

Who Gambles and Why?

Who gambles?

It has been noted that attempts to describe the general characteristics of people who are more likely to gamble, and then to gamble on specific forms, is fraught with difficulty as participation in gambling is very broad and as such “the characteristics of gamblers tend to be very similar to that of the general population”.¹ However, the various State-based studies conducted have found some common characteristics among various gambler groups.

Gaming machines

Current research suggests that generally, EGM gamblers are more likely to be:

- spread across a broad range of ages but with a predominance in age grouping of 18-24 in most jurisdictions;
- subject to no particular gender bias on a national level;
- unmarried;
- in full-time employment in a middle income bracket; and
- educated to high school level.

Racing

In summary, gamblers who participate in racing are broadly held to be:

- predominantly male;
- aged 20-35 years;
- under the age of 65 years; and
- most likely to be working full time with an income range between \$40,000-80,000.

Lottery

Lottery gamblers may then be generally categorised as:

- more likely to be middle-aged or older; and
- in paid employment with an average income.

Keno

A summary of Keno gamblers may describe these participants as:

- biased in age grouping towards 18-24 year olds; and
- likely to be middle income earners.

Casino

In summary casino gamblers may be broadly described as:

- most likely to be male;
- usually of a younger age grouping (18-34);
- likely to be engaged in full time employment or study; and
- earning a higher than average income.

Bingo

In summary, gamblers who participate in bingo are largely held to be:

- aged 50 years and over
- predominately female
- secondary school educated to some level
- living in a household with children but no partner or spouse

Sports

A summary of those who bet on sports may describe these participants as:

- more likely to be male;
- most likely to be aged 18-24;
- in a higher income bracket; and
- single.

Why?

In August 2006, Roy Morgan conducted a special telephone survey with an Australia-wide cross-section of 676 men and women. Respondents were asked: “Thinking about the kinds of bets or wagers you make most often, are you mostly playing for enjoyment, or are you mostly playing to win?” As the table below details, across all listed states and territories, a significantly greater proportion of respondents reported playing for enjoyment rather than playing to win.

Reason	N	V	Q	SA	W	T	A
	S	I	L	/N	A	A	L
	W	C	D	T		S	
	%						
Play to win	19	14	15	16	20	13	17
Play for enjoyment	36	45	52	36	34	24	41
Both	4	3	1	3	5	3	3
Neither	1	1	1	2	1	-	1
Don't gamble	40	37	31	43	40	60	38

¹ Delfabbro, Paul. (2006) Australasian Gambling Review 1992-2006, Independent Gambling Authority of South Australia.