

VICTORIAN RESPONSIBLE  
GAMBLING FOUNDATION

# OUR ANNUAL PLAN 2019–2020

A VICTORIA FREE FROM  
GAMBLING-RELATED HARM



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# A message from our Chair and Chief Executive Officer

In 2019–2020, the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation reaffirms our resolve to work towards our vision of a Victoria free from gambling-related harm.

To enable us to achieve our goals, we gratefully acknowledge the Victorian Government for its 2019 budget commitment to the Foundation of \$153 million over four years to tackle gambling harm.

Gambling harm can be devastating for the communities, families and individuals affected, whose experiences provide insight into the need for government, community and industry to work together to protect those most at risk. People who experience harm are the human face of an issue that is estimated to cost Victorians \$7 billion a year.

The Foundation prioritises support for vulnerable groups, including younger and older Victorians; outer metropolitan, regional and rural communities; people experiencing gambling harm and a mental health condition; socially isolated individuals; Aboriginal people; and certain culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

Our public health approach to gambling harm will see us continue to work over the next 12 months with our many partners, including communities, not-for-profit organisations, service providers, advocacy groups, governments and industry organisations.

As detailed in this annual plan, together we will take action to address a range of factors that contribute to gambling harm, including the:

- risks associated with a normalised gambling environment for young people, especially through the promotion of sports betting advertising and the convergence of online gaming and gambling platforms

- co-occurrence of gambling harm and other issues such as drug and alcohol misuse, poor mental health, family violence, social isolation and relationship breakdown
- technological advances that enhance consumer access to expanding gambling options, noting that these same advances provide opportunities for prevention, early intervention and support.

Following the establishment last year of the Foundation's Lived Experience Advisory Committee, a priority this year will be to embed the practical advice, borne of their individual and collective experiences, that members of the committee offer, especially in relation to stigma and the quality and efficacy of services.

Also of importance this year, the Foundation will launch and begin to implement our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Our Aboriginal Gambling Harm Reference Group, which is led by Foundation Deputy Chair and Wotjobaluk woman Belinda Duarte, will provide guidance and direction to ensure self-determination for Aboriginal people is at the centre of all our collaborations.

Finally, grounded in research and other evidence, we are excited to make further progress during the year ahead to raise community awareness of gambling harm as a public health issue; provide advice to communities and governments at all levels on issues associated with gambling harm; and strive alongside our partners to improve the health and wellbeing of all Victorians.



