

About the Australian Gaming Council

The Australian Gaming Council (AGC) was formed in June 2000 by leaders of Australia's gambling industries. Its members are from all sectors of the gambling industries, including wagering, licensed operators, hotels, casinos and lotteries across all states.

The AGC is committed to a sustainable gambling industry that provides entertainment and economic benefits, and one that reduces the potential for people to develop gambling problems.

The AGC welcomes ongoing constructive and informed dialogue with all stakeholders on the objectives, principles and measures in the Code, with a view to achieving a common goal of reducing the incidence of problem gambling.

September 2001

RESPONSIBLE GAMING CODE

A FRAMEWORK FOR
RESPONSIBLE GAMING

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PREAMBLE

The Responsible Gaming Code has been developed by members of the Australian Gaming Council (AGC) to provide a national framework for the responsible delivery and service of gaming. It is specific to gaming machines.

The Code promotes four goals:

- Responsible service to customers
- Responsible delivery of gaming
- Monitoring and assessment aimed at continuous improvement
- Research and consultation.

The playing of gaming machines and the ambience and facilities provided in gaming venues have become a very popular entertainment choice for a vast number of Australians. The AGC is committed to a sustainable gaming industry that provides entertainment and economic benefits, and one that reduces the potential for people to develop gambling problems.

We acknowledge that a small proportion of customers develop gambling problems which result in harm to themselves, their families and the broader community. We recognise that industry, together with governments, treatment providers and individuals, have a shared objective to reduce the incidence of problem gambling. We intend to work closely with support service providers and make their contact information available on our website.

This Code has been developed to improve the responsible delivery of gaming products. The thrust of the Code is aimed at reducing harm and the prospect of customers developing a gambling problem through informed customer choice and responsible communication. The Code provides a framework for being aware of and assisting customers who may have a problem with their gambling. Independent and authoritative research will be undertaken to identify reliable, observable behaviours associated with problem gambling.

The Code is a dynamic document and it will be improved by informed research into the definitions, extent of, causes of and preventative measures relating to problem gambling. We note that research in Australia and internationally in these aspects of gambling is still in its early stages.

We commit to monitoring the effectiveness of the Code and to developing guidelines to further enhance the responsible service and delivery of gaming including staff training, advertising and promotions.

Members of the AGC are representative of all aspects of the gaming industry including manufacturers, licensed operators and venue operators. We are committed to the goal of addressing problem gambling and recognise the Code will be adopted and applied by gambling businesses according to the nature of their operations.

Industry participants are encouraged to adopt the framework according to their particular circumstances and applicable laws.

The AGC welcomes ongoing, constructive and informed dialogue with all stakeholders on the objectives, principles and measures contained in the Code with a view to achieving a common goal of reducing the incidence of problem gambling.

Ross Wilson **Chairman**
Australian Gaming Council

PURPOSE

This Code was prepared, agreed and adopted by the AGC as recommended principles and practices which gaming machine and venue operators in the Australian Gaming Industry may adopt in relation to the conduct of all activities associated with the operation of Gaming Machines in Australia. It is the objective of the AGC to achieve industry-wide adoption of the Code, complementing existing codes of responsible gaming service.

By adopting the fundamentals of this Code gaming machine and venue operators will endeavour to:

- Promote integrity through sound and ethical business practices
- Train employees in the responsible service of gaming
- Support objective, ongoing research, to provide independent, quality advice, expertise and data to all stakeholders and continue to develop appropriate consumer protection measures and initiatives
- Make available to customers product information with the aim of customers being able to make an informed choice regarding their decision to participate in gaming products
- Provide a secure and attractive environment while highlighting for customers the risks and issues associated with problem gambling
- Engage with stakeholders affected by gambling issues on the basis of objective research targeted at reducing problem gambling
- Continue to provide benefits to recreational gamblers by supplying entertaining gaming products.

The AGC acknowledges that problem gambling is a serious community issue and that a small proportion of customers are harmed by their gaming activities. The potential for harm to these customers is aimed to be reduced by providing gaming:

- As set out in this Code
- Pursuant to a commitment to shared social objectives
- With sensitivity to and due recognition of community concerns and
- In accordance with applicable laws.

1 Responsible Service to Customers

Participating members of the AGC will adopt, where appropriate, measures for responsible service to customers as follows:

1.1 Customer Assistance and Staff Training

Staff will be trained through a course in the responsible service of gaming to be aware of and to offer assistance to customers displaying observable signs of distress or seeking assistance. Such behaviour may indicate that they have a problem with their gambling. These behavioural characteristics will be expanded over time based on independent and authoritative research.

Responsible Service of Gaming Training Courses, to equip staff in methods and procedures for assisting customers, will be developed in consultation with the members of the industry, will be nationally accredited and will be approved by the AGC or an appropriate regulatory/industry body.

Gaming venue operators will undertake to have staff attend refresher training at appropriate intervals given their role in the venue. The staff training programs will be continuously reviewed and updated.

1.2 Support Services

Gaming venue operators will obtain and retain contact information of appropriate support services for the purpose of facilitating the provision of referral support for customers who may have a problem with their gambling.

Contact information of support services for people who may have a problem with their gambling will be made available to any person seeking such information.

Gaming venue operators will nominate one or more staff members in each of their venues as contact points for problem gambling support services.

1.3 Cooperation with Problem Gambling Support Services

Gaming venue and gaming machine operators will cooperate with problem gambling service providers in order to support their work in assisting customers who may have a problem with their gambling. This cooperation is subject to applicable laws.

