

# Young People and Gambling Consultation Report

**What young Tasmanians aged 12–18 years  
have to say about gambling.**

**July 2022**



Young People and Gambling Consultation Report  
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## About the Youth Network of Tasmania

The Young People and Gambling project is an initiative of the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT), supported by the Tasmanian Government, Department of Communities. YNOT is the peak body for young people 12-25 years and the youth sector in Tasmania. Our vision is a Tasmania where all young people are valued and can achieve anything. Our purpose is to drive positive change with young people and the youth sector in Tasmania.

## Acknowledgements

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The consultation was informed by a Youth Focus Group, consisting of five young people aged 12-18 years state-wide. We would like to thank Emma, Ruby, Tobi, An and Taso for participating and informing the consultation content, methodology and delivery.

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## Executive Summary

Young people aged 12-18 years report a low interest in gambling and have a negative view of formal gambling activities and environments. However, the level of exposure and impact of gambling appears to be relatively high in Tasmania.

Young people are significantly influenced and impacted by the social, cultural, environmental contexts around them and are increasingly exposed to gambling advertising and products that encourage gambling behaviours. Many develop and participate in gambling behaviours at a young age and can grow up with gambling as a cultural norm.

The majority of young people that were involved in this consultation displayed an awareness of gambling related harm and believed the risk of gambling outweighed the benefits. Of particular concern was the potential for gambling to cause problematic and/or addictive behaviour for those around them, and themselves. However, it is apparent that there remains a need for targeted resources to raise awareness and prevent gambling related harm amongst young people in Tasmania. Young people reported that they would like more opportunities to learn about gambling and explore related issues that they hadn't necessarily discussed in depth with family, friends or at school.

Communication with young people can be difficult due to rapidly changing technology and trends over time. Young people spoke about the importance of engaging with them in the design, development and evaluation of gambling related material and the types of communication channels and platforms that they use to engage with content. Of particular importance, is the need for harm reduction information to be authentic and relevant to assist in making informed decision about their lives and interests.

## Recommendations

1. Engage young Tasmanians in the ongoing development, implementation and evaluation of the Gambling-Support-Program-Strategic-Framework-2019-2023.
2. Targeted initiatives relevant to young Tasmanians under 18 years are identified and included in the Gambling-Support-Program-Strategic-Framework-2019-2023.
3. Efforts are made to align the Gambling Program Strategic Framework with other government strategies and frameworks relevant to young people, such as the Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework.
4. Investment is made to adequately resource gambling initiatives aimed at young Tasmanians under 18 years.
5. Explore awareness and education programs for parents/families of young people to increase awareness of gambling activity, behaviours and harms for young people under 18. Emphasis to be placed on online activity relevant to young people.
6. Work with the Department of Education to explore the provision of evidence informed, accurate and age-appropriate gambling education in Tasmanian schools.
7. Ensure young Tasmanians inform the development of gambling related resources intended for them.

## Background

Young people are being exposed to unprecedented levels of gambling advertising and marketing across various traditional and digital platforms. With technological advancements and access to mobile technology, young people are readily accessing gambling experiences online, on mobile apps and now commonly in gaming. In addition to this, research has demonstrated a shift in young people's attitudes and behaviours towards gambling, with gambling considered a cultural and social staple for many young Australians.<sup>1</sup>

Gambling is illegal for those under the age of 18, however, evidence suggests that young people commonly begin participating in gambling-related activities at 11-12 years of age.<sup>2</sup> While there are several factors that impact how and when young people engage in gambling-related activities, accessibility, marketing, and social influences are key factors.<sup>3</sup>

Young people are considered vulnerable to gambling harm due to their propensity to participate in risk-taking behaviours during adolescent development. While the long-term impacts of gambling on young people are largely unknown, research suggests a strong correlation between harmful gambling behaviours and other conditions including mental ill health, suicidal ideation and substance misuse. Gambling harm is also known to negatively impact young people's relationships, work or school performance, and has been attributed to young people engaging in antisocial behaviours.<sup>4</sup>

### The Tasmanian context

The Tasmanian Government is committed to preventing and responding to gambling related harm. The Gambling Support Program Strategic Framework 2019-2023 outlines the need to address gambling harms before they begin by increasing communities' understanding and awareness, and through the provision of early intervention and specialist support services.

