



# Gambling and Young People

**Presented by**  
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Generation Next  
The Mental Health & Wellbeing of Young People  
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## Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest

- My travel costs for this presentation were covered by Generation Next.
- My research is applied and often involves real-life settings to understand gambling with the aim of enhancing the provision of responsible gambling strategies.
- Research is only conducted with formal ethics approval.
- I have received research funding, honorariums, and travel costs from gambling industry bodies, government departments, and organisations that are funded indirectly from taxes and/or contributions from the gambling industry.
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## Gambling and Young People

### What do you need to know?

1. What types of gambling are young people using?
2. How do young people become involved in gambling?
3. What is problem gambling?
4. What can you do?

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## Context: Gambling in Australia

- Gambling losses almost \$24 billion (2015-16)

Australians are the world's biggest gamblers




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## Context: Gambling in Australia

Participation is declining  
Fewer people, gambling more  
Young adults are highly involved





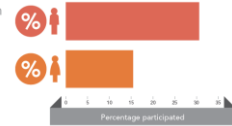
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## Young people are gambling



50-70% Australian adolescents have gambled

- Cards & informal
- Lotteries & scratch cards

Participation in sports betting



MALES AND FEMALES AGED 10 TO 24: GAMING SURVEILLANCE RESEARCH, AUSTRALIAN POKIES ET AL. 2016

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### Is gambling appealing?

Top reasons for gambling (11-15 year-olds)

1. To make money
2. Fun/entertainment
3. Excitement




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### New technology and gambling: Internet gambling

11% of adolescents gambled online (past year)

- Offshore sites may have no age gates
- Multiple payment options





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### New technology and gambling

- Virtual reality
- Augmented reality
- Skill-based gambling
- Fantasy sports



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### Esports, Professional Gaming Tournaments:

21 3.8 million viewers, US\$696 million



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### New technology and gambling: Esports betting

- \$5.5 billion wagered in 2016
- 8.5% UK adults
- 16% past-month Australian internet gamblers
  - More highly educated
  - Younger (28% aged 20-29 years old)
  - Culturally diverse



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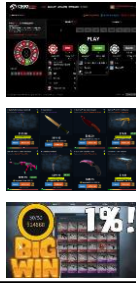
### New technology and gambling: Skins betting



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## New technology and gambling: Skins betting

- Skins = virtual items
- Can be bought, sold, and traded
  - Used as currency
  - Used for gambling
- No regulation
- \$7.4 billion worth of skins bet 2016



## Why are you telling me all of this?

- Young Australians are gambling
- Many irrational beliefs
  - "I am a skilled gambler"
  - "I can beat the house"
  - "My luck is due"
- Early engagement is highly formative
  - Big win in the worst outcome
  - Early engagement predictive of later problems



## Why are you telling me all of this?

### What can I do?

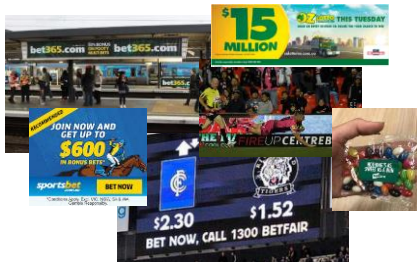
- Talk & listen
- Teach about the industry, how gambling works, the house advantage



## How do young people become involved in gambling?



## Advertising



## Social media

75% 11-15 year-olds seen gambling ads on SNS

Twice as likely to gamble online

9% follow gambling companies on SNS



Self-reported impact of ads:  
20% increased desire to gamble  
11% increased gambling

## Social media marketing does not include warnings

- 60% of social media users had never noticed responsible gambling messages



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## Video, online, & mobile games

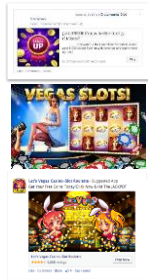


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## Young Australians play gambling-themed games

- 1,287 Australian high school students
  - 13% played simulated games last year
  - 32% at least once
- 561 Australian adolescents
  - 23% played social casino games
  - 22% played practice games

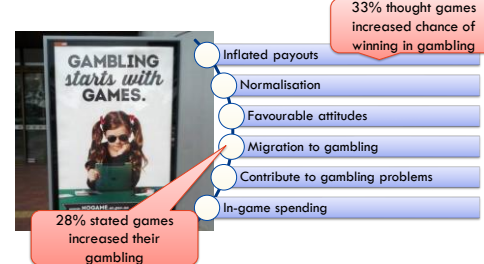


King et al., 2014; Gainsbury et al., 2015

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## Concerns about gambling-themed games



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## Why are you telling me all of this?

- Young Australians are aware of gambling
- But, they may not understand it
- May be learning misconceptions
- Need assistance learning critical appraisal



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## Problem gambling

Difficulty limiting time & money gambling and experiencing adverse consequences

- Around 1% of Australian adults have severe gambling problems
- Around 7% have at least some gambling problems
- Around 6 people affected by every problem gambler

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## Problem gambling

### Harms

- Psychological and health impacts
- Relationship damage
- Education & employment disruption
- Debt
- Crime
- Continued problems into adulthood

## Which youth are at greatest risk?

### Risk factors

- Male
- Cultural diversity (Asian, Indigenous, foreign students)
- Early gambling involvement (& wins)
- Family gambling involvement & environment
- Historical trauma
- School & social difficulties
- Risk-taking
- Delinquent behaviours
- Poor psychological functioning (depression, substance use)
- Low self-esteem
- Impulsivity

## Which youth are at greatest risk?

### Warning signs

- Mood: Flat, anger, moodiness
- Decreased activities: social and leisure
- Secretiveness
- School absences
- Preoccupation with sports, Internet
- Money: missing, borrowing, stealing, selling/losing possessions, having large amounts

## Impact of familial gambling problems

- Abuse (physical, verbal, emotional)
- Neglect
- Family breakdown
- Loss of trust
- Financial (poverty, doing without)
- Modelling



## Why are you telling me all of this?

- Talk to young people
- Be open & non-judgmental
- Share how to access resources
- Not all youth are problem gamblers
  - But, some may benefit from help & education



## Why are you telling me all of this?

### Strategies for gambling (18+)

- Critical thinking
- You can't beat the house
- Only gamble what you can afford to lose
- Set a limit, stay within it
- Look after mates
- Keep it fun



Thank you!

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- Know Your Odds: For Schools <http://knowyourodds.nsw.gov.au/for-schools-2/>
- Australasian Gaming Council <https://www.austgamingcouncil.org.au/gambling-education/australia-education>