%	24.8%	22.9%
Instant scratch tickets	74.9%	15.1%	5.1%	4.9%
Lotteries	80.7%	14.1%	3.3%	1.9%
Horse or greyhound races	54.3%	21.8%	23.9%	
Keno	45.7%	27.5%	26.8%	
Sporting or other events	61.1%	12.6%	26.3%	
Casino table games	45.5%	19.2%	35.2%	
Bingo & informal private games	73.9%	26.1%		
All gambling activity	**55.9%**	**18.9%**	**10.8%**	**14.5%**

Notes: Only estimates with a relative standard error of less than 50 per cent are reported.

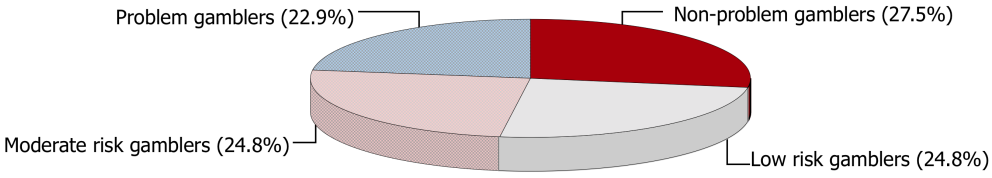
Source: 2011 *Social and Economic Impact Study of Gambling in Tasmania* survey

In the 12 months prior to March 2011, moderate risk/problem gamblers contributed 25 per cent of total expenditure on gambling by Tasmanians. Over the same period, however, moderate risk/problem gamblers contributed 48 per cent of total expenditure on EGMs, and 35 per cent of total expenditure on casino table games. Moderate risk/problem gamblers contributed 10 per cent of total expenditure on instant scratch tickets, and 5 per cent of total expenditure on lotteries.

Figure 3.7 depicts survey estimates of the proportion of total expenditure on EGMs by PGSI category, consistent with Table 3.1.

Figure 3.7

PROPORTION OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON EGMs, BY PGSI CATEGORY, 2011



Source: 2011 *Social and Economic Impact Study of Gambling in Tasmania* survey

The results of statistical tests suggest that, relative to non-problem gamblers:

- average annual expenditure on EGMs was statistically higher among problem gamblers and low risk gamblers;
- average annual expenditure on Keno was statistically higher among moderate and low risk gamblers; and

- average annual expenditure on horse and greyhound racing was statistically higher among low risk gamblers.

Problem gamblers are statistically more likely to be less than 45 years of age, and more likely to be in paid employment than not in paid employment.

As a group, moderate risk and problem gamblers are more likely to have personal incomes below $65,000 than above $65,000, and more likely to be born in Australia than overseas.

Multivariate analysis was undertaken to identify which socio-demographic factors and gambling activities are associated with problem gambling. The findings suggest a positive relationship between problem gambling severity and:

- younger age;
- a lack of dependent children in household;
- failure to complete secondary school; and
- frequent use of EGMs, Keno, sports betting, horse/greyhound race betting and instant scratch tickets.

Relative to non-problem gamblers, the average number of gambling activities participated in over the 12 months prior to March 2011 was statistically higher among problem gamblers, moderate risk gamblers and low risk gamblers.

3.5 EGM patterns of play

Overall, EGM gamblers spent an average of 56 minutes playing EGMs per visit to EGM venues. The proportion of EGM gamblers who gambled for 31 to 60 minutes was statistically higher among moderate risk/problem gamblers relative to non-problem gamblers.

The proportion of EGM gamblers who engaged in the following styles of play was statistically higher among moderate risk/problem gamblers relative to non-problem gamblers:

- gambling alone;
- spending all available money, including winnings, during a session;
- drinking alcohol while playing;
- playing for bonus features (for example, free spins or free games); and
- playing on EGMs that have linked jackpots.

The majority (85.1 per cent) of EGM gamblers travelled more than one kilometre from home to visit their regular EGM venue. Between the different PGSI categories there was no statistical difference in the distance travelled.

Among EGM gamblers, two cent machines were the most popular (52.1 per cent) denomination played. The proportion of EGM gamblers who usually played one cent machines was statistically lower for moderate risk/problem gamblers relative to non-problem gamblers. The majority (63.5 per cent) of EGM gamblers usually played one credit per line. The majority (66.1 per cent) of EGM gamblers usually spent under 50 cents per spin. The proportion of EGM gamblers who usually spent less than 50 cents per spin was statistically lower among moderate risk/problem gamblers relative to non-problem gamblers.

3.6 Motivations

The motivations of gamblers were analysed according to five domains: enhancement reasons, recreation reasons, social reasons, coping reasons and money reasons.

Enhancement reasons

Enhancement reasons included in the survey were competition, excitement, mental challenge and achievement. Of all these reasons, excitement was the most common motivating factor reported by gamblers overall, followed by sense of achievement when winning, the mental challenge (or to learn about the game), and to compete with others. The proportion of people who gambled for these reasons was statistically higher among moderate risk/problem gamblers relative to non-problem gamblers.