There is an acknowledgement by the Tasmanian Government that early intervention programs for young people require updating to reflect global advancements in digital and mobile technology. However, the attitudes towards, and prevalence of, gambling amongst young people in Tasmania is largely unknown. There is little research on the impacts of gambling harm on this cohort. While gambling harm education programs are available, they are outdated and are not consistently delivered across Tasmania, and program delivery is at the discretion of individual schools and educators.

To prevent harm from gambling, it is important to consider and respond to the underlying social, environmental and health factors that contribute to gambling in the Tasmanian context. To do this, we need to meaningfully engage with community to understand their lived experience and views. The Tasmanian Government engaged YNOT to deliver a targeted, co-designed consultation with young people aged 12-18 years to understand their attitudes and broad behaviours towards gambling. This report provides an overview of the Tasmanian gambling context for this cohort, as well as specific ideas and solutions from young people to prevent and respond to harm from gambling.

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<sup>1</sup> Youth Coalition of the ACT (2017) At odds: young people and gambling in the ACT. Pilot Project Report.

<sup>2</sup> NSW Government (2020) NSW youth gambling study 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (2021) Gen bet: a plain English summary of research into gambling and young people. Research Report.

<sup>4</sup> Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (2017) Gen bet: has gambling gatecrashed our teens?

## Consultation Process

The Young People and Gambling consultation was co-designed with a youth focus group to inform the consultation content, activities and delivery, and provide feedback on communications and recruitment processes. Five young people aged 12-18 years state-wide participated in the co-design workshop and were remunerated for their time.

The consultation process involved in-person workshops and an online survey, both delivered in May 2022. Consultation content aimed to capture the attitudes, opinions and views of young people towards gambling and to provide an insight into the behaviours towards gambling-related activities. Questions and activities were designed across the following domains:

- 1. Attitudes, understanding and awareness of young people around gambling**
- 2. Factors that encourage and discourage gambling**
- 3. Young people's experience with low-risk gambling and gambling behaviour**
- 4. Communication channels and support**

The workshops were delivered in person, and were designed to use a mixture of discussions, activities and anonymous questionnaires to explore domain areas in detail. In total 10 workshops were delivered state-wide, with four in the North-West (n=71), two in the North (n=28) and four in the South (n=57).

An online survey was developed to provide young people an opportunity to participate, for those who could not attend regional workshops. The online survey was open from 1 May to 31 May 2022, and completed by 411 individuals. The survey complemented the in-person workshops, allowing data to be fully aggregated for analysis.

While gambling is illegal for young people under the age of 18, it is important to note that this consultation included individuals aged 18 years (n=57).

# Who participated?

**567** young Tasmanians **12–18** years

**156** attended in-person workshops

**411** completed the online survey

Average age of participants was **16** years old

## Where were they?

**26%** North-West

**23%** North

**51%** South



## Ensuring diversity and representation

### Participant pronouns

**54%** used she/her pronouns,

**31%** he/him,

**15%** they/them or did not disclose

### The number of participants who identified as...

**24** Migrant or Refugee

**31** CALD

**4** Carer/parent

**66** Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

**39** Living with a disability

**113** LGBTQIA+





## Consultation Findings

*“I have grown up around a bit of it. It is highly addicting and damaging. Many people believe that it’s just luck whether or not you win but that isn’t the case, they are designed to make you feel like a winner but in reality, they are rigged for your loss.”*

*“I think casual gambling with friends and family is fun aka games of poker, bets etc, but that any forms that are done for the intention to get money rather than as just mucking around is dangerous and addictive and should be avoided.”*

*“Gambling is addictive, leading people to risk more than they might be able to afford, resulting in decreased happiness and ability to buy necessary resources in everyday life.”*

## Attitudes, understanding and awareness of young people around gambling

### What young people think about gambling

*“I think gambling can be fun, however when there is a lot on the line and not simply words it can get very dangerous.”*

Young people’s initial interest in the topic of gambling is low – especially those in the younger cohort (ages 12-14). Gambling is not an issue that young people feel passionate about. Young people do not seek information about gambling, and they often expressed a ‘don’t care’ attitude towards gambling during consultations. Despite initial interest in the topic of gambling being low, awareness and understanding of the harms, risks and odds of gambling is high. Young people recognise gambling to be a harmful activity and they have a mostly negative view of gambling activities and gambling behaviours.

