

NSW Office of Responsible Gambling

Annual Progress Report in 2024-25

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Introduction

Our vision and purpose

The Office of Responsible Gambling's Strategic Plan for 2024–27 outlines our vision to work towards zero gambling harm. We aim to achieve this by:

- preventing and reducing gambling harm, for people at risk and the broader community
- improving individual and community wellbeing, for those affected by gambling harm
- supporting people to understand their choices and decisions about gambling
- contributing to public debate and influence gambling harm prevention and minimisation by government, industry, community and other stakeholders.

Our outcomes

Outcomes in the Strategic Plan 2024–27 guide our work:

- Research - Our research builds the evidence base to influence gambling policy, regulation and programs as well as products and behaviour.
- Education and awareness - Our education and awareness initiatives empower individuals and the community to understand their choices and decisions about gambling, take action to prevent and reduce gambling harm, and seek support when they need it.
- Services and support - Our support and treatment services are multimodal, integrated, tailored to the needs of diverse communities, accessible and effective.
- Leadership and influence - Our advice and support leads government, industry, community, and other stakeholders to contribute to a stronger culture of gambling harm prevention and minimisation.

About this report

This is our first progress report under our Strategic Plan for 2024–27. It highlights our achievements in 2024–25 and our ongoing delivery of our core programs and services, including the free and confidential GambleAware support we fund across NSW.

The report provides an overview of our work across the four key outcome areas, along with financial statements and data on GambleAware clients and service delivery.

NSW Office of
Responsible Gambling
Strategic Plan
2024–2027

GambleAware
gambleaware.nsw.gov.au
1800 858 858



Strategic Plan 2024–27

Highlights from 2024–25

In October 2024 we launched our new strategic plan, which was developed through consultation with community organisations, GambleAware providers, researchers, government agencies and people with lived experience of gambling harm. We also introduced new Research and Education and Awareness Agendas.

In November we launched a new round of Gambling Research Capacity Grants, awarding one post-doctoral fellowship and two PhD scholarships to help to grow the depth and diversity of gambling research in Australia.

In December we released the NSW Gambling Survey 2024 which collected data from 10,000 adults in NSW to measure gambling participation, attitudes and harm. It included measures of harm experienced by affected others for the first time. The survey findings demonstrated the continuing and significant impact of gambling on our community, particularly on at-risk communities.

In January 2025 we received the results of an independent evaluation of the GambleAware service system. The review assessed whether the model was delivering effective and high-quality support to people across NSW, and found that it was safe, efficient and effective in meeting client needs.

In March, as the rugby league and AFL seasons got underway, we launched our *That's another epic protection play* campaign to increase use of the consumer protection tools available in betting apps. Increasing the uptake of these tools remains an ongoing priority.



Epic Protection Play Sports betting campaign

In 2025 we also welcomed four new Trustees to the Responsible Gambling Fund (RGF) Trust:

- Kara Lamond bringing a strong background in government and not-for-profits, specialising in policy development and reforms within the health and justice sectors
- Luke Lindsay, whose experience overseeing statewide gambling support services and community programs will bring relevant insights to the RGF
- Siobhan Toohill who has extensive experience in environmental, social and governance initiatives
- Maria Vassiliadis, with extensive experience as a senior government executive responsible for the development and implementation of policy and regulation.

Further details on our work in 2024-25 are provided throughout this report.

We look forward to building on this work in 2025-26, as we turn our attention towards recontracting our GambleAware services, building on our work for Aboriginal communities, improving how we engage with people with lived experience, and raising awareness of gambling harm among new and different audiences such as legal professionals and pharmacists.

We will also be evaluating the Reclaim the Game program and *The Number that Changed My Life* campaign as well as actioning key findings from the evaluation of the GambleAware service system.

Research



Our research builds the evidence base to influence gambling policy, regulation and programs as well as products and behaviour.

In 2024-25 we:

- published the NSW Gambling Survey 2024. Over 10,000 adults were interviewed for this research, which was funded by the Responsible Gambling Fund. It provides a comprehensive overview of gambling behaviours, trends and harm across the state.
- released the report of the *Australian Secondary Students Alcohol and Drug survey: The prevalence and correlates of gambling in secondary school students in NSW 2022-23*. For the first time in NSW this survey included questions about gambling. Over 1,300 high school students participated, providing more insight into gambling prevalence and associated behaviours.
- released new research on *Live streaming gambling: Who watches, why and what effects is it having?* which was funded through an RGF research grant. This is the first research into gambling live streaming – the online broadcast of people gambling for real-world money.

- developed our Research Agenda 2024-27 which sets out priority research themes.
- awarded one post-doctoral fellowship and two PhD scholarships through the Gambling Research Capacity Grants program. Researchers from the University of Sydney, Central Queensland University, and the Australian National University will work on projects exploring:
 - the effectiveness of mandatory carded play and harm-reduction tools in NSW
 - characteristics of individuals seeking help for both substance use and gambling
 - the role of culture in shaping gambling harm experienced by people affected by someone else's gambling.
- continued to support and oversee the latest wave of the NSW Longitudinal Youth Gambling Study.
- continued supporting the delivery of two RGF Research Grant projects:
 - Family and domestic violence and gambling harm - developing the evidence-base for prevention programs and intervention services in NSW, Australian National University
 - Early identification of gambling comorbidity in a hospitality setting, Western Sydney University.

