

Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation

ANNUAL REPORT 2022–23

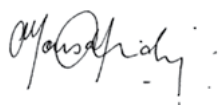


**The Honourable Melissa Horne MP
Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation**

Level 26, 121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne
Victoria 3000

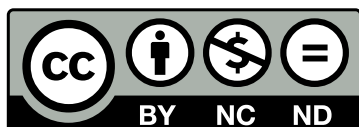
Dear Minister

I am pleased to present the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation's annual report for the year ending 30 June 2023 in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994*.



Tass Mousaferiadis
Board Chair

3 November 2023



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Acknowledgment of Country

The Foundation respectfully acknowledges the First Peoples of Australia and pays our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. Particularly, we acknowledge the deep and enduring connection to Country that exists now and has existed for more than 60,000 years. We specifically acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation on whose land our office is located.

Cover image: IPC Health's Young Leaders of the West teamed up with local artist Sebastian Fransz to co-design and create this Sunshine North gambling harm mural in partnership with Brimbank City Council and the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation.

Design: Suwanit Downing

Typesetting: Ben Galpin

Photography and story credits: For full details, contact the Strategic Communication & Marketing branch, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation

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A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Since the Foundation's establishment 11 years ago, our role has evolved in response to the growing research and evidence base, which has deepened our understanding of the complex nature of gambling harm.

While the provision of treatment and support for those adversely affected by gambling has always been core work, the Foundation's research, awareness raising, education, prevention and early intervention activities have enabled us to tackle gambling harm more holistically.

Our evidence-based advice to government, regulators and other stakeholders, together with our campaign work in the broader community, have generated greater awareness of gambling harm and influenced positive policy change. For example, it is now more generally acknowledged that gambling harm has health and wellbeing implications for the broader population and should, therefore, be considered a public health issue.

The Foundation has been instrumental in the move from a 'problem gambling' framing of the issue to one of understanding the harms caused by gambling. This important paradigm shift has helped to recognise the stigma associated with gambling and gambling harm, and to refocus attention away from individual behaviours to the gambling products, environments and promotional strategies used by industry that are the root causes of harm.

The effectiveness of any interventions to minimise gambling harm will rely on an ongoing commitment to continue this important work.

ENHANCING OUR APPROACH

In 2022–23, the Foundation undertook several major pieces of work, the outcomes of which would enable the development and delivery of a more sophisticated, integrated, strategic approach to gambling harm prevention and reduction into the future.

We commissioned a comprehensive, independent review of the Gambler's Help service system and identified strategies to better align it with best practice in comparable sectors, such as mental health.

We launched our new gambling frequency campaign based on research showing that if you gamble more than once a week you are more likely to develop an issue with gambling.

We collaborated with La Trobe University to develop an innovative, evidence-based prevention programming framework – the first of its kind in the field of gambling harm. The next steps involve testing the framework and embedding the cost-effectiveness principles.

We established a new sector development strategy to enhance prevention and treatment programs and support people in recovery through the mobilisation of knowledge gained from research, practical application and the insights of people with lived experience.

We completed a baseline report against the *Reducing gambling harm in Victoria: Outcomes framework*. Released in March 2022, the Foundation-developed framework is also a first of its kind, further demonstrating our leadership and expertise in gambling harm.

And, informed by extensive stakeholder consultations, analysis of gaps and weaknesses in the gambling evidence base, and aligned with our outcomes framework, we developed a suite of gambling harm prevention research directions through to 2027.

The Foundation's research program is lauded internationally, but there is still much to be done to understand and address the complexities associated with gambling harm, emerging technologies, industry tactics, who is at higher risk of harm and why, the different ways harm manifests, and common comorbidities.

There is also a need to identify how those who share responsibility for creating the conditions in which gambling harm occurs can reduce the risks for consumers. In addition to industry, government has a role to play through policy settings and regulatory measures.

EVIDENCE-BASED ADVICE

In the past 12 months, rising community concern about the normalisation of gambling, especially in relation to young people and sports betting, has become increasingly apparent. We know this through our own activities as well as those of others and by listening to the community.

In February 2023, the Foundation released a discussion paper, *Gambling harm and the online gambling environment*. The paper brought together the findings of Foundation-funded and other studies, market research and public discourse, as well as policy and regulatory responses such as the National Consumer Protection Framework, to highlight issues, challenges and opportunities for reform.

The paper was cited in *You win some, you lose more*, the June 2023 report of the Commonwealth House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs Inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm.

The Committee's 31 recommendations focus on consumer protection at a population level. This is consistent with a public health approach and reflects the knowledge and evidence base the Foundation has built up over the years, as well as the views and expertise of our Lived Experience Advisory Committee.

In many ways, the Foundation's work exemplifies the programs and activities the Parliamentary Committee has recommended be established at a national level, including:

- rigorous, independent research to inform and evaluate strategies and initiatives to address gambling harm
- public education campaigns with advertising and marketing components
- the development of education materials for children, parents, schools and community organisations, like sporting clubs, to raise awareness about gambling risks and harms
- access by vulnerable or at-risk populations to relevant, culturally safe and linguistically appropriate information and services
- the development and implementation of screening tools for gambling harm in mental health and drug and alcohol assessments.

This annual report includes examples of these and other initiatives in which the Foundation has served as a gambling harm minimisation leader and role model.

ACKNOWLEDGING SERVICE

Following a comprehensive recruitment process that attracted applications from a diverse range of candidates, in January 2023 the Foundation welcomed two new Lived Experience Advisory Committee members, Nicholas and Pauline.

In April 2023, we thanked and farewelled Christine Black, a Foundation board director since April 2015 and former chair of the Lived Experience Advisory Committee.

All other board director changes during the year were a consequence of the Victorian election. Serving until the caretaker conventions came into effect on 1 November 2022 were parliamentary representatives Maree Edwards, Tim McCurdy and David Morris. We thank them for their service to the Foundation's board.

In May 2023, the board was joined by three new directors appointed by a joint sitting of the Victorian Parliament, reflecting the bipartisan commitment to addressing gambling harm. We welcomed Luba Grigorovitch, Michael O'Brien and Kim O'Keefe.

AN ONGOING COMMITMENT

On 16 July 2023, the Victorian Government announced a suite of reforms that will require all pokies venues to implement mandatory pre-commitment, carded play, a reduced load-up limit and slower spin rates. With the exception of the casino, they will also be required to close between 4 and 10 am.

We believe the reforms will help to reduce the risk of gambling harm for Victorians and note that they reflect Foundation-funded research and our evidence-based submissions to the Royal

Commission into the Casino Operator and Licence and in many other forums.

At the time of the announcement of the reforms, the government also stated that the Foundation's functions would be transitioned to other government agencies from 1 July 2024.

The Foundation's board and staff are proud to have served the Victorian community as an independent statutory authority for more than a decade. We acknowledge our partners, the Victorian Government and others who have supported and contributed in various capacities to our many gambling harm minimisation programs and initiatives. We are proud of our passionate, professional and hard-working people. And we are grateful especially to those who have selflessly shared their personal experiences and stories of gambling harm for the benefit of others.

We are confident that the Government's ongoing commitment to gambling harm minimisation will build on the evidence-based, outcomes-focused, public health approach established by the Foundation to strengthen the health and wellbeing of future generations of Victorians.

The Foundation's board and staff are proud to have served the Victorian community as an independent statutory authority for more than a decade.



Shane Lucas
Chief Executive Officer

Tass Mousaferiadis
Board Chair

OVERVIEW

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Foundation is a statutory authority established in March 2012 under the *Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation Act 2011* specifically to address gambling harm in the Victorian community.

OUR PURPOSE

To prevent and reduce gambling harm for all Victorians.

OUR ROLE

To fund research and other activities that add to the knowledge and understanding of gambling harm.

To work in partnership with others to offer evidence-based prevention programs and support services to those affected by gambling harm.

To deliver communication campaigns that inform and influence gambling-related attitudes and behaviours.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In each of the three years 2021–24, our strategic priorities are to:

1. **Foster community understanding of gambling harm** to lay the groundwork for the attitudinal changes required to prevent and reduce gambling harm
2. **Inform and deliver prevention and intervention activities** to reduce the harm in populations, communities and settings most affected by access and exposure to gambling products
3. **Strengthen the funded services system** to provide accessible, integrated, relevant and visible options for the delivery of effective treatment and support to people seeking help for gambling harm.

OUR WORK

The Foundation is a statutory authority established under the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation Act. The legislation identifies the Foundation's objectives as: 1) reducing the prevalence of problem gambling and the severity of harm related to gambling; and 2) fostering responsible gambling.

The Victorian Auditor-General's Office, in its 2021 report *Reducing the harm caused by gambling*, stated the role of the Foundation is to reduce gambling harm.

In summary, the Foundation's legislated functions are to:

- undertake activities to address the causes of gambling harm
- deliver education and information programs to prevent and mitigate gambling harm
- raise awareness of the risks of gambling
- support public understanding of, and participation in, gambling policy issues
- provide treatment, counselling services and intervention services for people affected by gambling harm
- advocate within government through the provision of evidence-based advice and information.

The Foundation is governed by an independent board that is accountable to the Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation. The board comprises at least four (but no more than eight) appointed members and three members of the Victorian Parliament, selected by joint sitting and representing different political parties. The chief executive officer of the Foundation is appointed by, and is accountable to, the board.

The Foundation's Lived Experience Advisory Committee was established in 2018 to advise the board and management on matters related to the planning and implementation of gambling harm-related services for Victorians, prevention strategies and research priorities.





Love the Game forum with community partners at Carlton Football Club.

The Foundation maintains close working relationships with our portfolio lead agency, the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS), Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission (VGCCC), Office of the Special Manager for the Melbourne Casino Operator, other agencies of the Victorian Government, and our many funded partners across the gambling harm prevention sector.

The Foundation's public health approach to gambling harm recognises that:

- a combination of factors contribute to gambling harm, including social, cultural, policy, legislative, economic and environmental factors
- harm is experienced by individuals who gamble, their family members, friends, communities and the broader population

- gambling products are designed to keep people gambling, and the way industry promotes and offers them increases the risk of harm
- there is a collective responsibility for minimising harm that sits across governments, regulators, product developers, gambling providers, the advertising industry and those who partner with gambling companies, such as sporting bodies.

Accordingly, the scope of the Foundation's work is broad, encompassing evidence-based prevention, early intervention and treatment and support programs, policy advice, knowledge mobilisation and behaviour change campaigns.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY ONE

FOSTER COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING OF GAMBLING to lay the groundwork for the attitudinal changes required to prevent and reduce gambling harm

Through the Foundation’s research program (see page 43) we gain insights into, and a greater understanding of, the complexities of gambling harm. These inform our prevention and early intervention activities, treatment and support programs, awareness and behaviour change campaigns, and policy advice to governments.

Raising community awareness of the risks and harms associated with gambling, as well as the available support options, is fundamental. One of the main goals is to ensure that Victorians who are negatively affected by their own or someone else’s gambling can recognise the signs of harm and access support as early as possible.

Increased community understanding of gambling harm through information and open conversations helps to alleviate stigma, which is a barrier to help seeking.

MONITORING THE GAMBLING ENVIRONMENT AND DISSEMINATING KNOWLEDGE

The Foundation has a legislated role to capture and disseminate information about the regulation of gambling, including to assist people wishing to make submissions to inquiries or otherwise contribute to public discussions about gambling.

We monitor gambling trends and the application of new technologies and stay abreast of regulatory changes so we can provide accurate, up-to-date information and analyses of the Victorian, national and international gambling environments. We also monitor and share the findings of research from around the world with stakeholders, including policymakers, regulators, academics, the treatment and support sector, industry and interested members of the public.

The Foundation also provides analyses of gambling expenditure and develops simple, easy-to-use figures to explain the prevalence and incidence of gambling harm, its causes, influences and effects.

For examples, visit the Foundation’s Gambling in Victoria webpages.

VICTORIAN GAMBLING AND CASINO CONTROL COMMISSION

The Foundation has continued to work closely with the regulator, principally through the provision of evidence-based advice on matters relating to preventing gambling harm and the responsible service of gambling.

We have engaged on areas of strategic importance related to gambling harm research and policy, and the provision of evidence and advice related to the VGCCC’s harm minimisation activities. In turn, the VGCCC has assisted the Foundation to better understand the Victorian gambling environment, and its rules and regulations.

We have collaborated with the VGCCC in three main areas. Working groups comprising staff from both organisations met regularly during 2022–23 to progress work in the following areas.

New gambling products

We met with the VGCCC and DJCS to look at emerging gambling products and explore the gambling harm implications of environmental developments and industry product innovations. The Foundation shares relevant research findings and knowledge related to products and environments with the VGCCC and DJCS through this regular engagement.

Areas with high pokies losses

Recognising that some local government areas experience much greater losses from pokies than others, this working group explores tactics to reduce harm in those areas.

As a means of responding to the risk of gambling harm, the VGCCC has committed to trialling increased inspection activity at identified high-risk venues. This will include an assessment of the need for additional training or other support from the Venue Support Program and other education functions. This stronger connection between the VGCCC and the Venue Support Program will be assessed.

Better informed consumers

The group focuses on raising community awareness and understanding of how gambling products work and the obligations of gambling providers to minimise gambling harm. The Foundation and the VGCCC will continue this work in 2023–24.

CASHLESS GAMBLING AND CARDED PLAY

While the terms ‘cashless gambling’ and ‘carded play’ are sometimes used interchangeably, they are not the same.

Cashless gambling is gambling without notes or coins on land-based products like pokies. Instead of cash, tickets, tokens, or cards are used. The funds on these cash ‘substitutes’ can be topped up by the user at any time.

Carded play, which is linked to an individual through their ID, allows the setting of time and/or monetary limits for a gambling session that, once reached, cannot be revised.

A universal gambling pre-commitment system that requires people to set limits and track their time and money is considered the gold standard for reducing harm. Limit setting technologies can be integrated with cashless gambling while carded play allows exclusion from venues to be more effective.

State of play

Combinations of carded play and cashless gambling systems have been proposed for casinos in some Australian jurisdictions in response to royal commissions and inquiries.



The design of cashless and pre-commitment systems will influence their effectiveness in reducing gambling-related harm. The move towards evidence-based carded systems is a significant step towards preventing and reducing gambling harm and giving people greater control over the time and money they spend on gambling.

Following the 2021 Royal Commission into the Casino Operator and Licence, Victoria introduced laws restricting cash-based gambling at the casino, and mandating carded play with pre-commitment to binding limits on pokies by December 2023 and table games by 2025.

What the research says

Foundation-commissioned research conducted by Sarah Hare of Schottler Consulting reviewed the evidence relating to the effects of cashless gambling on behaviour.

Released in 2021, *What is the impact of cashless gaming on gambling behaviour and harm?* suggested that cashless gambling is convenient for users but can lead to increased spending because the ‘pain of payment’ is less acute. The tracking features of carded play, however, support better management of spending.

New reforms

In July 2023, the Victorian government announced reforms to the operation of pokies in pubs and clubs that will mirror elements already required of the casino. Namely, mandatory use of carded play and mandatory pre-commitment of time and money limits.

This means that all pokies in Victoria, regardless of the venue, will require consumers to use a card and to pre-set limits.

Luke Duffy



SHINING A LIGHT ON DARK MARKETING

An unregulated form of short-lived advertising goes straight to mobile devices and is not readily available for scrutiny.

The so-called ‘dark marketing’ of harmful and addictive products such as gambling, alcohol and unhealthy foods is the subject of a recent Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education report, *Advertisements on digital platforms: How transparent and observable are they?*

Members of that research team also partnered with VicHealth and 204 participants aged 16–24 years for another study that has shone a light on the marketing of harmful products specifically to young people in this way.

‘The study was shaped by the ads young people received and sent us screenshots of,’ explains University of Queensland Associate Professor Nicholas Carah.

While psychographics are used by marketers in conjunction with demographics to target people based on their perceived beliefs, values and aspirations, Carah sees the advertising model as simply a ‘blunt correlation tool.’

‘It compares your profile to the profiles of other users in your peer network,’ he says, ‘and seems to show that drinkers and gamblers look the same online.’

With platforms able to determine when a user is experiencing a low mood, the research report shows that some alcohol ads offer a ‘solution’ through promotional messages. For example, it reported on ‘a one-hour use of Facebook and Instagram ... [when] one user received 107 advertisements promoting alcohol products, including promoted messages about using alcohol *to cope and feel better*’.

While content from the seven major digital platforms was considered in both the research and the study – Facebook, Instagram, Google search, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat and TikTok – only the first two, both under the Meta umbrella, have a public archive of their ads.

However, only ‘live’ ads that are part of a current campaign can be independently observed. All record of them disappears once an advertising campaign ends.

On all the digital platforms except TikTok, ‘some information is provided on targeting, spend, and reach for political advertisements,’ explains the research. And while it is very limited, it shows there is no technical reason advertising data across all subject areas can’t be captured and made publicly available.

The Foundation provided data to VicHealth for other research that highlighted the study. Such provision of data, along with the publication of articles covering this subject matter in Foundation e-newsletters such as *Inside gambling*, is important in terms of raising awareness of risky products and industry marketing tactics.

LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Foundation's Lived Experience Advisory Committee was established in 2018 following a review of existing advisory committees in healthcare delivery, disability and mental health organisations, consultation with relevant organisations, and a review of research related to best practice consumer participation in providing advice to organisations.

The vitality of the committee and the insightful contributions of members demonstrate the importance of lived experience perspectives to break down stigma, raise awareness, create hope for recovery, and encourage help seeking.

The Foundation is grateful for the generosity and insights of each committee member.

Representing a diversity of experiences in types of gambling harm and pathways to recovery, the committee has provided advice to the Foundation's board and management on planning and implementing services for Victorians affected by gambling harm; gambling harm prevention strategies and project proposals; and research priorities and proposals.

Pauline is 22 months into recovery

PAULINE'S STORY, Lived Experience Advisory Committee member

Back in the early 1990s when driving with a dear friend to New South Wales, he'd stop at every club in every town. I would wait in the car park, but one time I stormed inside and he gave me \$5 to sit down at the pokie machine next to him. I won \$200 which was how much I earned per week, and I was addicted immediately.

I'm a bubbly person who loves a chat but I quickly learnt that other patrons don't want to talk when watching the colours and lights of the demon reels.

Gone were the days of manicured hair and bright colours. I became very dowdy and unkempt and didn't bother matching my clothes. I was so susceptible to a dopamine hit and on a big downwards spiral.

I was a shift worker so I didn't earn easy money or good money. I put myself into some very vulnerable situations. I was leaving venues at 5 am when no-one was around and walking alone through deserted suburban club car parks. My addiction far outweighed my fear.

I didn't want to give up on myself. I went into the city to get self-excluded and picked up a Banyule peer support leaflet. I started to attend their sessions and learnt about addiction. It wasn't enough to make me stop but it made me assess myself.

The day came that I lost my admin job. I had the key to the safe, embezzled money and was caught. I had to go to my family and tell them what I'd done.

Eventually I was having counselling, including seeing a financial counsellor at Banyule. I put everything on the table; I held nothing back. She got me out of trouble, including getting debts wiped and a moratorium on my mortgage.

There was no excuse. I was my own worst enemy. The only thing holding me back was me.

I'm now 22 months into recovery. I've retired into a better version of myself. I don't say no to any invitation. It's so nice to take part in society again.

Addiction thrives in the dark, and frankly I'm no longer prepared to live in silence, in dark places.



GAME-CHANGERS: HOW EUROPEAN REGULATORS ARE TACKLING GAMBLING HARM

As Director, Policy and Campaigns at Financial Counselling Australia, Lauren Levin has advocated for online gambling policy change, pushing for a national self-exclusion register and a better understanding of the link between gambling harm and suicide, as well as encouraging banks to give customers a way to easily block accounts used for gambling.

Lauren received a Churchill Fellowship to visit eight European countries that have introduced policy changes to prevent gambling harm.

Here are four of her key findings, presented to Foundation staff and stakeholders at a professional development session.

Prioritise safety: ‘I think we need to reframe gambling as not an ordinary service, but as a harmful product,’ said Lauren. ‘Gambling harms people, just like tobacco harms people.’

Create a data vault: Every bet placed in Spain, France and the Netherlands is recorded in the gambling regulator’s data vault. This allows regulators to see data on every bet.



The data also allows regulators to measure the effect of policy changes, identify groups at risk of gambling harm, and detect deposits that should be investigated for anti-money laundering compliance.

‘Knowing that the regulator can see everything keeps the gambling operators honest,’ said Lauren.

Control advertising and marketing: In March 2023, Belgium announced a total ban on gambling advertising and marketing. Sweden allows gambling companies to advertise only at ‘moderate levels’. Spain limits the broadcast of gambling ads to 1–5 am, when young people are less likely to be exposed, and has stopped in-stadium and sporting uniform sponsorship.

Set mandatory deposit limits: Sweden, Spain and Ireland require people to set deposit limits with each gambling operator they use.

Germany recently announced a mandatory deposit limit of €1000 a month across all forms of gambling.

‘Deposit limits need to be mandatory because evidence shows that voluntary limits do not work,’ said Lauren.

MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

The Foundation ran a second wave of the successful ‘Talk to someone who gets it’ Gambler’s Help campaign throughout September and October 2022 to promote the 1800 helpline and counselling support. The focus was on positive outcomes arising from professional support, advancing the idea that Gambler’s Help can change how clients and callers think about gambling.

The campaign resulted in a total of 1869 calls – a 50 per cent increase in calls over the eight weeks compared to normal call levels for September and October. The campaign also achieved an additional 156 referrals straight to gambling counsellors via the new call-back feature on the Gambler’s Help website.

Post-campaign tracking found that more than 50 per cent of the target audience surveyed recalled the key messages

of the campaign: that callers will talk to someone who understands them, and they will feel better after talking to someone.

The Foundation also exceeded its digital engagement targets for 2022–23 with the number of Victorians seeking information online about gambling harm and support reaching 663 226 sessions. Performance and engagement improvements led to the campaign achieving 97 per cent of the return seen in 2021–22 but with only 80 per cent of the budget.

The Foundation uses a digital behaviour change conversion model to track whether visitors to the Gambler’s Help website have moved through the different stages of behaviour change e.g. from contemplation to action. This year there was a 38 per cent increase in the number who visited the website to learn about gambling then, via re-marketing, returned to the ‘Get help and support’ section.

Gambling frequency campaign

In 2023 the Foundation launched a new campaign to build awareness and understanding that gambling frequency is a major factor in harm.

Most people who gamble regularly do not believe they do so at a level that puts them at risk of harm. However, Foundation research shows that Victorians who regularly gamble once a week or more are more likely to be experiencing issues with their gambling or are at high risk of developing an issue.

Around one in two people who gamble on pokies once a week or more (or one in three who bet on sport in the same period) have an issue with gambling or are at moderate risk of developing one.

The Foundation's 2018–19 population study established a link between gambling and happiness. Using the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index, which measures people's overall wellbeing, the study found that people who gamble more than once a week have lower wellbeing scores than the general population.

The frequency campaign landing page highlighted this connection with the aim of motivating people to change their gambling behaviour to enhance their wellbeing. Visitors were encouraged to go to the Gambler's Help website, where they could take a test to see if they were experiencing gambling harm and access strategies and resources to help reduce the frequency of their gambling.

The frequency campaign achieved 20 092 website sessions in just two weeks with around half of the target audience able to recall the key messages.



