

Media Release

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Informed Choice - A Guide to Assist Gambling Decisions

The Australian gambling industry has a responsibility to assist gamblers make informed choices about gambling, according to a report commissioned by the Australian Gaming Council.

Internationally recognised authors who prepared the report said individuals are responsible for their level of participation in gambling, while the industry shares an equal responsibility in providing relevant information for optimal choices to be made.

The Australian Gaming Council (AGC) today released the report, which outlines a set of principles to enhance decision-making about gambling in the community. The Report was prepared for the AGC by Professor Alex Blaszczynski (University of Sydney), Professor Robert Ladouceur (Laval University, Quebec), Assistant Professor Lia Nower (University of Missouri-St Louis) and Professor Howard Shaffer (Harvard University).

The Chairman of the AGC, Mr Matthew Slatter, said: "We commissioned this paper because we wanted to know what information is needed to assist individuals to make informed decisions regarding gambling and to understand the responsibilities of stakeholders to assist gamblers to make those informed choices.

"The paper utilises the knowledge of four experienced and internationally respected researchers in the gambling field." Mr Slatter said: "The gambling industry wants to ensure that gamblers have access to all relevant information that will allow them to make an informed choice."

Co-author Professor Alex Blaszczynski said the concept of informed choice has served as the basis for public health campaigns worldwide for many years, and it is an important aspect of responsible gambling.

"Industry must provide all the relevant, pertinent and available information that allows gamblers to make informed choices", Professor Blaszczynski said.

The report suggests a successful plan for informed choice in relation to gambling should:

- provide the relevant educational information necessary to objectively evaluate gambling options and to help gamblers recognise the activity as entertainment rather than income-generating behaviour;
- detail the benefits of responsible gambling as well as the potential social and personal costs of excessive gambling;
- provide sufficient guidelines to assist individuals to identify their current level of responsible gambling; and
- be targeted to specific gambling activities, socio-demographic groups, and stages of change, such that any individual could feel confidently informed about gambling options.

Mr Slatter said the AGC would forward the report to industry, government, community groups and treatment providers to stimulate discussion on the importance of informed choice in gambling.