NSW Gambling Survey 2024:



10,000+
adults surveyed in the NSW
Gambling Survey 2024

Australian Secondary Students Alcohol and Drug survey:



1,300+
high school students
surveyed across NSW

Spotlight on:

NSW Gambling Survey 2024

In December we released a landmark research report: the NSW Gambling Survey 2024. This large-scale study, commissioned by the RGF and delivered by Central Queensland University, surveyed 10,000 adults from across NSW between March and May 2024.

The survey explored gambling participation, attitudes and harm. It included representative coverage of Aboriginal people and people from multicultural communities. The 2024 survey built on previous surveys and, for the first time, included questions about harm to both gamblers and people affected by someone else's gambling, as well as harm from gambling that occurred more than 12 months ago.

The findings provide a current picture of who is gambling, how gambling is changing, and who experiences harm. While some statistics have remained stable, gambling harm continues to have a significant impact in our community. The findings demonstrate the need for an ongoing focus on reducing harm among people who gamble and affected others.



One in five
adults in NSW experience
gambling harm



One in three
weekly gamblers experience
moderate to high gambling risk.

The survey found that although gambling participation is relatively stable at 53.5%:

- One in five adults (21%) experience gambling harm:
 - 7.8% from their own gambling
 - 12.7% from someone else's gambling
 - 7.1% from gambling that occurred more than 12 months ago.
- Only 13.5% of people experiencing moderate or high-risk gambling sought help. This is a slight improvement from 11% in 2019.
- People who gamble weekly are far more likely to be at risk, with 30.5% experiencing moderate to high levels of gambling harm (compared to 2.5% of those who gamble less than weekly).

The survey findings show that the impacts of gambling are not spread equally across our community. Some groups are more affected than others:

- Young men (<45 years) accounted for about half the total impact of harm from their own gambling.
- People who speak a language other than English at home, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people without a tertiary education, and people not in a relationship were also disproportionately impacted by their own gambling.
- Women, people who live with children, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to experience harm from someone else's gambling.

Different forms of gambling have different impacts. The survey found that gaming machines are the source of most gambling harm in NSW – responsible for 54.8% of gambling harm.

Wagering and casino table games were also significant causes of harm, with wagering responsible for 16.5% of gambling harm in NSW and casino table games responsible for 7.7%.

Insights from the survey will directly inform our programs, services and policy initiatives in 2025–26. The findings will help us to prioritise our work, particularly in relation to at-risk populations and communities.

Education and awareness



Our education and awareness work empowers individuals, families and communities to make informed choices about gambling, take steps to reduce harm, and seek help when they need it.

In 2024–25 we:

- developed our Education and Awareness Agenda for 2024–2027.
- launched new resources for veterans.
- launched new fact sheets and posters at the 2024 Koori Knockout. They feature culturally appropriate imagery and language to raise awareness of the support available through GambleAware.
- delivered a successful GambleAware Week 2024. 70 events were hosted across the state. Campaign messages reached more than 1.2 million people through 145 media mentions. Online engagement was strong, with 300,000 YouTube views and a 70% increase in traffic to our website.
- launched the *That's another epic protection play* campaign to encourage young adults aged 18 to 34 who bet online to use consumer protection tools. The campaign achieved 14.3 million impressions and was the most visited page on our website during its launch period.
- re-released animations to encourage Aboriginal people to reflect on gambling and take steps to reduce the risk of harm. The animations were developed by Aboriginal filmmakers at the Jumbunna Institute and funded by an RGF grant in 2021. We promoted them through Aboriginal-owned channels, including NITV and Aboriginal Health TV.

- continued the *Be Aware, Be GambleAware* campaign, which raises awareness of GambleAware services. In 2024–25, the campaign achieved significantly greater reach compared to the previous year. Exposure among help-seeking individuals increased to 58% from 47%. Awareness of the GambleAware website rose to 23% from 18%, and awareness of the Helpline increased to 24% from 18%.
- continued to deliver *The Number that Changed my Life* campaign to reduce stigma, promote in-language support, and encourage help-seeking among culturally and linguistically diverse communities. In 2024–25, it led to over 30,000 visits to our in-language webpages and reached over 2.3 million people through social media.
- continued funding the Gambling Impact Society *Consumer Voices* program, which trains and supports people who have experienced gambling harm to tell their stories to increase community awareness. In 2024–25, the funding supported 41 community education sessions attended by 785 participants.
- funded the rollout of 20 *Conversations about Gambling* and 10 *Talking about Gambling* Mental Health First Aid Australia workshops which equip adults with the knowledge, skills and confidence to recognise, understand, respond and support people experiencing gambling harm, including Aboriginal people.



