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Helping the Gambling Sector become Child Aware

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Gambling in Australia

- Gambling is an accepted and common activity in Australia
- In 2011 around 64% of Australians gambled



Gambling in Australia

- Not all gambling is equal!
- Popular gambling activities are lotto, scratch-it tickets, race betting, electronic gaming machines (EGMs – pokies)



Gambling in Australia

- Highest spending is on EGM/pokies, casino games and race betting
- Sports betting still a small market (play and expenditure) but growing rapidly



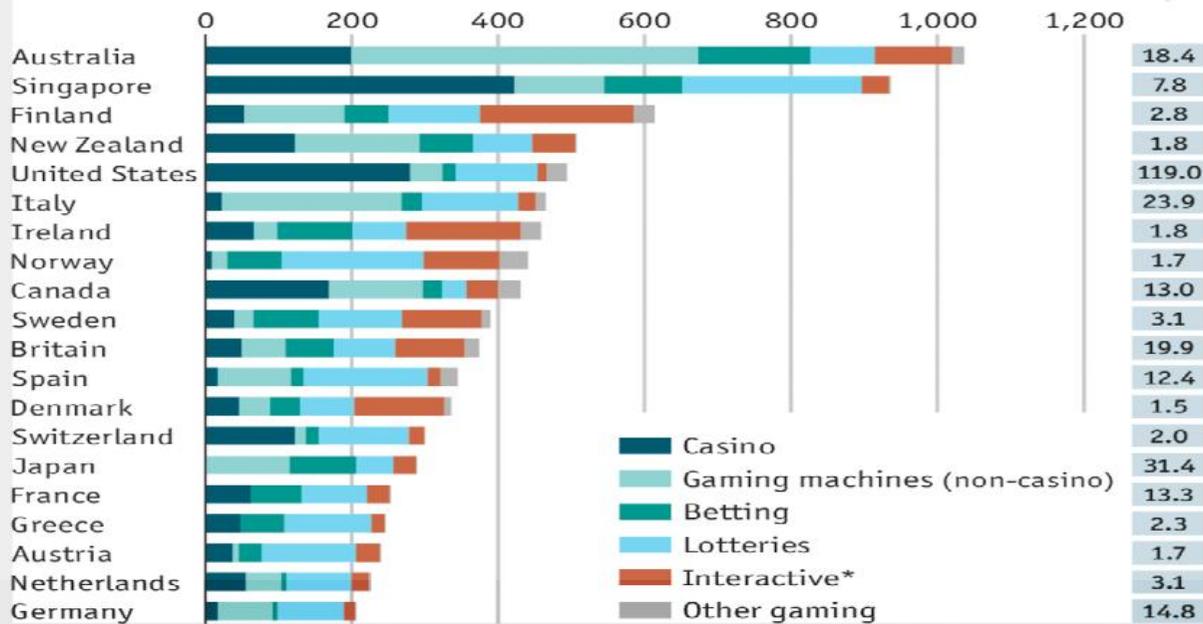
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Global gambling