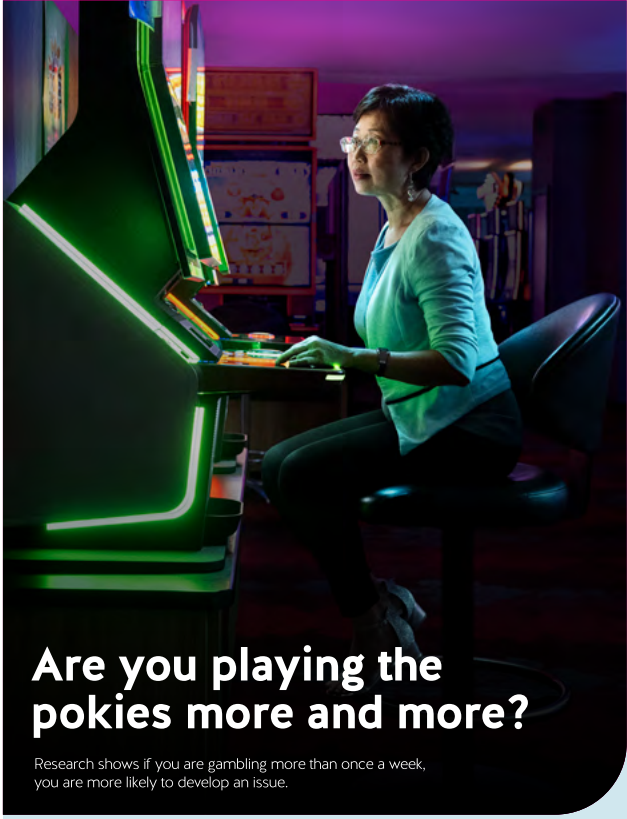
Are you gambling more than once a week?

Research shows if you are gambling more than once a week, you are more likely to develop an issue.

Take the first step to lower your risk. Visit gamblerhelp.com.au

Scan for language options.

Gambler's Help Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation COBSA



Are you playing the pokies more and more?

Research shows if you are gambling more than once a week, you are more likely to develop an issue.

Take the first step to lower your risk. Visit gamblerhelp.com.au

Scan for language options.

Gambler's Help Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation COBSA



GAMBLING WITH THEIR FUTURE: TEENAGE GAMERS AND PATHWAYS TO GAMBLING

Analysis by the Australian Gambling Research Centre (AGRC) has revealed links between playing simulated gambling games as a teenager and moving into real money gambling as a young adult.

Findings from *What is the link between video gaming and gambling?* were discussed by former AGRC manager Dr Rebecca Jenkinson and Research Fellow Dr Kei Sakata during a 2023 Foundation webinar. This session took place as part of the sector development strategy, aimed at providing sector workers with knowledge and information to inform their practices. (To read more, see page 37.)

The research explored the links between gaming among adolescents – with a particular focus on simulated gambling – and their gambling as young adults.

It found that one in five young Australians played simulated gambling games when aged 16 and 17, with boys more likely (24 per cent) to do so than girls (15 per cent).

Social casino games in particular are designed to normalise and encourage gambling by making ‘wins’ more frequent and larger than those in real money gambling.

‘We found that adolescents who played simulated gambling games were more likely to engage in

monetary gambling as adults – for any gambling [it is] around 40 percentage points higher probability,’ said Dr Sakata.

The research drew on *Growing up in Australia: the longitudinal study of children in Australia*.

Using statistical modelling, the evidence of a causal link between simulated gambling games and real money gambling showed:

- at 16–17 years, two per cent of young people are classified as being at risk of, or experiencing, gambling harm. By ages 18–19, that figure jumps to nine per cent – equivalent to around 54 000 young Australians
- while young people who play simulated gambling games are more likely to progress to real money gambling as young adults, teens who play video games daily are not necessarily more likely to gamble as young adults
- having parents who gamble is a risk factor, as are higher levels of alcohol use.

The past decade has seen monetisation of video games accelerate, with features such as loot boxes, in-game purchases that offer advantages or upgrades, and simulated gambling games now common.

The team hopes its research will help drive community education and national regulatory reform.

‘Ongoing research to understand the links between gaming, gambling and gambling harm must be a priority,’ said Dr Jenkinson.

UNLOCKING LOOT BOXES: GAMING HYPE, OR GAMBLING-LIKE?

Recent changes are flipping how the US\$200 billion video game industry makes money. In-game microtransactions, particularly loot boxes (random in-game rewards that are often purchased with real-world money), are soaring in popularity and some of the mechanisms look a lot like gambling.

University of Tasmania's Associate Professor Jim Sauer and Dr Aaron Drummond from New Zealand's Massey University are psychological scientists and gamers who are concerned about loot boxes because they look like gambling.

'We don't know what the short- or long-term effects of engaging with loot boxes are,' says Associate Professor Sauer. 'We don't know if it increases playtime or unwanted spending, and if it will translate into future gambling behaviour.'

Loot boxes differ across games, providing players with various rewards, like weapons or clothes, for their character. Activating loot boxes is designed to appeal to gamers, triggering animations and sounds, and is rooted in the same psychological tactics that lead people to experience gambling harm from pokies.

It's suggested that the most effective way to encourage behaviour is *not* to reward every instance of that behaviour, but to provide rewards for behaviour randomly, as per pokies and loot boxes.

So Associate Professor Sauer and Dr Drummond applied Professor Mark Griffith's five psychological criteria for gambling activities to 22 popular games that have loot boxes. The criteria include whether a cash exchange takes place, the role of chance in determining the outcome, and that winners gain at the expense of losers.

Ten of the games met the psychological criteria for gambling, while 17 involved paying real money for a chance outcome. All games were available to people aged under 18.

The researchers considered whether loot boxes in these games met the Commonwealth's legal definition of gambling: (1) risking something of value (2) on a chance-based outcome (3) where it's possible to win something of higher value.

Dr Drummond says that loot boxes easily meet the first two elements of the definition.

As understanding of loot boxes grows, parents are encouraged to have critical conversations with kids about gaming, gambling and marketing strategies.

Although not funded by the Foundation, both academics presented their findings as part of our sector development strategy. Our work is informed by, and involves sharing, the findings of Foundation-funded and other studies. This presentation and a resulting story in our *Inside gambling* e-newsletter add to the knowledge base about this topical issue.

Associate Professor Jim Sauer



BE AHEAD OF THE GAME

Be Ahead of the Game is a statewide school education program that provides free face-to-face and online information sessions to teachers, parents and students. The aim is to increase their understanding of the risks and harms associated with gambling and the availability of support.

Delivered by community engagement staff within Gambler’s Help agencies, the program’s evidence-based design and delivery is underpinned by:

- risk and protective factors for gambling harm prevention among young people, including age-appropriate messages and the socio-ecological model of health, which takes into account interpersonal, intrapersonal, organisational, environmental and public policy factors
- emerging research trends – in 2023, new parent modules that focus on youth gambling and gaming were developed and implemented
- partnerships with education peak bodies, whose staff review content, ensure it aligns with current school curriculums and promote it to the sector

- community-led, human-centred design and continuous improvement principles, with a clear pathway for feedback about resources and programs provided through the youth community of practice group and ongoing consultation with teachers, students and parents
- an improved and comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and learning framework that allows greater visibility and reporting of the program’s impact.

In 2022–23, 113 schools/education settings were directly engaged in the program, with 323 student/parent/teacher education sessions delivered to 7431 participants.

Work has begun to develop eight new teacher curriculum resources aligned to the new Victorian Certificate of Education – Vocational major program. It is anticipated that these will be completed in time for start of the 2024 school year.

A partnership with the Australian Teachers of Media Victoria has led to the successful completion of gambling-focused Unit 1 & 2 VCE Media Studies units.

Based on the successful pilot of the Young Leaders of the West school podcast model, funding was provided to four Gambler’s Help agencies to deliver a podcast session with a designated school within their catchment.

Fred Rubinstein (see page 35), a member of the Foundation’s Lived Experience Advisory Committee, answers students’ questions as part of the Young Leaders of the West podcast challenge.





THE BRIDGE

The Foundation released *The Bridge* in May 2023. This innovative program helps children understand the risks associated with online gaming and empowers them, through knowledge and critical thinking skills, to safely navigate the virtual gaming world.

The Bridge is a curriculum-aligned program for upper primary students (years 5 and 6) that explores the risks of online games, some of which include gambling-like elements designed to keep players engaged and spending money. The program gives children an awareness of, and the tools to manage, the risks of online gaming that will also help protect them when they encounter gambling.

The program comprises a blend of creative and interactive activities, lessons and discussions. With comprehensive lesson plans, activity guides and background information, it is suitable for use by all teachers regardless of their knowledge or experience of online games.

The Bridge is also the name of a fictitious online video game in the program in which players battle monsters, collect gold and, ultimately, cross the River of Forgetting. Animated videos guide students along the journey of a child character who becomes increasingly drawn into the game at the expense of their time, treasured possessions, relationships and wellbeing.

The program helps students, parents and teachers identify signs that indicate a child's online gaming may have changed from a fun and safe activity to one that risks their health and wellbeing. It helps students understand:

- how the mechanics of online games can influence them to play for longer and spend more money
- the way excessive gaming can negatively affect their health, wellbeing, safety and personal relationships
- how to help themselves and others find a healthy balance of online gaming and other activities in life.

The comprehensive resources include everything teachers need to deliver the program: an introduction and quick-start guide; a handy reference of the key terms and concepts; detailed lesson plans, discussion starters and curriculum links; and animated videos and activity sheets.

The program was co-created by the Foundation, Kids Thrive, which is a social purpose organisation that uses creative approaches to foster child-led social change, and the Kids Thrive – Kids' Big Ideas Lab with Altona North Primary School.

Development of *The Bridge* was funded by the Foundation with additional support from Creative Victoria's Creative Learning Partnerships program – a Victorian Government Initiative, and was a finalist in the 2022 VicHealth Future Healthy Award.

'The Bridge program is an incredible opportunity for students to develop a deep understanding of the risks of online gaming through engaging learning tasks,' said teachers from Altona North Primary School.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY TWO

INFORM AND DELIVER PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES

to reduce the harm in populations, communities and settings most affected by access and exposure to gambling products

The Foundation is a leader in understanding, and responding to, the complexities of gambling harm. As the evidence base has grown, our role has changed and evolved to place greater emphasis on awareness raising, education, prevention and early intervention to reduce gambling harm.

We collaborate and work in partnership with academics, health professionals, prevention experts, governments, community groups, people who have lived experience of gambling harm, and those who work with at-risk communities, including First Nations and multicultural organisations, to design and deliver programs and activities that aim to prevent and reduce harm.

We also recognise that gambling products are designed to keep people gambling, and the way industry promotes and offers them can increase the risk of harm. Accordingly, our public health approach to gambling harm includes interventions that:

- combat the normalisation of gambling, especially among young people
- highlight harmful products and industry practices to raise community awareness about the risks and harms associated with gambling
- offer strategies and advice to those who gamble to mitigate the risk they will experience harm
- make it easy to access help by reducing barriers to support, such as stigma, and providing a range of options such as tailored services, apps and tools.

Royal Commission into the Casino Operator and Licence – Gambling Data Committee

The Foundation continued to support the Victorian government's implementation of the recommendations stemming from the 2021 report of the Royal Commission into the Casino Operator and Licence.

The Foundation is leading the implementation of Recommendation 12, which is to form and manage a gambling data committee to establish a data repository for, and facilitate researcher access to, gambling information related to the casino.

The committee commenced operating in late 2022. Terms of reference have been established and the membership has been confirmed. Work is progressing towards identifying data and information appropriate for inclusion in the data repository.

Gambler's Help Venue Support Program

The Gambler's Help Venue Support Program provides training and other support to gaming venue management and staff that equips them to identify and respond to customers who may be experiencing gambling harm. The program also assists venue workers to develop and improve skills for referring customers to appropriate treatment and support.

During 2022–23, the Venue Support Program provided about 1940 Responsible Service of Gaming and other training sessions to almost 4600 staff members at approximately 460 pokies venues across the state. A key focus was to ensure venue managers and staff understood the changed requirements in the Ministerial Directions related to Responsible Gambling Codes of Conduct released in February 2020.

Staff members from First Nations Gambling Awareness Program organisations. From left, back row, Esther Gregory, Jasmine Versteeg, Chantelle McGuinness. Middle row, Shannon Beecher, Shae White, Ruby Evans, Jorja Lewis Jackson, Steven Morrison. Front row, Peter Clarke



COMMUNITY-LED PREVENTION

The Foundation supports community-led initiatives that aim to prevent and reduce gambling harm. Funding is provided under a range of initiatives, including the Strategic Partnership grants and the Community Engagement Program.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

These grants are provided to community organisations and local government for coordinated initiatives that aim to raise awareness of the risks of gambling, provide alternative recreational activities, reduce stigma and encourage help seeking.

In 2022–23, the Foundation continued partnerships with multiple organisations, including:

Victoria Local Governance Association. To build the capacity of elected councillors, council staff and

community members to undertake activities that will prevent harm from gambling in their communities.

Self Help Addiction Resource Centre for the Three Sides of the Coin Program. The program uses storytelling, through theatre, by people who have been harmed by gambling (directly or indirectly), as a tool for recovery, peer support and advocacy, to destigmatise and de-shame gambling, and to reframe it as a public health issue.

Merri-bek City Council for Libraries After Dark. Regional and metropolitan libraries across the state offer communities social and recreational opportunities during the evening as an alternative to attending gambling venues.

Reink for the Latrobe Valley Gambling Harm Prevention Project. Inclusive sports, arts and recreation programs run by local stakeholders for community members at risk of gambling harm, social isolation or poor mental health. (See page 20)

A SAFE AND SOCIAL SPACE

In partnership with the Foundation, Realink initiated a project that assists locals experiencing health challenges, as well as those at risk of gambling harm. It was adopted after the Latrobe Health Assembly noted an increase in GP visits from people experiencing loneliness.

Health professionals can now refer people to a range of local, non-clinical mental and physical health support services run by Realink. The project offers a variety of recreational programs, ranging from lawn bowls and footy to Pilates, cooking and art.

Realink sports coordinator Isaac Copland says, 'In the first six months we had around 1000 participants, and then the next six months just short of 4000 participants'.

'Given that this program also looks at gambling harm, we've had a lot of success running sessions at places like bowls clubs where they also have pokies,' explains sports coordinator Laura O'Neill.

Though the program has conducted gambling harm awareness programs, informal interactions often help people develop a better understanding of the risks involved in gambling.

'It's a soft approach where we can refer people to other services, or just let them know that they're available,' says Laura. Feedback about the project has been positive across the board, with recent surveys revealing that more than 70 per cent of participants feel more confident, better about themselves, and a greater part of the community.

For Isaac, Laura and the team, it's satisfying to be part of a group that fosters a sense of wellbeing and offers a healthy alternative to the call of the pokies.

'The difference and confidence you can see in people – it might even be in just one session,' says Laura.

Isaac agrees: 'I just love the fact we get to make such a positive impact on the community and the individuals that come to our programs.'

Realink activities and events in the Latrobe Valley program are free and inclusive to all abilities.

Right and below, Realink participants engage in a range of activities from craft to sport.



Australian Vietnamese Women's Association (AVWA) delivered two projects aimed at empowering socially isolated and disengaged Vietnamese women experiencing gambling harm that is often related to the behaviours of their partners.

The projects built on the Foundation's previous research and co-design with the Vietnamese community and focused on women with limited English language skills.

The 'Invest in You Too' project involved a partnership between AVWA and Brimbank City Council. Through the delivery of playgroups with fun and informative in-language activities, Vietnamese women with pre-school-aged children developed knowledge to protect them from gambling harm.

The 'Activators of Change' project involved facilitating social support groups led by women recruited and trained by AVWA to become 'Activators'. Through monthly in-language activities, they supported hard-to-reach Vietnamese women with school-aged children to connect and develop skills.

Both projects were effective at reducing gambling harm risk factors and enhancing protective factors for participants:

- social connections increased, contributing to improved wellbeing and mental health
- understanding of money and finances increased, including financial abuse, and financial literacy improved
- confidence to contact support services increased and participants were referred to a variety of services they reported using or planned to use soon
- rights-based knowledge about Australian systems, supports and laws was covered
- knowledge about opportunities for employment and education increased, with participants attending a variety of courses and job-seeking services
- knowledge about the risks of gambling increased, along with awareness of how to get help if gambling is harming them or others they care about.

An independent evaluation by Lirata Consulting found that both projects were delivered at a high standard; effectively engaged a substantial cohort of Vietnamese women; and demonstrated strong capacity to address risk factors for gambling harm.

The model has the potential to provide substantial value with modest resourcing, and the lessons from the approach may be applicable to other cohorts and communities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

Community engagement activities are developed, implemented and driven by local Gambler's Help services. Targeted prevention activities aim to raise awareness of the risks and harms associated with gambling and available services in locally identified at-risk populations and settings.

In 2022–23, priority populations engaged by Gambler's Help services varied across catchment areas and included multicultural communities, youth, and older adults, as well as professionals within local government, mental health and the justice sector.

Settings in which activities were delivered included universities and TAFE colleges, community hubs/centres, youth services, mental health services, alcohol and other drug services, prisons, and workplaces.

Examples of community engagement undertaken by Gambler's Help include education sessions with professionals and community groups, stalls at community events, and alternative recreational activities.

Engagement with local and digital media has included:

- participation in local radio segments and local podcasts
- interviews for local newspaper articles
- posts via the agencies' social media channels
- provision of gambling harm information to local organisations for their websites/social media platforms.



Participants in the co-hosted Connect Health and Settlement Services International multicultural community consultation forum in Dandenong in October 2022. The Gambling Harm Awareness Week event brought together seven community groups – African, Afghan, Bangladeshi, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Tamil and Lebanese – to focus on building capacity to prevent gambling harm and promoting help-seeking behaviour.



As part of the Wimmera roadshow, Cafs Gambler’s Help Community Engagement Officer John Bradshaw (fourth from right) and ReSPIN speaker Jan (third from right) met with the Horsham Independent Pathways and Living Skills group.

Gambler’s Help services continued to build strategic partnerships and foster cross-sector collaborations with community and health organisations throughout 2022–23. They co-delivered events and established and/or strengthened referral pathways to connect people needing support with relevant services, including referring community members into therapeutic or financial counselling at Local Gambler’s Help services.

During Gambling Harm Awareness Week in October 2022, Gambler’s Help services collaborated with various organisations – including Foundation-funded strategic and multicultural partners – to deliver more than 30 virtual and in-person community events.

Child and Family Services (Cafs) – Wimmera Roadshow

Cafs embarked on a week-long gambling harm prevention roadshow across the Wimmera region in March 2023. The roadshow was a collaboration with Banyule Community Health’s Foundation-funded ReSPIN program and included engagements with Active Farmers Warracknabeal, West Wimmera Health Services, Edenhope College, Nhill Learning Centre, and Grampians Advocacy.

The tour engaged groups as diverse as farmers, secondary school students, a Karen (Myanmar ethnic minority group) playgroup, and people living with a disability. Discussion topics included mental health, the effects of gambling advertising on young people, financial literacy, and stories of hope and recovery.

Better Health Network – Gambling Harm Awareness Week events

The Gambler’s Help staff at Better Health Network (previously known as Connect Health & Community) collaborated with several other Foundation-funded partners to deliver community events throughout Gambling Harm Awareness Week.

Better Health Network and City of Kingston hosted a twilight ‘Healthy, Mindful & Wise’ event at Chelsea Library as part of the Libraries After Dark program. The presentation on mental and social wellbeing urged attendees to ‘mind’ their habits, body, and community.

Better Health Network and Settlement Services International, a Foundation-funded statewide multicultural service, co-hosted a consultation in Dandenong on building capacity to prevent gambling harm and promoting help-seeking behaviour. The event brought together seven community groups – Afghan, African, Bangladeshi, Lebanese, Punjabi, Rajasthani and Tamil.

Foundation board director Tina Hosseini participated in the forum, along with guest speakers such as Deakin University’s Professor Nicki Dowling, ReSPIN lived experience speaker Ian, and local community leaders.

INDIGENOUS WELLBEING CONFERENCE

In October 2022 the Foundation's Expert Reconciliation Advisor, Rod Jackson, spoke about our First Nations Gambling Awareness Program at the Indigenous Wellbeing Conference in South Australia.

Rod spoke proudly about the program, which was formed by the Foundation and First Nations organisations, businesses and community leaders to tackle gambling harm in First Nations communities in a culturally safe way.

It provides counselling and yarning circles as well as activities like comedy nights and fishing competitions to strengthen culture. These events are a chance for First Nations people to get together, socialise and have fun away from gambling.

The program is for community, delivered by community, and committed to self-determination. It tests and reviews new and different approaches to find the right fit, which means being true to the history and culture of the local community and meeting their dreams for the future.

Some approaches succeed, some fail, and there's been a lot of learning along the way, but the program is making a real difference.

Rod told the conference that the Foundation knows the best results are achieved when First Nations people are in charge of activities. They're the experts in what is best for their communities.

Our role is to provide funding and support to the First Nations organisations that deliver the program. We aim to give them what they need to get the job done and get out of their way.



Rod Jackson





STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY THROUGH YARNING CIRCLES

As a gambling awareness support worker for Mallee District Aboriginal Services in Mildura, Jasmine Versteeg facilitates yarning circles that support community.

Yarning circles are important gatherings for spiritual connection and a sense of belonging.

‘It’s mainly about storytelling – an open group conversation,’ explains Jasmine, a proud Adnyamathanha woman. ‘You see people with similar stories and it allows the healing journey to happen. You connect over culture; you connect over your story.’

‘My role is community engagement. If you’re coming into a yarning circle, that point of connection and belonging is just the most amazing part.’

‘We’re on Latje Latje lands so an Elder will do a Welcome to Country. I pre-order all the food. I’ll contact everyone with a reminder the day before. I’ll pick all the Elders up in our 12-seater bus. I’ve already set all the chairs and the food, so when they walk in, it’s done.’

While Jasmine organises separate yarning circles for women, for Elders and youth, there are also programs for youth and Elders together, ‘because that is how our knowledge and power is passed on’.

Yarning circles also help the group members deal with gambling harm as they provide a meaningful way for people to be together while not in a gambling venue.

‘Mob don’t like talking about their problems, especially not their money problems,’ continues Jasmine. ‘Even when they’re not the person gambling, it affects them.’

‘We’ll yarn about how to say no and how to deal with that. We tell mob you can just go to these venues and have a meal and a yarn; you don’t have to gamble.’

The yarning circles regularly meet outside to pursue activities such as rock paintings.

‘We try to get back to our roots,’ says Jasmine. ‘We go down near the river. If we see a scar tree, we need to take care of it as it is from our ancestors so we’re trying to salvage and maintain that heritage.’

‘I love my groups.’

Left: Aunty Andrewina reads to Aunty Raylene in a yarning circle.

Above: from left, Jasmine Versteeg and the Foundation’s First Nations Expert Advisor Ashley Gordon at the Lowitja Institute’s 3rd International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference

A SAVVY EDUCATION PROGRAM IS GROWING WEALTH FOR INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

The First Nations Foundation’s innovative *My Money Dream*, which was developed with Foundation support, comprises financial education and wellbeing training specifically for Indigenous Australians.

The initiative uses a behavioural finance approach that encourages people to embrace the things in their life that make them happy.

‘Once the basics like housing, food and bills are covered, people might allocate \$50 to play cards with the family every other Friday,’ says Phil Usher, the First Nations Foundation’s CEO and a proud Wiradjuri and Gameroi man.

‘Like with any expense, spending money on gambling is all about prioritising, and thinking about where it fits into personal budgets.’