GambleAware Week campaign 2024

Spotlight on:

GambleAware for Veterans

In 2024-25 we worked to raise awareness of gambling harm among veterans' communities.

Veterans are almost twice as likely to experience gambling harm than the general population. Gambling harm is strongly linked to alcohol dependence, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. It is also a significant risk factor for suicide among veterans, with one in five veterans who experience gambling harm making a suicide plan or attempt.

We consulted with the NSW Office for Veterans Affairs, RSL LifeCare, RSL NSW, Open Arms and Bravery Trust to identify opportunities to improve outcomes for veterans and their families.

As a result, we:

- developed and launched new GambleAware brochures, posters and factsheets for veterans. We promoted these through our social media channels and through veteran-focused networks and organisations such as RSL NSW and RSL LifeCare Veteran and Family Hubs.
- supported connections between RSL LifeCare Veteran and Family Hubs and local GambleAware providers to foster collaboration and referral.
- built the capacity of GambleAware services to engage with and respond to veterans in their regions.
- hosted GambleAware information stalls at two Defence Transition Seminars, offering resources and advice to ADF members and their families as they prepare for civilian life.
- presented the new resources and ongoing capacity building work at the Open Arms Regional Advisory Forum in Newcastle.

- organised a presentation for the RSL LifeCare Veteran Services Professional Development Network from a GambleAware Clinical Lead on recognising and referring veterans experiencing gambling harm.
- partnered with the Centre for Community Welfare and Training to provide tailored gambling harm minimisation training for Open Arms staff.
- provided input to the NSW Veterans Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030 which recognise the impact of gambling harm on veterans.

These initiatives form part of our broader commitment to supporting the wellbeing of veterans and their families through targeted education, outreach and partnerships.



**What's gambling
really costing you?**

2304_VR004 | Image: Department of Defence

Free and confidential support 24/7

 GambleAware
gambleaware.nsw.gov.au
1800 858 858



GambleAware Veterans poster

Services and support



Our support and treatment services are multimodal, integrated, tailored to the needs of diverse communities, accessible and effective.

In 2024-25 we:

- funded an independent evaluation of the GambleAware service system, which found that the services are performing strongly, delivering safe, high-quality, efficient, and generally effective support across NSW.
- continued funding GambleAware providers to provide community awareness, education, support and treatment services across 10 regions.
- reached a significant milestone with 10 peer support workers recruited across nine GambleAware regions. They are all actively supporting clients and demand for their support continues to grow.
- managed the GambleAware statewide Aboriginal and Multicultural services to support the delivery of culturally safe and responsive services.
- engaged The Australian Centre for Social Innovation to conduct cultural capability assessments with GambleAware providers, resulting in action plans for each region to better engage with culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- continued overseeing the GambleAware Helpline which answered 9,538 genuine calls, an increase of 18.2% from the previous year. The Helpline referred over 1,500 people to GambleAware providers for ongoing counselling and support.



4,170
clients received counselling

- continued to lead the national Gambling Help Online service. Gambling Help Online provided over 2,620 NSW residents with online chat counselling in 2024-25. Visitors to the website increased, with over 141,000 NSW people visiting the site in 2024-25. Of these visitors, 85% were new to the site.
- continued to oversee the GambleAware website. Traffic to the website grew from 516,948 in 2023-24 to 599,566 visitors in 2024-25 – a 16% increase.
- launched the next phase of the GambleAware digital platform which allows the public to book appointments online. The enhanced platform also provides GambleAware staff with a more efficient and streamlined way to schedule and manage their appointments.
- continued to embed the peer support system introduced in 2023-24, with peer support staff now employed in each GambleAware region throughout the state. Early feedback on peer support has been very positive, and demand for this service is growing.
- funded and promoted the self-help apps Gambling Habit Hacker and Gambling Less In the Moment, leading to an 18% increase in users.
- hosted over 120 attendees at the annual GambleAware Services Forum. Feedback was positive, with participants valuing the opportunity to connect with peers and share knowledge to improve service delivery.



GambleAware team at the veterans seminar

Spotlight on:

GambleAware service evaluation

In 2024, an independent evaluation was conducted to assess how effectively the GambleAware service model is meeting its goals.

The evaluation engaged over 500 stakeholders. The evaluators interviewed GambleAware clients, GambleAware staff and organisations working with GambleAware services. They also ran an online survey of GambleAware clients and analysed service data including in relation to client outcomes and satisfaction.

The evaluation found that the GambleAware service system is performing strongly and that it delivers high-quality, safe, efficient, and generally effective services and is generally meeting demand for counselling services. It also found that the approach to implementing peer support is excellent and clients are finding it useful.

Clients reported high levels of satisfaction with the counselling services. Survey results showed that most clients reported services were “good” or “very good” at reducing anxiety about gambling harm (84%), improving overall wellbeing (82.8%) and reducing time spent gambling (80.8%).

