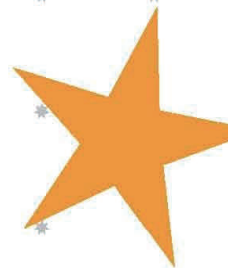
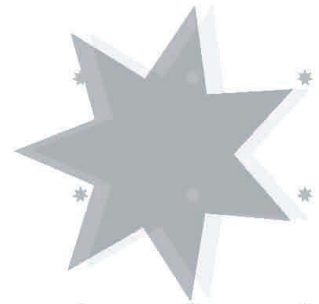
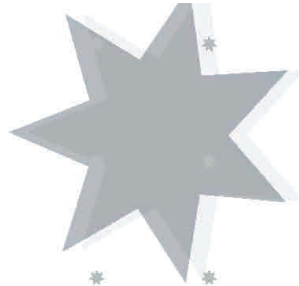


AUSTRALASIAN  
Gaming Council

ABN 64 092 720 753



**A Database**  
on Australia's Gambling Industry

**Chapter 15**

**2009/10**

# A Database

## On Australia's Gambling Industry

Published and Prepared by the Australasian Gaming Council (AGC).

Address: Level 40/140 William Street  
Melbourne 3000  
Victoria Australia

Phone +61 3 9229 3801

Fax +61 3 9607 8282

Email [info@austgamingcouncil.org.au](mailto:info@austgamingcouncil.org.au)

Web [www.austgamingcouncil.org.au](http://www.austgamingcouncil.org.au)

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1986

### DISCLAIMER

Whilst a great deal of care has been taken in the preparation of this publication, it is nevertheless necessary to caution users with regard to its accuracy.

The information contained in this publication has been obtained from external sources and has not been independently verified by the Australasian Gaming Council ("the Council"). The Council expressly disclaims all and any liability (including all liability from or attributable to any neglect or wrongful act or omission) to any persons in respect of anything done or omitted to be done by any person in reliance whether in whole or in part upon any material in this publication.

The Australasian Gaming Council welcomes comments and suggestions on this publication.

Please contact [info@austgamingcouncil.org.au](mailto:info@austgamingcouncil.org.au)

## Chapter 15

# A Brief History of Gambling in New Zealand

---

This chapter outlines a brief history of the development of gambling in New Zealand. This is based mainly on *Gambling and Problem Gambling in the Community: An International Overview and Critique-Report Number One of the New Zealand Gaming Survey* by Max Abbott and Rachel Volberg<sup>1</sup>.

Gambling was not part of the way of life of the indigenous population of New Zealand, the Maori. Gambling was first introduced by contact with European settlers and whalers in the early nineteenth century. From its colonisation in 1840, gambling flourished in New Zealand, as it did in the earlier frontier settlements of North America and Australia.

The first thoroughbred horse was imported in 1840 and race meetings and bets were recorded during the 1840s<sup>2</sup>.

New Zealand's first significant gambling legislation, passed in 1881, was titled '*An Act for the suppression of Gaming and Betting Houses, and the more effectual abolition of Lotteries*'. Apart from betting on horse and dog races through on-course totalisators and through bookmakers, almost all other forms of gambling were made illegal.

The second major piece of New Zealand gambling legislation was the 1908 Gaming Act.

These early legislative initiatives included provision for works of art, literature, mineral or agricultural specimens and mechanical models to be disposed of by lot with the permission of the Secretary for Internal Affairs. Registered 'Art Unions' were also permitted to raffle works of art.

This legislation was manipulated to allow a variety of voluntary sector organisations to run lotteries. This included the New Zealand government, which established its own Art Union (state lottery) in 1929.

Art Union lotteries were initially paid in alluvial gold, thus meeting the requirement of the 1908 Act. Later, monetary prizes were paid, although use of the term 'Art Union' was retained and prizes continued to be advertised as 'alluvial gold', to give the impression that they complied with the 1908 Act.

Lotteries were then fully legalised in 1949.

Card playing to raise money for charities was legalised in 1933 and in 1949 voluntary organisations were allowed to run raffles and prize competitions to raise funds.

The TAB was established in 1951 to limit bookmaking by enabling off-course betting on track races. Housie<sup>3</sup> was permitted from 1959 to obtain funds for specified charitable purposes.

In 1977 the Gaming and Lotteries Act 1977 was passed by New Zealand parliament. The emphasis of the 1977 legislation on directing gambling profits continued during the late 1980s when three additional activities were introduced, namely Lotto (a national televised lottery), Instant Kiwi (an instant lottery) and gaming machines.

This policy emphasis changed somewhat with the Casino Control Act 1990, which provided a framework for the establishment of casinos.

---

<sup>1</sup> Abbott & Volberg (1999), *Gambling and Problem Gambling in the Community: an International Overview and Critique: Report Number One of the New Zealand Gaming Survey*, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Grant, D. (1994). *On a roll: A history of gambling and lotteries in New Zealand*. Wellington: Victoria University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Housie is a variety of bingo

## A Timeline

1769	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Captain Cook sets foot in New Zealand</li> </ul>
1840	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White settlement of New Zealand</li> </ul>
1840's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First recorded horse races and betting</li> </ul>
1849	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treaty of Waitangi signed between British Crown and Maori</li> </ul>
1881	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First major piece of gambling related legislation passed, allowing betting on horse racing and dogs and criminalising almost all other forms of gambling</li> </ul>
1908	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Gambling Act passed</li> </ul>
1929	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State run Art Union lottery established</li> </ul>
1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Card playing legalised for charity</li> </ul>
1949	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lotteries fully legalised in New Zealand</li> <li>• Voluntary organisations allowed to run raffles for fund raising</li> </ul>
1951	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TAB legalised</li> </ul>
1959	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housie (bingo) legalised</li> </ul>
1977	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaming and Lotteries Act passed</li> </ul>
1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Zealand Lotteries Commission established</li> <li>• First Lotto draw held (August)</li> </ul>
1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kiwi scratch cards introduced</li> </ul>
1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Casino Control Act establishes framework for casino operations in New Zealand</li> </ul>
1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaming machines legalised in New Zealand</li> </ul>
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Zealand Government announces adoption of public health model for problem gambling</li> <li>• Australian Gaming Council formed</li> </ul>
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Zealand Racing Board established controlling horse racing and greyhound racing</li> <li>• The Gambling Act 2003 replaces the Gaming and Lotteries Act 1977 and the Casino Control Act 1990. It creates a harmonised regulatory framework for gambling in New Zealand.</li> </ul>
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australian Gaming Council renamed Australasian Gaming Council to encompass New Zealand membership and participation</li> </ul>
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Zealand Lotteries Commission launches online sales channel (MyLotto)</li> </ul>

Source: Abbott & Volberg (1999), *Gambling And Problem Gambling In The Community: An International Overview And Critique: Report Number One of the New Zealand Gaming Survey, 1999*. Adams, P (2005), *The history of gambling in New Zealand, Journal of Gambling Issues, 2005*.