Young people recognise that gambling can be problematic, addictive and damaging. Some gambling harms identified included:

- Financial troubles such as debt and being unable to pay for the basics.
- Impacts on mental health such as increased stress, or depression and anxiety.
- Negative effects on social life such as relationship breakdowns, arguments between partners and significant others, and family conflicts.

Participants often spoke in general terms about gambling and the factors that could influence young people to gamble, rather than from personal experience. Gambling, especially formal or problem gambling, was often something that other people did rather than something they would engage in themselves.

While initial perceptions of gambling were negative, further discussions exposed more varied opinions with respect to the specific forms and nuances of gambling. Young people recognise there can be an entertainment value to gambling and described it as exciting, giving a rush of adrenaline and as a fun social activity, even if it might lead to negative consequences. Gambling could also be an acceptable activity if done socially, in moderation and with clear limits on spending. However, most participants were aware that even engaging in low-risk forms of gambling activities could lead to addiction or negative outcomes.

Young people have a low threshold on acceptable spending limits regarding gambling. Generally, young people considered around \$20 as an acceptable risk but only on one-off occasions. This can be attributed to the fact that most young people have limited disposable income. However, smaller bets were considered more acceptable for young people to participate in more regularly, such as through sports ‘multibets’, scratchies and casual betting – even when the chance of winning was significantly against the odds.

## Attitudes to different types of gambling

*“I reckon it’s okay to buy a scratch-off once in a while but it’s definitely addicting.”*

Young people have a more positive view of ‘informal’ gambling and ‘private betting’ activities, where they are not engaging directly with betting companies and betting products. While young people did not directly refer to informal or formal gambling, there was a clear distinction in gambling behaviours between casual and private betting, and ‘formal’ gambling where they had to spend money on a gambling product or visit a gambling venue.

Types of informal gambling activities were described as casual bets or playing card games for money with friends and family, community raffles and footy tipping competitions (see Appendix: Table 1). Most young people had experience with one or more of these activities and do not view them as particularly problematic. This type of gambling most often happens at home or at school, and some young people believe they are a good social activity and play a role in building friendships.

Community-based gambling activities such as sports club competitions or school raffles were viewed favourably due to the proceeds being used to directly benefit their community. However, some young people questioned the role that these activities might play in embedding gambling culture and whether it could be a gateway for more harmful kinds of gambling.

‘Formal’ types of gambling such as poker machines, betting on horseracing or buying a lotto ticket are considered more negative and more harmful by young people. Common attitudes and responses from participants were that:

- Poker machines have a depressing image and are seen as something for older people.
- Lotto tickets can have bad odds and are rarely value for money.
- Casinos are for people with ‘more money than sense’ and can be places where considerable amounts of money are spent.
- Betting on horses or sports at the pub is associated with drinking alcohol and bad decision making.
- Formal gambling environments can be confronting and associated with anti-social behaviour.

Gambling activities that are perceived as more skill or knowledge-based such as card games like poker, or sports betting, were also viewed more favourably. Young people believed that they could improve their skills by studying and practicing the activity more. Activities such as the lottery, roulette, keno and poker machines, were perceived as purely chance-based, have worse odds of winning or were directly ‘rigged’ to incur losses.

## Loot boxes and gambling adjacent activities

*“I absolutely hate loot boxes... they are a waste of time and money.”*

*“If a big YouTuber plays a game and uses bought in-game currency, others could copy for video ideas; eventually getting younger audiences to join in... causing problems for them and their family.”*

Loot boxes are a common feature of online video games for customers to purchase in-game perks, cosmetics, or items. Loot box products have a randomised outcome, with different rates of selection for rarer and coveted items. Loot boxes were largely viewed negatively by participants that had experience with them. Meanwhile, young people who did not extensively play video games, had little to no awareness of loot boxes.