“I’m totally happy seeing my counsellor—she’s good at what she does. Just being able to talk to someone openly about it has been helpful for my mental health.”

GambleAware client

The evaluation also found that financial counselling is effective but could be better promoted to raise awareness of its availability.

“I’d acquired some debt from gambling and the financial counsellor was a really good advocate for me. She helped to set up a repayment plan and showed me how to budget my money. I seem to be on track with finances at the moment, but I know that she’s there if I need her.”

GambleAware client

The evaluation identified some opportunities for improvement, such as the need to increase community engagement activities with multicultural communities and health and mental health services to increase referrals to GambleAware services.

The insights from the evaluation will inform the approach to re-tendering for the GambleAware services in 2025-26, and the ongoing capacity-building and support given to GambleAware providers.

A report on the evaluation is available on the GambleAware website and has been shared with GambleAware providers and other stakeholders.



GambleAware Services forum 2024

Leadership and influence



Our advice and support leads government, industry, community, and other stakeholders to contribute to a stronger culture of gambling harm prevention and minimisation.

In 2024-25 we:

- made updates to language in the RGF Trust Deed to shift the focus from responsible gambling and problem gambling to gambling harm minimisation and prevention.
- renewed our Reclaim the Game partnerships with the Sydney Swans, Sydney Sixers, Sydney Thunder, and the Western Sydney Wanderers. As of June 2025, 19 teams across 6 sporting codes were participating in the program.
- hosted gambling awareness education for Professional Footballers Australia. These online webinars reached over 260 of Australia's professional footballers including the Socceroos and the Matildas, players in the A-Leagues and their player development managers.
- consulted on a new grants program to prevent gambling harm in Aboriginal communities with Hospitality and Racing's Aboriginal Reference Group, the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council, the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Regional Alliances, the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations, the Centre for Aboriginal Health and the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research. The grants program will be released later in 2025.
- partnered with the Australian Psychological Society to develop a clinical practice guide and information for the community on psychological treatments for gambling harm. They also delivered a webinar on how to identify and address gambling harm in clinical practice.



GambleAware Week 2024 event stall

- funded the Royal College of Australian General Practitioners to deliver a webinar on culturally safe gambling harm minimisation for Aboriginal people. The webinar provides participants with practical skills to recognise risk factors, have culturally appropriate conversations and connect patients to services and supports.
- engaged the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia to develop an educational webinar about gambling harm targeted at pharmacists which will be delivered in August 2025.
- worked with Westpac on their website content about gambling and provided an article for their customer newsletter to provide practical tips to help people understand and reduce their risk of gambling harm.
- presented at stakeholder and community events to raise awareness of gambling harm and our services, including forums held by the Inner West and Dee Why councils, the Liquor Accords Forum and professional development sessions for Services NSW, RSL LifeCare and Open Arms.
- promoted our campaigns and services at the Hospitality and Racing Regional Roadshows in Albury, Broken Hill, Dubbo, Wagga Wagga and Coffs Harbour. We consulted with local community organisations and representatives of Aboriginal communities at each roadshow.
- supported the RGF Trust with submissions on the Casino Control Act 1992 and the statewide third-party exclusion scheme. We also provided input to the Statutory Review of Betstop and the Review into the impact of online keno and foreign-matched lotteries.
- participated in the NSW Independent Casino Commission Gambling Harm Minimisation Advisory Committee, the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority Research and Evaluation Committee, the Australasian Gaming and Casino Regulators CEO forum and the NSW Government Suicide Prevention Legislation Working Group. We also supported RGF Trustees to participate on the external reference group for the NSW Statewide Exclusion Register and the Independent Panel on Gaming Reform.



Regulatory roadshow

Spotlight on:

GambleAware at the 2024 Koori Knockout

In 2024, we strengthened our engagement with Aboriginal communities across NSW. A highlight was our presence at the Koori Knockout, a major rugby league event that brings together thousands of Aboriginal people to celebrate sport, culture and community. The event was a great opportunity for us to launch our newly developed GambleAware resources for Aboriginal communities.

The 2024 Knockout was held in Bathurst over the October long weekend. We had a stall at the Knockout, with staff from GambleAware Far and Western NSW, the GambleAware Aboriginal Statewide service and other Aboriginal GambleAware staff from across NSW.

We used the stall to raise awareness of the culturally appropriate support available for Aboriginal communities through direct engagement, a quiz, GambleAware merchandise and our new GambleAware Aboriginal resources.

The quiz was a particular success thanks to the two signed NRL jerseys from our Reclaim the Game partners the South Sydney Rabbitohs and the Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs which were offered as prizes. Over the weekend GambleAware staff connected with over 2,300 attendees and gave out over 3,000 branded GambleAware water bottles, along with a range of our information and resources.

We look forward to supporting more Aboriginal community events in future, as they present a key opportunity to promote our culturally appropriate services to the community.



Koori Knockout stall

About us

The Office of Responsible Gambling is part of the Hospitality and Racing division of the NSW Government Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport.