Recreation reasons

Recreation reasons included in the survey were fun, hobby, boredom and relaxation. Of all these reasons, fun was the most common motivating factor reported by gamblers overall, followed by hobby or a pastime, to escape boredom (or to fill time), and to relax. Endorsement of all of these recreation reasons was statistically higher among moderate risk/problem gamblers relative to non-problem gamblers.

Social reasons

Social reasons included in the survey were sociability, and something to do with friends or family. Of these two reasons, something to do with friends or family was the most common motivating factor reported by gamblers overall. Endorsement of all of these sociability reasons was statistically higher among moderate risk/problem gamblers relative to non-problem gamblers.

Coping reasons

Coping reasons included in the survey were to impress other people, and because it helps when feeling tense. For gamblers overall, neither of these two motivating factors were regarded as reasons for gambling. However, around a quarter of moderate risk/problem gamblers reported that they gambled at least sometimes because it helps when feeling tense.

Money reasons

Money reasons included in the survey were chance of winning big money, and to make money. Of these two reasons, the chance of winning big money was the most common factor reported by gamblers overall. Endorsement of these money reasons was statistically higher among moderate risk/problem gamblers relative to non-problem gamblers.

3.7 Triggers

The most common gambling triggers among gamblers overall were situations involving: pleasant, happy or good feelings; alcohol consumption; winning; confidence about skills; a need for excitement; and temptations to gamble.

The proportion of people who gambled in response to the following triggers was statistically higher among moderate risk/problem gamblers relative to non-problem gamblers:

- difficulties with others;
- being worried about debt;
- having unpleasant, sad or bad feelings;
- to test their control over gambling;
- temptations to gamble;
- feeling confident about skills;
- situations involving winning;
- pleasant, happy or good feelings; and
- experiencing a need for excitement.

3.8 Other characteristics

The proportion of the population who regarded themselves as having a good/very good quality of life, or good/very good overall health, was statistically lower among problem gamblers relative to non-gamblers.

The proportion of the population who reported experiencing the following health, emotional and social deficits was statistically higher among problem gamblers relative to non-problem gamblers:

- lower ability to get around;
- lower satisfaction with ability to perform daily activities;
- lower 'meaningfulness' of life;
- lower satisfaction with personal relationships;
- lower satisfaction with support from friends;
- lower satisfaction with access to health services; and
- lower satisfaction with transport.

The proportion of the population who reported smoking daily or using any drug (excluding smoking and cigarettes) was statistically higher among problem gamblers relative to non-problem gamblers.

The proportion of the population who regarded themselves as having good, very good or excellent health was statistically lower among problem gamblers relative to non-problem gamblers.

The proportion of the population who had a physical condition that affected their day-to-day life was statistically higher among moderate risk/problem gamblers relative to non-problem gamblers.

The proportion of the population who at least sometimes missed, skipped or avoided any type of payment was statistically higher among problem gamblers relative to non-problem gamblers. Moreover, the proportion of people who at least sometimes engaged in behaviours designed to obtain additional money was statistically higher among problem gamblers relative to non-problem gamblers.

4. Clients of gambling support services

A significant number of gambling support services are provided each year around Tasmania. The demand for these services is an indication, albeit partial, of the prevalence of problem gambling behaviours in the community.

Client demographic data provided by the Tasmanian Government Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) suggests that people accessing support services are:

- as likely to be male as female;
- likely to be older rather than younger;
- likely to be married;
- likely to have experienced harms associated with gambling for at least a year or more before accessing help;
- likely to have been referred to the service by a family member, friend or neighbours;
- more likely to gamble on EGMs than to use other forms of gambling; and
- more likely to access EGMs that are in their local areas.

The available information indicates that the majority of people who accessed face-to-face problem gambling counselling services attended between one and five sessions. There is no indication of the outcomes derived, due to a lack of measurement. However, additional research undertaken by the Gambling Support Program in 2010 suggests that the outcomes for clients from therapeutic counselling have been positive.

The underlying issue for gambling support service providers, pointed out in consultations and submissions, is twofold:

- many problem gamblers do not self-identify — they may not access formal, funded problem gambling support and are not captured in the data; and
- if a problem gambler does identify and seek help, it is usually only after a long period of time, and when they have 'hit rock bottom'.

It is acknowledged that a significant number of clients experiencing gambling problems may seek support services, such as financial counselling, but not self-identify as a problem gambler.

5. Gambling at the local level

Findings in relation to local aspects of gambling in Tasmania were based on the results of the survey and data from other sources. The survey focussed on eight specific LGAs comprising four lower socioeconomic status (SES) LGAs and four comparison LGAs. The LGA focus was intended to identify whether there are differential impacts of gambling on the basis of LGA characteristics. It should be noted that LGA comparisons were only possible in instances where there were sufficient respondents to specific survey questions.