Some participants shared stories of their peers spending significant amounts of money, sometimes upwards of hundreds of dollars, on loot boxes or similar in-game microtransactions. Throughout the consultations a small number of participants shared experiences of friends or family losing money to formal gambling activities. While few young people reported significant financial losses, loot boxes appeared to have the highest monetary losses in young people under 18 years.

Loot boxes were seen as a risk to young people due to ease of access, with online game vendors typically saving credit card details for future purchases. Parents were often a significant facilitator for young people to access loot boxes, often due to the low costs and lack of understanding on what loot boxes are and how they work. YouTube and Twitch gaming influencers can also play a role in promoting loot box purchasing and role modelling spending large amounts of money on video game products.

Participants questioned whether legal activities with inbuilt odds such as loot boxes, trading card packs and claw machines encourage gambling behaviours and if these activities should be legal for people under 18. While most participants would prefer to be able to buy the exact product they wanted- they felt that a key difference with inbuilt odds is the guarantee to receive a product, and therefore different to most forms of formally recognised gambling.

Similarly, there were also discussions about the role of investments in the share market, non-fungible tokens (NFTs) and cryptocurrencies. These activities have high levels of risk and speculation, and are highly accessible through the internet and mobile applications. Many of these activities, but particularly NFTs, target young people with their design and marketing. Participants said that young people need to be wary of these activities due to the role they could have in heavy financial losses, developing addictive behaviour, or the risk of being scammed. Reliable information about the risks of these activities is also often difficult to find.

## Attitudes and mindsets

### *“It’s a good way to lose money rather than make money”*

A consultation activity was designed to explore young peoples’ attitudes and mindsets regarding gambling, challenging common myths or misconceptions that often accompany gambling behaviours (see Appendix. Table 2).

Young people generally believed they were unlikely to win money through gambling: less than 5% of young people thought they would win over \$10,000 in the lottery and 13% of respondents thought that they would strike it lucky at gambling one day. While they reasoned that they felt unlikely to win, they also felt that they only need to win once and that you “have to be in it to win it”.

Participants were asked whether it was possible to have a system to make money through gambling - 8% of respondents thought that it was possible to win at poker machines with the right system. Many young people referred to the gambling achievements of David Walsh aka “the Mona guy”, but believed professional gamblers were likely the exception to the rule and that the average person will not win long-term.

Young people also believed that it was unlikely that you would win if you thought positively or had lucky numbers. Only 7% thought they were more likely to win using lucky numbers. Most young people viewed lucky numbers as a fun way to go about entering a draw or to gamble, rather than truly believing that they would make a difference. In terms of positive thinking, young people felt this was a mindset that should be adopted for all aspects of life and that it generally would not manifest gambling wins.

Young people shared a strong view on underage gambling, with only 10% of respondents believing that individuals under the age of 18 should be allowed to gamble. However, some young people clarified their response that some specific forms of gambling should be allowed, such as casual bets with friends or gambling while under the supervision of adults.

## Factors that encourage and discourage gambling

### Social factors

*“I’d like to think it wouldn’t impact me, but I can’t say I wouldn’t do it if all my friends were doing it... I probably would.”*

*“From personal experience, my dad enjoys gambling at the pub and that sometimes initiates money issues and fighting between my parents. Not once has he come home and made a good profit out of it, possibly \$20 or \$50 but that’s on a good day.”*

Peer pressure is the primary social factor that encourages young people to gamble. Terms such as ‘FOMO’ (fear of missing out) and ‘follow the leader’ were often cited as factors that could encourage gambling. Young people said that if gambling is seen as a fun thing amongst a peer group, that it would be difficult to avoid joining in or experimenting with gambling - even if they had a previously negative view of gambling. Social media can also influence how peers encourage gambling. Some participants witnessed peers posting gambling wins on Snapchat or Instagram stories regularly. Young people said that they would only ever see people post the wins and never losses on these platforms.