Our governance framework

The Minister for Gaming and Racing oversees the RGF, which is administered by Trustees. The Trustees provide advice to the Minister on expenditure from the RGF consistent with the RGF Trust Deed. The RGF Trust also plays an expert advisory role for the Minister and the Department in relation to gambling policy, and regulation matters where required.

The Office of Responsible Gambling leads the development of gambling harm minimisation strategy and public policy advice to the NSW Government and supports the Trustees to provide advice to the Minister on the use of the RGF and on gambling policy matters.

The operation of the RGF and Trustee decision-making is conducted within a harm minimisation framework that recognises gambling as a lawful activity and that safeguards are needed to protect consumers and the community from gambling harm.

The Office and the RGF work closely with the regulator Liquor & Gaming NSW, the NSW Independent Casino Commission (NICC) and the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority (ILGA) as well as GambleAware providers who deliver direct services to the community.

Our role administering other funds

The Office also administers the ClubGRANTS Category 3 Infrastructure Grants and the Community Development Fund. More information about these grants is available on the NSW Government Grants and Funding website.

The RGF Trustees



**Chris
Bertinshaw**
(Chair)



**Anne
Fitzgerald**



**Robert
Lagaida**



**Kara
Lamond**



**Luke
Lindsay**



**Sara
Pantzer**



**Anastasia
Polites**



**Steven
Takacs-Gal**



**Siobhan
Toohill**



**Maria
Vassiliadis**



**Tarek
Barakat**

The Responsible Gambling Fund Trustees

The RGF Trust has expertise from diverse fields including public health, law, government, gambling industry, academia, business and social research.

In 2024, four Trustees reached the end of their tenures: Dr Clive Allcock, Professor Paul Delfabbro, Elizabeth Lyne, and Professor Joel Negin. We appointed four new Trustees to take their place: Kara Lamond, Luke Lindsay, Siobhan Toohill and Maria Vassiliadis.

Chris Bertinshaw (Chair)

Chris Bertinshaw is an experienced CEO and company director and has been consulting with a range of public and private companies providing advice on corporate governance and effective management for the last 30 years.

Chris currently chairs the Board of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. He is accredited by the NSW Government to provide governance training to non-government school 'Responsible Persons'. He is the Managing Director of Inclusive Boards Pty Ltd, a search and development company preparing and placing people of diverse backgrounds onto company boards.

Chris has a Graduate Diploma in Corporate Governance from the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania; a Master in E-Commerce degree from the University of New England and a Bachelor of Business degree from the University of Technology, Sydney. He holds a Diploma in Theology from the Australian College of Theology and, having gained a Company Directors' Diploma, is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Chris facilitated the Australian Institute of Company Directors director education programs in Australia and overseas specialising in corporate governance, finance and strategy and risk for almost 10 years.

Anne Fitzgerald

Anne Fitzgerald is an accomplished senior executive and board director across a number of industries including registered clubs, government, the performing arts, community sector and health insurance. She has worked in the not-for-profit, commercial and government sectors and has considerable experience in developing strategy and leading multi-disciplinary teams.

Anne is currently the Chair of charity Youth off the Streets and was the recent CEO of the Talent Development Project. Prior to these roles Anne led the ClubSAFE Responsible Gambling Program for the registered clubs industry as part of her executive management position at ClubsNSW from 2001- 2020 and has seen significant change in the responsible gambling space in that time for the better.

Anne holds her MBA, a Graduate Diploma of Public Administration and a Bachelor of Arts. She is also a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and is a qualified mediator.

Robert Lagaida

Robert Lagaida has extensive experience in the NSW public health and not for profit sectors, having previously worked as a senior executive within NSW Health for over 20 years in policy development, hospital services management, financial management, public and private partnerships, capital works program, procurement and information management. Mr Lagaida received a Public Service Medal in recognition of his contributions to the NSW public health system.

Mr Lagaida also has extensive experience in governance, board, audit and risk management portfolios. He has previously served and is currently serving as a Board Member and/or Chair on Audit and Risk Management Committees in a number of NSW government agencies, local government, aged and disability organisations and medical colleges.

Mr Lagaida holds a Bachelor of Economics, Master of Commerce and a Graduate Diploma in Information Systems. He is a Fellow with CPA Australia and a Graduate and Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Kara Lamond

Kara Lamond has extensive experience in senior leadership positions across the public, private and not for profit sectors. Kara has held leadership positions in the health and medical research sector, with extensive knowledge and experience in policy development and implementation, public health frameworks, and social determinants of health.

In her role as Chief Operating Officer at the Illawarra Health and Medical Research Institute, Kara has participated in research projects, program evaluations, and public awareness campaigns to address addiction-related challenges. Kara has extensive experience in representing health and research organisations at public events, conferences, and at high level meetings to advocate for evidence-based solutions and resources.

Kara has held numerous Non-Executive Director positions on not-for-profit boards with a strong focus on supporting community organisations to assist disadvantaged groups within our community.