The First Nations Foundation has helped Indigenous Australians with their money since 2006 and played a role in locating more than \$24 million in lost First Nations superannuation across 21 communities.

Designed by First Nations people, for First Nations people, *My Money Dream* has assisted more than 800 people through facilitator-led training and an online portal. It is for people at all stages of life and financial needs, equally supporting people getting out of debt or balancing a budget, and those wanting to get the most out of their super.

More First Nations people are employed and have higher-paid jobs than ever before, yet the First Nations Foundation reports that most don’t have a trusted source of financial information, or feel too much shame to engage with the financial services sector.

‘We have an open dialogue around what it is to be Aboriginal, and to want to acquire wealth, while balancing cultural obligations,’ says Phil.

The Foundation is working with the First Nations Foundation to develop *Financial literacy and gambling behaviour in Victorian First Nations communities*, a guide for, and by, First Nations health and community service organisations.

It highlights the key findings of research by CQUniversity, *Evaluation of the My Moola Indigenous money management program as a gambling harm minimisation tool*. This report considers how improving financial literacy may help to reduce gambling harm in First Nations communities.

WORKING WITH PROFESSOR KERRY ARABENA

When PwC’s Indigenous Consulting reviewed the First Nations Gambling Awareness Program in 2020–21, it found that the Foundation’s reporting requirements could be improved by taking into account the stress on First Nations organisations to deliver reports to all government departments at the same time and real-world issues, like Sorry Business, that might lead to delays.

In response, the Foundation hired Professor Kerry Arabena to review the program’s rules and tools. The aim was to determine how a government organisation could manage its contracts in a way that is supportive, respectful and culturally safe while also following grant management rules.

‘Culturally safe programs help families meet their hopes and dreams rather than look at the negatives,’ Kerry said. ‘That means a focus on connection to Country and cultural healing for community members.’

‘We’ll have yarning circles and send out surveys so we can learn what the local issues are.’

‘We will also set up plans so workers in First Nations organisations look after themselves and don’t burn out.’



Professor Kerry Arabena

CELEBRATING NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2023

The Foundation celebrated National Reconciliation Week and the theme, 'Be a voice for generations', with an event for our staff, funded partners and members of the First Nations organisations with which we work.

Uncle Tony Garvey, a Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elder who lives on *Coranderrk*, delivered a heart-felt Welcome to Country.

'Never can the land be taken away. The land is part of us and we are part of the land,' he said in a passionate address about the 2023 Australian Indigenous Voice referendum.

Rod Jackson, Reconciliation Expert Advisor to the Foundation, also spoke about the Voice.

'We walk in the footsteps of the 1967 referendum,' he said; an event that is referred to in the Uluru Statement from the Heart – 'In 1967 we were counted.'

Cherie Minniecon is a proud Yorta Yorta woman, social worker and educator. She is a strong voice for her ancestors, one of whom is the activist William Cooper. As leader of the Australian Aborigines League, he led a 1938 protest against the Nazi German government after the violent Kristallnacht attack against Jews.

'Someone who didn't even have rights in his own country used his voice, even if no-one was listening,' said Cherie with great pride. But today in Yad Vashem, where Israel holds tight the memory of the Jews who were murdered, William Cooper's act of resistance has never been forgotten. William Cooper *was heard*.

Phil Usher, a Wiradjuri and Gameroi man, is the head of the First Nations Foundation. It encourages First Nations to better handle money, starting with connection to Country and family relationships.

'Things like stolen wages and the cashless debit card are examples of policies and practices that have prevented First Nations people from managing their own money,' he said.

Rapper and hip-hop sensation Philly closed the event. He told stories about growing up in Mildura and, with great heart, sang *Yil Lull* from his *Deadly Hearts* album.

It was inspiring to have so many people together in-person and online to hear the real-life stories shared so openly by our First Nations guests.



Philly performs at the Foundation's 2023 National Reconciliation Week event.

AUSTRALIAN RECONCILIATION BAROMETER

During the year, the Foundation participated in a Workplace Reconciliation Barometer project undertaken by Reconciliation Australia. Foundation staff completed a survey and the responses were compared to those of other organisations that have a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Of those surveyed, 91 per cent of Foundation staff said they think the relationship between First Nations people and other Australians is very important. Eighty-three per cent believe the Foundation has a genuine and strong commitment to reconciliation, compared with an average of 69 per cent in other organisations.

On the difference our RAP has made, staff believe it has mostly or strongly improved their:

- awareness of the effect of unconscious racism and prejudice on First Nations people
- understanding of cultural protocols
- confidence to work with First Nations people in a respectful way.

REDUCING GAMBLING HARM IN FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

A GUIDE FOR HEALTH WORKERS

The 'What is gambling harm?' content on this page comes from the first evidence-based resource on the subject for health workers in First Nations communities.

The guide provides an overview of the harms associated with gambling, how to work with individuals affected, and how to raise awareness of gambling in First Nations communities.

It was written by staff in five Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and is based on a decade of work, research, and collaboration.

The ACCOs were:

- Victorian Aboriginal Health Services
- Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-Operative
- Mallee District Aboriginal Services
- Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative
- Strong Brother Strong Sister.

The ACCOs worked with Dr Sarah MacLean, Associate Professor Social Work & Social Policy, Latrobe University and Kathleen Maltzhan to produce the guide.

Health workers are the core workforce across the 300 plus Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) in Australia.

The guide has been shared through the network of ACCHOs and has been incredibly well received. The guide provides culturally appropriate guidance on working effectively with people and communities experiencing harm from gambling.

What is gambling

Money worries



- can't afford to do fun things with family or friends
- can't pay for food, bills or rent
- need to borrow money
- stressful for those who lend money

Relationship trouble



- lies and hiding things
- arguments in the family
- kids miss out on things they need
- may lead to family violence

Emotional effects



- feeling regret and shame about money lost or time away from family
- feeling anxious or depressed

harm?

"My ex-partner was a severe gambler, majorly... at one stage he was on a higher wage than me and rent would go down the drain."

Community member

"Kids have gone without a feed, wife's gone without a feed, electricity is not on. 'Where's the money?', 'Oh, I spent it all betting.' And then they start to get cranky and he starts firing back and then the violence starts."

Community member

"When I put that money in and it's gone, my children are the first ones that come to my head, and that hurts. It hurts the soul; it hurts the heart."

Community member

Health problems



- high blood pressure from stress
- poor sleep
- using drugs and alcohol to cope with feeling awful

"90% of people who gamble... wouldn't think they could develop a mental health illness [such as depression] when they started gambling."

Community member

Cultural harm



- takes people away from cultural activities
- damages community relationships
- missing out on time with Elders
- Elders pressured to loan money

"It is sad to watch our culture sort of spiral down due to gambling and to me that's what starts the stereotype crap about, 'That's all blackfellas do is gamble!'"

Community member

Work or study performance



- can't afford transport to get to school or work
- skip work or study to gamble
- too stressed to perform well

"They lost all their money on the weekend and then couldn't get to work until payday."

Community member

Justice-related harm



- can't pay fines
- stealing things
- police and courts get involved

"That's how I nearly lost my family, coz I was lying about my gambling."

Community member

Illustrator: Nakia Cadd

LOVE THE GAME SPORTING CLUB PROGRAM

The Love the Game Sporting Club Program is Australia's largest and longest running initiative to combat the normalisation of gambling in sport and raise awareness about the risks and potential harms associated with sports betting by targeting influencers of young Victorians involved in sport.

Love the Game's unique three-tiered approach covers all levels of Victorian sport with coordinated activity across education, policy change, marketing and community engagement through partnerships with:

- 18 professional sporting clubs
- community sport peak bodies (Victorian state sporting and governing bodies)
- more than 800 Victorian sporting clubs (inclusive of professional and community clubs).

Love the Game partners, which represent a range of sporting codes across the state, stand united against sports betting sponsorships and promote the message, 'Love the game, not the odds'. New partners this year include Melbourne United, Rugby Victoria, Victorian Amateur Football Association and Wyndham Netball Association.

Partners actively engage with their communities to teach young people about the risks associated with gambling and how to think critically about them. At the professional level, clubs also commit to reduce their reliance on gambling revenue.

During Love the Game month (May), community clubs are encouraged to hold Love the Game rounds to raise awareness about the risks of sports betting for young people.

This year, some 128 community clubs across a range of sporting codes took part, including cricket, soccer, football, rugby, netball and basketball.

AFL PLAYERS ASSOCIATION (AFLPA)

Now in its sixth year, the Foundation has returned to face-to-face delivery of the gambling education program we deliver on behalf of the AFLPA to all first-year players at each of Australia's 18 professional AFL clubs.

The AFLPA reports that the program is well regarded by clubs. Player surveys indicate excellent ratings (87 per cent average) for content relevance, benefit, knowledge retention, comprehension, engagement and presentation quality.

The Foundation continues to update content in line with feedback and emerging research on gambling harm prevention. The program has continued to gather interest from other sporting codes, including national sport bodies and professional player member representative bodies.

Collingwood Football Club organised a footy clinic for children which encouraged them to love the game, not the odds.





Players from Melbourne United, Hawthorn Football Club, North Melbourne AFLW and Melbourne Rebels joined Point Cook community club for the 2023 Love the Game month launch.

Professional athletes get behind the Love the Game Challenge

Sport should be all about fun – but excessive gambling advertising is diminishing the experience for children by making it seem like sport is actually about betting.

A multi-code sporting event in Point Cook marked the beginning of Love the Game month in May 2023. The Foundation was joined by emerging Hawthorn star Mitch Lewis; Melbourne Rebels' players Ray Nu'u and Divad Palu; Melbourne United's Shea Ili; North Melbourne AFLW players Ash Riddell and Jasmine Garner; and juniors from the Point Cook Bulldogs.

The athletes expressed support for the Foundation's new Love the Game Challenge, which encouraged Victorians to:

- turn their phone off for an entire match
- find ways to talk about sport without referring to the odds
- delete betting apps from their phone
- make a pact with their mates to not bet on, or during, a game

- avoid gambling in front of kids
- encourage their local sports club to sign up to the Love the Game program
- start a conversation about the risks of sports betting.

Numerous surveys over recent years have shown that the sports betting industry is out of step with community sentiment, which is why programs like Love the Game are so widely supported, as recognised by its 800+ sporting club partners across the state.

'Industry won't do it voluntarily,' said Foundation CEO Shane Lucas, 'so the onus is on government and community to protect kids from sports betting promotions and encourage them to love the game, not the odds.'

'Sports stars, coaches, parents – we are all role models for the young people in our lives and we can all play a part in severing the connection between gambling and sport.'

LOVE THE CLUB THAT LOVES THE GAME

Point Cook Football Club is a hub for sport and community life for an expanding population in Melbourne's west.

Point Cook recently chose not to renew a sponsorship with a sports betting company in favour of joining the Foundation's Love the Game program. Member clubs take a stand against sports betting sponsorship and help juniors to love the game, not the odds.

Lachlan Couch plays centre half-back in the under-18s and is pleased his club has signed on to Love the Game.

'I think it's important to understand the risks of sports betting because it's hard-earned money you're putting on the line,' he says, 'and you don't know if you're going to win or lose.'

The Foundation's 2018–19 population study found that 18-24-year-old men make up the largest group of sports

bettors in Victoria, although participation by women is on the rise.

Nathan Havard is the club captain and plays on the wing in the under-18s. Both he and Lachlan love watching footy on TV but are sick of the endless gambling content.

'When I was growing up it wasn't like that,' says Nathan. 'It was all about footy. And for the younger kids coming through, it's smacking them in the face every single day.'

So, yeah, it sucks, but hopefully it can change.

'Other clubs should join Love the Game because it's a great message that we're trying to spread.'

Point Cook's move reflects that of its league – the Western Region Football League – which has also signed up to Love the Game and been a program partner since 2016. In May 2022, neighbourhood rival Williamstown visited for the under-14s girls match during the Love the Game round, an annual campaign to raise awareness of the risks of sports betting for young people.

LOVE THE GAME EVALUATION

In 2020 the La Trobe University Centre for Sport and Social Impact was appointed to conduct a three-year evaluation of Love the Game (2020–22) to determine the impact of the program on the attitudes, knowledge and behaviour of target groups.

The program's design is based on public health best practice. It is underpinned by an academically recognised theoretical behaviour change framework and research for addressing risk and protective factors for preventing gambling harm for young people.

One of the evaluation activities was the Love the Game annual fan survey. The survey was sent to fans of 16 Love the Game professional sporting club partners. A total of 49 562 responses were received across three waves, making it, we believe, the largest study of sporting fans' gambling attitudes ever conducted.

Some key findings and achievements include:

- 53 of the total 63 recommendations provided across five evaluation progress reports and a final report have been implemented (with five recommendations in progress and five on hold)
- 87 per cent of young people who completed a Love the Game education session reported they had a 'good' or 'very good' understanding of betting risk after completing the session — this includes an increase in 'very good understanding' from 18 per cent (before) to 52 per cent (after)
- 89 per cent of parents think it is important to have conversations with their child(ren) about the risks of sports betting and two-thirds (66 per cent) have spoken to their child(ren) about gambling risks
- 33 per cent of parents who regularly bet on sport stated they had reduced the amount of time they speak about sports betting/odds in front of their child(ren) as a result of seeing or hearing the Love the Game campaign
- regular sports bettors who recognised Love the Game were more likely to agree that 'watching sport on TV/ in stadium should be free from gambling ads' and less likely to agree that 'betting makes sport more exciting', than regular sports bettors who did not recognise Love the Game
- 224 local Love the Game clubs had developed a gambling harm prevention policy and committed to actions that limit or reduce exposure of young people to gambling promotion at their club
- professional sporting club partners made significant changes to their practices, with four clubs divesting their interests in gaming venues and two clubs removing all betting advertising at home games in stadiums within their control (Geelong and Western Bulldogs – AFL).

In 2021, La Trobe University published an academic research paper from the evaluation, which has been embedded into program development as well as shared and promoted across funded and sector partners.

FIRST NATIONS SPORT PROGRAM

The Foundation's First Nations Love the Game program facilitates opportunities for First Nations people to participate in sport to improve cultural connection and physical, social and emotional wellbeing.

Dandenong basketball stadium played host to the Victorian Junior Aboriginal Basketball Tournament during NAIDOC Week 2022. The three-day tournament saw more than 600 under-18 players participate.

The program partnered with Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) Preventative Health Unit to support the event and subsidise travel costs.

Survey data collected by VAHS from the 67 attendees who used the sponsorship travel subsidy highlighted that:

- 58 were from regional Victoria
- 66 per cent would have been unable to, or unsure if they would have been able to, attend the event without the travel voucher
- the vouchers supported a total of 196 children, with 44 per cent of those who used the voucher bringing four or more children.

Lionel Austin, a VAHS Preventative Health Unit manager, was enthusiastic about the response.

'The Love the Game message was spot on, and it was great to play a small part in ensuring people could actually get to the event without some of the barriers that can get in the way,' he said.

'Seeing young players from different communities just out there running around and loving the game was what these events are all about.'

First Nations Love the Game branded socks, sweat bands and backpacks were given out to young players. When attendees were asked what they thought the First Nations Love the Game logo meant, responses included: have fun, participation, passion for the game, opportunities for kids to play, and coming together to share love of the game.

FIRST NATIONS' APPROACHES LEAD TO PROSPEROUS FUTURES

During Gambling Harm Awareness Week in October 2022, First Nations community leader Cormach Evans yarned about First Nations approaches to gambling treatment leading to prosperous futures and generational change.

A proud Yorta Yorta man, Cormach founded Strong Brother Strong Sister (SBSS) to support First Nations children and young people to achieve positive social and emotional wellbeing while ensuring connections to culture and community. It is funded by the Foundation to deliver the Djilang Gambling Awareness Program.

'Low incomes and over-crowded housing push people to gambling,' said Cormach, who reported that many community members resort to gambling as a way to make ends meet.

However, he sees many young people now with changed attitudes towards wellbeing and prosperity.

'Elders have eliminated barriers for us,' he continued. 'Young people are on different journeys now, looking at business and entrepreneurship, and that contributes to self-determination and generational change.'

'It's inspiring to see our young people making decisions. They have a voice now.'

Cormach acknowledged the ways gambling ads market to young people and people from low socio-economic areas.

'With online games, when we first started the [SBSS] program, we saw kids spending thousands. It comes back to great leaders, education and [family and community] supports in lowering those risks,' he said.

'Young people on Wadawurrung Country are really lucky because Elders and strong community networks help prevent risk-taking. Deep connections nurture and divert that into positive situations.'

Cormach was positive about the SBSS experience of working with the Foundation.

'They listen and offer support [which] allows for self-determination and young people co-designing programs,' he said.

'It's created opportunities for communities to benefit through employment. Career pathways are being pursued and growth opportunities that allow ripple effects that will flow on for years.'

'From a learning perspective it's been amazing too. It really aligns with the way we work; that holistic approach, and also that culturally safe and valuing approach.'

'There are great opportunities to continue that work supporting both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities to learn and walk together and have mutual respect and learnings.'

'It's a really exciting time.'



Cormach Evans

STRATEGIC PRIORITY THREE

STRENGTHEN THE FUNDED SERVICES SYSTEM to provide accessible, integrated, relevant and visible options for the delivery of effective treatment and support to people seeking help for gambling harm

The Foundation's research program, and the actions informed by it, have put the Foundation at the forefront of developing responses to both risks and occurrences of gambling harm. Our expertise is used to enhance the delivery of effective prevention and treatment programs, and to support people who are in recovery.

We recognise the importance of ensuring that people who work in the gambling help sector, including in the Gambler's Help agencies funded by the Foundation, associated professionals and community primary prevention workers, have the opportunity to strengthen their knowledge and skills and keep up to date with relevant research, clinical approaches and prevention frameworks.

Our new sector development strategy focuses on mobilising research findings and new knowledge into service design and delivery. The strategy prioritises upskilling people who work in the sector and supporting them to implement and use evidence-based best practice.

REDESIGNED PREVENTION AND TREATMENT RESPONSE

The Foundation funds a range of prevention, early intervention, treatment and support services that work to reduce the burden of gambling harm across the state. In 2022–23, we have undertaken the following two strategic projects aimed at enhancing the funded service system and ensuring our programs continue to deliver effective and responsive support in a changing gambling environment.

1. Service System Review

Beginning in September 2022, this project took a two-phase approach. The first phase reviewed the current gambling harm service system. The second developed recommendations for the future gambling harm service system.

The review phase featured research and consultation to identify key challenges within the existing system. This involved engaging with 115 individuals, including community members with lived experience of gambling harm, service providers in the funded service system, and stakeholders working outside the service system. Analysis of existing service data and a literature review of best-practice approaches to gambling harm support were also undertaken.

The second phase comprised a series of consultations and workshops with funded service providers, people with lived experience of gambling harm, and other stakeholders in order to develop a new service delivery model with a stepped care model at its centre.

A stepped care approach is the recommended approach to align gambling harm services with contemporary best practice in the mental health system and ensure consistent statewide clinical practice, referral processes and access to integrated peer support services. This will ensure that people across Victoria are able to access the types and intensities of care that best meet their needs.

2. Gambling Harm Prevention Programming Framework

This framework, which was completed in 2022–23, is an overarching, cohesive structure to guide the Foundation's prevention program activity. It provides an overview of the latest conceptualisation of gambling-related harm and advances in prevention approaches to enable the Foundation to evolve its current prevention activities.

The framework has been designed to ensure that the Foundation's prevention programs and projects form part of a mutually reinforcing, evidence-based approach that clearly articulates the risk and protective factors for gambling harm that we seek to influence.

THE ROLE OF GAMBLING IN FAMILY VIOLENCE

Gateway Health in the Upper Murray region delivers a men's behaviour change (MBC) program in Wodonga and Wangaratta. Since 2019, a gambling harm component has been integrated into the program.

'The gambling module provides an understanding of how gambling and sports marketing work,' says Jody Riordan, a Gambler's Help team leader and community support worker at Gateway Health.

Jo Newell, Gateway Health's clinical leader of family safety, has overseen the integration of the gambling harm component into the program.

'We run the MBC program for men where family violence occurs within relationships, and recognise the links between family violence and gambling,' Jo says while emphasising it's not a given that the men in the program are physically violent.

'Technically it's voluntary but many men are under a court order or a child protection order to attend.

'We need them to understand all the forms of family violence such as stalking; monitoring and isolating their family members; limiting or preventing access to family finances; gaslighting and deliberate attempts to undermine emotional and psychological health; and harmful disruption of parent and child relationships.'

The intensive gambling module comes halfway through the 20-week program.

'This gives the group time to digest the MBC content,' says Jody, 'then individuals are ready to reflect and explore how the learnings might be applied in a gambling context.'

Both Jo and Jody say that while they recognise men are responsible for their own choices, participants are shown how societal and gender norms can shape their behaviour.

This is where ads for sports gambling apps come in. Jody shows the group a range of sports betting ads and then they discuss the messages they convey.

'The ads make men out to be exempt from any [gambling] harms. They show the activity as harmless, stress-free fun, and an example of modern mateship.'

Program participants are screened to ensure they are open to having their belief systems challenged. The men are required to be 'ready to acknowledge the impact of [their] violent, controlling, or coercive behaviour towards [their] partner, ex-partner, children, or other family members,' Jody says.



Gateway Health's Family Safety team at the Stop Family Violence conference on the Gold Coast, December 2022. From left, Emma Leerson, Rachel Pitman, Victoria Kean, Jody Riordan and Jo Newell

ONE SIMPLE QUESTION ON THE PATH TO RECOVERY

In the past 12 months, have you had an issue with gambling?

There's a strong co-occurrence of gambling harm and mental health issues, a reality that confronted Fred Rubinstein when he gambled away the inheritance left to him by his father. His mother, recognising the challenges to Fred's mental health, 'dragged' him into a psychiatrist's office. It was the beginning of his recovery.

The Foundation trialled a screening question for gambling harm with allied health practitioners where clients were routinely asked, 'In the past 12 months, have you had an issue with gambling?' Behind the strategy is the realisation that people often disclose their gambling problem to their physiotherapist, chiropractor or even their hairdresser rather than their GP or mental health provider.

In a discussion as part of Gambling Harm Awareness Week 2022, three experts in the field considered the usefulness of such a tool, and ways to improve pathways to services for those seeking help.

On the panel were Dr Hester Wilson, GP, addiction medicine specialist, and chair of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' addiction medicine special interest group; Angus Clelland, CEO of On the Line Australia, which delivers online and phone counselling, and suicide prevention services; and Dr Evan Symons, consultant psychiatrist and Head of Consultation Liaison and Emergency Psychiatry at the Alfred Hospital, and medical lead of the hospital's addiction stream.

GPs haven't traditionally screened patients for gambling harm, Dr Wilson says. They're generalists and often pressed for time, she points out.

'We want to be able to assist our patients with all their health issues and gambling is just one of them.'

She agrees that the trialled question, designed to be objective, impartial and without bias, could be easily included in routine health assessments. However, GPs may not be aware of where to then refer someone.

Effective referral requires a solid understanding of a particular service, Dr Wilson says. Readily available information about a service's staff, fees, wait time and access would allow GPs to make a confident recommendation.

Angus Clelland believes a similar question could prove useful for On the Line's counsellors.

It would be highly beneficial for such an approach to be standardised across Commonwealth- and state-funded health intake and assessment services, he says.

Dr Symons points out that one-fifth of those currently being cared for in community mental health services experience gambling-related harm. Recognising this, the Alfred's Mental Health and Gambling Harm Program, along with the training the hospital provides to psychiatric registrars, aims to improve understanding of gambling's impact on mental health.