The eight LGAs subject to focussed analyses were chosen based on a combination of their Socioeconomic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) scores and EGM density. Four LGAs with lower SEIFA scores were chosen to reflect lower SES (Brighton, Break O'Day, Glenorchy and Devonport). To provide a basis for comparison, four LGAs with relatively higher SEIFA scores (Sorell, Circular Head, Launceston and Clarence) were included. The analysis identified a number of differences between individual LGAs, and the two LGA groupings, on a range of measures. These included EGM density, expenditure, and gambling frequency.

5.1 Overview of 'focus' LGAs

Table 5.1 presents an overview of gambling related statistics for the eight focus LGAs and for Tasmania as a whole, including the number of EGMs, EGM venues, other gambling venues, persons per EGM, and population.

Table 5.1

OVERVIEW OF FOCUS LGAS

LGA	EGM number	EGM Venues	Other gambling venues[a]	Persons per EGM	Adult population
Lower SES LGAs					
Brighton	60	2	1	263	15,807
Break O'Day	45	2	2	142	6,410
Glenorchy	270	9	7	165	44,628
Devonport	230	8	5	111	25,518
Comparison LGAs					
Circular Head	50	2	1	166	8,300
Launceston	346	13	8	189	65,548
Sorell	70	3	4	188	13,127
Clarence	165	6	2	316	52,140
Tasmania	**3,658**[b]	**102**	**88**	**108**	**396,538**

Note: [a] 'Other gambling venues' include those venues which provide Keno and TOTE only and do not have EGMs. [b] There are also 46 EGMs on the two Spirit of Tasmania ships.

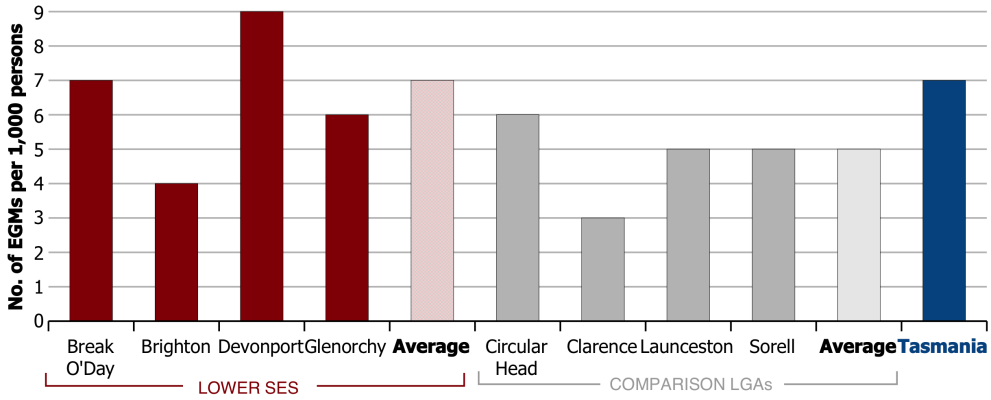
5.2 Socioeconomic status

EGMs per 1,000 persons

Figure 5.1 shows the number of EGMs per 1,000 persons in the eight focus LGAs. The two LGAs with the highest EGM density are Break O'Day and Devonport, both in the lower SES group. Two of the LGAs with the lowest number of EGMs per capita are Sorell and Clarence, which also have the highest SEIFA scores among this group of LGAs.

Figure 5.1

NUMBER OF EGMS PER 1,000 PERSONS, BY LGA, 2011



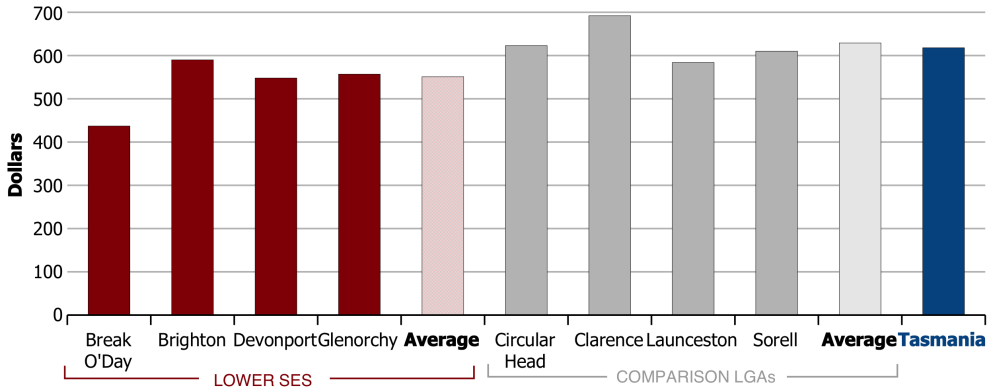
Note: The 'Average' columns are a population weighted average

Household income

Figure 5.2 shows the median gross weekly household income for the eight focus LGAs, as well as Tasmania. As shown, median income in the four lower SES LGAs is lower than the average for Tasmania as a whole, while median income in the four comparison LGAs is either close to the Tasmanian average, or higher.