1.4 Self-Exclusion

Participating members will provide, or refer customers to, readily accessible information about self-exclusion procedures, approved by the appropriate industry body. Any person requesting self-exclusion at a venue will be supplied with appropriate self-exclusion documents and/or provided with advice as to how to apply for these self-exclusion arrangements.

Gaming venue operators will endeavour to observe these self-exclusion arrangements entered into by a person by supplying a photo of the person to venue staff for the applicable period together with instructions regarding denial of access and removal from the premises.

1.5 Customer Care

Gaming venue operators will remove from the gaming area any person who is observed by staff to behave in a manner unacceptable to the venue and, in particular, if the person behaves in a manner that is reasonably considered likely to adversely impact on the safety and security of others at the venue.

1.6 Responsible Gaming Incident Register

A Responsible Gaming Incident Register will be maintained by the gaming venue operator.

Senior staff nominated by the gaming venue operator, who have received appropriate training, will record the information referred to below in a Responsible Gaming Incident Register.

The Responsible Gaming Incident Register, subject to applicable privacy laws, should record the following:

- Material action taken by staff to assist persons in accordance with this Code
- Action taken relating to customer exclusion or self-exclusion
- Contact information for appropriate problem gambling support services for customers
- Material complaints relating to the delivery of responsible gaming
- The outcome of each review of Code compliance undertaken in accordance with the Code.

Gaming venue operators shall maintain records of staff training.

The Responsible Gaming Incident Register will be treated on a strictly confidential basis, except where disclosure is required by law or to assist the gaming venue operator in complying with this Code.

2 Responsible Delivery of Gaming

The measures referred to in this section of the Code are for the purpose of assisting customers to make an informed choice regarding their participation in gaming, for responsibly communicating with customers regarding gaming products and providing an appropriate playing environment.

2.1 Informed Choice and Player Warnings

2.1.1 Chances of Winning

The AGC endorses the principle of informed choice, which is aimed at empowering customers to make informed decisions and exercise choice regarding their gaming expenditure. For this reason, gaming venue operators will make available to customers information regarding likelihood of winning including minimum player return percentages required to be paid.

In addition, as gaming machines are upgraded to conform with national standards, dollars and cents as well as credits will be displayed on gaming machines.

2.1.2 Player Information

Participating members of the AGC commit to making accessible information that certain customers may be at risk of experiencing gaming related problems. This information will relate to:

- Responsible gaming messages being displayed within gaming machine areas and/or on gaming machines
- Self-assessment tools based on generally accepted research, which may indicate that a person has a problem with their gambling.

This material will be developed in consultation with appropriate experts including treatment providers and researchers.

2.1.3 Large Wins

Gaming venue operators will recommend to winners of substantial prizes that they take their winnings as a cheque.

2.1.4 Cooling Off Periods

Gaming venue operators will recommend to winners of substantial prizes that they take a "cooling off" period.

2.2 Playing Environment

2.2.1 Problem Gambling Support Notices

Gaming venue operators will make available to customers on request information about the availability of problem gambling support services.

2.2.2 Responsible Gaming Warning

A responsible gaming warning approved by the appropriate industry body and/or as required by the relevant regulator will be displayed.

2.2.3 Automatic Teller Machines

Gaming venue operators will phase in measures to ensure that ATMs are not visible to any customer playing an EGM. ATMs will have on or within sight of them, problem gambling warning signage and appropriate support service contact details in a manner easily visible to customers.

2.2.4 Clocks

Clocks in good working order will be installed and be clearly visible from within the gaming area.

2.2.5 Unattended Children

Gaming venue operators will display signage advising customers not to leave children unattended either in the venue or the venue's car park and will adopt procedures to check venues and venue car parks under their control with the aim of reducing the risk of children being left unattended.

2.2.6 Minors

Gaming venue operators' will check identification of any player whom they believe is likely to be under eighteen years of age.

Access to gaming areas will be denied to persons known to be under eighteen years of age and persons known to be seeking to play on their behalf.

2.2.7 Safety and Security

Gaming venue operators will take reasonable measures aimed at providing a safe and secure environment within which gaming activities are conducted.

2.3 Responsible Communication

2.3.1 Advertising

Advertising shall not be intentionally misleading or deceptive, particularly in relation to winning.

Advertisements relating to gaming shall be in good taste, not offend prevailing community standards and shall not involve or encourage minors.

Advertising will not be broadcast during programs targeted specifically at children. Gaming machine and venue operators will comply with all applicable laws relating to gaming advertising.

2.3.2 Prize Winner Publicity

Gaming venue operators shall ensure that gaming prize-winners are not identified in any material published by the gaming venue operator unless the customer consents in writing.

2.3.3 Gaming Inducements

Gaming venue operators providing gaming to the public shall not induce people to gamble through intentionally misleading or deceptive advertising in any form or by intentionally misrepresenting the true chances of winning or by any false promise.

Gaming venue operators shall comply with all applicable laws relating to gaming inducements.

3 Monitoring and Assessment

3.1 Review of Compliance

Gaming venue operators will periodically review their level of compliance with this Code or arrange for an independent person to do so.

3.2 Other Forms of Gambling

This Code is intended to apply to the operation of gaming machines only.

3.3 Continuous Improvement

The effectiveness of the Code will be monitored regularly and further enhanced.

4 Research and Consultation

- Members who adopt the Code, support and assist the AGC's ongoing research and consultation to identify and implement responsible gaming measures aimed at reducing problem gambling
- The AGC's research will be conducted in consultation with governments, community groups, researchers and treatment providers
- A protocol will be developed to ensure transparent and independent research.