Rapidly screening a client experiencing gambling harm is only one part of the challenge Angus Clelland says. While an enormous amount of effort has gone into campaigns to raise awareness in recent years, resourcing appropriate services able to respond immediately is vital.

'Critically, we've got to make sure that support services for ... gambling are available 24/7,' he says.

'We have a huge problem with what we call the "missing middle" in mental health,' referring to those who have issues that are more complex than what a GP might be able to effectively treat, but which don't reach the threshold where they can access services designed for acute mental health episodes.

Client choice is also a referral consideration, he adds.

'It may be that their preference is to seek help through a telephone or a web-chat service. For others, it'll be face-to-face or a group setting.'

More GP training is crucial in improving the health sector's approach to gambling harm, Dr Wilson believes. Training should be offered at both undergraduate and graduate level and via a variety of platforms, including online, she says.



The Prevention Partners Peer Networking Forum with representatives from the Foundation's Strategic Partnerships Program along with Gambler's Help community engagement workers.

SECTOR DEVELOPMENT HUB

The Foundation's in-house Sector Development Hub delivers targeted learning and development events such as online training, workshops and other opportunities to professionals such as clinicians, peer support workers, financial counsellors, and community educators.

The purpose of the Sector Development Strategy 2022–24 is to mobilise evidence and practice-based responses to reduce gambling harm. An implementation plan provides a roadmap for workforce activities that are designed to inform, build capacity and otherwise enhance high-quality responses to gambling harm.

Delivered in partnership with others, activities include leading curriculum development, contributing to research agendas, sponsoring and seeding gambling harm content within relevant sector conferences, and training for staff working in gambling-related sectors such as mental health, family violence and alcohol and drug treatment services, where clients may also be experiencing gambling harm.

Foundation-led activities include Gambling Harm in Mind webinars, communities of practice, networks, resources and newsletter content.

An evaluation plan is used to ensure ongoing outcomes-based assessment and continuous improvement of activities.

Continuing to implement VAGO recommendations

The Victorian Auditor-General's Office's *Reducing the harm caused by gambling* performance audit was tabled in the Victorian Parliament in March 2021. The Foundation accepted all the recommendations and, since then, has made significant progress to implement them.

To date, we have:

- acquitted Recommendation 1 by establishing new protocols to enhance our knowledge translation capabilities to ensure that evidence informs practice and vice versa. We continue to build on this work through ongoing knowledge mobilisation activities
- acquitted and completed Recommendation 3 by developing and implementing the *Reducing gambling harm in Victoria: Outcomes framework* (published in March 2022; a baseline report against the framework will soon be released)
- progressed a review of our prevention, early intervention and treatment and support services, including a redesign process to ensure that these programs and services continue to effectively meet the needs of Victorians (Recommendations 2, 6, 7)
- developed an evaluation framework that sets out the principles and general approaches to be used in designing future evaluations, and begun work to enable calculation of cost-effectiveness within those evaluations (Recommendation 4)
- completed a sector development strategy (Recommendations 1, 5) and prevention programming framework (Recommendation 3) to guide our professional development activities and prevention program design
- formed an interdepartmental committee to determine how to establish practical and program-based systems and protocols to support identification, treatment and cross-agency referral of people with co-occurring conditions (Recommendation 8).

In response to Recommendation 1, our new sector development strategy focuses on mobilising research findings and new knowledge into prevention and treatment service design and delivery. The strategy prioritises upskilling people who work in the sector and supporting them to implement and use evidence-based best practice.

GAMBLER'S HELP CLIENT OUTCOMES SNAPSHOT 2022–23

The Foundation tracks improvements in the wellbeing of people who access Gambler's Help services while they are on the path to recovery. The following survey results show significant improvements in client wellbeing after commencing counselling.

Local Gambler's Help counselling – snapshot of client outcome survey 2022–23

Percentage all or most of the time			
	First counselling session	Three months later	Six months later
During the past fortnight, roughly how much time do you think you have spent thinking about gambling?	42	17	12
During the past four weeks:			
... your own or someone else's gambling has affected your relationships with your partner, family, work mates and/or friends.	39	13	6
... your own or someone else's gambling has made your financial situation worse.	58	16	16
... your own or someone else's gambling has affected your ability to work or be productive at work.	19	6	1
... how much of the time did you feel that everything was an effort?	32	20	8
... how much of the time did you feel hopeless?	28	9	7
... how much of the time did you feel nervous?	31	12	10
... how much of the time did you feel restless or fidgety?	34	18	15
... how much of the time did you feel so sad that nothing could cheer you up?	24	12	6
... how much of the time did you feel worthless?	24	12	9

The table shows that after three months people who engage with Gambler's Help counselling report, on average, a 60 per cent (approx.) improvement in the majority of the outcome categories. At the six-month mark, people who have seen a Gambler's Help counsellor report even more significant improvements in every outcome category.

When they begin counselling, Gambler's Help clients are asked what they hope to achieve. In this reporting period, addressing financial harm was the main objective, followed by stopping gambling and addressing emotional and/or psychological harms. Other objectives included reducing harm to family relationships and reducing gambling.

At case closure, clients are asked whether counselling helped them achieve their desired outcome. Where outcomes were reported, 93 per cent of client objectives were met or partially met, and 94 per cent of clients felt that, overall, counselling helped them meet or partially meet their desired outcome.

Local Gambler's Help therapeutic and financial counselling – client objectives 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

	Number of objectives created, grouped by objective	Percentage of objective, grouped by objective type
Financial	1 083	28.01
Stop gambling	972	25.14
Emotional and/or psychological	455	11.77
Family and/or relationships	283	7.32
Reduce gambling	251	6.49
Other	259	6.70
Self-exclusion	177	4.58
No objective	201	5.20
Health and wellbeing	126	3.26
Work and/or study	30	0.78
Recovery Assistance Program	25	0.65
Cultural (harm)	4	0.10
Total	3 866	100

Local Gambler's Help therapeutic and financial counselling 2019–23

	2022–23	2021–22	2020–21	2019–20
Therapeutic counselling				
Hours	49 626	46 475	50 058	54 141
Sessions	20 110	19 859	22 776	23 906
Clients	3 266	2 920	2 860	3 559
Financial counselling				
Hours	20 092	20 818	20 187	20 570
Sessions	12 227	12 670	12 122	12 454
Clients	1 551	1 578	1 503	1 783

Compared to the previous financial year, 2022–23 saw an increase in counselling hours. In response to seeing more complex clients, with comorbid conditions, some therapeutic counsellors extended the length of their sessions, which in some cases, reduced the overall number of sessions needed per client. This contributed to the number of sessions remaining steady, despite the increase in clients.

Client numbers increased in therapeutic counselling and remained steady in financial counselling. Factors that contributed to the increase in hours for therapeutic counselling and the increase in overall client numbers include:

- greater awareness of Gambler's Help across the state as a result of community engagement and Foundation marketing activities centred on help seeking
- a new online referral form that allows people to contact a Gambler's Help organisation direct.

STATEWIDE GAMBLER'S HELP TELEPHONE AND GAMBLING HELP ONLINE SUPPORT

Calls to the helpline increased by 28 per cent from 2021–22 to 2022–23. While difficult to specify, it is thought this can be attributed to increased visibility of gambling harm in news media and the introduction of new gambling warning messages on industry advertisements, which feature details for the helpline.

Online counselling supports (chat and email counselling) are provided through the national Gambling Help Online website. There were 2100 chats and emails from people in Victoria using this service. As with the helpline, visits to the website and online counselling contacts increased, indicating higher demand for online support services. In addition, there were 16 540 posts and comments on the 100 Day Challenge forum (Victorian-based service), which again represents an increase in engagement compared to the previous year.

The Foundation worked closely with other jurisdictions to reinvigorate the national Gambling Help Online website. A comprehensive overhaul of the website structure has improved usability of the service.

Statewide Gambler’s Help telephone and Gambling Help Online support 2019–23

	2022–23	2021–22	2020–21	2019–20
Calls to Gambler’s Help (including Youthline)	10 516	8 192	8 264	7 044
Gambling Help Online				
Visits to gamblinghelponline.org.au	61 710	51 195	57 221	51 260
Chat and email counselling contacts	2 100	1 695	1 468	1 712

WORKING WITH MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Our multicultural program partners have continued to engage with communities through culturally appropriate and in-language counselling support services. The focus in 2022–23 was on digital engagement and partnership approaches to extend program reach.

A notable highlight was the Foundation’s ‘Talk to someone who gets it’ campaign, which ran across a range of media outlets and was translated into six languages. We extended our reach to Punjabi and Hindi community groups in response to the growing population of Indian migrants in Victoria as well as reports of gambling harm in these communities.

The Foundation also introduced in-venue bilingual posters for targeted language groups (Italian and Punjabi), and distributed Gambler’s Help brochures in eight languages (Nepalese, Farsi, Hazaragi, Hindi, Punjabi, Pashto, Tamil and Urdu).

Our statewide Multicultural Gambling Harm Prevention Service, delivered by Settlement Services International, provides support to migrant and refugee communities through a dedicated helpline and referral service. The service also engages multicultural communities in activities that increase awareness of gambling risks and harms.

During 2022–23, small grants were provided to community organisations to develop creative approaches that encourage community conversations about gambling harm. Settlement Services International also developed and delivered a project on intergenerational learning to assist parents to share information about the harmful effects of gambling, such as financial and mental health issues, with the next generation.

Arabic Welfare implemented a community and digital engagement strategy that involved developing podcasts and animated videos, which were shared on radio and social media platforms to increase community reach. Victorian Arabic Social Services continued its ‘Win back your life’ program, providing support for people affected by gambling harm, including family and friends.

It is anticipated that client numbers will increase following these digital engagement strategy and marketing campaigns.



Connect Health and Settlement Services International co-hosted a multicultural community consultation forum in Dandenong in October 2022. From left, Christine Pappon, Claire Emmanuel, Theresa Scali, Michael Kheirallah, Rahul Agrawal, Stefanie Maciulaitis and Tina Hosseini.

Multicultural Gambler's Help client numbers 2018–23

	2022–23	2021–22	2020–21	2019–20	2018–19
Clients	460	485	443	428	484

Where outcomes were reported, 92 per cent of client objectives were met or partially met, and 96 per cent of clients felt that counselling helped them achieve their desired outcome.



The Dandenong forum (see page 40) took place during Gambling Harm Awareness Week. It brought together seven community groups – African, Afghan, Bangladeshi, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Tamil and Lebanese – to focus on building capacity to prevent gambling harm and promoting help-seeking behaviour.

PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS

The Peer Connection and Chinese Peer Connection programs provide telephone-based, non-crisis, confidential peer support services in English, Cantonese and Mandarin to people affected by gambling harm. These services are delivered by trained volunteers who have lived experience of gambling harm.

In 2022–23, the dedicated volunteers supported 113 individuals struggling with gambling harm.

The annual client and volunteer satisfaction survey demonstrated positive results for all measures of success. Some 90 per cent of clients reported improvements in their situation, such as reduced gambling, a new job, increased social connections and a boost in hopefulness.

RESPIN SPEAKERS BUREAU

The ReSPIN program is a statewide gambling harm awareness program that recruits, trains and supports a pool of volunteer community educators with lived experience of gambling harm and recovery. These volunteers talk to community and corporate groups, health professionals and the media about their experiences. Sharing their personal stories is a powerful way to connect with the audience, spark discussions and promote local resources.

During 2022–23, ReSPIN speakers participated in 111 events, which is an increase from 104 in the previous financial year. There were 64 face-to-face sessions delivered in addition to 47 virtual engagements, which allow the program to reach broader audiences in regional and rural areas of Victoria.

WORKING WITH FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

The First Nations Gambling Awareness Program (FNGAP) continued to deliver a strong blend of culturally appropriate and safe services to address gambling harm within First Nations communities. This included individual counselling, community engagement activities to raise awareness and reduce risk of gambling harm, and work within the service system to build understanding of gambling harm in First Nations communities.

The five FNGAP agencies have crafted their programs to meet the aspirations and needs of their communities. During the past year, they worked with Professor Kerry Arabena from Karabena Consulting to improve the cultural safety of the FNGAP planning and reporting framework.

Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS) delivered ongoing yarning circles for women, men and Elders to address underlying issues that may give rise to gambling harm. MDAS also shared strategies to minimise gambling harm and offered valued cultural and recreational opportunities.

The Victorian Aboriginal Health Service provides financial and therapeutic counselling and has worked closely with several sporting clubs and carnivals to raise awareness of gambling harm.

Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative delivered a highly successful men's group as well as individual support and community engagement activities.

Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative provided individual support for financial issues as well as community awareness activities, including a very successful fishing competition.

Strong Brother Strong Sister continued to work with young people and their families through a program of group activities, mentoring and individual support.

There has been a slight increase in FNGAP client numbers since 2021–22.

First Nations Gambling Awareness Program client numbers 2018–23

	2022–23	2021–22	2020–21	2019–20	2018–19
Clients	520	502	443	480	556

FOUNDATION-FUNDED RESEARCH AND ITS IMPACT

The main aim of our research program is to build our understanding of gambling harm. Each year, the Foundation identifies new areas of gambling to research, awards research grants and commissions major research projects so that we can learn more about how gambling affects our community.

Since 2020, the *Victorian population gambling and health study 2018–19* has been the most frequently downloaded document on the Foundation’s website.

During 2022–23, 11 000 Victorians were interviewed for the next population study, which will provide an update on the prevalence and distribution of gambling behaviours and gambling harm in the Victorian community. The results will be ready for release in 2024.

Also during 2022–23, Foundation-funded research reports achieved more than 5500 unique downloads. Those most frequently downloaded were:

- *Assessing gambling-related harm in Victoria: a public health perspective*
- *The social cost of gambling to Victoria*
- *What is the impact of cashless gaming on gambling behaviour and harm?*

By June 2023, Foundation research reports had received more than 1000 citations. Additional publications such as journal articles arising from Foundation-funded research had been cited more than 2500 times.

While the impact of Foundation-funded research becomes more apparent and measurable in the longer term, engagement with the research is the first step in knowledge mobilisation and these reports have achieved positive exposure.

GAMBLING HARM PREVENTION RESEARCH DIRECTIONS 2023–27

During October and November 2022, stakeholders were invited to give their views on priorities for our future research directions via an online survey, face-to-face interviews and/or at network meetings. Participants included researchers, our Lived Experience Advisory Committee, and senior policymakers and regulators.

Responses were summarised, compared against an analysis of gaps and weaknesses in the evidence base related to gambling, and aligned to our outcomes framework. The Foundation then prepared our Gambling Harm Prevention Research Directions 2023–27.

The directions support studies across diverse socio-demographic and multicultural populations under the broad themes of:

- gambling products and environments (online and land-based)
- effects on the community
- gambling harm prevention
- industry marketing
- recovery and support.

Given the announcement of the Foundation’s cessation from July 2024, the research directions will no longer be released. It is hoped they will influence research decisions of successor agencies.

GAMBLING PROBLEMS, RISK FACTORS, AND IMPLICATIONS IN AUSTRALIAN VETERANS

The Transition and Wellbeing Research Programme commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs is the most comprehensive study undertaken in Australia on the impact of transitioning out of the military.

Data gathered as part of the study was used in Foundation-funded research, led by Dr Olivia Metcalf, that found one in five veterans who experienced gambling harm had made a suicide plan or attempt.

Previously, she says, research regarding Australian Defence Force (ADF) veterans and the effects of trauma on their mental health tended to be concerned with issues other than gambling. Yet gambling harm is experienced by veterans at comparable rates to other well-studied risks to their wellbeing.

'Our suspicion was ... that veterans, like other populations [with high rates of trauma exposure], are vulnerable to the development of gambling problems for specific reasons ... and that's the case.'

The study revealed that the veterans most vulnerable to gambling harm are younger males who've been medically discharged from the ADF. Worryingly, only two per cent of veterans who experience problems with gambling seek help.

'We have high prevalence rates, really significant harm, and very low rates of help seeking,' Dr Metcalf says.

'We saw high rates of gambling problems among veterans within one year of leaving the military. That tells us – and we have evidence from folk still serving – that gambling problems are likely developing during military service.'

Dr Metcalf is hopeful that the findings will attract support for additional research into the impact of gambling on veterans' mental health.

'I'm pleased that we've seen this data, and that it's been given attention.'

The research was cited by RSL Tasmania Chief Executive John Hardy, for example, as evidence that supported his organisation's decision to ban pokies in Tasmania.

Dr Metcalf and her colleagues made a submission to the 2022–23 Commonwealth House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs Inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm. In it, they used the research findings as evidence of the need for measures that address broader environmental factors, such as exposure to gambling advertising and gambling products.

Dr Olivia Metcalfe



GAMBLING HARM EXPERIENCED BY CHILDREN OF PARENTS WHO GAMBLE

Dr Aino Suomi and her team at the Australian Catholic University surveyed 510 people for this study, including 287 adults whose parents gambled when the survey participants were children. Participants shared their reflections on growing up in a household where one or both parents gambled.

The majority talked about not having enough money due to gambling – going without food, activities or school materials. In many cases, they had strained relationships with their parents. Some had to drop out of school to look after siblings and earn money to keep the family home. A significant number of them also experienced serious mental health issues.

‘Our study fills a real knowledge gap in both practice and academic literature about the impacts of parental gambling on child wellbeing,’ says Dr Suomi.

‘We knew parental problem gambling can manifest in all sorts of short- and long-term difficulties for children. But the study revealed that lower levels of gambling by parents also directly caused quite severe negative consequences for their children, like verbal abuse, psychological distress, or even witnessing violence in the home.’

When compared to a control group of people not exposed to regular parental gambling, the 287 adult children of parents who did gamble regularly were more likely to report current depression, anxiety, intimate partner violence, post-traumatic stress disorder, and poorer family functioning.

Parents who gambled were also surveyed. They reported perceptions of fewer and less severe harms to their children as a result of their gambling, compared to the harms children reported experiencing.

Predominately, parents reported that their gambling caused financial harms to their children, whereas children were most likely to report psychological distress or poorer family relationships because of their parents’ gambling.

The adult children talked about how gambling was normalised in many of their households and reported that intergenerational transmission was a common occurrence – from grandparent, to parent, and to children and siblings.

More than a quarter of the interviewed participants had experienced gambling problems of their own.

A pattern picked up by the researchers was that children exposed to regular gambling where the risk of harm was *lower*, were *more likely* to develop issues with their own gambling later in life than those who had been exposed to parents who experienced high levels of gambling harm.

Those who didn’t gamble explained that this set them apart from their immediate and extended families.

‘Many participants talked about never wanting to put their family or loved ones through similar experiences to what they went through with their own parents,’ says Dr Suomi.

The findings suggest that children exposed to parental gambling are likely to come into contact with a range of social, health and welfare services. Dr Suomi says that her research illustrates the need for better coordination of approaches to identify these children, and the kinds of supports from which they and their families could most benefit.

In 2023, this Foundation-funded research was quoted in submissions to the Commonwealth parliamentary inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm.

Some had to drop out of school to ... earn money to keep the family home.



Associate Professor Alex Russell led the CQUniversity research into simulated gambling and the role of parental factors.

FROM ADOLESCENCE TO YOUNG ADULTHOOD: ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN SIMULATED AND TRADITIONAL GAMBLING, AND THE ROLE OF PARENTAL FACTORS

Simulated gambling products contain some, but not all, elements of gambling. Social casino games, for example, allow the user to pay money to play a gambling-style game, such as a slot machine, but they cannot cash out any winnings. Other examples are loot boxes and video games with gambling components, such as ‘Grand Theft Auto’.

Simulated gambling products, which are not classified as gambling, are available to people under 18, although the Commonwealth government has proposed an R18+ rating for simulated gambling games.

This Foundation-funded research looked at how use of simulated gambling products relates to use of traditional gambling products, as well as harm from simulated and traditional gambling products.

The researchers surveyed 1026 young Australians (18–25 years) about their use of simulated and traditional gambling products, including at what age they first started using each product.

Some simulated gambling forms were commonly used before a person turned 18, particularly those related to video games, including loot boxes. Simulated forms where the core gameplay element is gambling (e.g. social casino games, demo games) were more common after people turned 18.

On average, simulated forms that most closely resemble traditional gambling activities appear to be more popular once a person has started engaging in gambling. Simulated gambling products are also associated with gambling harm.

Simulated gambling products may set unrealistic expectations because a social casino game pokie machine is not bound by the same regulations as a real-world pokie machine.

The research also considered the relationship participants had with their parents during their adolescence. ‘Hostile’ parent–adolescent relationships were a predictor of participation in both simulated and traditional gambling forms, potentially because they served as an escape.

In addition, the researchers looked at whether parents were perceived by the participant to approve of gambling, and to take part themselves. If both perceptions were positive, there was an association with participants’ engagement in simulated and traditional gambling.

They suggested that education programs could help raise parental understanding of how their actions may influence their children, and the risks of these products, so they can educate their children.

RESEARCH RELEASED IN 2022–23

The Gambling Harms Scales: Instruments to assess impact to gamblers and affected others that are benchmarked to health utility

Professor Matthew Browne, CQUniversity

There are two main instruments that evaluate the personal and population impact of gambling. They are the Problem Gambling Severity Index and the Short Gambling Harms Screen. This project developed new measures of gambling-related harm for both people who gamble and affected others.

The study measured the health of people who reported gambling-related harm and compared the findings to a similar group who did not. This led to the development of a novel set of measures that can be used in research to assess gambling-related harm and monitor population impacts of gambling, including in the Foundation's population study.

Experiences and perceptions of gamblers using gambling, mental health and alcohol and other drug use online forums: A natural language processing approach

Dr Stephanie Merkouris, Deakin University

Using online forums in Australia, the UK and the USA, the researchers explored the experiences and perceptions of people who gamble.

The study found that people experiencing gambling harm and mental health issues felt their recovery was dependent on both sets of issues being addressed.

They discussed their experiences of gambling and perceptions of co-occurring conditions and help-seeking options mostly in gambling forums. Australian forum members were also likely to use mental health and gambling forums to seek information about help-seeking services and strategies.

The research suggests that improved screening for gambling problems in mental health and alcohol and other drugs (AOD) services, and for mental health and AOD issues in gambling services, may help to better identify the scope of appropriate supports for individuals.

The receptivity of young people to gambling marketing strategies on social media platforms

Dr Hannah Pitt, Deakin University

This study examined social media marketing strategies used by sports betting brands, with a focus on their potential to appeal to young people.

Phase one analysed social media posts from six sports betting brands on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Phase two incorporated an online panel survey of 770 young people (16–24 years) that explored their recall of, and receptivity towards, sports betting advertising on social media platforms.

The researchers concluded that:

- policy responses should seek to limit young people's exposure to gambling promotions on social media
- stronger regulations are required to restrict gambling marketing to young people.

Recognition and responses to Intimate Partner Violence in Gambler's Help services: A qualitative study

Dr Sean Cowlishaw, Phoenix Australia – Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health, University of Melbourne

Qualitative interviews with 20 staff from Victorian and South Australian gambling help services explored the role gambling help services can play in identifying and responding to clients who have either experienced or used violence in their intimate relationships, including as one part of a multi-sector response to these issues.

The authors recommend:

- strategies be considered that promote identification of intimate partner violence and provide safe contexts for disclosure in gambling help services
- tailored policies, training and resources on intimate partner violence for gambling help services
- system-level initiatives to promote cross-sector collaboration.