Julie Ligeti  
Chair



Shane Lucas  
Chief Executive Officer

# Victoria's gambling environment at a glance

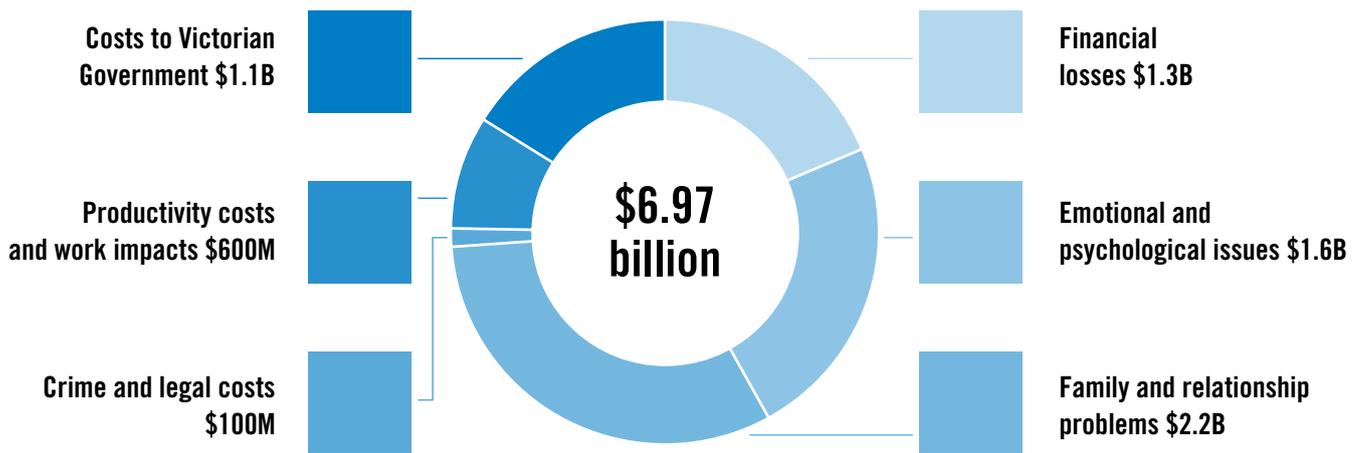


Figure: Costs associated with gambling harm in Victoria

- Australians spend the highest amount of money per person on gambling in the world.
- Gambling products are available 24/7 – online, through smart phones and gambling apps, and at venues – which means that almost any adult can gamble anywhere in Victoria at any time.
- Of the 70 per cent of Victorians who gamble each year, 30 per cent do so regularly (once a month or more, excluding bingo).
- There are 200,000 poker machines in Australia and Victoria is home to about 30,000.

## GAMBLING HARM

- Each year, more than half-a-million Victorians experience harm from their own gambling.
- Eighty-five per cent of the total burden of harm from gambling in Victoria arises from people in the low- and moderate-risk groups for problem gambling. The other 15 per cent comes from people in the high-risk group.
- For every individual who experiences severe gambling harm, up to six others are affected.
- Pokies, sports betting, wagering, casino and table games, and lotteries are all associated with different forms and severity of harm.
- Complex and nuanced policy, regulatory and programmatic responses are required to prevent harm and provide support where harm occurs.

## A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE

- Harm from gambling can have significant implications for the health, wellbeing and economic security of people who are affected.
- Harms usually accumulate and, at the population level, can be widespread, affecting hundreds of thousands of Victorians.
- A public health approach to gambling harm recognises that government, community and industry all have a role to play in addressing this complex social issue, rather than putting the onus on the individual whose gambling leads to harm.
- There is compelling evidence of strong associations between problem gambling and mental health conditions:
  - » 39 per cent of Victorians with a gambling problem have been diagnosed with a mental health condition
  - » up to 30 per cent of people who both gamble and seek treatment for a mental illness experience problem gambling
  - » gambling in general is estimated to account for 22 per cent of the Victorian mental health sector's total costs.

## STIGMA

- Negative attitudes and perceptions of gambling harm increase rejection, discrimination and exclusion of people who experience it, and affect self-esteem and self-perception
- Stigma is reinforced by feelings of failure, shame and guilt, which are common among people experiencing gambling harm and act as a barrier to seeking support.
- Gambler's Help agencies say the stigma is so strong that many people would rather admit to a drug or alcohol addiction than disclose a gambling issue.
- In some cultural groups, gambling-related stigma means the family and friends of a person experiencing harm may bear a huge burden.
- Initiatives that encourage people to talk openly about gambling harm can help alleviate stigma, inform communities about the early signs of harm, and empower those affected to seek support.

## NORMALISATION THROUGH PROMOTION

- The amount of money spent on gambling advertising (not including sponsorships or in-program content) in Australia in 2011 was \$89 million. In 2018, it was \$283 million. The 2018 spend in Victoria was \$82 million.
- The heavy promotion of betting, especially on sport, makes gambling seem normal and without risk.
- In 2018, 74 per cent of adults in Victoria thought adolescents were exposed to too much gambling advertising.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

- Only 22 per cent of people who experience severe gambling harm seek support, either from a professional (formal) or from family and friends (informal). This drops to about two per cent for people who experience moderate harm.
- Less than 10 per cent of people who experience severe harm access formal treatment. When they do, it is more likely to be for a related issue, such as a health concern, relationship breakdown, financial, emotional or physical stressor, or drug or alcohol misuse.
- Access to Gambler's Help services has remained steady over the past five years, with increased online access offsetting fewer calls to the Gambler's Help line.
- There are ongoing challenges associated with encouraging people who experience gambling harm to seek support and delivering effective support in the ways people want it.