Figure 5.2

MEDIAN GROSS WEEKLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME, BY LGA, 2006



Note: The 'Average' columns are a population weighted average.

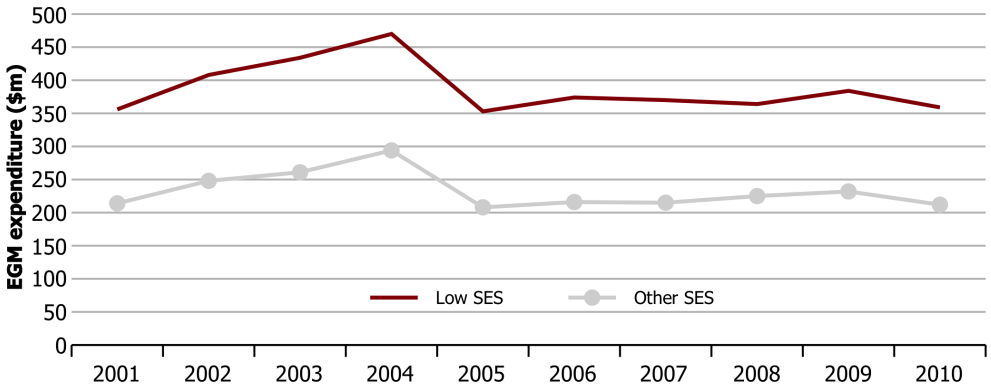
EGM expenditure

Figure 5.3 depicts the trend for EGM expenditure in both the lower SES and comparison LGAs over the period 2001 to 2010. EGM expenditure in the lower SES LGAs was consistently higher than in the comparison LGAs over the 2000s. However, the pattern of growth has been approximately the same between the two groupings over the period.

The drop in expenditure in 2005 occurred shortly after the introduction of smoking bans in January 2005. The expenditure trend for these two LGA groupings largely follows that of the whole of Tasmania.

Figure 5.3

TREND FOR EGM EXPENDITURE PER CAPITA, BY LGA GROUPINGS



Notes: Figures are expressed in 2009-10 prices

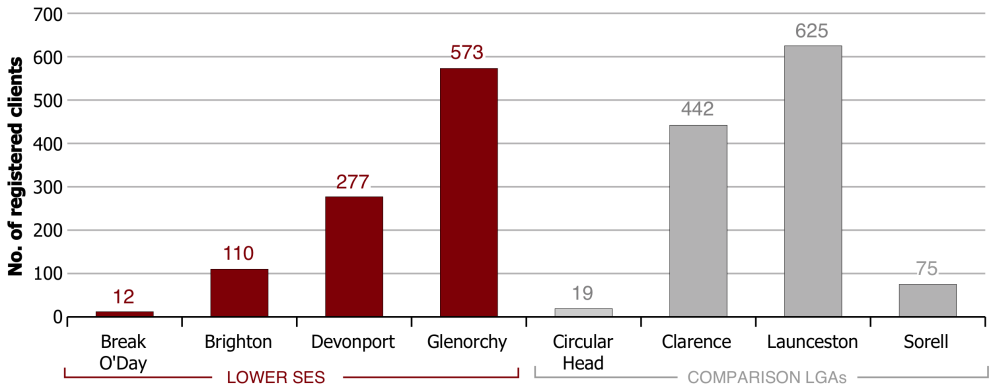
Source: Allen Consulting Group analysis

Gambling support service uptake

Figure 5.4, shows the number of clients in each of the eight focus LGAs that registered with Gamblers Help support services from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2010. The numbers vary greatly between the LGAs, which is to be expected given differences in the size of the local populations.

Figure 5.4

REGISTRATIONS FOR FACE-TO-FACE GAMBLING SUPPORT SERVICES, BY LGA, 2000 TO 2010



Source: Unpublished DHHS data

5.3 Key differences between focus LGAs and LGA groupings

Table 2.5 lists the key findings from the 2011 survey in relation to differences between individual LGAs, and LGA groupings.