In 2023, this Foundation-funded research was quoted in submissions to the Commonwealth parliamentary inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OVERVIEW

A summary of the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation's financial performance in 2022-23 is set out below. Full financial details for 2022-23 are in the financial statements from page 73. The Foundation was funded via a four-year approved allocation by the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet. Expenditure and revenue identified in reporting for 2022-23 reflects operations for the final year of the funding allocation for the period commencing 1 July 2019 and ending 30 June 2023.

The Victorian Government considers the net result from transactions to be the appropriate measure of financial management that can be directly attributed to government policy. This measure excludes the effects of revaluations (holding gains or losses) arising from changes in market prices, which are outside the control of the Foundation.

In 2022-23, the Foundation achieved a net result from transactions of a deficit of \$2 201 711, compared to a deficit of \$570 033 in the prior year. This position reflects the systematic reduction in prior period surplus funding. The accumulated surplus balance reflects the total of other income held within the Responsible Gambling Fund.

Over the duration of the Foundation's operational trust-funded program, expenditure cannot exceed revenue. There can, however, be timing variations between years with respect to revenue drawdowns and expenditure incurrence, which can have an associated impact on the operating result.

The Foundation's equity position is \$1 441 467.

The movement in operating cash inflows reflects the Foundation's trust fund balance.

There are no outstanding receivables associated with amounts owing as at 30 June 2023 from the Community Support Fund (CSF) to meet operational costs.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

For the financial year ended 30 June 2023, the Foundation recorded revenue of \$41 147 412, reflecting operational grant funding from the CSF, funding to Gambler's Help agencies associated with wage increases in the social and community services sector, an allocation associated with the establishment of the Gambling Data Committee as recommended by the Royal Commission into the Casino Operator and Licence and legislated jackpot special prize pool funds. Expenditure of \$43 349 123 mainly reflects grants for Gambler's Help services and prevention programs, media campaign and marketing activities, partnerships with sporting clubs, education in schools initiatives, research and evaluation programs, operational costs associated with the Gambler's Help Connect system, web and digital media development, training and awareness activities, strategic reviews, and program delivery and development costs.

FINANCIAL POSITION – BALANCE SHEET

Total assets decreased by \$1 791 934, primarily reflecting the movement in receivables and the trust fund balance. For the same period, total liabilities increased by \$386 569, mainly reflecting the movement in employee benefit provisions and borrowings.

CASH FLOWS

Major operating cash flows comprise grant funding and payments for suppliers and employees.

Financial summary

Five-year financial summary	2023 \$	2022 \$	2021 \$	2020 \$	2019 \$
Total income from transactions	41 147 412	40 145 250	41 558 796	41 034 089	41 091 889
Total expenses from transactions	(43 349 123)	(40 715 283)	(39 244 658)	(39 605 858)	(41 008 252)
Other economic flows	23 208	107 198	51 592	(38 133)	(75 809)
Net result from transactions	(2 201 711)	(570 033)	2 314 138	1 428 231	83 637
Net result for the period	(2 178 503)	(462 835)	2 365 730	1 390 098	7 828
Net cash flow from operating activities	(1 078 791)	(192 849)	1 824 570	1 218 773	217 958
Total assets	5 737 668	7 529 602	7 120 234	5 094 078	3 918 397
Total liabilities	4 296 202	3 909 633	3 037 430	3 377 003	3 591 420

DISCLOSURE OF GRANTS AND TRANSFER PAYMENTS

The Foundation partnered with a range of organisations to deliver services and programs for the Victorian community. This section outlines the grants and transfer payments provided to partner organisations.

PROGRAM A: GAMBLER'S HELP

Through the delivery of prevention, early intervention and support services and activities, the Gambler's Help grants program aims to prevent and reduce harm caused by gambling in Victoria.

GRANT 1: GAMBLER'S HELP LOCAL

Eleven local delivery partners provide prevention, early intervention and support across 16 designated catchment areas covering the whole of Victoria.

Organisation	Payment \$
Anglicare Victoria	1 243 489
Banyule Community Health	1 928 854
Bethany Community Support Incorporated	1 811 602
Child and Family Services Ballarat Incorporated	1 190 566
Connect Health and Community	2 985 569
EACH including Peer Connection Program	2 427 876
Gateway Community Health	493 674
IPC Health Limited	1 468 034
Latrobe Community Health Service	1 419 632
Primary Care Connect	514 446
The Salvation Army	1 249 607
Total	16 733 349

GRANT 2: GAMBLER'S HELP LINE AND NATIONAL GAMBLING SERVICE

Gambler's Help line is a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week telephone information, referral and support service for people experiencing gambling harm, including from someone else's gambling. This incorporates the Gambler's Help Youthline, which provides an additional point of contact for young people.

National Gambling Service is a national online service providing a range of web-based self-help information, referral and support materials, as well as direct access to online clinical interventions. This includes 24-hour live online counselling, and email-based counselling and support.

Organisation	Payment \$
Eastern Health	979 712

This figure includes \$711 316 (Gambler's Help line) and \$268 396 (Victorian contribution to National Gambling Service).

GRANT 3: GAMBLER'S HELP FOR MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

This program funds multicultural partners to provide prevention and support services to their communities. It includes in-language services for the Vietnamese-, Chinese- (both Mandarin and Cantonese) and Arabic-speaking communities.

Organisation	Payment \$
Arabic Welfare Incorporated	197 511
Australian Vietnamese Women's Association Incorporated	197 511
The Federation of Chinese Associations (Victoria) Limited	176 186
Springvale Indo-Chinese Mutual Assistance Association Incorporated	197 511
Settlement Services International	355 902
Victorian Arabic Social Services Incorporated	197 511
Total	1 322 132

GRANT 4: FIRST NATIONS GAMBLING AWARENESS PROGRAM

This program provides funds to First Nations Community Health organisations to address gambling harm in their communities.

Organisation	Payment \$
Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-Operative Limited	184 517
Mallee District Aboriginal Services (including Family Wellbeing Program)	159 849
Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative Limited	178 263
Strong Brother Strong Sister	209 799
Victorian Aboriginal Health Service Limited	391 176
Total	1 123 604

GRANT 5: GAMBLING MINDS PROGRAM

Through our partnership with Alfred Health, this program delivers support to Victorians experiencing serious problems and mental health conditions related to gambling. The program also provides clinical training and secondary consultations to other health professionals assisting people with serious co-occurring gambling and mental health conditions.

Organisation	Payment \$
Alfred Health	371 041

GRANT 6: LIVED EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

Through our partnership with Banyule Community Health, this program combines peer-led psycho-educational group support for people experiencing gambling harm together with Re-spin prevention activities.

Organisation	Payment \$
Banyule Community Health	391 564

PROGRAM B: PREVENTION PROGRAM

We also specifically direct resources towards programs and initiatives aimed at preventing harm from gambling. This includes generating greater awareness of gambling harm and encouraging early recognition of the signs of gambling harm.

GRANT 1: PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

This program aims to promote innovative ways to prevent gambling harm, looking at at-risk populations and place-based initiatives.

Organisation	Payment \$
Wyndham City Council*	(6 967)
Total	(6 967)

*Expenditure reflects a prior period recoup.

GRANT 2: STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP GRANT FUNDING

Funding was allocated with the goal of preventing and reducing gambling harm through a public health approach. It allocated grants to key initiatives across the public health spectrum together with election commitments to fund existing successful partnerships and projects.

Organisation	Payment \$
Australian Vietnamese Women's Association	240 000
IPC Health	50 000
Merri-bek City Council	100 000
Redundancy Payment Central Fund (Incolink)	150 000
Reclink Australia	303 000
SHARC	108 875
Victorian Local Governance Association	147 888
Total	1 099 763

PROGRAM C: RESEARCH

GRANT 1: GRANTS FOR GAMBLING RESEARCH PROGRAM

This competitive program provides up to \$200 000 of funding over three years for independent research projects on topics drawn from the Foundation's research agenda. The program also provides grants of up to \$50 000 over two years for early-career researchers.

Organisation	Payment \$
CQUniversity	78 284
Deakin University	110 351
La Trobe University	14 232
RMIT	11 438
Schottler Consulting	31 333
Total	245 638
Total grants and transfer payments	22 259 837

ADVERTISING AND CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURE

The Foundation's marketing campaign costs for 2022–23 are provided in the table below.

Name of campaign	Date	Campaign summary	Advertising (media) \$	Creative and campaign development \$	Research and evaluation \$
Prevention – normalisation of gambling in sport	1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023	Professional and community sporting clubs across Victoria say no to sports gambling sponsorship so kids can love the game, not the odds.	0	63 888	89 500
Early intervention – gambling frequency levels to avoid harm	13–30 June 2023	Gambling regularly increases one's risk of experiencing harmful effects from gambling.	409 090	145 205	14 375
Help seeking – Gambler's Help promotion	1 September – 30 October 2022	To change the way you think about gambling, call someone who gets it.	936 783	9 890	28 750
Help seeking – local area marketing	1–30 June 2023	Local agencies provide gambling counselling to improve overall wellbeing and connection with others.	49 267	0	0
Help seeking – continuous digital promotion of help services (digital continuity)	1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023	Ongoing digital promotion of help-seeking messages, which are served continuously via search engine and social media marketing, paid digital display and content advertising, to better reach those who need help.	838 942	35 954	N/A (research conducted by marketing agency OMD as part of media buy)
In-venue convenience advertising	1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023	Gambling harm and support service messages are displayed in the conveniences in or near gaming rooms in almost all venues in Victoria.	619 980 (print costs included)	15 367	N/A (ongoing quarterly reporting provided)

Note: Expenditure may reflect marketing activities that span financial years.



Foundation staff members attend NAIDOC Week march. From left, Justin Tham, Sharin Milner and Dea Morgain.

OUR ORGANISATION

GOVERNANCE



Figure 1: Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation reporting structure

VICTORIAN RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING FOUNDATION

BOARD

The board is responsible for determining the Foundation’s strategic direction, ensuring we achieve our objectives, and carrying out our legislated functions.

The board comprises between seven and 11 directors. At least four of them (but no more than eight) are appointed directors, and the remainder are elected members of parliament representing different political parties.

Board directors are appointed by the Governor in Council (acting on the recommendation of the Minister for Casino,

Gaming and Liquor Regulation) and are chosen on the basis of relevant skills, experience and knowledge. Directors are appointed for up to four years and remunerated in accordance with Victorian government guidelines.

Parliamentary members are appointed by a joint sitting of parliament for the parliamentary term and are not separately remunerated for their role on the board.

Under its charter, the board must meet at least six times a year. The board formally met seven times in 2022–23.

Directors of the Foundation board as at 30 June 2023 are listed below.



Tass Mousaferiadis
BOARD CHAIR

Tass has a background in public health, social policy, program development and strategy with the Victorian Government and health and community sectors. He consults for health and community organisations, serves as board chair of Eastern Health, and chairs the Southeastern Metro Mental Health and Wellbeing Interim Regional Body. He is a board member of Foodbank Victoria and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. Tass joined the Foundation board in February 2017 and was appointed board chair in February 2020.



Dr Alison Roberts
DEPUTY CHAIR

Alison joined the board in September 2020 and was appointed deputy chair in February 2022. She also chairs the board’s Research, Policy & Advocacy Committee. Alison has a PhD in change management and is an experienced board director and executive. Alison has a passion for innovation and reform, building strong relationships with government and other stakeholders to develop and execute strategies for policy implementation. Her career has spanned primary health care, population health, harm reduction, the wellbeing of children, aviation, infrastructure regulation and sustainability.



Zana Bytheway

Zana is the executive director of JobWatch, an employment rights legal centre that assists Victorian, Queensland and Tasmanian workers. A qualified mediator, Zana is a committee member of the Law Institute’s Workplace Relations Committee, an associate member of the Australian Government’s Respect@Work Council, member of the RMIT Legal Practice Program Advisory Committee, committee member of Woor-Dungin, and management team member of RMIT’s Rethinking Criminal Record Checks project. Zana joined the board in February 2022.



Lee Crockford

Lee is a social impact strategist and non-executive director whose work spans health, education, environment, technology, and justice across the private, public and non-profit sectors. Lee has been a Victorian LGBTIQ+ leader, Laureate Global Fellow and D&F Academy Fellow. His work has also been awarded by Good Design, UNLEASH, Impact 25, Australian Scholarships, Pro Bono Australia, and Advance Queensland. Lee was appointed to the Foundation board in June 2020 and is the board champion for the Foundation's Reconciliation Action Plan.



Luba Grigorovitch MP

Luba served as a councillor for Hobsons Bay City Council before stepping down in 2014, when she became the first woman and youngest ever state secretary of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union. As a member of parliament, Luba's main passion and priority is to work tirelessly for the people of Kororoit, to help bring more jobs, better education and world-class health care to the western suburbs. She was appointed to the Foundation board in May 2023.



Tina Hosseini

Tina is a passionate campaigner for multiculturalism, human rights, social justice and adolescent health and wellbeing. Tina currently works as a research and policy advisor for the Australian Government and was a former Research Fellow. She is a member of the Iranian Women's Association, Fire Rescue Victoria Strategic Advisory Committee, and Victorian Children's Council (Department of Education). Tina is deputy chair of the Victorian Red Cross board. She joined the Foundation board in February 2022.



Michael O'Brien MP

Michael has served as the member for Malvern in the Parliament of Victoria since 2006, having previously practised at the Victorian Bar and as a commercial lawyer. As Minister for Gaming, Michael established the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation in 2011 and significantly increased funding to tackle gambling-related harm. Michael has also served as Victorian Treasurer and Leader of the Opposition and is currently the Shadow Attorney-General. Michael joined the board as a parliamentary representative in May 2023.



Kim O'Keeffe MP

Kim was elected to the Parliament of Victoria in 2022. Prior to that she served as the Mayor of Greater Shepparton and was the Chair of Regional Cities Victoria. She sits on the Parliament's Economy and Infrastructure Committee and the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee. Kim ran her own business in the service and training industry and is a strong advocate for small business and regional Victoria. She was appointed to the Foundation board in May 2023.



Jim Pasinis

Jim has held CEO roles in health and human services for 35 years. He is a director of Melbourne Polytechnic after previously being the chair, a director of Araluen Centre, and a past member of several ministerial advisory committees. Jim is a recipient of the Centenary Medal for his services to culturally and linguistically diverse communities and was named 2016 Banyule Citizen of the Year. He is a life member of Banyule Community Health and the West Heidelberg Community Legal Service. Jim joined the board in March 2018.

The following directors ended their term on the Foundation board during 2022–23.



Christine Black

Chris has 25 years of experience as a social policy and communications adviser for government, corporate and non-government organisations. Currently, she is director of policy and stakeholder engagement for national advisory agency 89 Degrees East. Chris has a strong interest and expertise in developing policy and practical solutions for addressing homelessness, empowering disadvantaged communities, disability policy, social justice and gender equality. She has a Master of Social Policy and is a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Chris became a Foundation board director in April 2015.



Maree Edwards MP

Maree has been the Member for Bendigo West since November 2010. She is passionate about gender equity and having women's voices heard in the government, corporate and private sectors. Maree was formerly a board member of Lifeline Central Victoria and Mallee and Chair of the Women's Correctional Services Advisory Committee. She was Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly from 2017, and was elected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in August 2022, and in December 2022. Maree was a Foundation board director from 9 March 2016 until 30 October 2018. She was reappointed on 14 August 2019 to 1 November 2022.



Tim McCurdy MP

Tim has been a member of the Victorian Parliament since 2010, currently serving as the member for Ovens Valley. He is Shadow Minister for Water and Consumer Affairs and has previously served as Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Sport, Veterans, Gaming and Liquor Regulation. As a former dairy farmer, Tim is a staunch advocate for regional Victoria and the people of Ovens Valley. Tim was a Foundation board director from March 2016 to February 2017 and was reappointed on 14 August 2019 to 1 November 2022.



David Morris MP

David was a member of the Victorian Parliament from 2006 to 2022. He is a former chair of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee and a former parliamentary secretary for local government. He also served in a number of shadow ministries. Prior to entering parliament, David spent 25 years in small business on the Mornington Peninsula. He was a member of the Foundation board from 6 April 2022 to 1 November 2022.

DIRECTORS	MEMBER OF				
	BOARD	RISK, AUDIT & FINANCE COMMITTEE	RESEARCH, POLICY & ADVOCACY COMMITTEE	LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE	EXECUTIVE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE
Tass Mousaferiadis, Board Chair ¹	●	●	●	-	●
Dr Alison Roberts, Deputy Board Chair	●	-	●	-	●
Jim Pasinis	●	●	-	●	●
Zana Bytheway ²	●	●	-	●	-
Lee Crockford	●	●	●	-	-
Luba Grigorovitch MP	●	-	-	-	-
Tina Hosseini	●	-	●	-	-
Michael O'Brien MP	●	-	-	-	-
Kim O'Keeffe MP	●	-	-	-	-
Christine Black ²	●	-	-	●	-
Maree Edwards MP	●	-	●	-	-
Tim McCurdy MP	●	-	-	-	-
David Morris MP	●	-	-	-	-

LEGEND: ● Chair of board/committee ● Board director or committee member

1. The Board Chair is an ex officio member of the Risk, Audit and Finance Committee and Research Policy and Advocacy Committee.
2. Zana Bytheway was appointed Chair of the Lived Experience Advisory Committee in May 2022. Prior to this date, Christine Black was the Chair of the Lived Experience Advisory Committee.

RISK, AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Foundation maintains an audit committee to provide independent financial oversight and risk assurance. In 2022–23, the Risk, Audit & Finance Committee met four times. The committee assists and advises the board in carrying out its corporate governance function, including by overseeing:

- risk management
- internal and external audit
- financial management, performance and sustainability.

RESEARCH, POLICY AND ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

This committee assists and advises the board on matters relating to the strategic direction of the Foundation's research, policy and advocacy functions. In 2022–23, the committee met four times.

LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The membership of this committee represents diverse gambling experiences and backgrounds. The committee offers the Foundation perspectives from personal experience of gambling harm, including harm experienced from someone else's gambling. In 2022–23, the membership comprised:

- Christine Black, Chair (until April 2023)
- Zana Bytheway, Chair (from May 2023)
- Jim Pasinis, Deputy Chair
- Anna Bardsley
- Nicolas Bloom (from January 2023)
- Lynda Genser
- Carmel
- Pauline (from January 2023)
- Chandana
- Shayne Rodgers
- Fred Rubinstein.

EXECUTIVE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

This committee determines the Foundation's policy and practice for executive remuneration, including succession planning. The CEO is the Foundation's only executive-level role.

STRUCTURE OF OUR ORGANISATION

The CEO is accountable to the board for the day-to-day management of the Foundation. The CEO is supported by the Foundation’s executive leadership team, which comprises the heads of the Foundation’s functional branches; Director, People & Culture; and Manager, Office of the CEO.

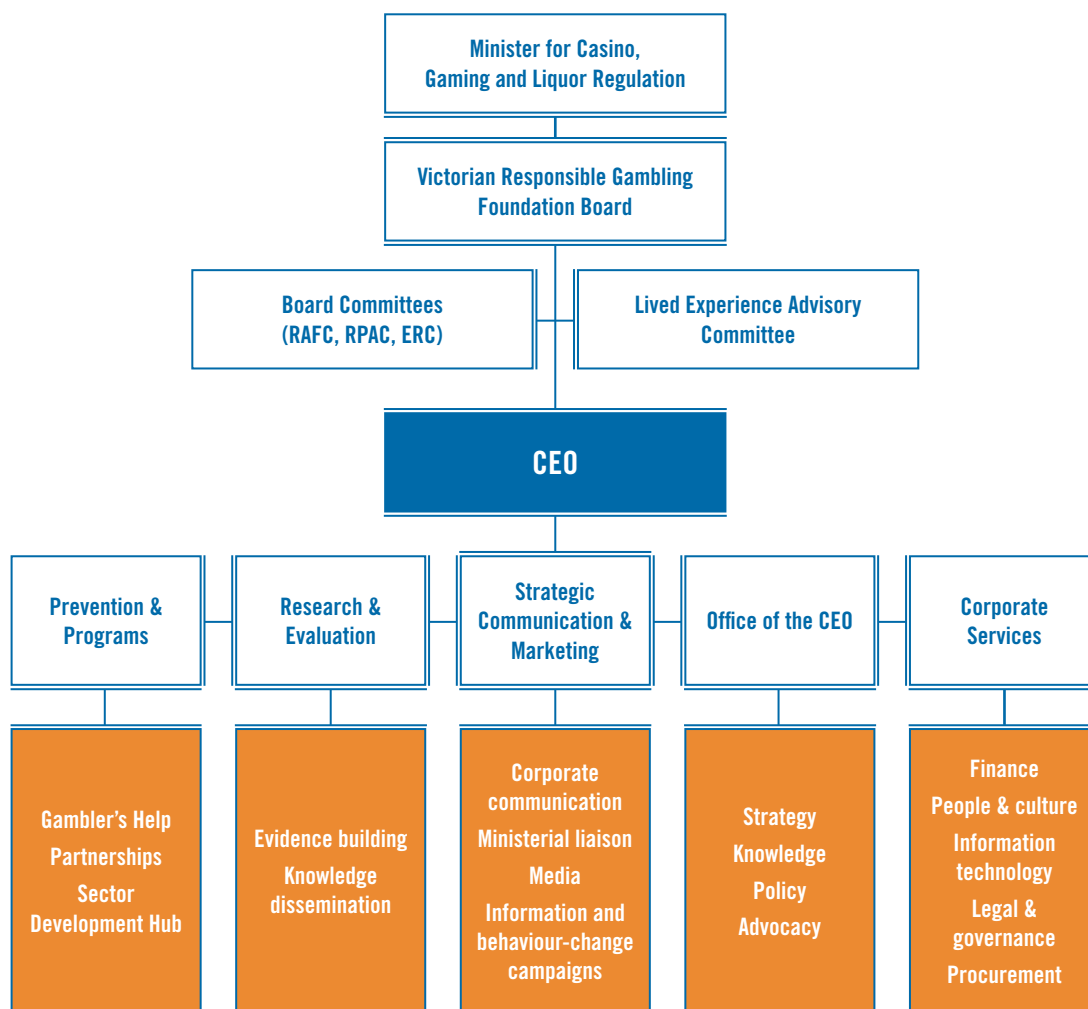


Figure 2: Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation organisational structure

The Foundation's CEO and executive leadership team during 2022–23 are listed below.



Shane Lucas

CEO

Shane has been Foundation CEO since March 2019. He has extensive leadership experience in the public, private and community sectors with a range of organisations, including Early Learning Association Australia, ANZ Banking Group and the Commonwealth Administrative Appeals Tribunal (Migration Division). Shane has held various executive and senior management positions across the Victorian Government and is a Williamson Fellow of Leadership Victoria. He has also been a director of the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (Foundation House) since 2020.



Rosa Billi PSM

BRANCH HEAD, RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Rosa has worked in gambling research for more than 15 years. She has a Master of Public Health and a Master of Health Sciences in Public Health Practice. She worked in the education and public health sectors before becoming the senior research associate working in the Department of Justice on the longitudinal Victorian Gambling Study. In 2022, Rosa was awarded a Public Service Medal for 'outstanding public service to community health in Victoria, particularly in the area of gambling harm'.



Cathy Daly

DIRECTOR, PEOPLE & CULTURE

Cathy has worked in human resources for more than 20 years. She is responsible for the development and implementation of the people and culture strategy and is focused on enabling strategic business outcomes through targeted people initiatives and support. Cathy has worked in a range of industries in Australia and overseas, predominantly within the public sector. Prior to joining the Foundation in September 2018, Cathy headed up the HR function for Transport Safety Victoria for seven years.