Kara is a graduate of the Australia Institute of Company Directors, holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from University of Wollongong, Bachelor of Arts from University of Wollongong, Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning from University of New England and a Graduate Certificate of Laws from the Australian National University.

Luke Lindsay

Luke Lindsay is an experienced executive leader and clinician with over 25 years of experience across the hospital and healthcare, education, mental health, and community services sectors.

Currently serving as the CEO of Lifeline, Australia's largest suicide prevention service, Luke is dedicated to making a profound impact on mental health and well-being of our community.

In addition to his role at Lifeline, Luke is a non-executive Director on the Board of the North Coast NSW Primary Health Network and serves as an Expert Clinical Advisor in mental health for the Office of the Health Ombudsman. He is also a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Luke has extensive experience in managing statewide gambling treatment and support services across Queensland, with a particular focus on the intersection between gambling and mental health. His strategic vision and clinical expertise continue to drive positive change and support for individuals and communities.

Sara Pantzer

Sara is an experienced senior executive with more than 30 years of experience across a diverse range of industries, from global pharmaceutical and biotech companies to national standards regulation, telecommunications and finance, and Ministerial advisory roles. Her specialist skills are in public policy, strategic communications, government relations and stakeholder management.

Sara's contribution to the pharmaceutical sector has been recognised through numerous awards.

Sara also serves as a Non-Executive Director on a range of not-for-profit Boards, in the health, civil society and education sectors.

She holds a Master's Degree in Dispute Resolution, degrees in Economics and Law, and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Anastasia Polites

Anastasia Polites is currently the senior manager of Industry Relations at Aware Super.

Anastasia was previously an employment and industrial relations lawyer for both Unions and Employer Associations. She worked for Local Government NSW and managed the legal and industrial teams at the Fire Brigade Employees' Union and the Electrical Trades Union in NSW. Anastasia started her legal career as a legal aid and community sector lawyer in NSW and worked on cases with disadvantaged clients including those affected by problem gambling.

Anastasia has been a director on the Board of legalsuper, and the recipient of the Garry Weaven scholarship with AIST which allowed her to attend the Harvard Kennedy School.

Anastasia has a Masters of Law and Legal Practice from the University of Technology, Sydney, and also a Bachelor of Electrical Engineering and Commerce from the University of Sydney.

Steven Takacs-Gal

Steven Gal has extensive experience in the roles of board member, executive and senior manager, having held key positions in NSW State government and not-for-profit organisations. After a long career in primary health and health promotion, Steven then went on to work in the areas of aged care, disability, youth, First Nations issues, refugee and migrant issues, child protection, natural resource management, community development, funding and procurement.

He has led funding reforms and designed new programs and services to meet the support needs of a wide range of people in his current board roles, he chairs the board of Inner West Neighbour Aid and is a director of Accessible Diversity Services Initiative. He was an independent director of Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Service and founding director for Blacktown Youth Services Association.

Siobhan Toohill

Siobhan Toohill is a corporate sustainability pioneer, having established and led sustainability functions in listed finance and property over the past 20 years. As the first chief sustainability officer at a major Australian bank, she was responsible for sustainability strategy and led policy and action on climate change including net zero transition planning, natural capital and human rights. Siobhan has led a wide range of initiatives across customer vulnerability including problem gambling, Indigenous engagement, child safeguarding, strategic philanthropy and social impact.

Siobhan is a trusted advisor to business and government through a range of governance roles, including as Member, Australian Government's Nature Repair Committee; Member, NSW Division Council Australian Institute of Company Directors; Trustee, Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, and Member, NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner's Advisory Panel. Siobhan was previously a member and co-chair of the UN's Environment Program Finance Initiative's Banking Board overseeing the UN Principles for Responsible Banking.

Siobhan's leadership has been widely recognised, including the Australian Financial Review's 2024 Women in Leadership Award (Banking Category) and Chief Executive Women's 2023 Leadership Transition Scholarship (INSEAD, Fontainebleau). As part of her continued focus on leadership development Siobhan is passionate about supporting emerging sustainability leaders and social change makers.

Maria Vassiliadis

Maria has over 30 years of experience in the federal Government, specialising in legal, regulatory, and senior executive roles. As Assistant Secretary of the Classification Branch in 2023, she led reforms aimed at addressing concerns regarding children's exposure to gambling-related content online.

Previously, Maria worked at the eSafety Commissioner's Office as Executive Manager of the Legal and Compliance Branch. At eSafety she led the implementation of several regulatory schemes and awareness initiatives, including Australia's world-first cyberbullying scheme, designed to better protect children from online harms.

Maria is passionate about harm minimisation through robust regulatory frameworks, supported by evidence-based education and awareness initiatives.

Maria holds a Bachelor of Arts and Law degree from Sydney University.

Tarek Barakat (ex-officio)

Tarek is the Deputy Secretary Hospitality and Racing, with responsibility for Liquor & Gaming NSW, the Office of Racing and the Office of Responsible Gambling.