Table 5.2

KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FOCUS LGAs AND LGA GROUPINGS

Survey data	Key findings
Participation in gambling activities	Overall, gambling participation was highest in Devonport, Glenorchy and Sorell Participation in EGMs was most common in Glenorchy, Sorell, Devonport and Launceston Participation in EGMs, instant scratch tickets, Keno and bingo was higher in lower SES LGAs relative to the rest of State
Gambling frequency	Gambling frequency was highest in Brighton, followed by Clarence, rest of State, Glenorchy, and Devonport
Expenditure on gambling	Gambling expenditure was highest in the low SES LGAs of Devonport, Brighton, and Glenorchy More generally, expenditure in the low SES LGAs was significantly higher than expenditure in the comparison LGAs
Problem gambling prevalence	Moderate risk/problem gambling and low risk gambling rates were highest in the low SES LGAs
Distance travelled to regular EGM venue	Relative to Tasmanians as a whole, EGM gamblers from Devonport were significantly more likely to travel less than five kilometres to their usual EGM venue

Notes: Where LGAs are only mentioned in groupings, the analysis has not gone to the individual LGA level.

Source: 2011 *Social and Economic Impact Study of Gambling in Tasmania* survey

6. Impacts of gambling

6.1 Contribution to the economy

This study also sought to estimate the impacts of gambling on all industries across the Tasmanian market economy using computable general equilibrium modelling.

The key finding from this analysis is that Tasmania's gambling industry provides a positive contribution to gross state product, employment and household consumption. In particular, Tasmania's gambling industry is estimated to increase these measures by between 0.5 and 1 per cent.

This positive contribution is largely attributable to Tasmania's gambling industry export of gambling services to other jurisdictions. Further, the large majority of these exports are wagering services provided by TOTE Tasmania and Betfair Australia. If Tasmania's wagering industry did not export any services to other jurisdictions, the overall economic contribution from Tasmania's gambling industry would be small, if not negligible.

6.2 Qualitative perspective of benefits and costs

Gambling is a common recreational pursuit for Australians. Industry stakeholders who were consulted as part of this study argued that gaming may provide a range of social benefits, such as enjoyment for individuals. Gambling may also provide a range of indirect or intangible benefits to local communities, including improved quality of life for the elderly, secure environments, high quality facilities in which community members can socialise, and greater social cohesion.

However, it is widely acknowledged in the literature and among stakeholders — including industry and support service providers alike — that some types of gambling have the potential for causing significant harm and that this distinguishes gambling from other recreational activities. These harms include significant social costs such as:

- impacts associated with debt and bankruptcy on individuals and families;
- effects on productivity and employment;
- crime (including theft, fraud, legal costs, and imprisonment);
- personal and family costs (including divorce, separation, depression and suicide);
- treatment costs (including the funding of counselling services); and
- other health costs associated with co-morbidity issues such as depression.

More extreme harms (such as bankruptcy, crime and imprisonment) were not cited widely by stakeholders. However, many examples were provided, including in structured group interviews, about the prevalence of harms such as personal and family distress, and depression.

The realisation of the social benefits outlined was also questioned by other stakeholders. For example, many of the social benefits cited by some stakeholders were argued by others not to be attributable to the gambling industry.

6.3 Quantitative perspective of benefits and costs

This study sought to estimate (in quantitative terms) impacts on those who participate in the gambling industry or are affected by it, namely gamblers, gambling providers, the government and society more broadly.

The analysis finds that gamblers, gambling providers and Tasmanians more broadly (through gambling taxes) all attain quantifiable benefits as a result of legalised gambling in the State. For example, Table 6.1 details that consumer surplus to non-problem/low risk gamblers is estimated to be in the order of $77 million to $124 million. The majority of this is attributable to spending on EGMs and lotteries.

Table 6.1

ESTIMATED CONSUMER SURPLUS TO NON-PROBLEM/LOW RISK GAMBLERS IN TASMANIA, BY GAMBLING ACTIVITY, 2011 ($ MILLIONS)

Gambling type	Consumer surplus
Table games	$2.3 - $3.8
EGMs	$42.1 - $68.4
Lotteries	$13.4 - $21.7
Keno	$7.9 - $12.9
Race wagering	$7.2 - $11.8
Sports betting	$0.1 - $0.1
Minor gaming	$3.5 - $5.7
All gambling	**$76.5 - $124.4**

Source: Allen Consulting Group analysis

However, it is acknowledged that gambling is associated with quantifiable costs to families of problem gamblers, problem gamblers themselves, and the community more broadly. Drawing upon analysis previously undertaken by the Productivity Commission, Table 6.2 indicates that costs associated with problem gambling in Tasmania vary, depending on the assumed applicability to moderate risk gamblers of prevalence rates from a 1999 Productivity Commission survey. If it is assumed that prevalence rates for social costs among moderate risk gamblers are half the prevalence rates among problem gamblers, the costs of problem gambling in Tasmania are estimated in 2011 to be between $51 million and $144 million.

The large majority of these costs (around 85 to 90 per cent) fall within the category of personal and family costs. In particular, costs of emotional distress to parents and immediate family members account for approximately half of total costs (around 47 to 60 per cent).