Roberta Donovan

BRANCH HEAD, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION & MARKETING

Roberta oversees the Foundation's communication, brand and behaviour change strategies. With a strong background in consumer marketing and community engagement, Roberta has experience across all aspects of communication and has held senior marketing and communication roles within the government, education and not-for-profit sectors.



Brett Hetherington

MANAGER, OFFICE OF THE CEO

Brett leads the delivery of strategy, planning and policy at the Foundation. He has experience in policy, research, project management, program delivery, stakeholder management, and providing evidence-informed advice in government and non-government contexts.



Heidi Rose

BRANCH HEAD, PREVENTION & PROGRAMS

Heidi leads the Foundation's programs to prevent, reduce and treat gambling harm. With a strong background in the public sector, Heidi has broad experience managing policy, legislation and program and service reform initiatives to drive improvements in public health, particularly tobacco control.



Craig Swift

**BRANCH HEAD, CORPORATE SERVICES,
CHIEF FINANCE & ACCOUNTING OFFICER,
CHIEF PROCUREMENT OFFICER**

Craig is a Certified Practising Accountant with an extensive corporate services background in Victoria's public service. He is experienced in financial and risk management, audit services and corporate services administration. Craig has worked for the Office of Local Government, was Chief Finance Officer with the then Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation and has held managerial roles within the former Department of Justice portfolio.

OUR PEOPLE

Our people are highly skilled, passionate, professional and competent individuals who work collaboratively with our partners and stakeholders to achieve our purpose to prevent and reduce gambling harm for all Victorians.

OUR VALUES

In addition to the Victorian Public Sector Code of Conduct, the Foundation is guided by an internal set of values. The values help to define how we will behave when delivering our business, engaging with our colleagues and supporting our stakeholders. They underpin our purpose and priorities, reflect the beliefs and behaviours that are most important to our staff, and shape our culture.

Our values are:

- **collaboration** – we engage openly and are solutions oriented
- **curiosity** – we are inquisitive and open to ideas
- **integrity** – we are transparent and accountable in our actions
- **outcomes focused** – we are strategic, evidence driven and committed to continuous improvement
- **respect** – we value diverse experiences and perspectives and are compassionate in all our interactions.

PEOPLE & CULTURE STRATEGIC PLAN

Our 2021–23 People & Culture strategic plan supports a holistic approach to ‘people matters’ through the application of contemporary human resources management practices. It enables us to build on previous progress to enhance the experiences of staff and strengthen capabilities. Actions in the plan support staff to achieve the Foundation’s strategic priorities and operational goals.

Key achievements during the reporting period include:

- implementation of key actions outlined in our Reconciliation Action Plan

- strong 2022 People Matter survey results
- an ongoing focus on safety, wellbeing and flexibility for staff, including through a hybrid working model
- submission of our gender equality action plan as part of the requirements of the Gender Equality Act 2020
- establishment of a learning and development plan and facilitation of individual and organisation-wide development activities
- continued support for career development through internal expression of interest, secondment and higher duties processes with a broader focus on staff wellbeing via targeted training awareness initiatives
- implementation of a succession planning framework with a significant focus work on critical role identification.

Additional outcomes are described in the following sections.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement 2020 and the *Public Administration Act 2004* provide the legal framework for establishing our staff employment terms and conditions. They are supported by a suite of Victorian Public Service and Foundation policies and procedures. The suite of Foundation policies was reviewed in 2022–23.

In addition, we have a range of wellbeing programs and flexible working options to meet the diverse needs and commitments of our people.

Our employment delegations ensure that people-related decisions are fair and equitable and ensure operational effectiveness.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The Foundation recognises that diversity, equity and inclusion are integral to a safe, innovative and productive work environment. We have created an environment that allows individuals to work to their full potential through respect, collaboration, innovation and performance. We encourage and support staff to bring their 'true selves' to work and we embrace the diversity of our workforce.

Our workplace culture supports all staff members to thrive. We value the unique skills, knowledge and attributes that staff members bring to the workplace and recognise that these qualities can be informed by various aspects of their identity, including gender, ethnicity, age or sexual orientation.

To advance diversity, equity and inclusion at the Foundation we:

- created a Gender Equality Action Plan in 2022, the implementation of which is ongoing
- support flexible working arrangements such as part-time work and flexible hours
- offer hybrid working arrangements for all
- participate in the annual People Matter survey and use the data to inform our people-related decisions
- support all staff with inclusive HR policies, including workplace behaviour and anti-discrimination and harassment policies
- provide First Nations cultural awareness and mental health first aid training for staff
- participate in community awareness activities such as National Reconciliation Week, International Women's Day and R U OK? Day.

EMPLOYMENT PRINCIPLES

The Foundation is an inclusive workplace that embraces people's different experiences, backgrounds and perspectives. We encourage employment applications from people with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, First Nations people, those who identify as LGBTIQ+, individuals with personal experience of gambling harm and people living with a disability.

The Foundation is committed to applying merit and equity principles when appointing staff, and we adhere to the Public Sector Employment Principles outlined in the Public Administration Act.

Our selection processes ensure that applicants are assessed and evaluated fairly and equitably, without discrimination, on the basis of key selection criteria and other accountabilities relevant to a specific vacancy. We ensure that:

- recruitment decisions are based on merit
- selection decisions are based on a competitive process
- selection criteria are clearly identified and mapped directly to the requirements of the vacancy and included in the position description
- decisions are free from bias and comply with the public sector employment framework.

This year the Foundation welcomed eight new staff, each of whom is already contributing to the achievement of our strategic goals and enhancement of our workplace culture.

Our employees have been correctly classified in workforce data collections.

INDUCTION

New employees participate in a structured induction program that spans the first three months of their employment. The program is delivered by line managers in partnership with the People and Culture team and other key Foundation staff. It familiarises new staff with the Foundation's:

- role, purpose, strategic priorities and work planning
- organisational structure
- organisational practices, policies and work environment
- values and behavioural expectations
- health, wellbeing and safety practices
- learning and development programs and opportunities
- conditions and entitlements of employment.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Foundation encourages a culture of ongoing learning and capability enhancement. This year, we continued to emphasise leadership capability and ensured that staff could access opportunities in a variety of formats: on the job; mentoring; interactive, self-paced activities; and tailored approaches that look beyond the annual planning cycle. We focused on the capabilities required by staff to perform their roles and employee wellbeing as we moved into the post-pandemic way of working.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

We are committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment for all staff, other workers (including agency staff and contractors) and visitors.

The Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Sustainability Committee operates to help the Foundation adhere to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*. The committee includes one elected health and safety representative, one elected deputy health and safety representative, six staff representatives and two management representatives. The CEO is the committee's executive sponsor.

During 2022–23, the Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Sustainability Committee met formally four times to monitor and evaluate our health, safety and wellbeing framework.

In addition to broad home office support, initiatives during the year included:

- six-monthly occupational health and safety (OHS) reporting to the executive leadership team and the board's Risk, Audit and Finance committee
- a comprehensive review of all OHS-related policies and revised OHS induction for new starters
- access to ergonomic assessments to assist with home office working arrangements
- annual flu vaccinations
- a formal workplace inspection to identify and address any workplace risks, with all issues resolved
- maintenance of building-related OHS actions through Colliers management
- delivery of a series of wellbeing webinars that focused on resilience, motivation and addressing change, along with broader awareness programs.

We provide every new starter with comprehensive training on the Foundation's safety and wellbeing practices, as well as available support services. And we encourage all leavers to complete an exit interview.

We also support constructive and inclusive workplace behaviour and practices, including by reviewing and promoting our workplace behaviour, anti-discrimination and harassment, and flexible working policies.

The Foundation's OHS risk register forms part of our strategic risk register. Progress of action items is measured and recorded in the register, which is reviewed at every Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Sustainability Committee meeting.

Several OHS-related training sessions were delivered to staff throughout the year, such as mandatory emergency warden refresher sessions and to update the qualifications of our first aid officers.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

In 2022–23, three health-related incidents were recorded in the incident reporting system, which is independently maintained by the Department of Justice and Community Safety. Incidents include injuries, 'near-misses' and detected workplace hazards.

An investigation was completed for each incident. All were resolved satisfactorily, and the incidents were closed off in the reporting system.

There were no notifiable incidents, which require the OHS regulator to be informed, in 2022–23.

EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

The Foundation has ensured that employee wellbeing remains at the forefront of our culture. Foundation employees have access to a range of wellbeing programs and support services, including:

- the Employee Wellbeing and Support service, delivered by Converge International, which can be used for personal and/or work-related issues. There are three types of support: a specialist helpline; critical incident/rapid response services following a traumatic event; and a manager-assist hotline and portal
- discounted private health insurance
- events and activities to acknowledge and celebrate key cultural, health and wellbeing days that encourage positive interactions between staff from different backgrounds
- completion of the annual People Matter survey, which has a specific focus on wellbeing, and action taken on outcomes
- regular training and information sessions. In particular, in 2022–23 we delivered a monthly wellbeing seminar series for staff and board members.

WORKFORCE PROFILE

Workforce data

The data in the following tables is based on active full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, meaning people who attended work or were paid during the last full pay period of the 2022–23 financial year. This includes ongoing, fixed-term and casual employees employed under Part 3 of the Public Administration Act (including those on paid leave).

It excludes staff on long-term personal or parental leave without pay and those absent on secondment, as well as labour hire agency staff.

This year, FTE-equivalent staff increased from 54.5 to 55.7.

FTE staffing trends from 2018 to 2023

2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
55.7	54.5	56.5	50.6	52.2	55.5

The workforce distribution within the Foundation is informed by business need, and positions are allocated within budget to ensure the delivery of strategic priorities. Staffing is regularly reviewed as new business pressures emerge and key outcomes are achieved.

The Foundation's workforce profile consists primarily of ongoing positions. These are supplemented by fixed-term positions, agency contractors and external consultants, who provide additional skills support in key strategic areas.

Workforce by classification

Classification	Employment type	2023		2022	
		Count	FTE	Count	FTE
VPS 1	Fixed and casual	0	0	0	0
	Ongoing	0	0	0	0
VPS 2	Fixed and casual	0	0	0	0
	Ongoing	0	0	1	0.2
VPS 3	Fixed and casual	0	0	0	0
	Ongoing	1	1	1	1
VPS 4	Fixed and casual	3	2.6	2	2
	Ongoing	13	13	14	14
VPS 5	Fixed and casual	4	4	3	3
	Ongoing	21	20.2	22	20.5
VPS 6	Fixed and casual	0	0	0	0
	Ongoing	14	13.9	14	13.8
Executive	Fixed and casual	0	0	0	0
	Ongoing	1	1	1	1
Total		57	55.7	58	55.5

Workforce by employment type

Employment type	2023		2022	
	Count	FTE	Count	FTE
Fixed and casual	7	6.6	5	5
Ongoing	50	49.1	53	50.5
Total	57	55.7	58	55.5

Workforce gender breakdown

Gender	Employment type	2023		2022	
		Count	FTE	Count	FTE
Female	Fixed and casual	6	5.6	3	3
	Ongoing	32	31.3	34	32.1
Male	Fixed and casual	1	1	2	2
	Ongoing	18	17.8	18	17.4
Self-described	Fixed and casual	0	0	0	0
	Ongoing	0	0	0	0
Total		57	55.7	57	54.5

The gender profile of the Foundation is almost two-thirds female, which aligns with the broader public sector. There were no self-described staff members employed by the Foundation for the 2022–23 reporting period.

Workforce age

Age	2023				2022			
	Fixed and casual		Ongoing		Fixed and casual		Ongoing	
	Count	FTE	Count	FTE	Count	FTE	Count	FTE
25–34	1	1	2	2	1	1	7	5.7
35–44	3	2.6	20	19.4	2	2	19	18.3
45–54	3	3	15	14.9	2	2	15	14.9
55–64	0	0	11	10.8	0	0	9	8.6
Over 65	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	2
Total	7	6.6	50	49.1	5	5	52	49.5

The average age of the workforce is slightly above the Victorian Public Service at 47 years.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER DATA

An executive officer is defined as a person employed as an executive under Part 3 of the Public Administration Act. For a public body, an executive officer is defined as an executive under Part 3 of the Act or a person to whom the Public Entity Executive Remuneration Policy applies. The definition of an executive officer does not include a statutory office holder or an accountable officer.

The Foundation currently employs one executive officer, the CEO.

STATUTORY COMPLIANCE

LOCAL JOBS FIRST

The *Local Jobs First Act 2003* ensures that Victorian businesses, workers, apprentices, trainees and cadets benefit from Victorian Government procurement.

The Foundation is required to apply the Local Jobs First policy in all metropolitan Melbourne or statewide projects valued at \$3 million or more, and in regional projects valued at \$1 million or more.

For the 12 months ending 30 June 2023, the Foundation did not enter into any relevant contracts.

CONSULTANCY EXPENDITURE

Details of consultancies valued at \$10 000 or greater

In 2022–23, the Foundation engaged one new consultancy where the total fee payable was \$10 000 or greater. Expenditure incurred in relation to this consultancy was \$627 894 (excluding GST). Details are outlined below.

Consultant	Purpose of consultancy	Total approved project fee (excl. GST)	Expenditure 2022–23 (excl. GST)	Future expenditure (excl. GST)
Impact Collaborative Pty Ltd	Gambling harm service system review	681 589	627 894	53 695

Details of consultancies under \$10 000

No consultancies were engaged by the Foundation in 2022–23.

DISCLOSURE OF MAJOR CONTRACTS

In accordance with the requirements of government policy and accompanying guidelines, the Foundation did not enter into any major contracts for the 12 months ending 30 June 2023. Major contracts are defined as contracts greater than \$10 million in value.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY EXPENDITURE

The Foundation did not engage in any relevant activities or circumstances that resulted in spending.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI)

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* extends, as far as possible, the right of the community to access information held by the Foundation. The Foundation received one FOI request from members of the public during 2022–23.

Making a request

Access to documents may be obtained through written request to the FOI officer, as detailed in section 17 of the FOI Act. In summary, requests should:

- be in writing
- clearly identify what types of material/documents are being sought
- be accompanied by the appropriate application fee (this may be waived in certain circumstances).

Requests for documents should be addressed to:

Freedom of Information Officer
Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation
PO Box 2156, Royal Melbourne Hospital
Victoria 3050

The Foundation can also be contacted via the following email address: contact@responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au.

Access charges (for example, photocopying and search and retrieval charges) may apply once documents have been processed and a decision on access has been made.

FOI statistics/timeliness

During 2022–23, the Foundation received one application from the general public. The Foundation made one FOI decision during the 12 months ending 30 June 2023. This decision was made within the statutory time periods.

During 2022–23, one request was subject to an internal review by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner.

Further information

Further information regarding the operation and scope of FOI can be obtained from the Act, regulations made under the Act, and www.foi.vic.gov.au.

BUILDING ACT 1993

The Foundation does not own or control any land or buildings but is a tenant at 14–20 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne, Victoria 3051. Consequently, we are exempt from notifying compliance with the building and maintenance provisions of the Building Act.

COMPETITIVE NEUTRALITY POLICY

Competitive neutrality requires government businesses to ensure that where services compete, or potentially compete, with the private sector, any advantage arising solely from their government ownership be removed if it is not in the public interest.

The Foundation is working to ensure Victoria fulfils its requirements on competitive neutrality reporting as required under the Competition Principles Agreement and Competition and Infrastructure Reform Agreement.

PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURES ACT 2012

The Foundation does not tolerate improper conduct by employees, nor the taking of reprisals against those who come forward to disclose such conduct. We are committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in administrative and management practices and support the making of disclosures that reveal corrupt conduct, substantial mismanagement of public resources, or substantial risk to public health and safety or to the environment.

The Foundation will take all reasonable steps to protect people who make such disclosures from any detrimental action in reprisal for making a disclosure. We will also afford natural justice to the person who is the subject of a disclosure to the extent that is legally possible.

In 2022–23, no disclosures were made by any individual to the Foundation or the Department of Justice and Community Safety or notified to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC).

Reporting procedures

Disclosures of improper conduct or detrimental action by the Foundation or any of our employees or officers may be made to any of the following personnel:

- public interest disclosure coordinator at the Department of Justice and Community Safety
- CEO of the Foundation
- manager or supervisor of any person in the Foundation who chooses to make a disclosure.

Alternatively, disclosures may be made directly to IBAC:

Level 1, North Tower
459 Collins Street Melbourne
Victoria 3000

Phone: 1300 735 135
Web: ibac.vic.gov.au

CARERS RECOGNITION ACT 2012

The Foundation has taken all practical measures to comply with our obligations under the Carers Recognition Act. For example, we have:

- ensured staff are aware of, and understand, the care relationship principles set out in the Act and how they relate to conditions and entitlements of employment
- considered the care relationship principles set out in the Act when setting policies and providing support services to employees (our policies such as flexible working arrangements and leave provisions comply with the principles)
- increased our awareness of staff who have caring arrangements.

DISABILITY ACT 2006

Inclusive Victoria: State disability plan 2022–2026 is Victoria's plan for making things fairer for people with a disability. The plan is a key way for the Victorian Government to be accountable for making all parts of the community inclusive and accessible for everyone.

The Foundation has removed barriers that may prevent people with a disability using our services and facilities or gaining and keeping employment with the organisation. We promote inclusion and participation in the community and achieve changes in attitudes and practices that may result in discrimination.

The Foundation has acted against each of the four outcome areas outlined in the Disability Act.

1. To reduce barriers to people with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities, we have:
 - ensured Gambler's Help services include a range of access options, such as after-hours and outreach, telephone and web counselling
 - worked with our funded partners to provide free access for deaf, hearing-impaired and vision-impaired people to Auslan, tactile fingerspelling and visual framing interpreters when using Gambler's Help services
 - ensured our websites are accessible to the widest possible audience, including visitors using assistive technology or accessibility features
 - ensured our office building includes lifts and stairs, stair-free access to the foyer and electric sliding access doors at ground level.
2. To reduce barriers to people with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment, we have:
 - advertised all vacancies on the Jobs and Skills Exchange and Victorian Government Careers websites, which adhere to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0
 - actively promoted and adhered to the Victorian Public Sector flexible working policy, including home-based work and support for reasonable adjustments to work
 - promoted use of our employee assistance program service provider, which includes a specialist helpline for advice on disability support and referral to state and local resources and services, as well as emotional support for those caring for family members or friends who live with a disability
 - collated intranet resources for managers and staff, including a manager toolkit and wellbeing and mental health resource library.
3. To promote inclusion and participation in the community of people with a disability, we have:
 - ensured that the needs of people with a disability are fully accommodated at online and in-person Foundation professional development activities and events
 - ensured that offsite events such as conferences are held at venues that meet the needs of attendees who have disabilities and provided staff support.
4. To achieve tangible changes in attitudes and practices that discriminate against people with a disability, we have:
 - changed the layout of Foundation rooms to ensure ease of access for people with disabilities
 - provided local parking and building access information to all event and training participants or Foundation visitors.

OFFICE-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Foundation has several strategies in place to promote sustainability in the workplace and reduce the organisation's impact on the environment. For example, we:

- have two sustainability officers on our Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Sustainability Committee
- provide separate recycling, landfill and compost bins in our kitchens
- provide paper recycling bins
- encourage staff to use electronic documents wherever possible
- encourage use of low-energy settings when printing documents
- use 100 per cent recycled paper
- engage socially conscious and environmentally friendly caterers where possible
- encourage staff to use public transport when travelling to and from work, and for work purposes
- use sensors that automatically turn off lights in unoccupied rooms
- promote efficient use of electricity (turning off computers and other equipment)
- use non-toxic dishwashing liquid in our kitchens
- have ceased using plastic catering materials at events and in the office.

Our Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Sustainability Committee continues to find new ways to promote sustainable practices.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

In compliance with the requirements of the Standing Directions 2018 under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, additional information about the items listed below is available on request, subject to FOI provisions. The items are:

- a statement that declarations of pecuniary interests have been duly completed by all relevant Foundation officers
- shares held by a senior officer as nominee or held beneficially in a statutory authority or subsidiary

- publications produced by the Foundation about our activities, and how they can be obtained
- changes in prices, fees, charges, rates and levies charged by the Foundation
- any major external reviews carried out on the Foundation
- major research and development activities undertaken by the Foundation
- overseas visits undertaken, including a summary of the objectives and outcomes of each visit
- major promotion, public relations and marketing activities undertaken by the Foundation to develop community awareness of our organisation and services
- assessments and measures undertaken to improve the occupational health and safety of employees
- a general statement on industrial relations within the Foundation and time lost through industrial accidents and disputes
- a list of major committees sponsored by the Foundation, the purpose of each committee and the extent to which each committee has achieved its purpose
- consultancies and contractors engaged, services provided and expenditure commitments for each engagement.

Requests should be addressed to:

Freedom of Information Officer
Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation
PO Box 2156, Royal Melbourne Hospital
Victoria 3050

Email: contact@responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au

DATAVIC ACCESS POLICY

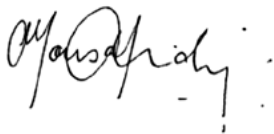
Consistent with the Victorian Government's DataVic Access Policy issued in 2012 (<https://www.data.vic.gov.au/datavic-access-policy>), the Foundation has developed our policies and procedures to ensure appropriate access to, and release of, information.

ATTESTATION STATEMENT

ATTESTATION FOR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT COMPLIANCE WITH STANDING DIRECTION 5.1.4

Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation Financial Management Compliance Attestation Statement

I, Tass Mousaferiadis, on behalf of the Responsible Body, certify that the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation has no Material Compliance Deficiency with respect to the applicable Standing Directions under the *Financial Management Act 1994* and Instructions.



Tass Mousaferiadis
Board Chair
Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation
3 November 2023

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER, CHAIR AND CHIEF FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING OFFICER **DECLARATION**

The attached financial statements for the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation have been prepared in accordance with Direction 5.2 of the Standing Directions of the Assistant Treasurer under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, applicable Financial Reporting Directions, Australian Accounting Standards including interpretations, and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

We further state that, in our opinion, the information set out in the comprehensive operating statement, balance sheet, statement of changes in equity, cash flow statement and accompanying notes, presents fairly the financial transactions during the year ended 30 June 2023 and financial position of the Foundation at 30 June 2023.

At the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstance which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We authorise the attached financial statements for issue on 3 November 2023.



