

A Guide for Volunteers on Responsible Gambling

The purpose of this Guide is to provide you with an abbreviated easy to read version of the *Queensland Responsible Gambling Code of Practice*.

As a volunteer worker at your venue, you play a critical role in creating an environment where patrons can gamble responsibly.

- The *Queensland Responsible Gambling Code of Practice* is a set of practices developed by the gambling industry to promote the provision of responsible gambling environments within their industry and is aimed at minimising the risk of harm from gambling to patrons, their families and the local community.
- For many people, gambling is an enjoyable leisure and entertainment activity.
- For some, however, gambling can have a harmful impact on, not only the gambler, but the gambler's family, their friends, their employers or the general community. The behaviours of a problem gambler may potentially impact on another five to ten people in their family and social circle.
- The Code of Practice is reviewed on a regular basis to evaluate the effectiveness of the practices. From time to time your venue will be asked to participate in a survey on how effectively the voluntary Code of Practice has been implemented within your venue.
- The practices in the Code of Practice are organised into the following broad categories:
 1. Provision of information;
 2. Interaction with customers and the community;
 3. Exclusion provisions;
 4. Physical environments;
 5. Financial transactions; and
 6. Advertising and promotions.
- The Code of Practice is supported by the *Queensland Responsible Gambling Code of Practice Resource Manual*. The Resource Manual provides a step by step guide on how best to implement the practices in the Code of Practice. All gambling providers have been provided with a copy of the Resource Manual. As these documents contain a significant amount of information this Guide has been developed to assist you in acquiring knowledge about the Code of Practice and responsible gambling environments.

A further resource which can assist you in learning about the Code of Practice and responsible gambling environments is the *Queensland Responsible Gambling Code of Practice Industry Training Kit*. The Kit contains a self-paced workbook and a training DVD and has been provided to all gambling providers in Queensland.

The following provides a brief overview of each practice.

1. Provision of information

All gambling providers are required to display signage and provide information to ensure that patrons can make informed decisions about their gambling. Signage and information relating to responsible gambling is to be displayed in the venue in an area that is highly visible to patrons. Refer to your venue's Resource Manual for further details on responsible gambling signage.

Information is to be displayed to alert patrons that the following information is available on request:

- Responsible Gambling Policy document (site specific);
- The nature of games, game rules, odd or returns to players;
- Exclusions provisions;
- Gambling-related complaints resolution mechanisms; and
- The gambling provider's financial transaction practices.

The venue should also have on display the following:

- The gambling provider's Responsible Gambling Mission Statement;
- Information about the potential risks associated with gambling and where to get help for problem gambling is prominently displayed in all gambling areas and near ATM and EFTPOS facilities servicing gambling areas;
- Meaningful and accurate information on the odds of winning major prizes is prominently displayed in all gambling areas and in proximity to relevant games.

2. Interaction with customers and community

Your venue should nominate a person(s) to perform the responsible gambling customer liaison officer role and who should:

- establish links with local gambling-related support services and relevant local community networks;
- provide information and assistance to patrons and staff with gambling related problems;
- establish complaint handling procedures to deal with gambling issues; and
- ensure ongoing responsible gambling training is provided to all gambling staff.

A key responsible gambling strategy within the Code of Practice is for gambling providers to ensure an ongoing *liaison with their customers* and the community. This can be achieved by establishing *effective links with local gambling-related support services* and community networks where responsible gambling-related issues can be raised.

For the contact details of your local Gambling Help service provider
- refer to the Gambling Help service section in your *Queensland Responsible Gambling Code of Practice Resource Manual*

3. Exclusion provisions

Where a patron is experiencing problems with their gambling behaviour they can be excluded from, the whole venue; or the gaming machine area; and/or from participating in keno or TAB betting.

An exclusion can be either:

- requested by the patron (self-exclusion) (*when a patron asks a venue to exclude/ban them from whole of the venue or part of venue*); or
- initiated by the gambling provider (venue-initiated exclusion) (*when the venue excludes/bans a patron from whole or part of venue because the venue is concerned about a patron's gambling behaviour. The venue may have become aware of the gambling problem through an approach by a third party*)

Gambling providers are responsible for providing exclusion procedures and supporting documentation to patrons. Exclusion provisions are contained in the *Gaming Machine Act 1991*,

the Keno Act 1996 and the *Wagering Act 1998* and are aimed at supporting patrons who are experiencing problems with their gambling behaviour.

In all cases the venue must ensure that the patron is provided with the contact details for the local Gambling Help service provider.

Details of persons who are excluded from the venue are to be kept in a Register of Excluded Persons and the venue and venue staff must take all reasonable steps to enforce the exclusion – e.g., prevent a patron entering the venue.

Excluding patrons and recognising the possible signs of problem gambling represent some of the most challenging issues for venue workers. As a general rule you should refer to your responsible gambling Customer Liaison Officer, Supervisor or Manager for assistance.