Table 6.2

ESTIMATED COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH PROBLEM GAMBLING IN TASMANIA (2011, $ MILLIONS)

	Estimated cost under each scenario		
	Narrow application of PC survey results	Moderate application of PC survey results	Broad application of PC survey results
Financial			
Bankruptcy	$0.3	$0.4	$0.5
Productivity and employment			
Productivity loss at work	$0.8-$5.6	$1.1-$7.7	$1.4-$9.9
Job change			
earnings loss	$0.9	$1.3	$1.6
employee job search	$0.3	$0.5	$0.6
employer staff replacement cost	$0.6	$0.8	$1.0
Crime and legal			
Cost of police incidents	$0.1	$0.1	$0.1
Court cases	$1.0	$1.3	$1.7
Jail costs	$0.7	$1.0	$1.3
Personal and family			
Emotional distress of immediate family	$17-$50.9	$23.5-$70.6	$30.1-$90.4
Emotional distress of parents	$0-$11.2	$0-$15.6	$0-$19.9
Financial cost of divorce and separation	$0.2	$0.2	$0.3
Emotional cost of divorce	$3.1-$9.4	$4.4-$13.1	$5.6-$16.8
Cost of violence	$0.4-$1.2	$0.5-$1.6	$0.7-$2.1
Depression	$0.1-$0.2	$0.1-$0.3	$0.1-$0.4
Thought of suicide	$4-$8	$5.6-$11.1	$7.1-$14.2
Attempted suicide	$2.5 - $4.1	$3.4 - $5.7	$4.4 - $7.3
impact on immediate family	$3.5-$7.1	$4.9-$9.8	$6.3-$12.6
impact on parents	$0-$0.9	$0-$1.3	$0-$1.6
Treatment costs			
Problem gambling programs funded through Community Support Levy	$1.5	$1.5	$1.5
Total	**$37-$104**	**$51-$144**	**$64-$184**

Notes: [1] Estimated prevalence rates from the *Survey of Clients of Counselling Agencies 1999* are applied under three different scenarios: Narrow application (100% of PGs and 25% of MRGs); Moderate application (100% of PGs and 50% MRGs); and Broad application (100% of PGs and 75% of MRGs), where PGs = Problem Gamblers and MRGs = Moderate Risk Gamblers.

Source: Allen Consulting Group analysis

The analysis does not draw any conclusions regarding the net social benefit (or aggregate 'social surplus') of Tasmania's gambling industry. Moreover, it is inadvisable to attempt to draw such conclusions by subtracting estimates of total costs from total benefits.

Regardless of these uncertainties, one finding that is consistent across all cost estimates is that EGMs tend to be associated with higher participation by problem gamblers and, therefore, higher gambling related social costs. This is potentially attributable to the estimate that 83 per cent of total gambling expenditure by moderate risk/problem gamblers is on EGMs. In comparison, a smaller estimated share (55 per cent) of total gambling expenditure by non-problem/low risk gamblers is on EGMs.

The quantitative estimates from this analysis are not comparable with the results of the analysis into the economic contribution of gambling to the economy. This comparison is not possible because the results of these two analyses are interpreted differently. In particular, benefit cost analyses generally focus on a single industry and capture impacts on industry participants as well as those affected by it. General equilibrium analyses focus on all industries across the whole market economy and capture impacts on economic aggregates such as gross state product and household consumption. Neither approach is more accurate or appropriate. They simply reflect different perspectives.

7. Evaluation of harm minimisation measures

7.1 Outline of measures

Prior to 2008, Tasmania had several venue- and machine-specific measures in place that were ahead of current practice in other jurisdictions. These measures are all still in place and include:

- prohibiting automatic teller machines in gaming venues (with the exclusion of the two casinos);
- prohibiting smoking inside a licensed venue (Tasmania was the first state to do so);
- ensuring that no venues operate gaming for 24 hours (with the exclusion of casinos);
- ensuring that competitive advertising of gaming is moderated, partly through the brand name of 'Oasis' and partly through the industry voluntary codes of practice;
- ensuring that EGMs with note acceptors are not permitted in hotels and clubs, and autoplay is prohibited; and
- introducing a maximum bet limit of $10 in clubs and hotels.

The Tasmanian Gambling Exclusion Scheme has also been in place since 2001. The scheme allows patrons to be excluded from gambling venues or from participating in gambling.

Following the release in 2008 of the previous *Social and Economic Impact Study of Gambling in Tasmania*, the State Government began introducing a range of additional harm minimisation measures to address problem gambling across the State.

As part of the Mandatory Code of Practice due to commence in March 2012, gambling operators across all forms of gaming and wagering will be required to introduce a range of restrictions to, among others, advertising, player loyalty programs, and inducements.

Generally, there is now a moderate to good evidence base for almost all the harm minimisation measures introduced and proposed for Tasmania.

Further, when compared with other jurisdictions, mandated harm minimisation measures in Tasmania (as categorised by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) are among the most comprehensive. The only non-mandated area is provision for cashless gaming.