Craig Swift

Chief Finance and Accounting Officer
Victorian Responsible
Gambling Foundation

3 November 2023



Shane Lucas

Chief Executive Officer
Victorian Responsible
Gambling Foundation

3 November 2023



Tass Mousaferiadis

Chair
Victorian Responsible
Gambling Foundation

3 November 2023

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT



Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation

Opinion	<p>I have audited the financial report of the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (the Foundation) which comprises the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• balance sheet as at 30 June 2023• comprehensive operating statement for the year then ended• statement of changes in equity for the year then ended• cash flow statement for the year then ended• notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies• accountable officer, chair and chief finance and accounting officer declaration. <p>In my opinion the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Foundation as at 30 June 2023 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 7 of the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i> and applicable Australian Accounting Standards.</p>
Basis for opinion	<p>I have conducted my audit in accordance with the <i>Audit Act 1994</i> which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the <i>Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report</i> section of my report.</p> <p>My independence is established by the <i>Constitution Act 1975</i>. My staff and I are independent of the Foundation in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 <i>Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)</i> (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.</p> <p>I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.</p>
The Board's responsibilities for the financial report	<p>The Board of the Foundation is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i>, and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.</p> <p>In preparing the financial report, the Board is responsible for assessing the Foundation's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.</p>

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report	<p>As required by the <i>Audit Act 1994</i>, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.</p> <p>As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control • obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Foundation's internal control • evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Board • conclude on the appropriateness of the Board's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Foundation's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Foundation to cease to continue as a going concern. • evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation. <p>I communicate with the Board regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.</p>
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MELBOURNE
14 November 2023



Timothy Maxfield
as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

COMPREHENSIVE OPERATING STATEMENT

For the financial year ended 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$	2022 \$
CONTINUING OPERATIONS			
Income from transactions			
Grants	2.1.1	40 620 200	39 402 200
Other income	2.1.2	527 212	743 050
Total income from transactions		41 147 412	40 145 250
Expenses from transactions			
Employee expenses	3.1.1	(9 075 093)	(8 647 101)
Depreciation	5.1.1	(21 380)	(6 421)
Grant expenses	3.2	(22 259 837)	(22 549 271)
Media campaign advertising	3.3	(2 854 092)	(3 199 090)
Professional services	3.3	(6 898 347)	(4 438 277)
Other supplies and services	3.3	(2 240 374)	(1 875 123)
Total expenses from transactions		(43 349 123)	(40 715 283)
Net result from transactions (net operating balance)		(2 201 711)	(570 033)
Other economic flows included in net result			
Net gain arising from revaluation of long service leave liability	9.1	16 798	107 198
Net gain arising from disposal of leased vehicle	9.1	6 410	-
Total other economic flows included in net result		23 208	107 198
Comprehensive result		(2 178 503)	(462 835)

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET

As at 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$	2022 \$
ASSETS			
Financial assets			
Cash and deposits	7.1	5 519 666	6 598 457
Receivables	6.1	282	733 074
Total financial assets		5 519 948	7 331 531
Non-financial assets			
Plant and equipment	5.1	80 187	54 664
Prepayments		137 533	143 407
Total non-financial assets		217 720	198 071
Total assets		5 737 668	7 529 602
LIABILITIES			
Payables	6.2	1 968 301	1 875 181
Borrowings	7.4	32 077	-
Employee-related provisions	3.1.2	2 295 824	2 034 452
Total liabilities		4 296 202	3 909 633
Net assets		1 441 467	3 619 970
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		1 441 467	3 619 970
Net worth		1 441 467	3 619 970

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

For the financial year ended 30 June 2023

	Accumulated surplus \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2021	4 082 805	4 082 805
Comprehensive result for the year	(462 835)	(462 835)
Balance at 30 June 2022	3 619 970	3 619 970
Comprehensive result for the year	(2 178 503)	(2 178 503)
Balance at 30 June 2023	1 441 467	1 441 467

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

For the financial year ended 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$	2022 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Receipts			
Receipts from government and others		41 886 614	39 402 200
Total receipts		41 886 614	39 402 200
Payments			
Payments to suppliers and employees		(42 918 502)	(39 542 336)
Total payments		(42 918 502)	(39 542 336)
Net cash flows (used in) operating activities	7.1.1	(1 031 888)	(140 136)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Purchases of non-financial assets		(46 902)	(52 713)
Net cash flows (used in) investing activities		(46 902)	(52,713)
Net (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(1 078 791)	(192 849)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		6 598 457	6 791 306
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	7.1	5 519 666	6 598 457

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

1. ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (the Foundation) is a public sector entity of the State of Victoria, established pursuant to section 1 (1) of the *Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation Act 2011*. It is an administrative agency acting on behalf of the Crown.

A description of the nature of its operations and its principal activities is included in the Report of Operations, which does not form part of these financial statements.

Its principal address is:

Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation
14–20 Blackwood Street
North Melbourne
Victoria 3051

Basis of preparation

These financial statements are in Australian dollars and the historical cost convention is used unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the note associated with the item measured on a different basis.

The accrual basis of accounting has been applied in preparing these financial statements, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about financial information being presented. The significant judgements made in the preparation of these financial statements are disclosed in the notes where amounts affected by those judgements are disclosed. Estimates and associated assumptions are based on professional judgements derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

These financial statements represent the audited general purpose financial statements for the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation for the period ended 30 June 2023 and include all the controlled activities of the Foundation. All amounts in the financial statements are to the nearest dollar.

The statements are prepared on a going concern basis; however, there is an economic dependency on grant income from the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) Community Support Fund (CSF) for the majority of the income used to operate the VRGF. As described in Note 2, the period ending 30 June 2023 is the final year of the Foundation's four-year grant allocation that commenced 1 July 2019. While the VRGF received confirmation of a renewal of grant allocation funding for the financial year commencing 1 July 2023, a subsequent government announcement identified that the functions of the Foundation are to be transferred to other government entities by 30 June 2024.

Compliance information

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994* (FMA) and applicable Australian Accounting Standards (AAS), which include interpretations, issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB). In particular, they are presented in a manner consistent with the requirements of AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

Where appropriate, those AAS paragraphs applicable to not-for-profit entities have been applied. Accounting policies selected and applied in these financial statements ensure that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported.

2. FUNDING DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICES

The legislated objectives of the Foundation are to:

- (a) reduce the prevalence of problem gambling and the severity of harm related to gambling
- (b) foster responsible gambling.

The Foundation is funded via an account in the Public Account as part of the trust fund known as the Responsible Gambling Fund. This fund is administered by the Foundation. Amounts are credited to the Responsible Gambling Fund from the CSF of the DTF.

The Foundation is a general government sector entity, consolidated under the Justice portfolio, whose revenue is classified as DTF appropriation, paid into the CSF, being a DTF entity, and which is on-passed to the Foundation via the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS).

The Foundation is to apply monies in the Responsible Gambling Fund to fund its ongoing operations and service delivery.

2.1 Summary of revenue and income that funds the delivery of our services

	Notes	2023 \$	2022 \$
Grants	2.1.1	40 620 200	39 402 200
Other income	2.1.2	527 212	743 050
Total income from transactions		41 147 412	40 145 250

Revenue and income that fund delivery of the Foundation's services are accounted for consistently with the requirements of the relevant accounting standards disclosed in the following notes.

2.1.1 Grants

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Income recognised as income of not-for-profit entities		
Community Support Fund	37 733 000	36 434 000
Other grant income	2 887 200	2 968 200
Total grants	40 620 200	39 402 200

The Foundation has determined that the grant income included in the table above is accounted for under AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-profit Entities* as it has been earned under arrangements that are either not enforceable or linked to sufficiently specific performance obligations.

Income from grants is recognised when the Foundation has an unconditional right to receive cash, which usually coincides with approval of the allocation to be provided the cash.

Income received for specific purpose grants for on-passing is recognised simultaneously as the funds are immediately on-passed to the relevant recipient entities.

Grants from the Community Support Fund – Department of Treasury and Finance

Income from grants is recognised when the Foundation receives or has the right to receive the cash.

The Foundation's income is primarily by way of grant funding from the CSF – DTF for the production of Foundation outputs.

The Foundation has historically been funded via a four-year allocation that is approved by the Expenditure Review Committee (ERC) of Cabinet. Expenditure and revenue identified in reporting for 2022–2023 reflects operations for the final year of the funding approved allocation for the period commencing 1 July 2019 and ending 30 June 2023. During 2022–2023, the Foundation undertook the process of renewing its funding allocation, via the ERC process, for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2027. Confirmation of an approved funding allocation for the 2023–2024 financial year has been received.

The CSF is a trust fund governed by the *Gambling Regulation Act 2003* to direct a portion of gaming revenue back to the community. CSF funding objectives identify that programs that tackle problem gambling are a first call on the fund, including payments into the Responsible Gambling Fund.

Other grant income

Grant income becomes recognised by the Foundation when it is appropriated from the consolidated fund and applied to the purposes defined under the relevant Appropriations Act.

Income of \$2.437 million in 2022–2023 reflects funding to Gambler's Help agencies associated with wage increases in the social and community services sector, implementing the equal remuneration decision handed down by Fair Work Australia on 1 February 2012 regarding workers employed under the Social and Community Services (SACS) Award. It also reflects termination benefits payable when employment is terminated before the normal retirement date.

Further income of \$0.450 million in 2022–2023 is associated with the establishment of a Gambling Data Committee, as recommended by the Royal Commission into the Casino Operator and Licence, to address a need for gambling data to be made more easily accessible to researchers.

2.1.2 Other income

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Unclaimed jackpot special prize pool	527 181	738 050
Donation	-	5 000
Freedom of Information access charge	31	-
Total other income	527 212	743 050

Section 3.6.1B of the *Gambling Regulation Act 2003* states that if a venue operator is in possession of funds in a jackpot special prize pool that have not been paid out at the time of the venue operator ceasing to hold a venue operator's licence or any gaming machine entitlements, then the operator must pay an amount equal to the funds in the jackpot special prize pool to the Treasurer for payment into the Responsible Gambling Fund, established under section 19 of the *Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation Act 2011*.

The Freedom of Information revenue relates to a document access charge paid to the Foundation with respect to the processing of a request.

In 2021–2022 there was donation income received which related to a Magistrate's Court order determination to provide an amount to the Responsible Gambling Fund.

3. THE COST OF DELIVERING SERVICES

This section provides an account of the expenses incurred by the Foundation in delivering services and outputs. In Section 2, the funds that enable the provision of services were disclosed and in this note the costs associated with provision of services are recorded.

3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services

	Notes	2023 \$	2022 \$
Employee benefit expenses	3.1.1	9 075 093	8 647 101
Depreciation	5.1.1	21 380	6 421
Grants expenses	3.2	22 259 837	22 549 271
Other operating expenses	3.3	11 992 813	9 512 489
Total expenses incurred in delivery of services		43 349 123	40 715 282

3.1.1 Employee benefit expenses in the comprehensive operating statement

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Salaries and wages, annual leave and long service leave	8 299 956	7 940 740
Defined contribution superannuation expense	761 100	692 424
Defined benefit superannuation expense	14 037	13 937
Total employee expenses	9 075 093	8 647 101

Employee expenses include all costs related to employment including wages and salaries, fringe benefits tax, leave entitlements and WorkCover premiums.

The amount recognised in the comprehensive operating statement in relation to superannuation is employer contributions for members of both defined benefit and defined contribution superannuation plans that are paid or payable during the reporting period. The Foundation does not recognise any defined benefit liabilities because it has no legal or constructive obligation to pay future benefits relating to its employees. Instead, the DTF discloses, in its annual financial statements, the net defined benefit cost related to the members of these plans as an administered liability (on behalf of the State as the sponsoring employer).

3.1.2 Employee benefits in the balance sheet

Provision is made for benefits accruing to employees in respect of wages and salaries, annual leave and long service leave for services rendered to the reporting date and recorded as an expense during the period the services are delivered.

	2023 \$	2022 \$
CURRENT PROVISIONS:		
Annual leave		
Unconditional and expected to settle within 12 months	598 611	550 865
Unconditional and expected to settle after 12 months	106 522	103 960
Long service leave		
Unconditional and expected to settle within 12 months	140 918	97 802
Unconditional and expected to settle after 12 months	860 315	681 429
Provisions for on-costs		
Unconditional and expected to settle within 12 months	192 479	179 786
Unconditional and expected to settle after 12 months	183 772	148 339
Total current provisions for employee benefits	2 082 617	1 762 182
NON-CURRENT PROVISIONS:		
Employee benefits	180 404	231 534
On-costs	32 803	40 736
Total non-current provisions for employee benefits	213 207	272 270
Total provisions for employee benefits	2 295 824	2 034 452

Reconciliation of movement in on-cost provision

	2023 \$
Opening balance	368 861
Additional provisions recognised	210 588
Reductions arising from payments/other sacrifices of future economic benefits	(170 396)
Closing balance	409 054
Current	376 251
Non-current	32 803

Wages, salaries and annual leave: Liabilities for wages and salaries (including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and on-costs) are recognised as part of the employee benefit provision as current liabilities because the Foundation does not have an unconditional right to defer settlements of these liabilities.

The liability for salaries and wages is recognised in the balance sheet at remuneration rates which are current at the reporting date. As the Foundation expects the liabilities to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date, they are measured at undiscounted amounts.

The annual leave liability is classified as a current liability and measured at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid, as the Foundation does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period.

No provision has been made for sick leave as all sick leave is non-vesting and it is not considered probable that the average sick leave taken in the future will be greater than the benefits accrued in the future. As sick leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised in the comprehensive operating statement as it is taken.

Employment on-costs such as payroll tax, workers compensation and superannuation are not employee benefits. They are disclosed separately as a component of the provision for employee benefits when the employment to which they relate has occurred.

Unconditional long service leave is disclosed as a current liability, even where the Foundation does not expect to settle the liability within 12 months, because it will not have the unconditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement should an employee take leave within 12 months.

The components of this current long service leave liability are measured at:

- undiscounted value – if the Foundation expects to wholly settle within 12 months, or
- present value – if the Foundation does not expect to wholly settle within 12 months.

Conditional long service leave is disclosed as a non-current liability. There is a conditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement until the employee has completed the requisite years of service. This non-current long service leave is measured at present value.

Any gain or loss following revaluation of the present value of non-current long service leave liability is recognised as a transaction, except to the extent that a gain or loss arises due to changes in bond interest rates for which it is then recognised as an 'other economic flow' in the net result.

3.1.3 Superannuation contributions

Employees of the Foundation are entitled to receive superannuation benefits, and the Foundation contributes to both defined benefit and defined contribution plans. The defined benefit plans provide benefits based on years of service and final average salary.

As noted earlier, the defined benefit liability is recognised by DTF as an administered liability. However, superannuation contributions paid or payable for the reporting period are included as part of employee benefits in the comprehensive operating statement of the Foundation.

	Paid contribution for the year		Contribution outstanding at year end	
	2023 \$	2022 \$	2023 \$	2022 \$
DEFINED BENEFIT PLANS ⁽ⁱ⁾				
State Superannuation Fund	14 037	13 937	-	-
DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PLANS				
VicSuper	279 353	293 505	-	-
Other	481 747	398 918	-	-
Total	775 137	706 360	-	-

Note:

(i) The basis for determining the level of contributions is determined by the various actuaries of the defined benefit superannuation plans.

3.2 Grant expenses

	2023 \$	2022 \$
General purpose grants	19 291 636	19 581 071
Payments for specific purposes	2 968 201	2 968 200
Total grant expenses	22 259 837	22 549 271

Grant expenses reflect payments provided to partner organisations to deliver gambling-harm-related services and programs for the Victorian community. These include:

- a range of Gambler's Help prevention, early intervention and support services and activities
- prevention program initiatives aimed at preventing harm from gambling by generating greater awareness and recognition of the signs of gambling harm
- grants for the gambling research program.

Grants are contributions of the Foundation's resources to another party for specific or general purposes, having conditions attached regarding their use.

General purpose grant funding is derived from the CSF. Specific purpose payments are derived from annual appropriation funding with payments provided to Gambler's Help agencies associated with wage increases in the social and community services sector for workers employed under the SACS Award.

Grant expenses are recognised in the reporting period in which they are paid or payable.

3.3 Other operating expenses

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Professional services ⁽ⁱ⁾	6 898 347	4 438 277
Media campaign advertising ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾	2 854 092	3 199 090
Other supplies and services		
Travel and related expenses	36 241	11 164
Printing, stationery and office requisites ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾	320 887	145 517
Communication expenses	50 051	47 940
Training and development ^(iv)	140 842	52 992
Information technology ^(v)	768 837	739 519
Occupancy costs	795 080	762 699
Remuneration of auditors	24 400	24 400
Other	104 036	90 892
Total other supplies and services	2 240 374	1 875 123
Total other operating expenses	11 992 813	9 512 490

Notes:

- (i) Professional services reflect media campaign development and tracking research, partnership/ sponsorship payments with sporting organisations, education in schools activities, research and evaluation reviews, strategic reviews, legal expenses and agency staff costs. The increase in expenditure reflects costs associated with the Gambler's Help Service System Review, Prevention Framework, Population Study and evaluation reporting.
- (ii) Campaign costs for 2022–2023 reflect the impact of campaign postponement owing to government advertising decisions.
- (iii) Printing, stationery and office requisite costs primarily reflect an increase in sporting club promotional items, particularly with respect to the 'Love the Game' program.
- (iv) Training and development costs increased in 2022–2023, primarily reflecting the impact of sponsored targeted mental health–related conferences and other online programs.
- (v) Information technology costs mainly reflect hosting, support and maintenance costs for the Gambler's Help Connect system together with website and application development.

Supplies and services are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred. Other supplies and services generally represent the day-to-day running costs incurred in normal operations.

Occupancy costs are recognised as an expense in the comprehensive operating statement. The Foundation recognises monthly accommodation expenses, based on a service agreement between the DJCS and the DTF/Shared Services Provider for use of its business location.

Services provided by the Department of Justice and Community Safety

DJCS provides certain corporate services and resources to the Foundation. The value of these support services, which include the use of the department's finance and payroll systems, is not recognised in the financial statements. The department is centrally funded to provide these services and resources for which fair value cannot be reliably determined. The Foundation is, however, directly charged by the Department for information and communication technology related licence fees.

4. DISAGGREGATED FINANCIAL INFORMATION BY OUTPUT

The Foundation is a statutory body that is governed by an independent board. It uses the best available evidence, in partnership with others, to prevent and reduce gambling harm and provide support services to those affected by gambling harm in Victoria. The Foundation adopts a public health approach that focuses, in particular, on raising awareness about the risks associated with gambling and its 'normalisation', recognising the early signs of harm and mitigating harm through a range of partnerships, community grants and programs.

The Foundation's role is to fund research and other activities that add to the knowledge and understanding of gambling harm, to work in partnership with others to offer evidence-based prevention programs and support services to those affected by gambling harm, and to deliver communication campaigns that inform and influence gambling-related attitudes and behaviours.

For 2022–2023, the Foundation's activities formed part of the DJCS, Gambling and Liquor Regulation output. This output provides for monitoring and regulation of gambling and liquor activities in Victoria. It also provides leadership and strategic policy advice to the Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation on the regulation of the gambling and liquor industries, problem gambling and harm minimisation in relation to liquor and gambling. This output group contributed to the Department's objective of 'A fair marketplace for Victorian consumers and businesses with responsible and sustainable liquor and gambling sectors'. No separate output statement has been prepared as the Foundation had only three output measures in 2022–2023 and the comprehensive operating statement effectively provides the relevant information.

5. KEY ASSETS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT OUTPUT DELIVERY

The Foundation controls equipment that is used in fulfilling its objectives and conducting its activities. These assets represent the resources that have been entrusted to the Foundation to be used for delivery of those outputs.

5.1 Total property, plant and equipment

	Gross carrying amount		Accumulated depreciation		Net carrying amount	
	2023 \$	2022 \$	2023 \$	2022 \$	2023 \$	2022 \$
Office equipment at fair value	126 500	121 410	(83 475)	(66 746)	43 025	54 664
Motor vehicle at fair value	39 720	-	(2 558)	-	37 162	-
Net carrying amount	166 220	121 410	(86 033)	(66 746)	80 187	54 664

Initial recognition: Items of plant and equipment are measured initially at cost and subsequently revalued at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Where an asset is acquired for no or nominal cost, the cost is its fair value at the date of acquisition.

Subsequent measurement: Plant and equipment are subsequently measured at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Fair value is determined with regard to the asset's highest and best use (considering legal or physical restrictions imposed on the asset, public announcements or commitments made in relation to the intended use of the asset) and is summarised below by asset category.

Vehicles are valued using the current replacement cost method. The Foundation may acquire a new vehicle and at times disposes of it before the end of its economic life. The process of acquisition, use and disposal in the market is managed by experienced fleet managers in DJCS who set relevant depreciation rates during use to reflect the utilisation of a vehicle.

5.1.1 Depreciation and impairment

Charge for the period

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Office equipment at fair value	16 730	6 421
Motor vehicle at fair value	4 650	-
Total depreciation	21 380	6 421

All plant and equipment and other non-financial physical assets that have finite useful lives are depreciated.

Depreciation is generally calculated on a straight-line basis at rates that allocate the asset's value, less any estimated residual value, over its estimated useful life. The typical estimated useful life for office equipment for the current and prior years is 5–10 years. The useful life for the motor vehicle is based upon its leased period.

The estimated useful lives, residual values and depreciation method are reviewed at the end of each annual reporting period, and adjustments are made where appropriate.

Impairment: Non-financial assets, including items of plant and equipment, are tested for impairment whenever there is an indication that the asset may be impaired.

The assets concerned are tested as to whether their carrying value exceeds their recoverable amount. Where an asset's carrying value exceeds its recoverable amount, the difference is written off as an 'other economic flow', except to the extent that it can be debited to an asset revaluation surplus amount applicable to that class of asset.

If there is an indication that there has been a reversal in impairment, the carrying amount shall be increased to its recoverable amount. However, this reversal should not increase the asset's carrying amount above what would have been determined, net of depreciation or amortisation, if no impairment loss had been recognised in prior years.

The recoverable amount for most assets is measured at the higher of depreciated replacement cost and fair value less costs to sell.

5.1.2 Carrying values by 'purpose' group ⁽ⁱ⁾

	General public services	
	2023 \$	2022 \$
Office equipment at fair value	43 025	54 664
Motor vehicle at fair value	37 162	-
	80 187	54 664

Note:

- (i) Property, plant and equipment are classified by the 'classification of the functions of government' (COFOG), according to one of 10 categories. Foundation assets are categorised as 'general public services' according to the asset's 'nature'.

5.1.3 Reconciliation of movements in carrying amount of property, plant and equipment ⁽ⁱ⁾

	Office equipment at fair value		Motor vehicle at fair value under finance lease		Total	
	2023 \$	2022 \$	2023 \$	2022 \$	2023 \$	2022 \$
Opening balance	54 664	8 372	-	-	54 664	8 372
Additions	5 090	52 713	41 812	-	46 902	52 713
Depreciation	(16 730)	(6 421)	(4 650)	-	(21 380)	(6 421)
Closing balance	43 025	54 664	37 162	-	80 187	54 664

Note:

- (i) Fair value assessments have been performed for all classes of assets in this purpose group, and the decision was made that movements were not material (less than or equal to 10 per cent) for a full revaluation.

6. OTHER ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

This section sets out those assets and liabilities that arose from the Foundation's controlled operations.

6.1 Receivables

	2023 \$	2022 \$
CURRENT RECEIVABLES		
Contractual		
Other receivables ⁽ⁱ⁾	7	7
Statutory		
Fines and regulatory fees ⁽ⁱ⁾	275	733 067
Total receivables	282	733 074

Note:

- (i) Current year receivables reflect an amount of \$275 associated with AFL Players' Association payments together with salary overpayments. The prior year disclosure reflects amounts owing from DTF with respect to jackpot special prize pool funds and salary overpayments.

Contractual receivables are classified as financial instruments and categorised as ‘financial assets at amortised cost’. They are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial measurement they are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment. Amounts recognised represent debtors in relation to services.

Statutory receivables do not arise from contracts and are recognised and measured similarly to contractual receivables (except for impairment) but are not classified as financial instruments for disclosure purposes.

6.2 Payables

	2023 \$	2022 \$
CURRENT PAYABLES		
Contractual		
Supplies and services ⁽ⁱ⁾	32 238	8 741
Accrued expenses	1 586 596	1 609 298
	1 618 834	1 618 040
Statutory		
Amounts payable to the Department of Justice and Community Safety ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾	342 542	257 141
FBT Payable	6 925	-
	349 467	257 141
Total current payables	1 968 301	1 875 181

Notes:

- (i) The average credit period is 30 days. No interest is charged on the other payables for the first 30 days from the date of the invoice.
- (ii) The amount recognised from the DJCS represents payables for commitments as they fall due.