4. Physical environment

Gambling providers must ensure that the physical environment of the venue supports and promotes a safe and responsible environment for patrons.

There are a number of physical environmental practices you should be aware of that create a responsible gambling environment. They are:

- prohibiting minors from gambling;
- prohibiting minors from entering designated gambling areas within the venue;
- service of alcohol is managed in such a way to encourage patrons to take breaks in play;
- patrons who are unduly intoxicated are not permitted to continue gambling;
- any child care facilities provided by gambling providers must be in accordance with relevant child care legislation;
- staff working in gambling areas do not encourage gambling patrons to give them gratuities; and
- gambling providers should ensure that patrons are made aware of the passage of time and discourage their patrons from participating in extended, intensive and repetitive play.

5. Financial transactions

- Your venue's financial transactions policy which provides details on how cheques can be cashed, and how winnings are to be paid should be available upon request by a patron.
- ATM facilities are not to be located in close proximity to designated gambling areas or located at the entry to gambling areas where alternative locations are safe and practical.
- Your venue has an approved cheques clearance limit, above which all large winnings are to be paid to the patron by cheque. Cheques issued to patrons for winnings should not be cashed by the gambling provider. If the gambling provider does cash the cheque it should not do so until the next trading day or within 24 hours of the win.
- Gambling providers must not provide credit or lend money to patrons for gambling purposes.

6. Advertising and promotions

The Code of Practice states that your venue is to develop and implement strategies to ensure advertising and promotions are delivered in a responsible manner with consideration given to the potential impact on people adversely affected by gambling. There are thirteen advertising and promotions practices set out in the Code of Practice.

To assist venues in implementing the advertising and promotions practices the *Queensland Responsible Gambling Advertising and Promotions Guideline* has been developed and provides examples of acceptable and unacceptable practices. A copy of the Guideline was issued to all venues in 2005 and is also available for download from the responsible gambling website www.responsiblegambling.qld.gov.au

For further information on implementing the Code of Practice in your venue, please refer to the **Queensland Responsible Gambling Code of Practice Resource Manual**

The following table sets out possible problem gambling risk indicators for use by gambling venue staff. Whilst it is not your role to approach patrons, you should always refer to your Customer Liaison Officer, Supervisor, or Manager if you have concerns that a patron is exhibiting risk behaviours. Your Customer Liaison Officer, Supervisor, or Manager have been trained in ways to approach the patron and to offer assistance.

Possible Problem Gambling risk indicators for use by gambling venue staff

Risk Factors	Examples of Risk Factors
Faulty Cognition.	Patron reports having a perception of chances of winning which is unrealistic.
Loss of control.	<p>Patron reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a problem with gambling; • Having tried unsuccessfully to stop gambling; • Spending too much time gambling. <p>Patron is observed as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatening or causing physical harm to others or self; • Selling valuables to gamble; • Behaving in an aggressive manner towards property.
Negative impacts of gambling.	<p>Patron reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having lost a significant relationship due to gambling; • Having lied to others to hide their gambling; • Having lost a job due to gambling. <p>Third party (eg. a family member or another customer) reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patron gambling instead of fulfilling family responsibilities (eg. children); • Trying to borrow or “scam” money for gambling from others (eg. other patrons).
Alcohol / drugs use while gambling.	Patron observed as unduly intoxicated or under influence of drugs while gambling.
Depression / suicidal thoughts.	Patron reports suffering from depression and/or has thoughts of suicide due to gambling.
Involvement in multiple simultaneous gambling activities.	Patron is observed to be participating in three or more gambling activities simultaneously (eg. playing more than one gaming machine at a time).
Personal remorse.	<p>Patron reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Losing household money on gambling (eg. money to buy groceries or pay bills); • Selling valuables to gamble; • Borrowing money to live due to gambling; • Being unable to meet loan repayments due to gambling; • Depending on others to repay their gambling debts; • Having committed illegal acts due to gambling (eg. stealing or fraud or domestic violence).

Some of the potential harmful impacts caused by problem gambling include:

- **Mental and Physical Health** – stress, low self-esteem, depression and anxiety, poor health, suicide on the part of the problem gambler;
- **Work or Study problems** – absenteeism, poor academic or professional performance, job loss on the part of the problem gambler, loss of productivity from employer’s perspective;
- **Financial problems** – financial hardships (inability to pay bills, rising debts), asset loss (eg. house or car repossessed), bankruptcy on the part of the problem gambler. Landlords (rent) and banks may not be paid. Employers may be defrauded;
- **Legal and criminal impacts** – theft or fraud on the part of the problem gambler, adverse commercial impact upon their employers;
- **Interpersonal problems** – family neglect, domestic violence, relationship breakdown (eg. divorce);
- **Adverse effects upon gambling venue staff** – eg. absorbing abuse from customers, de-motivation or depression from observing negative effects of gambling, venue staff developing gambling problems of their own; and
- **Costs to the Community** – financial pressure on charities and Government funds (eg. cost of funding support services), cost of legal court cases etc.