7.2 Evaluation method

A key component of this study was the evaluation of the effectiveness of existing harm minimisation measures in Tasmania. These measures were evaluated through:

- analysis of whether measures meet established criteria for a gambling harm minimisation framework;
- applying an evidence framework specifically for harm minimisation analysis; and
- assessing the effectiveness of these harm minimisation measures.

In undertaking this evaluation, a number of data collection techniques were used, including:

- a literature search;
- analysis of stakeholder consultations with industry, local government and support service providers;
- analysis of the 2011 survey results; and
- analysis of themes and messages from structured group interviews.

7.3 Views of gamblers about harm minimisation measures

Both a survey and thirteen structured group interviews were undertaken as part of this project. Both provided insights into the awareness and opinions of Tasmanian consumers about a number of aspects of the gambling environment, and in particular: awareness of harm minimisation measures; support or opposition to the measures; and assessments of the measures' effectiveness.

Self-exclusion scheme

Just over two-thirds of EGM gamblers reported being aware of the Tasmanian Gambling Exclusion Scheme. However, somewhat surprisingly, fewer moderate risk gamblers and problem gamblers were aware of the Scheme compared to non-problem gamblers. There is a high level of support for third party exclusion.

Advertising

Advertising of sports betting was highly criticised. With respect to problem gambling advertising, the 'House edge' advertisement featuring 'Jack' (a component of the Know Your Odds Campaign) showed almost universal reach to survey and interview participants. There were extremely high levels of unprompted recall among the structured group interview participants.

Harm minimisation measures

Nearly 96 per cent of EGM gamblers were aware of the smoking ban in venues (despite the fact that this was introduced as an occupational health and safety measure, it may have had a secondary harm minimisation function). However, generally fewer than one-third were aware of any specific harm minimisation measures currently in place, except for the restriction on numbers of EGMs per venue (37.8 per cent). The lowest level of awareness was recorded for the reduction of EGM lines (13.8 per cent).

Of these measures, the greatest change to enjoyment was experienced in relation to the smoking ban — 34.6 per cent of those surveyed reported that the ban had impacted on their enjoyment (27.6 per cent reported increased enjoyment and 7.0 per cent reported decreased enjoyment).

Bans on ATMs in venues

The existing ban on ATMs in hotels and clubs with EGMs was strongly supported by the structured group interview participants. The ban was seen to contribute to non-impulsive gambling and to create breaks in play that may actually act as a disincentive to continue playing after a spend limit is reached. The exemption of casinos from the ban on ATMs had little support.

Bans on note acceptors

Bans on note acceptors on EGMs located in hotels and clubs were generally supported, including a low limit on note acceptors in casinos.

Pre-commitment regime

A majority of structured group interview participants did not favour mandatory pre-commitment, although there was some conditional support for voluntary pre-commitment. It should be noted that this is an Australian Government proposal, not a Tasmanian Government harm minimisation measure. However, given its salience as a political issue at the time the interviews were conducted, many participants wished to express an opinion on the concept of pre-commitment.

Impact of measures

The majority of survey respondents indicated that there was no change to their spend or enjoyment as a result of the reduction in lines played, maximum bet per spin and amount that can be inserted into note acceptors in new EGMs.

The majority of respondents considered that measures proposed in the draft Mandatory Code of Practice (as at March 2011) would result in either no change to their spend, or a decrease in spend. Not serving food or alcohol to EGM players after 6pm recorded both the largest anticipated decrease in spend (22.4 per cent) and also the highest rate of anticipated decrease in enjoyment (28.4 per cent).

Moderate risk/problem gamblers believed their spend would be impacted by:

- reducing the amount they could withdraw from an EFTPOS machine for gambling or from an ATM at the casino;
- restricting the payment of cash for EGM payouts;
- locating highly visible clocks on gaming room walls;
- allowing only socially responsible advertising of gambling.

Moderate risk/problem gamblers perceived that all proposed measures would impact more on their enjoyment than on the enjoyment of non-problem gamblers.

Distribution of EGMs

An issue continually raised by survey respondents was the distribution of EGMs. Specifically, the dispersal of EGMs to a number of smaller venues as distinct from a single destination venue gaming model was seen as a product of a non-competitive market. In a context where venues are relatively small and widely dispersed, it was considered that the current approach means there are limited opportunities for patrons to move to non-gaming areas.

7.4 Views of other stakeholders about harm minimisation measures

The overall project included an extensive statewide and local stakeholder consultation process. The awareness and opinions of stakeholders — industry, local government and support service providers — in relation to existing and proposed harm minimisation measures was quite varied.

There was some consensus between stakeholder groups on issues such as improvements to staff training and the burden placed on venue staff.

The consultations were undertaken prior to the final details of some harm minimisation measures being released, in particular the Mandatory Code of Practice. Therefore, the relevance of some stakeholder comments changed during the reporting period. Where this has occurred it is noted in the text. The key findings, by stakeholder group, are as follows.

