

# Assessing gambling-related harm in Victoria

## A conceptual framework of gambling harm



### What is the study?

This project consulted with experts and the community to develop a framework for measuring and assessing the impact of gambling harm in Victoria. The framework can help researchers, policymakers, health professionals and the community better understand and minimise the negative consequences of gambling.

### What is gambling harm?

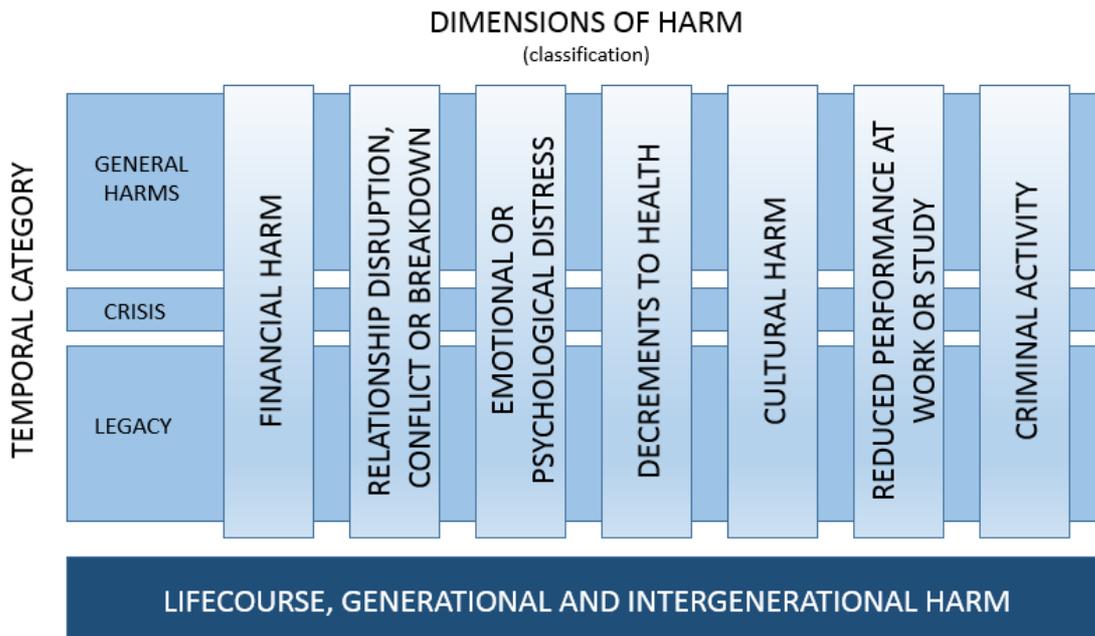
There is no agreed definition of gambling-related harm. The concept of harm is highly subjective and the difficulties of isolating gambling harm from other co-occurring conditions such as depression and anxiety make defining gambling-related harm a complex task.

The project proposed the following definition:

*Gambling-related harm is any initial or exacerbated adverse consequence due to an engagement with gambling that leads to a decrement to the health or wellbeing of an individual, family unit, community or population.*

The researchers focused on the outcomes and manifestations of gambling-related harm to construct a conceptual framework of gambling harm.

### Conceptual framework of gambling harm



The framework classifies gambling harm into seven dimensions:

- financial
- work or study
- health
- emotional or psychological
- relationships

- cultural
- criminal activities.

The framework emphasises that gambling harm not only affects people who gamble and those close to them, but also the broader community.

For more information and examples of harm for each dimension, see fact sheet 2: The seven dimensions of gambling harm.

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### Stages of harm

Harm can also be grouped into three categories depending on the stage of gambling problems:

- **general harms:** minor harms that may occur any time after starting to gamble – for example, being unable to pay bills
- **crisis harms:** harms critical enough to make someone believe they may have a gambling problem and to consider seeking help – for example, bankruptcy
- **legacy harms:** harms that have a long-term impact even after a gambling problem has been resolved – for example, restrictions due to bankruptcy.

The framework covers the complex interaction of harms across dimensions and stages of gambling problems.

The negative impact may go beyond the sum of harms experienced, affecting the life course of gamblers and those close to them. This can result in generational and intergenerational harms.

### Generational and intergenerational harms

Generational harms irrevocably affect an individual's life course. For example, the impacts of bankruptcy and relationship breakdown may cause homelessness and disrupt career development. The disruption cannot be reversed and may further damage health and wellbeing due to an inability to secure employment and to stigma, leading to long-term poverty.

Intergenerational harms are legacy harms that go beyond the gambler's life course and transfer to the next generation. For example, parental poverty as a result of gambling could impact on children throughout their lifespan. Intergenerational harms are not well understood and further research is required.