

VISION

Set your course

VISION

The Newsletter of the Central Coast Problem Gambling Service

## How to Keep Gambling Recreational and Fun

In this regular feature clients highlight their own experiences

Who's doing what to ensure a responsible gambling environment

Helpful strategies to keep you on track

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**Gamble for entertainment not so you can win enough to pay bills or increase your income**

**Expect to lose money.**

**Don't gamble with money that you need to buy food**

**Plan gambling occasions in advance.**

**Decide before you go how much money you can spend and leave the rest at home.**

**Leave credit and debit cards at home**

**Decide how long you will stay and make another commitment so you have a reason to leave**

**Make Gambling only one of your leisure activities so you can enjoy other things in life.**

**Involve yourself in other activities that are fun and exciting so have choices about what to do for recreation.**

### TIPS FOR RETIREE'S (to stay well and avoid gambling)

- Social: fun activities— dances, bowling, concerts, movies, friends.
- Physical: Tai Chi, walking, regular GP appointments, swimming, golf.
- Intellectual: Reading, courses, book club, cross word.
- Purposeful: Volunteering, visiting, teaching what you know to others.
- Emotional: Stress reduction, exercise, meditation, music, painting.
- Spiritual: Nature walks, religious gatherings, spiritual events, sing, art.
- Leisure: Gardening, cycling, boating, chess, cooking, theatre, day dreaming.

**REACH OUT, MAKE NEW FRIENDS, LAUGH OFTEN AND HAVE FUN!**

## Donor of the Month :- Everglades Country Club - Woy Woy.



A big thank you to Everglades Country Club for the monetary contribution which allowed us to purchase a digital camera/printer dock. This will be invaluable to us when our women's group begins in 2007. The support of Everglades Country Club is much appreciated and allows us to continue to reach out and assist problem gamblers/family/friends on their journey of change.

Your club or business could be our next acknowledged donor! Central Coast Problem Gambling Service is currently seeking funding to allow us to take our services to new levels of excellence : donations from industry sectors are particularly welcome and allow us to fully support and implement responsible gambling policies.



## Availability of Electronic Gaming Machines and prevalence of problem gambling— a two state comparison

**“The prevalence rate of problem gambling in Victoria is three times that of WA... it is EGM play that is the source of the problem”**

*Michael O'Neill,  
Director SACE*

**Easy access to EGMS results in high rates of problem gambling—this a key finding from a paper presented at a recent conference organised by Duty of Care.**

Mr. Michael O'Neil, Director of the South Australian Centre for Economics presented the paper at the 2006 IPIC conference held in Melbourne in September. The high profile centre is acknowledged for its work on economics by government at all levels with Australia and in the corporate sphere.

Mr O'Neil was outspoken in criticizing current government and industry policies which he emphasized were not outcome based. Good public policy has its benchmark outcomes - however current public policies with regard to gambling are not outcome based.

Quoting evidence from a consultation the Centre undertook for the Victorian Government Mr O'Neil indicated that governments were failing in their duty to protect socially vulnerable communities from the impact of Electronic

Gaming Machines.

The study on the impacts of EGM's in Victoria and WA contrasted the prevalence of problem gambling in the two states.

**“The prevalence rate of problem gambling in Victoria is three times that of WA”.** More clients in Victoria attend financial counselling with gambling problems, and the pattern of referrals confirms that it is EGM play that is the source of the problem (Victoria 86% of clients; WA 18% of clients).

**“On an annual per capita basis the actual number of new clients attending counselling services in Victoria is some 13.4 times above that in WA.** The principal cause is EGM play within the local community setting and financial counsellors experience is that gambling related financial problems are more severe in terms of harm to individuals and families (eg, more severe: Victoria 72%, WA 20%.)

Basically the study provides a direct link between the availability of EGM's and the prevalence of problem gambling and resulting problems. What is clear from the WA study is EGM's attract a new and different population to gambling—people who may never have experienced a problem related

to gambling before.

Mr O'Neil also quoted figures which showed both an emphasis on the placement of machines in Local Government Areas with lower socio-economic profiles and a resulting much higher level of gambling expenditure.

Mr O'Neil called for a reduced focus on the individual and an increased focus on protecting whole communities and populations from the effects of EGM's. He sees problem gambling as a socially conditioned phenomena from which government benefits through high rates of tax revenue.

He called for the development of outcome based policy in this area with the implementation of objectives which would protect vulnerable populations (reduction in the number of EGM's, reduction in spin rates of machines, removal of ATMs from venues and the implementation or precommitment agreements with players (which would help players to budget and

**WAYS TO CHANGE:  
HARM REDUCTION  
Counselling, SELF HELP,  
groups, Gamblers Anonymous,  
internet one-to one  
counselling , hypnotherapy,  
Sandplay, ACTION etc**



CHECK it out !  
[www. Dutyofcare.org.au](http://www.Dutyofcare.org.au)  
A website developed by ex-gamblers !

**“Gambling: The sure way of getting nothing from something”** Wilson Mizner.

## Youth Problem Gambling:

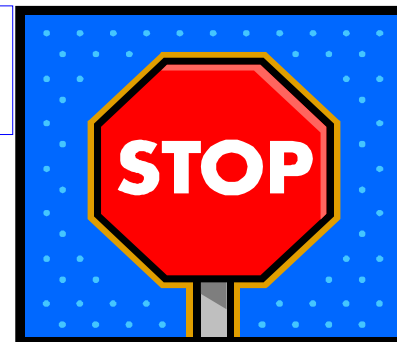
**“Gambling activities appear to be particularly attractive to today’s youth. In fact, prevalence studies conducted in the US, Canada, New Zealand, Europe and Australia have noted rising prevalence rates of youth involvement both legal and illegal forms of gambling.**

While approx 80% of High school students report having gambled for money during the past year, 4-8% of adolescents presently have a serious gambling problem with another 10-14% of adolescents at risk for developing a serious gambling problem”. (taken from McGill University website (<http://www.education.mcgill.ca/gambling>).