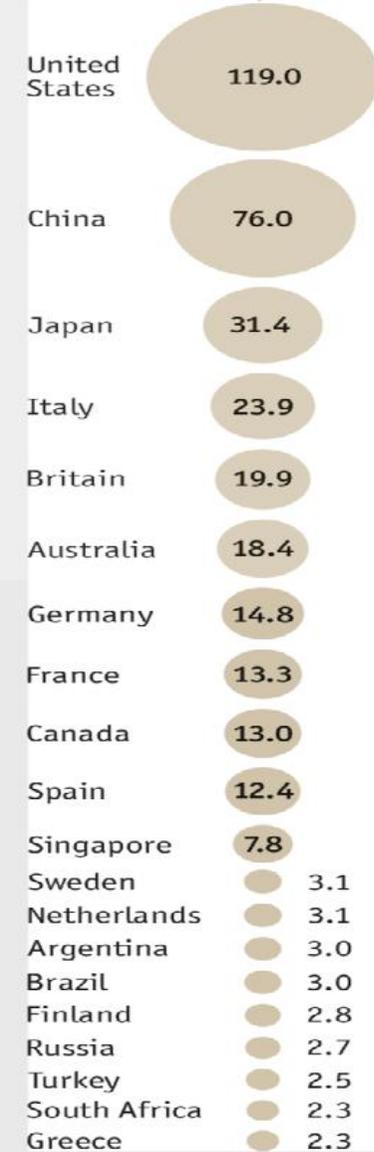
2013

Biggest gamblers, loss per resident adult, \$

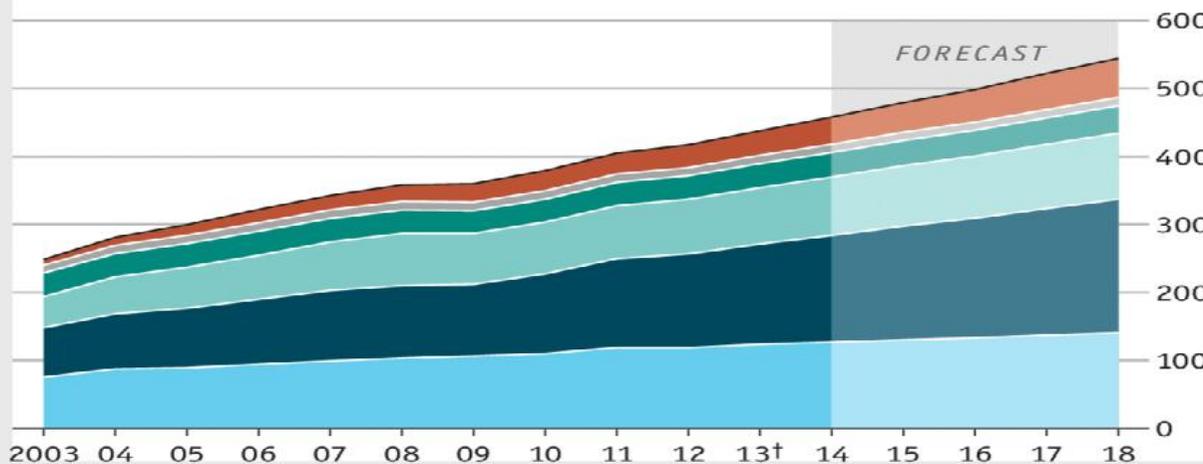


Total, \$bn: Losses

Biggest losses by country



Global gambling losses, \$bn

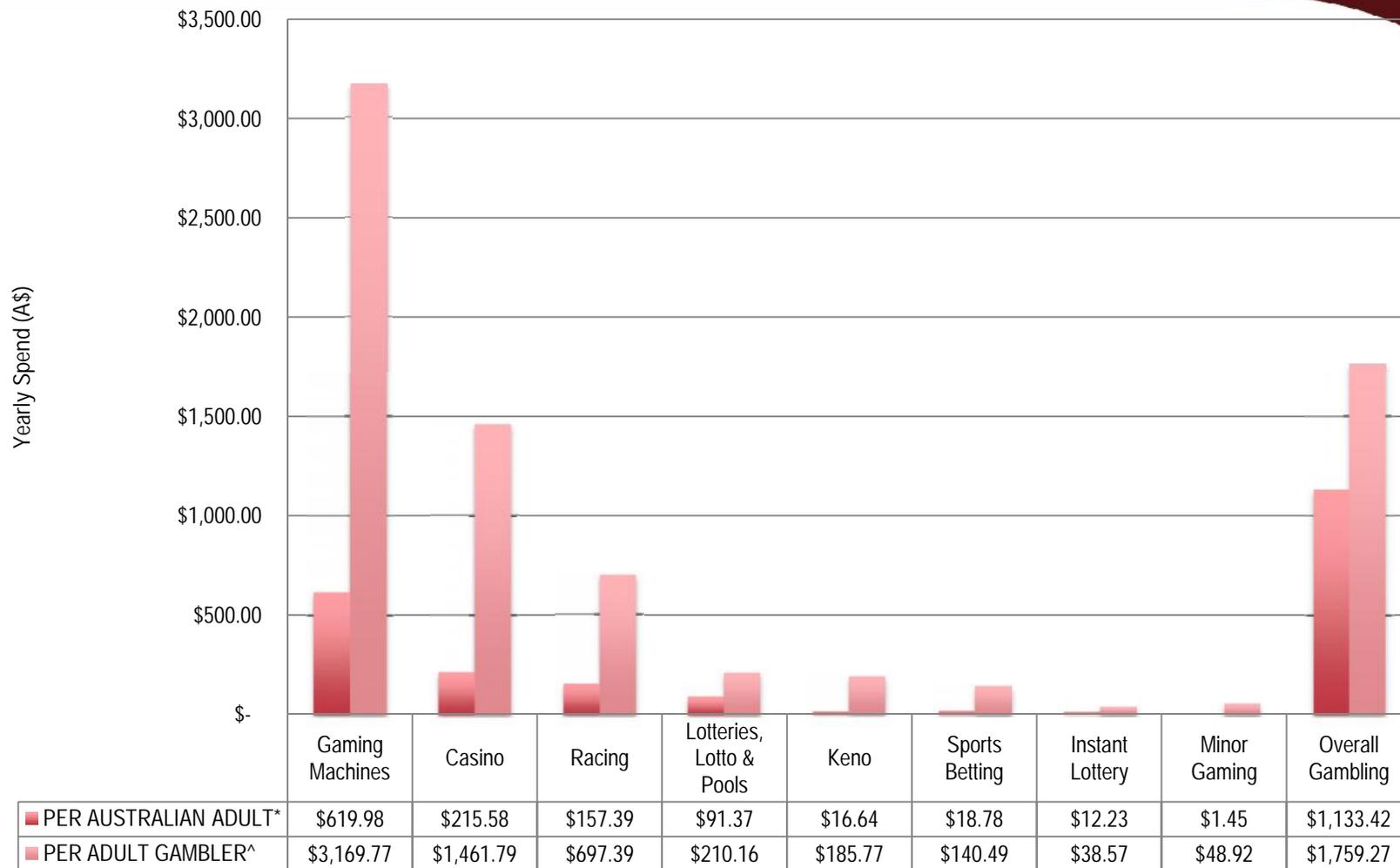


Source: H2 Gambling Capital

*Computer, mobile phone or interactive TV †Estimate



Gambling Expenditure, 2010-11^o



Gambling-related Harm

- Around 3% of the population experience moderate-severe problems from their gambling
- Much larger proportion (possibly 19%+) experience some concerns/harms related to their gambling
- Vast majority of people seeking help are EGM (pokie machine) gamblers