Family is often the most common enabler or ‘gateway’ to access. Young people said that betting with family or receiving scratch cards or lotto tickets from family members as gifts is a common way for them to participate in gambling. Adults also play a significant role in normalising gambling behaviours, either through their general attitudes or in exposing their children to gambling by being an active participant.

The rewards for succeeding at gambling such as being able to earn money quickly and the feeling of winning were other significant encouraging factors. Young people said that feelings associated with winning at gambling such as the feeling of adrenaline, happiness, and competitiveness were all associated with winning and were good feelings that get people to engage in gambling behaviours.

With gambling being illegal for people under 18- participants thought that some young people might want to gamble to appear cool or edgy. Breaking rules and engaging in risk-taking behaviour was mentioned as something that might give some young people a thrill or sense of status, because they can access something that is only for older people. However, this was not a common factor for individuals to participate and more a general observation of their peers.

Gambling is a ‘rite of passage’ for many young people when they turn 18. Many young people were interested in trying gambling or visiting a gambling venue out of curiosity and previous exclusion while underage. Participants who had turned 18 and engaged in these activities said this was more of a one-time occasion to see what it is like rather than something that would become a regular occurrence. Those who had turned 18 before their peers often reported not wanting to visit or participate in gambling activities until their friends were also of age.

While peer influence is an encouraging factor, it is also a significant preventative factor. Young people said that if their friends had negative views or were disinterested in gambling, they would be less likely to participate themselves.

Families that do not gamble and/or educate their children about the risks of gambling are significant preventative factors. Young people who grew up in family environments that discouraged or did not participate in gambling reported a low interest in gambling activities and felt like they were well informed about the risks and harms.

Negative family experiences such as exposure to gambling addiction or repeated losses were discouraging to some young people. Those whose family displayed problematic gambling behaviours reported being directly harmed by gambling and witnessed the first-hand impacts on relationships, finances and wellbeing. They also felt that parents and families could be better educated about gambling and equipped with more information on the direct and indirect impacts of gambling on children and young people.

The fear of losing money or becoming addicted were strong discouraging factors against gambling. Young people recognised the negative emotions associated with gambling such as sadness and depression from losing money and that they did not want to experience the negative feelings that come with losses or addiction.

Stories and firsthand experiences are effective in communicating about gambling risks. Young people want to be shown the real risks and harms of gambling and do not want the information 'sugar-coated'. Young people also felt real stories of problem gambling or first-hand experiences with losing at gambling helped them understand the risks, as well as the harm gambling can cause.

## Marketing factors

*“We see ads for websites like Sportsbet or TasKeno on tv and social media a lot. I also believe it's just because that is the societal norm and gambling addictions are not taken anywhere as serious as something like substance abuse. Growing up I'd watch the Powerball results on TV and help my dad check his numbers.”*

*“There are so many of them and they want you to do it so badly that it makes you think that there has to be a catch... If you tell me, you want me to do something so much, it actually makes me not want to do it.”*

Gambling advertising is universally recognisable and young people are highly exposed to gambling advertising across a range of platforms. Young people recognise advertisements for a range of different gambling products, particularly sports betting ads, TasKeno and the lottery. Young people viewed gambling ads as engaging and memorable, and said they could be funny, exciting or memorable and that they share wins and happiness.

Young people view gambling advertisements regularly, particularly online through free games, streaming services, social media platforms and YouTube. Free to air TV was less commonly used by young people in general, however those who watched sports games or shows reported seeing targeted gambling ads. Young people reported viewing more ads online as they became older, particularly as they approached 18 years. Young people felt regularly exposed to gambling advertising in their communities, particularly via newsagencies and pubs.

While young people are highly exposed to gambling, they reported that the sheer number of gambling ads is annoying and a turnoff. Young people often felt gambling ads come across as desperate or ‘dodgy’ and are a hindrance to enjoying an event. Participants were also critical of advertising regulation and think that the current ‘responsible gambling’ messaging is tokenistic.

Gambling advertising often targets specific demographics and young women often noticed that they were left out of gambling advertising. Sports betting ads often depict events such as young men at the pub celebrating or are centred around male athletes and celebrities. Online casino ads also often use imaging that was targeted more to young males. Some participants said that this is a discouraging factor against gambling – either because they did not feel included or because it was a culture that they did not find it engaging or appealing.