Industry peak bodies and associations

Industry peak bodies suggested that stricter restrictions implemented only in Tasmania, such as the Mandatory Code of Practice, would mean gamblers would choose to gamble elsewhere. However, industry stakeholders did not provide any evidence about the extent to which this is currently occurring, evidence about the likelihood of further harm minimisation measures resulting in these outcomes, or evidence about the impact of these outcomes.

The extent of regulation on different gambling forms was seen as an issue. For lottery operators, an issue was raised about the extent of regulation on this 'less risky' form of gambling; however, the release of the Mandatory Code (finalised after the consultation process for this study) may have alleviated some of these concerns. For many industry groups, the impact of online gambling was a concern. It was felt that players would substitute away from terrestrial gaming if stronger restrictions were put in place.

Venue operators

Most venue operators consulted were aware of the forthcoming Mandatory Code of Practice but many operators were not aware of specific content. They advised that the Code might have some impact on problem gamblers and that it would be unlikely to have a significant impact on recreational gamblers. However, as most restrictions are already in place, it was felt that the impact of the remaining changes on problem gamblers would be limited.

All venue operators consulted were aware of the Tasmanian Gambling Self-Exclusion Scheme. They adhered strongly to it by providing re-awareness training for staff, and regularly looking up the Scheme database. However, the ability to enforce the regime was questioned. For those venue operators in smaller regional areas it was seen as easier to enforce because they knew their customers personally.

Venue operators expressed confusion about what they can and cannot do under current regulations. It appears to venue operators that there are multiple policies and regulations that require compliance, but little or no guidance about what they should actually do. Accordingly, most harm minimisation measures in place in venues (outside those required by legislation) were largely based on venue staffs' relationships with customers, such as in-house self-exclusion schemes.

Alternative harm minimisation measures supported by industry (including peak bodies and associations) included increasing funding to support service providers and potentially a *voluntary* pre-commitment scheme. However, collectively, industry was strongly against a mandatory pre-commitment regime.

Support service providers

Support service providers agreed that the Mandatory Code of Practice is a step in the right direction. Measures particularly supported were: reducing the times that gambling can be advertised in the electronic media; restricting access to cash via credit cards; prohibiting the cashing of 'winnings' cheques on the same day; and improving lighting in venues. Support service providers felt there would be little negative impact on venues from introducing these measures and that the measures were 'largely on target' for providing environments that do not induce people to gamble recklessly.

A *mandatory* pre-commitment scheme was widely supported by support service providers. They considered that any reduction in venue revenue would be justified, as it would largely come from problem gamblers, not recreational gamblers.

While support service providers were in favour of the Tasmanian Gambling Self-Exclusion Scheme, they agreed that a few enhancements were required. A particular concern was that counsellors are not being contacted by venues when someone breaches the Exclusion Scheme. DTF and DHHS have advised, however, that work has been done to improve this communication.

Support services suggested a number of additional harm minimisation measures. These include further reducing the bet limit to $1, increasing information provision to players and improved community awareness campaigns. A few support service providers (and some venue operators) also suggested compulsory income management for people experiencing significant difficulties.

Local government

The local government authorities consulted in the course of the project had commented on the harm minimisation measures in place. However, councils, especially those in low SES areas, strongly argued that they should be given more jurisdiction over gambling in their areas — such as the ability to undertake social impact studies to inform planning decisions, as is the case in other states. In addition, two of the lower SES local government authorities consulted argued that:

- the Tasmanian Gaming Commission should commission in-depth studies of the local social impact of gaming; or
- alternatively, councils should be able to undertake their own studies, funded from the Community Support Levy or similar source.

However, the limitations of these requests were recognised — it was acknowledged that any increased powers would be likely only to affect new venues, but that existing venues are an integral part of the equation. Therefore, a general study of the social impacts of gambling in an LGA may be preferred.

7.5 Overall evaluation of harm minimisation measures

The harm minimisation measures currently in place and covered by legislation or regulation, and enhancements as specified in the *Responsible Gambling Mandatory Code of Practice for Tasmania*, were assessed against a number of best practice criteria. The overall result was very positive. Measures were found to be:

- evidence based;
- sensitive to context;
- part of a comprehensive, diverse, flexible and innovative strategy;
- formulated through a consultative process;
- emphasising prevention and demand reduction;
- just and equitable;
- evaluated regularly; and
- implemented in a way that ensures stakeholders understand that harm minimisation is a norm.

7.6 Methodology for ongoing evaluation of harm minimisation measures

A detailed methodology is proposed for the ongoing evaluation of harm minimisation measures in Tasmania. A longitudinal survey can be implemented, building upon the data collected as part of this 2011 study, to track the effect of harm minimisation measures. This methodology also includes an economic evaluation to assess the cost effectiveness of the combined package of measures.