Gambling-related Harm

- Even a single episode of gambling can cause harm
 - ◆ Unable to pay bills
 - ◆ Inadequate money for food or socialising
- Extended gambling problems lead to major, long term harm to gambler and to those around them
 - ◆ Unmanageable debt, poverty, homelessness
 - ◆ Negative impact on relationships
 - ◆ Loss of self-esteem, feelings of stigmatisation, social isolation
 - ◆ Mental and physical health problems
 - ◆ Legal or forensic consequences
 - ◆ Intergenerational transmission of gambling problems



Gambling-related Harm

- Gambling most associated with harm
 - ◆ Linked to expenditure
 - ◆ EGM/Pokies - biggest cause of harm
 - ◆ Race betting
 - ◆ Online sports betting again a growing phenomenon



Harms to families and children

- Gambling harm extends beyond the individual gambler
 - ◆ Partners – particularly women
 - ◆ Children of problem gamblers
 - ◆ Thought ~ 5-10 people affected for every 'problem gambler'
- Limited knowledge about the effects of gambling on others



Harms to families

- Domestic and family violence
- Broken relationships
- Loss of trust
- Chaos and dysfunction of family environment
 - ◆ Debts, unstable/lost housing
 - ◆ Arguments, conflict
 - ◆ Comorbid mental illness and substance abuse - gambler and partner
- Pervasive, long-term harms extend to children



Harms to children

- Can have a huge negative effect on family finances
- Impacts extend beyond resolution of gambling problems
- Children often very aware of the impact of gambling on family finances
- Children may take on adult roles of financial responsibility (but without the power to change situation)
- Negative effect of problem gambling parents stealing or 'borrowing' from child's savings or other allocated money



Harms to children

- Breakdown of family unit – single parent household
- Child abuse and neglect
- Loss of trust
- Emotional disturbances - depression, hopelessness, anxiety, guilt, confusion
- Behavioural difficulties – substance abuse, over-eating, lower academic/employment performance, illegal acts, conduct problems
- physical complaints



Harms to families and children

- Intergenerational transmission of gambling problems
 - Clear link between parental and adult children problems
 - ◆ Recent Australian research suggests people with problem gambling parents are 7-14 times more likely to experience gambling problems
 - ◆ Relationships remained significant even when controlling for family chaos (Dowling, Jackson, Thomas, & Frydenberg, 2010)



Child aware approaches

- Making the gambling sector more 'child aware'
- Making other allied adult services more 'gambling aware'



Australian Gambling Research Centre

- Translation and communication of existing knowledge
 - ◆ Discussion paper 'The impact of gambling problems on families '
 - ◆ Webinar 'The impacts of gambling on families and young people
 - ◆ Expert advice and discussions with allied sectors



Australian Gambling Research Centre

- Conducting research
 - ◆ Gambling in suburban Australia
 - ◆ Seeking support online: Gamblers' family and friends
- Introducing gambling modules into major established longitudinal studies
 - ◆ The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)
 - ◆ Footprints in Time: The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC)
 - ◆ The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey
 - ◆ The Australian Temperament Project (ATP)



Making gambling sector more 'child aware'

- Education and resources for gambling services
 - ◆ Simple, accessible information on effects of gambling on children
 - ◆ Practitioner guidelines on being child aware
 - Recognise gambling services as an early intervention point
 - Being sensitive to needs of children
 - Incorporate child aware philosophies and principles to guide appropriate responses



Making gambling sector more 'child aware'

- Research to increase child awareness
 - ◆ Need for more research into the short and long term effects of parental gambling on children
 - ◆ Need for research into the best practice interventions within services to meet needs of children and families



Child aware approaches

Making allied services more 'gambling aware'

- Educating allied service practitioners about
 - ◆ the potential that gambling may be a cause of client problems
 - ◆ the potential issues this may cause for their children
- Informational resources
- Incorporation into child aware practitioner guidelines



Conclusions

- Gambling can lead to problems for the gambler and to their family and children
- Harms to children can be extensive and long lasting
- Child aware approaches include
 - ◆ making the gambling sector more 'child aware'
 - ◆ making allied adult services more gambling and child aware



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- Do you live in Melbourne's West?
- Indigenous Australians and gambling
- Gambling strategies across life stages study
- Family impacts of problem gambling**
- Family & friends seeking support study

The Australian Gambling Research Centre (AGRC) provides high quality, evidence-based publications and resources for policy-makers, researchers and professionals in the area of gambling.



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Thank you

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