While young people think that anti-gambling messaging was generally effective, they don’t see these campaigns as often as gambling advertisements. Young people were also less aware of anti-gambling campaigns and harm-reduction resources when compared to other important health and wellbeing initiatives such as Quit Smoking.



## Environmental factors

*“I grew up as a “pub kid”. Being around the pub with gambling rooms right next door was definitely an encourager to gambling and alcohol to me, because it was what I was used to being around as a kid.”*

*“I made an account on a sports betting app to prove a point to a friend and that bit was easy... but I couldn’t bet any money because it had age verification and I needed a proper ID... It was easy to create an account, but I couldn’t actually bet money”*

Pubs were the most prominent environment that enabled gambling for young people. Pubs are a common venue for young people to visit with family or friends to participate in gambling or be passively exposed as a minor. Many young people shared experiences of visiting local pubs for a meal with family, only to have family members participate in gambling activities. This was an especially prominent issue for young people living in rural areas or smaller towns with the majority (if not all) of local eateries hosting gambling activities such as poker machines, TOTE and Taskeno.

Mobile phones were another common point of access. However, young people under 18 tended to access app-based simulated betting games, rather than paid gambling services on their phones. These games typically had casino games or ‘spin the wheel’ type mechanisms in them; with some having in-game currency that you can earn or purchase for more attempts or perks. Few 18-year-olds had experience with sports betting apps and websites on their phones, however this largely depended on their personal interests. A small number of young people under 18 years accessed sports betting through friends or families, however this was not a common experience.

Casinos were viewed as a more luxury or high-class environment where larger amounts of money are spent. Young people also felt that casinos were more likely to be glamorised through TV and movies. While Casinos were often viewed as a place of interest when they first turn 18, this was not a common venue young people access to participate in gambling activities.

Home and school were the most common environments young people participated in gambling activities, typically informal betting with friends and family. However, young people did not generally consider these activities as gambling and viewed them as less harmful compared to formal gambling activities.

The law and age verification mechanisms significantly discouraged gambling. Gambling sites that use strong ID verification processes present a significant barrier to underage use, compared to sites that simply ask for a date of birth – which are easy to bypass.

The image of many formal gambling activities and environments are seen as depressing and only for older people. This image is something that a lot of young people do not want to engage with and can be seen as a confronting environment for many young people.

Spaces such as horse and greyhound racing venues and gaming rooms were seen as less enticing for most young people due to associations with gambling addiction. Young people recognised that these

environments were setup with artificial light, bright attractive colours and were designed for people to be kept there for long periods of time.

Gambling venues were often viewed as confronting and associated with excessive alcohol consumption and bad decision making. Generally, these types of behaviours and environments gave the impression that gambling is not an acceptable activity, and they could be a turn off from wanting to engage in gambling or visit venues that are associated with it.

## Young people's experience with low-risk gambling and gambling behaviour

*"I have helped family members fill out keno tickets at the pub, and I have made bets with friends over silly things, and I have bought raffle tickets for clubs and event type things."*

Young people 18 years and younger generally had low interest and rates of participation in formal gambling activities. However, participation in informal gambling activities were far more common (Appendix: Table 2). Participation in formal gambling activities such as poker machines (7%) and sports betting (9%) were relatively low compared to young people who had placed a casual bet with a friend or family member (76%) and purchased raffle tickets (76%). Other common gambling activities for young people included scratchies (69%) and placing a lottery bet (21%), which were most commonly enabled by family members.

While sports betting was relatively common amongst young people (20%), only a small proportion had used a sports betting app (9%). This was due to young people utilising informal mechanisms to gamble on sports, such as footy tipping and casual bets, along with strict ID verification procedures with online and TOTE sports betting. Grand finals and special sports events attracted the highest occurrences of sports betting with young people.

Loot boxes were more common than most forms of formal gambling, with 30% of young people having bought an in-game loot box. Some respondents felt it was important to qualify that loot boxes are not technically gambling and are legal for young people.