Prior to joining Hospitality and Racing, Tarek worked at the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment as Executive Director, Strategic Projects at Property and Development NSW, before becoming Executive Director, Policy & Reform, where he led the most significant reform to the state's Cemetery and Crematoria sector in its history.

Starting in local government, before moving to the Department of Justice and onto Liquor & Gaming NSW as Manager, Policy and Legislation, Tarek has also held several senior executive roles at Create NSW, including Acting Chief Executive and Chair of the Night-time Economy Taskforce, during which he led the redevelopment of the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct, the expansion of the Art Gallery of NSW, and commercial negotiations to reopen Sydney's Theatre Royal.

Appendix one:

Financial statements

This appendix provides financial statements for the Responsible Gambling Fund (RGF), which is used to fund the work of the Office.

The RGF is established under the Casino Control Act 1992 (the Act) which requires each casino licence in NSW to make contributions to the Fund, with contributions currently set at two per cent of gaming revenue.

The Act and associated governance arrangements provide that these funds are used for purposes relating to responsible gambling. These include activities which seek to enable people to make safer and more informed decisions about their participation in gambling; minimise the potential for, and incidence of, gambling harm; and reduce the incidence, prevalence and severity of gambling problems and gambling harm.

The RGF also receives revenue from the point of consumption tax on online wagering as required in Section 13N Betting Tax Act 2019 and the levy on gaming machine leasing applications and community benefit payments for gaming machine increase applications, as required under the Gaming Machines Act 2001.

Unlike other revenue to the RGF, the funding for community benefit payments is allocated to recipients in the local community and is not available for general expenditure of the Fund.

The RGF is governed by a Trust Deed and Policy Guidelines. The guidelines are issued by the Minister, consistent with section 115 of the Casino Control Act.

The following financial statements provide an overview of revenue and expenditure for 2024-25.



Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport

Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2025

Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport

**Statement by the Secretary
for the year ended 30 June 2025**

Pursuant to section 7.6(4) of the *Government Sector Finance Act 2018* ('the Act'), I state that these financial statements:

- have been prepared in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards and the applicable requirements of the Act, the *Government Sector Finance Regulation 2024* and the Treasurer's directions, and
- present fairly the Department's financial position, financial performance and cash flows.

Elizabeth Mildwater
Secretary

13 October 2025

Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2025

B) Special Deposit Account administered by the Department

The Responsible Gambling Fund (the Fund) was established under section 115 (4) of the *Casino Control Act 1992* (the Act) as a Special Deposit Account.

The Fund receives income from a levy, under section 115 of the Act, on each casino licence in NSW as well as community benefit payments and gaming machine lease levies under sections 36A and 25C of the *Gaming Machines Act 2001*. In addition, section 13N of the *Betting Tax Act 2018* allows (and for a defined period, requires) the Treasurer to pay to the Fund certain amounts.

The principal function of the Fund is to make available funds for purposes related to responsible gambling in accordance with the RGF Trust Deed and Policy Guidelines.

Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2025

26. Administered items (continued)

Expenses and revenue of the Fund	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Expenses		
Grants		
GambleAware provider services ¹	15,622	14,507
GambleAware related services ²	3,920	4,023
Community benefit payments ³	5,881	5,943
Other ⁴	109	81
Personnel and administration services expenses ⁵	4,221	4,096
Fees for service	2,782	2,529
Advertising	3,398	2,642
Sponsorship	1,373	1,249
Amortisation expense	164	215
Auditor's remuneration	15	15
Trustee's remuneration ⁶	317	293
Other operating expenses	499	324
Total	38,301	35,917
Revenue		
Responsible gambling levy ⁷	19,146	16,711
Community benefit payment receipts ⁸	7,064	5,891
Gaming machine lease revenue ⁹	520	439
Grants appropriated from the <i>Betting Tax Act 2001</i> ¹⁰	5,356	5,213
Other grants ¹¹	10,000	10,000
Other revenue	356	519
Total	42,442	38,773

1 Payments to GambleAware providers in NSW for the delivery of community engagement, support and treatment services.

2 Payments for other GambleAware services, primarily the GambleAware Helpline, the GambleAware statewide Aboriginal and Multicultural services and the NSW contribution to Gambling Help Online

3 Section 36 of the Gaming Machines Act 2001 requires a proposed increase in the gaming machine threshold for a venue to provide a positive contribution towards the local community where the venue situated or have an overall positive impact on the local community where the venue is situated. A community Contribution Panel makes recommendations on the use of the funding, which is generally provided to not-for-profit organisations and registered charities that support the social wellbeing of the local community. This funding is allocated to recipients in the local community and is not available for general expenditure of the Fund.

4 Payments primarily for research projects and education and awareness programs and projects.

5 Payment primarily for administrative, operational and secretarial support provided by the Department.

6 Includes \$0.01 million remuneration for an RGF Trustee appointed during the year, who is the spouse of the current Minister for Health, Regional Health, and Illawarra and the South Coast.

7 Section 115(1) of the Act authorises the payment of the Responsible Gambling Levy by casino operators to the Fund in respect of each casino licence.