**Australian researchers (Moore & Ohtsuka, 1997) state “Australian data suggests that up to 4% of adolescents may be experiencing serious problems with their gambling, or are at risk of experiencing such problems.**

“Australian youth attitudes on gambling mirror those of the adults, young gamblers are likely to regard gambling in a positive light (fun, exciting) to believe peers and significant others, also condone it and to hold optimistic views about their chances of winning.” (Moore & Ohtsuka 1997 &1999).

Blum et al 1997 state, “Young people who are disconnected from leisure-based social networks may be at risk of self destructive risk taking activities, of which problem gambling could be seen as an example”.



- Stop
- Take a Break
- Organise priorities
- Put into action.

## Frequently Asked Questions About Our Service

### **Many people often ask who our service is for**

and are surprised to hear the service can help them even if they don't have a gambling problem. While our service is for those who do identify a gambling problem and want to get some help exploring avenues for change there are a great many more people who can access gambling help and information.

Gambling is a universal and social adult activity. It can become harmful however. Our service is for people who want to check out their current gambling. It is for people who are family members of Problem Gamblers and for people who are friends of Problem Gamblers.

The service is for those who want to know how to make sure they don't become Problem

Gamblers themselves. Our service is also for friends and family members of Problem gamblers and for anyone who wants information or education on the subject. The service is open to any one with questions or concerns about gambling and want to come in for a talk.

### **If I come in will I have to stop gambling altogether?**

No, not necessarily. You will be helped to develop a realistic strategy for your recovery from a gambling problem. This will be determined by your ability to put choices and strategies into action. There are many people who find they can gamble a set amount that is not harmful while others can not control their amounts so make a choice to stop completely. You make the choice based on what is best suited to your personal goals for change.

### **How will you help me? Its my partner with the problem!**

It can be very difficult to maintain a relationship in the face of problem gambling. Often partners become very upset and angry and have no idea what to do. Talking to a counsellor can help with goal setting, the development of coping strategies and an outlet to deal with the many feelings experienced by partners of problem gamblers. It is important for people to know they have some support who will offer a listening ear and information about the condition.

### **Do I have to attend a group?**

No. Individual, couple and group counselling is available, also group workshops. Clients elect the type of counselling they require to meet their specific needs.

### **Can I change counsellors, but stay with the service?**

Yes, clients needs are a priority.

### **How will I know when I no longer need to attend? Can I come back if necessary?**

Clients set personal goals and work with their counsellor to achieve these, using specific strategies to obtain their desired outcome. Length of time and follow up will be part of the clients plan which will be negotiated during session time.

As the client continues to progress, and develop awareness of themselves and their gambling behaviour positive changes occur, assisting the client to reach their desired goal/outcome and come to completion. Further assistance/support is always available.

Ph. 4344 7992  
[www.problemgambling.net](http://www.problemgambling.net)



## PLAY IT SAFE

BOOK YOUR

## FREE



Central Coast  
Problem  
Gambling  
Service

Woy Woy, Gosford, Berkleyvale

Funded by NSW government from the  
Responsible Gambling Fund

## GAMBLING CHECK UP NOW

Ph.4344 7992

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## A Courageous Journey of Insight and Self Discovery.

I am 46 years old and I'm a compulsive gambler. I first started gambling at the age of 17, not long after I started working. I used to bet on the horses at the TAB, and I remember that I had a few good wins in the early days. This allowed me to escape from my mundane job and an unhappy life. At 19 I was goaled for 9 months for committing false pretences. I changed the balances in a couple of my bank books and drew out money that wasn't in there, I also stole on one occasion from a youth group, these offences happened after I had gambled and lost my money.

In the late 1980's I discovered poker machines and my losses became more frequent and more damaging financially. I was desperately unhappy but when sitting in front of a poker machine nothing else mattered.

I stole from friends or borrowed money with concocted stories to hide my gambling losses, I had become a pretty despicable person. Over the years I knew my gambling was out of control, but I didn't want to stop.

In the 1990's I met up with an old friend, he gave me somewhere to live and I have lived with him ever since. I have lied and stolen from him in order to keep gambling, every time he has accepted me back and tried to help me with my gambling. I am sure if it wasn't for him I would not be alive today.

In 2002 after a very heavy gambling session where I lost \$7,000 in two days at the casino, I finally realized I had hit rock bottom. I started attending GA. I found a fellowship where I wasn't judged and realized I wasn't the only gambler.

I started seeing a gambling counsellor about 18 months ago and this has helped me immensely.

My counsellor has given me great help, encouragement and some real insight into my gambling behaviour as well as some practical tips and strategies for dealing with the urge when it strikes. I still have busts from time to time but thankfully they are becoming less frequent and less damaging financially. There has been no quick fix for me but the counselling has taught me strategies to limit the damage when it occurs.

I now like to think of myself as a recovering gambler, no longer compulsive but not yet cured, but a hell of a lot happier. Every time I get the urge to gamble now I try to live the Serenity Prayer.

Graham.