It should be noted that 57 respondents were young people aged 18 years, reflecting approximately 10% of the consultation participants. Gambling is legal for this cohort and represent the majority of young people who reported using a poker machine or sports betting app.

Participants were also asked about where they accessed gambling activities and were able to comment on this if they felt comfortable. While casual betting with friends and community and charity raffles were most common in how young people engaged with 'informal betting', family was the most common access for young people under 18 years to participate in formal gambling activities.

## Communication channels and support

### Social Media

*“The number of children aged from 12-18 that use TikTok is insane. If you were to sponsor some big creator to warn younger children about gambling, I think it would have a massive impact.”*

Young people predominantly gain their information from social media, and it is often their preferred method of communication. TikTok and Instagram are the most favoured social media platforms for young people aged 12-18 years and are seen as the best place to reach them. Facebook is used less regularly and is considered more relevant for people over 18 years. Young people 14 years and younger reported a preference for YouTube due to having limited access to personal mobile devices or social media accounts.

It is important to consider the platform and messaging when communicating with young people through social media. While social media apps such as TikTok and Instagram are popular, young people felt that targeted advertising on these channels can be difficult. Many reported ‘tuning out’ to ads or skipping past them if they weren’t immediately interesting or engaging. Young people suggested looking beyond standard advertising and seeing how content could be delivered through informational accounts, influencers and engaging content that encourages young people to participate with the topic online. Channels that deliver accessible information aimed at young people can prevent the information from being viewed as negative or coming across as too paternalistic or intrusive.

#### Ideas from young people:

Young people suggested using social media to share key messages with their peers. Any social media campaign should be co-designed with young people to ensure that the messages are contemporary, relevant and engaging for them. Young people also suggested including young adults (17-29 years) as role models to share content and set a positive example to those under the age of 18. Key social media messages identified by young people include:

- Honest, real-life experiences of young people impacted by gambling harm.
- Facts and statistics about gambling concepts such as the ‘house edge’, the odds and impacts of problematic gambling.
- Give examples of how gambling losses accumulate over time and what they could actually do with the money (e.g., buy new car tyres, invest or attend a concert).

### Education through schools

Young people felt that schools would be an essential institution to support learning about gambling risks and harms. Several young people reported receiving lessons on gambling at school and felt it had a positive impact on their understanding. However, gambling information is not included in the Australian Education Curriculum and is delivered at the discretion of individual schools and educators. Young people who knew about the odds and concepts like house edge said that this education directly discouraged them from participating in gambling.

*Ideas from young people:*

Participants felt that content around gambling could be easily adapted to fit into their health classes and that it was something they would like to learn about. They suggested that simulated gambling games could be effective in helping young people understand the risks, odds and feelings of gambling safely. They also said that awareness presentations and discussions from outside organisations would help get people's attention and help to reach a larger number of young people.

***Education for/with parents and family***

Family is one of the leading influencers that encourage and discourage young people to participate in gambling. Overall, young people believe that learning about gambling and its harms from family was important, particularly for those who are unintentionally exposing young people and children to gambling activities (such as scratchies, the Lottery and casual bets). There was also a noticeable difference among young people's attitudes and experiences towards gambling, depending on their family's view.

*Ideas from young people:*

Young people suggested providing information and educational support to adults to support safe discussions with their children and to give a better understanding of the impacts of gambling (including low-risk activities) on minors. Young people believe many parents are not aware of online mechanisms that simulate or facilitate access to gambling activities, such as loot boxes, NFTs and online games or apps.

Young people from multicultural backgrounds did not generally see a need for gambling resources to include language support for those aged 12-18 years. However, they felt that this would be incredibly important for their family members – as young people often become the main translator for their family. Many multicultural young people playing games with family that incorporate aspects of gambling. They felt that their families should be better informed to discourage gambling in minors without negatively impacting their participation in cultural activities.

**Television**

Television (TV) was identified as a relatively useful communication channel when sharing gambling harm-reduction messaging with adults. Young people generally thought that TV adverts against gambling were effective and should be continued or expanded. However, TV would be less effective for young people as the target audience compared to social or digital media. TV advertising would be more effective when targeting instances where high volumes of gambling advertising occur, such as surrounding sports games, or when sharing harm-reduction messages with family TV events.