Payables consist of:

- **contractual payables**, classified as financial instruments and measured at amortised cost. Accounts payable represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Foundation prior to the end of the financial year that are unpaid.
- **statutory payables**, that are recognised and measured similarly to contractual payables but are not classified as financial instruments and are not included in the category of financial liabilities at amortised cost because they do not arise from contracts.

Payables for supplies and services are made within one month.

7. HOW WE FINANCED OUR OPERATIONS

This section provides information on the sources of finance used by the Foundation during its operations and other information related to financing activities of the Foundation. It includes disclosures of balances that are financial instruments (such as borrowings and cash balances). Notes 8.1 and 8.3 provide additional, specific financial instrument disclosures.

7.1 Cash flow information and balances

Cash and deposits, including cash equivalents, recognised on the balance sheet.

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Cash and cash equivalents	5 519 666	6 598 457
Balance as per cash flow statement	5 519 666	6 598 457

7.1.1 Reconciliation of net result for the period to net cash flow from operating activities

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Net result for the period	(2 178 503)	(462 835)
NON-CASH MOVEMENTS		
Depreciation and amortisation of non-current assets	21 380	6 421
MOVEMENTS IN ASSETS AND LIABILITIES		
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	732 792	(606 871)
Decrease in prepayments	5 874	50 946
Increase in payables	93 120	759 789
Increase in provisions	261 372	112 414
Increase in borrowings	32 077	-
Net cash flows (used in) operating activities	(1 031 888)	(140 136)

7.2 Trust account balances

The trust account was created with the purpose of crediting amounts from the CSF into the Responsible Gambling Fund. These funds are held by DJCS and provided to meet the operational expenses for the Foundation.

	Opening balance as at 1 July 2022 \$	Total receipts \$	Total payments \$	Closing balance as at 30 June 2023 \$
CONTROLLED TRUST				
Trust fund – for the operations of the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation	6 598 457	37 733 000	(38 811 791)	5 519 666
Total controlled trust	6 598 457	37 733 000	(38 811 791)	5 519 666

	Opening balance as at 1 July 2021 \$	Total receipts \$	Total payments \$	Closing balance as at 30 June 2022 \$
CONTROLLED TRUST				
Trust fund – for the operations of the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation	6 791 306	36 434 000	(36 626 849)	6 598 457
Total controlled trust	6 791 306	36 434 000	(36 626 849)	6 598 457

Note:

Funds are drawn down from the Community Support Fund on an ongoing basis to meet the Foundation's operational expenses. The trust fund balance is maintained in a positive position.

7.3 Commitments for expenditure

There were no operating or capital expenditure commitments as at 30 June 2023. As per prior year reporting, in line with the *Centralised Accommodation Management Instructions and Guidance Materials to Victorian Government Departments and related portfolio entities*, issued June 2020 by DTF, the Foundation's occupancy arrangement for its accommodation at Blackwood Street, North Melbourne, reflects that associated payments are recorded as service expenses and are not disclosed as a commitment.

7.4. Borrowings

	2023 \$	2022 \$
CURRENT BORROWINGS		
Finance lease liabilities ⁽ⁱ⁾	976	-
Total current borrowings	976	-
NON-CURRENT BORROWINGS		
Finance lease liabilities ⁽ⁱ⁾	31 101	-
Total non-current borrowings	31 101	-
Total borrowings	32 077	-

Note:

(i) Secured by the assets leased. Finance leases are effectively secured as the rights to the leased assets revert to the lessor in the event of default.

Maturity analysis of borrowings

Please refer to Note 8 for the maturity analysis of borrowings.

Nature and extent of risk arising from borrowings

Please refer to Note 8 for the nature and extent of risks arising from borrowings.

Defaults and breaches

During the current year, there were no defaults and breaches of any of the borrowings.

8. RISKS, CONTINGENCIES AND VALUATION JUDGEMENTS

The Foundation is exposed to risk from its activities and outside factors. In addition, it is often necessary to make judgements and estimates associated with recognition and measurement of items in the financial statements. This section sets out financial instrument specific information, (including exposures to financial risks) as well as those items that are contingent in nature or require a higher level of judgement to be applied, which for the Foundation related mainly to fair value determination.

8.1 Financial instruments – specific disclosures

Introduction

Financial instruments arise out of contractual agreements that give rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Due to the nature of the Foundation's activities, certain financial assets and financial liabilities arise under statute rather than under a contract. Such assets and liabilities do not meet the definition of financial instruments in AASB 132 *Financial Instruments: Presentation*. For example, statutory receivables arising from amounts owing from the Victorian Government do not meet the definition of financial instruments as they do not arise under contract.

Categories of financial assets

Financial assets at amortised cost

Financial assets are measured at amortised costs if both of the following criteria are met and the assets are not designated as fair value through net result:

- the assets are held by the Foundation to collect the contractual cash flows
- the assets' contractual terms give rise to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest.

These assets are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less any impairment.

The Foundation recognises the following assets in this category:

- cash and deposits
- receivables (excluding statutory receivables).

Categories of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities at amortised cost are initially recognised on the date they are originated. They are initially measured at fair value less any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition, these financial instruments are measured at amortised cost with any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value being recognised in profit and loss over the period of the interest-bearing liability, using the effective interest rate method.

Financial instrument liabilities measured at amortised cost include all of the Foundation's contractual payables, deposits held and interest-bearing arrangements other than those designated at fair value through profit or loss.

8.1.1 Financial instruments categorisation

2023	Financial assets at amortised cost (AC) \$	Financial liabilities at amortised cost (AC) \$	Total \$
CONTRACTUAL FINANCIAL ASSETS			
Cash and deposits	5 519 666	-	5 519 666
RECEIVABLES			
Other receivables	7	-	7
Total contractual financial assets	5 519 673	-	5 519 673
CONTRACTUAL FINANCIAL LIABILITIES			
Payables ⁽ⁱ⁾			
Supplies and services	-	1 618 834	1 618 834
Borrowings			
Lease liabilities	-	32 077	32 077
Total contractual financial liabilities	-	1 650 911	1 650 911

Note:

(i) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts.

2022	Financial assets at amortised cost (AC) \$	Financial liabilities at amortised cost (AC) \$	Total \$
CONTRACTUAL FINANCIAL ASSETS			
Cash and deposits	6 598 457	-	6 598 457
RECEIVABLES			
Other receivables	7	-	7
Total contractual financial assets	6 598 464	-	6 598 464
CONTRACTUAL FINANCIAL LIABILITIES			
Payables ⁽ⁱ⁾			
	-	1 618 040	1 618 040
Total contractual financial liabilities	-	1 618 040	1 618 040

Note:

(i) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts. An immaterial change to 'other receivables' relates to the removal of a previously reported statutory amount.

8.1.2 Financial risk management objectives and policies

The Foundation's principal financial instruments comprise:

- cash assets
- receivables (excluding statutory receivables)
- payables (excluding statutory payables)
- borrowings, associated with a motor vehicle lease liability.

Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement, and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, with respect to each class of financial asset, financial liability and equity instrument above are disclosed in Note 8.1 to the financial statements.

The main purpose in holding financial instruments is to prudentially manage the Foundation's financial risks within the government policy parameters.

The Foundation's main financial risks include credit risk and liquidity risk. The Foundation manages these financial risks in accordance with its financial risk management policy.

The Foundation uses different methods to measure and manage the different risks to which it is exposed. Primary responsibility for the identification and management of financial risks rests with the Foundation Accountable Officer, Executive Leadership Team and the Risk, Audit and Finance Committee.

Financial instruments: Credit risk

Credit risk arises from the contractual financial assets of the Foundation, which comprise cash and deposits. The Foundation's exposure to credit risk arises from the potential default of a counter party on their contractual obligations resulting in financial loss to the Foundation. Credit risk is measured at fair value and is monitored on a regular basis.

Credit risk associated with the Foundation's contractual financial assets is insignificant because the main debtor is the Victorian Government.

Financial instruments: Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Foundation would be unable to meet its financial obligations as and when they fall due. The Foundation operates under the government fair payments policy of settling financial obligations within 30 days and, in the event of a dispute, making payments within 30 days from the date of resolution.

The Foundation's maximum exposure to liquidity risk is the carrying amounts of financial liabilities as disclosed in the face of the balance sheet.

The Foundation's exposure to liquidity risk is deemed insignificant based on current assessment of risk.

Financial instruments: Market risk

The Foundation has no exposure to market risk as its financial assets and liabilities are non-interest bearing.

8.2 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the balance sheet, but are disclosed and, if quantifiable, measured at nominal value.

There are no contingent assets as at 30 June 2023 (2022: nil).

There are no contingent liabilities as at 30 June 2023 (2022: nil).

8.3 Fair value determination

This section sets out information on how the Foundation determined fair value for financial reporting purposes. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

The following assets and liabilities are carried at fair value:

- plant and equipment.

In addition, the fair values of other assets and liabilities that are carried at amortised cost also need to be determined for disclosure purposes.

The Foundation determines the policies and procedures for determining fair values for both financial and non-financial assets and liabilities as required.

Fair value hierarchy

In determining fair values, a number of inputs are used. To increase consistency and comparability in the financial statements, these inputs are categorised into three levels, also known as the fair value hierarchy. The levels are as follows:

- Level 1 – quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities
- Level 2 – valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable
- Level 3 – valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

For the purpose of fair value disclosures, the Foundation has determined classes of assets and liabilities on the basis of the nature, characteristics and risks of the asset or liability and the level of the fair value hierarchy as explained above.

In addition, the Foundation determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by re-assessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

Fair value of financial instruments measured at amortised cost

The Foundation considers that the carrying amount of financial instrument assets and liabilities recorded in the financial statements is a fair approximation of their fair values, because of the short-term nature of the financial instruments and the expectation that they will be paid in full.

Fair value determination: Non-financial physical assets

	Carrying amount as at 30 June 2023 \$	Fair value measurement at end of reporting period using:		
		Level 1 ⁽ⁱ⁾	Level 2 ⁽ⁱ⁾	Level 3 ⁽ⁱ⁾
Property, plant and equipment at fair value				
Office equipment	43 025	-	-	43 025
Motor vehicle	37 162			37 162
Total of property, plant and equipment at fair value	80 187	-	-	80 187

	Carrying amount as at 30 June 2022 \$	Fair value measurement at end of reporting period using:		
		Level 1 ⁽ⁱ⁾	Level 2 ⁽ⁱ⁾	Level 3 ⁽ⁱ⁾
Equipment at fair value				
Office equipment	54 664	-	-	54 664
Total of equipment at fair value	54 664	-	-	54 664

Note:

(i) Classified in accordance with the fair value hierarchy.

Plant and equipment is held at fair value.

There were no changes in valuation techniques throughout the period to 30 June 2023.

For all assets measured at fair value, the current use is considered the highest and best use.

There were no movements in fair value of non-financial assets other than depreciation.

Description of significant unobservable inputs to Level 3 valuations

	Valuation technique	Significant unobservable inputs
Plant and equipment	Current replacement cost	Cost per unit Useful life of plant and equipment

9. OTHER DISCLOSURES

This section includes additional material disclosures required, by accounting standards or otherwise, for understanding this financial report.

9.1 Other economic flows included in net result

Other economic flows are changes in the volume or value of an asset or liability that do not result from transactions. Other gains/(losses) from other economic flows include the gains or losses from the revaluation of the present value of the long service leave liability due to changes in the bond interest rates.

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Other gains from other economic flows		
Net gain arising from revaluation of long service liability ⁽ⁱ⁾	16 798	107 198
Net gain arising from disposal of leased vehicle ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾	6 410	-
Total other gains from other economic flows	23 208	107 198

Notes:

(i) Revaluation gain due to changes in bond rates

(ii) Realised gain from disposal of physical asset

9.2 Responsible persons

In accordance with the Ministerial Directions issued by the Assistant Treasurer under the Financial Management Act, the following disclosures are made regarding responsible persons for the reporting period.

Names

The persons who held the positions of responsible minister, board member and accountable officer in the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation are as follows:

Responsible minister

Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

The Hon. Melissa Horne MP 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

Acting Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

The Hon. Ben Carroll MP 16 January 2023 to 22 January 2023

The Hon. Anthony Richard Carbines MP 24 June 2023 to 30 June 2023

Board members

Mr Tass Mousaferiadis	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
Ms Christine Black	1 July 2022 to 21 April 2023
Ms Zana Bytheway	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
Mr Lee Crockford	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
Ms Maree Edwards MP	1 July 2022 to 31 October 2022
Ms Luba Grigorovitch MP	3 May 2023 to 30 June 2023
Ms Tina Hosseini	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
Mr Tim McCurdy MP	1 July 2022 to 31 October 2022
Mr David Morris MP	1 July 2022 to 31 October 2022
Mr Michael O'Brien MP	3 May 2023 to 30 June 2023
Ms Kim O'Keeffe MP	3 May 2023 to 30 June 2023
Mr Jim Pasinis	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
Dr Alison Roberts	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

Accountable officer – Chief Executive Officer

Mr Shane Lucas	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
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Remuneration

Remuneration received or receivable by members of the board, including the accountable officer, in connection with the management of the Foundation during the reporting period was in the range:

Income band	2023 No.	2022 No.
\$0	6	4
\$1 000 to \$9 999	-	2
\$10 000 to \$19 999	1	2
\$20 000 to \$29 999	5	4
\$30 000 to \$39,999	1	1
\$310 000 to \$319 999	-	1
\$330 000 to \$339 999	1	-
Total number of persons	14	14
Total remuneration	478 660	481 667

The compensation detailed above excludes the salaries and benefits the portfolio minister receives. The minister's remuneration and allowances are set by the *Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968* and are reported within the State's Annual Financial Report.

9.3 Related parties

The Foundation is a wholly owned and controlled entity of the State of Victoria.

Related parties of the Foundation include all key management personnel and their close family members and personal business interests (controlled entities, joint ventures and entities they have significant influence over).

All related party transactions have been entered into on an arm's length basis.

Key management personnel of the Foundation include the board members, accountable officer – chief executive officer and members of the executive leadership team. The compensation detailed below excludes the salaries and benefits the Portfolio Minister receives. The Minister's remuneration and allowances are set by the *Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968* and reported within the State's Annual Financial Report.

Compensation of key management personnel	2023 \$	2022 \$
Short-term employee benefits	1 556 825	1 489 352
Post-employment benefits	149 590	140 231
Other long-term benefits	37 891	42 611
Total⁽ⁱ⁾	1 744 306	1 672 194

Note:

(i) Certain key management personnel (KMP) are also reported in the disclosure of responsible persons (Note 9.2).

Transactions and balances with key management personnel and other related parties

Given the breadth and depth of Victorian Government activities, related parties transact with the Victorian public sector in a manner consistent with other members of the public, for example, stamp duty and other government fees and charges. Further employment of processes within the Victorian public sector occurs on terms and conditions consistent with the *Public Administration Act 2004* and Codes of Conduct and Standards issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission. Procurement processes occur on terms and conditions consistent with the requirements of the Victorian Government Procurement Board.

Outside those transactions of normal citizens with the Foundation, there were no related party transactions that involved key management personnel, their close family members and their personal business interests. No provision has been required, nor any expense recognised, for impairment of receivables from related parties.

The Foundation has received grants as part of its operational business activities from DTF and DJCS. These have been disclosed in Note 2. The recognition of occupancy costs, based on a service agreement with DJCS, as well as the provision of certain corporate services and resources as part of the use of DJCS finance and payroll systems, are disclosed in Note 3.3.

9.4 Remuneration of auditors

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Victorian Auditor-General's Office		
Audit of the financial statements	24 400	24 400
Total remuneration of auditors	24 400	24 400

9.5 Subsequent events

The financial statements for the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation are prepared for the reporting period ended 30 June 2023.

On 16 July 2023, a government announcement identified a machinery of government change associated with the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation. The functions that have been performed by the Foundation are to be transferred to other government agencies by 30 June 2024, at which time the Foundation will cease to exist as a separate entity.

9.6 Australian Accounting Standards issued that are not yet effective

Certain new and revised accounting standards have been issued but are not effective for the 2022–2023 reporting period. These accounting standards have not been applied to the financial statements. The Foundation is reviewing its existing policies and assessing the potential implications of these accounting standards which includes:

- AASB 2020-1 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-Current*. This Standard amends AASB 101 to clarify requirements for the presentation of liabilities in the statement of financial position as current or non-current. It initially applied to annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2022 with earlier application permitted; however, the AASB has recently issued AASB 2020-6 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-current – Deferral of Effective Date* to defer the application by one year to periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023. The Foundation will not early adopt the Standard.

The Foundation is in the process of analysing the impacts of this Standard. However, it is not anticipated to have a material impact.

Several other amending standards and AASB interpretations have been issued that apply to future reporting periods but are considered to have no impact on the Foundation's reporting.

9.7 Glossary of technical terms

The following is a summary of the major technical terms used in this report.

Borrowings

Interest-bearing liabilities from finance leases and other interest-bearing arrangements.

Comprehensive result

The net result of all items of income and expense recognised for the period. It is the aggregate of operating result and other comprehensive income.

Commitments

Operating, capital and other outsourcing commitments arising from non-cancellable contractual or statutory sources.

Current grants

Amounts payable or receivable for current purposes for which no economic benefits of equal value are receivable or payable in return.

Depreciation

An expense that arises from the consumption through wear or time of a produced physical or intangible asset. This expense is classified as a 'transaction' and so reduces the 'net result from transaction'.

Effective interest method

The method used to calculate the amortised cost of a financial asset or liability and to allocate interest income over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the financial instrument, or, where appropriate, a shorter period.

Employee benefits expenses

All costs related to employment, including wages and salaries, fringe benefits tax, leave entitlements, redundancy payments, defined benefits superannuation plans and defined contribution superannuation plans.

Financial asset

Any asset that is:

- (a) cash
- (b) a contractual or statutory right:
 - to receive cash or another financial asset from another entity, or
 - to exchange financial assets or financial liabilities with another entity under conditions that are potentially favourable to the entity

- (c) a contract that will or may be settled in the entity's own equity instruments and is:
 - a non-derivative for which the entity is or may be obliged to receive a variable number of the entity's own equity instruments, or
 - a derivative that will or may be settled other than by the exchange of a fixed amount of cash or another financial asset for a fixed number of the entity's own equity instruments.

Financial instrument

Any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Financial assets or liabilities that are not contractual (such as statutory receivables or payables that arise as a result of statutory requirements imposed by governments) are not financial instruments.

Financial liability

Any liability that is:

- (a) a contractual obligation:
 - (i) to deliver cash or another financial asset to another entity, or
 - (ii) to exchange financial assets or financial liabilities with another entity under conditions that are potentially unfavourable to the entity, or
- (b) a contract that will or may be settled in the entity's own equity instruments and is:
 - (i) a non-derivative for which the entity is or may be obliged to deliver a variable number of the entity's own equity instruments, or
 - (ii) a derivative that will or may be settled other than by the exchange of a fixed amount of cash or another financial asset for a fixed number of the entity's own equity instruments. For this purpose, the entity's own equity instruments do not include instruments that are themselves contracts for the future receipt or delivery of the entity's own equity instruments.

Financial statements

A complete set of financial statements comprises:

- (a) a balance sheet as at the end of the period
- (b) a comprehensive operating statement for the period
- (c) a statement of changes in equity for the period
- (d) a cash flow statement for the period
- (e) notes, comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information

- (f) comparative information in respect of the preceding period as specified in paragraph 38 of AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements
- (g) a statement of financial position as at the beginning of the preceding period when an entity applies an accounting policy retrospectively or makes a retrospective restatement of items in its financial statements, or when it reclassifies items in its financial statements in accordance with paragraph 41 of AASB 101.

Grant expenses and other transfers

Transactions in which one unit provides goods, services, assets (or extinguishes a liability) or labour to another unit without receiving approximately equal value in return. Grants can either be operating or capital in nature.

While grants to governments may result in the provision of some goods or services to the transferor, they do not give the transferor a claim to receive directly benefits of approximately equal value. For this reason, grants are referred to by the AASB as involuntary transfers and are termed non-reciprocal transfers. Receipt and sacrifice of approximately equal value may occur, but only by coincidence. For example, governments are not obliged to provide commensurate benefits, in the form of goods or services, to particular taxpayers in return for their taxes.

Grants can be paid as general purpose grants, a term which refers to grants that are not subject to conditions regarding their use. Alternatively, they may be paid as specific purpose grants, which are paid for a particular purpose and/or have conditions attached regarding their use.

General government sector

All government departments, offices and other bodies engaged in providing services free of charge or at prices significantly below their cost of production. General government services include those which are mainly non-market in nature, those which are largely for collective consumption by the community and those which involve the transfer or redistribution of income. These services are financed mainly through taxes, or other compulsory levies and user charges.

Grants for on-passing

All grants paid to one institutional sector (e.g. a state general government entity) to be passed on to another institutional sector (e.g. local government or a private non-profit institution).

Net result

A measure of financial performance of the operations for the period. It is the net result of items of income, gains and expenses (including losses) recognised for the period, excluding those that are classified as 'other economic flows – other comprehensive income'.

Net result from transactions/net operating balance

A key fiscal aggregate, and income from transactions minus expenses from transactions. It is a summary measure of the ongoing sustainability of operations. It excludes gains and losses resulting from changes in price levels and other changes in the volume of assets. It is the component of the change in net worth that is due to transactions and can be attributed directly to government policies.

Net worth

Assets less liabilities, which is an economic measure of wealth.

Non-financial assets

Assets that are not 'financial assets'. It includes plant and equipment.

Other economic flows included in net result

Changes in the volume or value of an asset or liability that do not result from transactions. It includes gains and losses from disposals, revaluations and impairments of non-financial physical and intangible assets.

Other economic flows – other comprehensive income

Items (including reclassification adjustments) that are not recognised in net result as required or permitted by other Australian Accounting Standards.

The components of other economic flows – other comprehensive income include changes in physical asset revaluation surplus.

Payables

Short- and long-term trade debt and accounts payable, grants, taxes and interest payable.

Receivables

Amounts owing from government through appropriation receivable, short- and long-term trade credit and accounts receivable, accrued investment income, grants, taxes and interest receivable.

Supplies and services

Generally, cost of goods sold and the day-to-day running costs, including maintenance costs, incurred in the normal operations of the Foundation.

Transactions

Economic flows that are considered to arise as a result of policy decisions, usually an interaction between two entities by mutual agreement. They also include flows in an entity such as depreciation where the owner is simultaneously acting as the owner of the depreciating asset and as the consumer of the service provided by the asset. Taxation is regarded as mutually agreed interactions between the government and taxpayers. Transactions can be in kind (e.g. assets provided/given free of charge or for nominal consideration) or where the final consideration is cash. In simple terms, transactions arise from the policy decisions of the government.

9.8 Style conventions

Figures in the tables and in the text have been rounded. Discrepancies in tables between totals and sums of components reflect rounding. Percentage variations in all tables are based on the underlying unrounded amounts.

The notation used in the tables is as follows:

-	zero, or rounded to zero
(xxx.x)	negative numbers
20xx	year
20xx–xx	year period

The financial statements and notes are presented based on the illustration for a government department in the 2022–2023 *Model Report for Victorian Government Departments*. The presentation of other disclosures is generally consistent with the other disclosures made in earlier publications of the Foundation's annual reports.

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Note:

(i) References to FRDs have been removed from the disclosure index if the specific FRDs do not contain requirements that are of the nature of disclosure.

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