8 Community benefit payment receipts are received by the Fund when a venue increases the number of gaming machine entitlements at the venue as per section 36A of the Gaming Machines Act 2001. Refer footnote 3 above.

9 Section 25C of the Gaming Machines Act 2001 authorises a levy payable based on the lease of a gaming machine entitlement as approved by the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority at the time of application

10 Section 13N of the Betting Tax Act 2001 authorises the appropriation and payment of revenue to the Fund from the Consolidated Fund appropriated by the Parliament. The amount received is \$5 million per annum, plus indexation applied from 2023-24.

11 Government grant funding provided to help reduce gambling harm across NSW.

Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2025 26.

26. Administered items (continued)

Assets and Liabilities of the Fund	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	24,743	26,716
Receivables and prepayments	6,286	2,100
Software (including work in progress)	7,871	6,727
Total	38,900	35,543
Liabilities		
Payables ¹²	9,374	10,012
Grants payable	52	200
Total	9,426	10,212

27. Events after the reporting period

There are no known events subsequent to the reporting date requiring disclosure.

End of the financial statements

¹² Represents liabilities for goods and services provided to the Fund. \$ 7.4 million of these payables are to GambleAware providers (GAPs) for services delivered, where contracts specify a progress payment to be made by 30 June 2025 (2024: \$7.3 million).

Appendix two:

Detailed service and clientele data

This appendix provides further information on the treatment and support services funded through the RGF, in addition to the data presented in the body of the report.

The data relates to service delivery by the GambleAware providers funded across 10 regions in NSW to provide community awareness and education, support and treatment. The data presented here is based on the service reporting of providers for 2024–25.

Client and session numbers

- 4,170 clients received counselling services in 2024–25.
- 19,422 counselling sessions were delivered.
- 9,453 were delivered in person, 5,011 online and 4,958 by telephone.
- 124 groups sessions and 146 couple or family sessions were delivered.

Client demographics

- 8.7% of GambleAware clients indicated that they were Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both.
- 7.4% of GambleAware clients indicated they prefer to speak a language other than English.
- 0.8% of GambleAware clients were young people (<18)

Gender	%
Male	66%
Female	34%

Languages spoken other than English (Top 10)	%
Arabic	15.1%
Mandarin	10.2%
Korean	8.3%
Cantonese	6.3%
Vietnamese	4.9%
Thai	2.9%
Spanish	2.9%
Hindi	2.9%
Greek	2.4%
Turkish	2.4%

Age	%
Under 20	0.9%
20–29	17.2%
30–39	30.8%
40–49	23.6%
50–59	15.0%
60–69	8.5%
70–79	3.3%
80–89	0.6%

Top ten LGAs where clients live

- Albury City
- Blacktown
- Canterbury-Bankstown
- Central Coast
- Cessnock
- City of Parramatta
- Clarence Valley
- Lake Macquarie
- Mid-Coast
- Northern Beaches

Preferred means of gambling

	%
In person	78.7%
Online	18.6%
Telephone	0.9%
No preference	0.9%
Other	0.9%

Gambling activities

Where they gamble	%
Hotel/pub	49.1%
Club	23.9%
Home	13.6%
Other	6.4%
TAB	3.7%
Casino	2.6%
On course (Racing/Sports Betting)	0.4%
Newsagent	0.3%

Main form of gambling

	%
Gaming machines	67.4%
Race betting	12.9%
Sports betting	10.2%
Other	3.9%
Poker	2.6%
Casino games	2.1%
Lotteries	0.4%
Bingo	0.3%
Keno	0.2%

LGAs where services are delivered (Top ten)	Number of sessions
Sydney	1,996
City of Parramatta	1,367
Inner West	1,134
Tamworth Regional	765
Newcastle	721
Wollongong	695
Central Coast	678
Campbelltown	628
Northern beaches	597
North Sydney	520

Secondary form of gambling

	%
Sports betting	27.3%
Race betting	21.8%
Other	13.4%
Gaming machines	13.2%
Casino games	8.6%
Lotteries	7.9%
Keno	3.3%
Instant scratchies	2.6%

Access to services

Where client was referred from	Percentage	Client receiving support from other service providers	Percentage
GambleAware Helpline	40.5%	Other	55.9%
Other	22.5%	Mental health service	17.6%
Family/friend/colleague	11.4%	Other health/welfare service	14.7%
Another mental health service/counsellor	9.3%	Financial counselling service	6.1%
GambleAware website	6.7%	Drug and alcohol service	3.5%
Financial counsellor	2.1%	Self-help group	1.2%
Justice system/legal service	1.5%	Legal service	1.1%
Gambling Help Online	1.7%		
Gambling venue	1.3%		
Medical service/GP	1.1%		
Online advertising	0.8%		
Media (i.e TV/radio/brochure)	0.5%		
Another gambler	0.4%		
Religious organisation	0.3%		
Poker	1.5%		
Bingo/Housie	0.2%		