Young people are critical of the amount of gambling advertising on TV and felt that the regulation of such ads should be improved to include more information about the risks and harms of gambling. Young people want more information about what gambling responsibly means, and they think that betting advertising should be more regulated or prohibited if the government and community are serious about reducing gambling and related harms.

*Ideas from young people:*

‘Gamble responsibly’ messaging could be expanded to include more information about the impacts of gambling and the true odds of winning in that activity. Several young people suggested using a similar method to US pharmaceutical advertising and having to include a full list of side-effects, impacts and where to get help if impacted by gambling.

Many participants suggested banning gambling advertising or creating stricter regulations similar to regulations around cigarette advertising in Australia. This could include adding health warnings on TV adverts and banning enticing colours, sounds and perks used by gambling venues and advertisers.

### **Websites**

While less commonly used, young people felt that they would use a website to access specific harm-reduction information if they or someone they knew needed support. While social media was preferred to share harm-reduction messages, websites are where young people will seek help. Young people had little knowledge of where they could access gambling support anonymously and felt a youth-friendly website would be the most beneficial.

#### *Ideas from young people:*

Having a website with tailored information for young people and very clear messaging on how to access support if they need it. This is best if people can access information anonymously and they can contact support mechanisms through digital means. Websites are also commonly used by young people at school, and they felt they would be more likely to explore a gambling support website if it was incorporated into a larger educational package.

### **Posters, brochures and print media**

Young people felt they were more likely to engage with online resources compared to print media. The newspaper was viewed as one of the worst ways to communicate information about gambling and most young people had little interest in print media or informational booklets and brochures.

However, posters were viewed favourably as they could easily be placed in common spaces young people utilise. Like websites, posters were “good to have”, but for awareness communication rather than the main form of how young people consume information. Young people felt that posters would be a good mechanism to connect them to harm-reduction resources such as an online website but are not the most effective method to share harm-reduction messages or a broader communications campaign.

#### *Ideas from young people:*

Young people said that posters could be eye-catching and a more proactive form of communication. Placing informational posters where young people or at places where gambling activity occurs such as at school common spaces, pubs or sports clubs to raise awareness of gambling odds and harms would be a good way to communicate the harms of gambling to target populations



## Appendix. Data Tables

**Table 1. Attitudes and opinions of young people 12-18 years regarding gambling and gambling-related behaviours. Respondents (%) agreement or disagreement to statements regarding gambling  $n=558$ . \***

	I think I will win over \$10,000 in Tattsлото one day.	One day I'm going to strike it lucky at gambling.	To win at gambling you have to think positively.	I'm more likely to win if I use my lucky numbers.	You can win at poker machines if you have the right system.	Gambling is a good way to make money.	Young people under the age of 18 shouldn't gamble.
<b>agree</b>	4.5	13.3	11.5	6.5	8.4	5.8	75.6
<b>neutral</b>	19.0	29.6	26.3	18.5	25.0	11.3	14.7
<b>disagree</b>	76.5	57.2	62.2	75.0	66.6	82.9	9.7

*\*Adapted from Gardner and Williamson (2011) Weighing up the odds: Young Tasmanians' knowledge of, attitudes to, experiences of, and future intentions about gambling. Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania.*

**Table 2. Low-risk gambling experiences of young people 12-18 years. Percentage (%) of respondents who had disclosed participating in gambling activities  $n=538$ .**

	Placed a casual bet with friends or family	Used a poker machine	Scratched a scratchie	Placed a lottery bet	Gambled online using real money	Used a sports betting app	Bought an in-game loot box	Bought a raffle ticket	Bet on a sports game	Lost money gambling	Wanted gambling support
<b>yes</b>	75.7	7.3	69.1	20.9	10.8	9.1	30.9	76.0	20.1	29.7	5.9
<b>no</b>	17.5	91.0	27.9	74.8	85.8	89.2	64.2	20.5	77.6	63.0	83.3
<b>unsure</b>	6.9	1.7	3.0	4.3	3.4	1.7	1.5	3.5	2.2	7.2	10.8