## OUR LEGISLATED ROLE

The Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation was created by the Victorian Parliament under the *Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation Act 2011* specifically to address the challenge of gambling harm in the Victorian community.

The Foundation is a statutory body funded by the Victorian Government. Administratively, we sit within the Justice and Community Safety portfolio, but we are governed by an independent board.

The board is responsible for providing strategic direction and ensuring we achieve our objectives and carry out our functions. The board is accountable to the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation.

# Our strategic priorities 2018–2021

## OUR VISION

A Victoria free from gambling-related harm.

## OUR MISSION

To improve the health and wellbeing of Victorians by working with our communities and government to deliver effective, evidence-based initiatives and innovative approaches to prevent gambling harm and provide support for those seeking help.

## OUR VALUES

The Foundation's values guide our actions, behaviours and the way we engage with each other and our stakeholders. At all times, we aim to be:

### RESPECTFUL

We are respectful, professional and constructive in the way we work together. We value people's time, perspectives, experiences and contributions.

## OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

*Our Strategic Priorities 2018–2021* describes the Foundation's key focus areas, actions and major initiatives as we seek to achieve our vision. Developed in consultation with our community, key stakeholders and staff, our three-year strategic priorities are:

**1. Prevent gambling harm through a public health approach**

**2. Work in partnership with those who share our vision to improve community health and wellbeing**

**3. Build a collaborative and respected centre of expertise to deliver our mission for all Victorians**

### ACCOUNTABLE

We are open, impartial and objective in our approach. We follow through on our commitments and are accountable for our actions and outcomes.

### COLLABORATIVE

We seek out and support a broad range of contributors, collaborators and partners to inform our work and enhance our impact. We listen, are responsive and engage continuously – keeping stakeholders informed and involved as we progress.

### INNOVATIVE

We work with our stakeholders, the community and our staff to lead the way on innovative strategies and programs to reduce gambling harm.

# Recognising the opportunities for action in 2019–2020

Gambling harm is often the consequence of risk-taking behaviour fuelled by the complex interplay between a consumer, a gambling product and the social, cultural and economic environment in which the product is accessed.

In the coming year, we will create, and take advantage of, opportunities to tackle these challenges, as well as raise awareness and strengthen understanding of gambling harm as a public health issue.

We will consolidate the implementation of our stakeholder engagement framework, working in partnership with community, government and the gambling industry, as well as seeking out opportunities for innovative collaborations with others, such as the banking and financial services sector and the justice system.

Our Lived Experience Advisory Committee has told us that stigma is both a barrier to help-seeking and a significant source of harm itself. We will encourage open conversations about the risks of harmful gambling to the health and wellbeing of not only the person who gambles, but also affected others such as family and friends. And we will look broadly at our programs and services with a view to better addressing the stigma associated with gambling.

We know that some groups are at greater risk of gambling harm than others. An ongoing priority for the Foundation is to work closely with these groups; ideally to prevent harm, but also to ensure they are aware of, and have access to, professional support if needed. This is the focus of our work with young people, multicultural communities and those living in regional and rural Victoria.

The Foundation's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) articulates our respect and support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and our commitment to working with Aboriginal people in culturally appropriate ways that uphold the principles of self-determination. We will honour our commitment by working with Victoria's Aboriginal communities to co-design programs, expand and strengthen relationships, and participate in employment and contracting Indigenous providers.

We will also continue to explore ways to improve the efficacy of Gambler's Help services, with a particular focus this year on improving the accessibility of specialist gambling counselling in the broader health service system. And, recognising preferences change, we will aim to offer consumers a broader range of flexible and accessible support options, including online self-help tools.

Similarly, the Foundation is committed to enhancing our digital capability across multiple programs and functions, and encouraging our stakeholders to do the same, including to access professional development and to keep pace with innovations across the sector.

Our work will be underpinned by the growing gambling harm evidence base, which comprises academic research and the outcomes of prevention, early intervention and support initiatives. And we will ensure that this evidence is effectively communicated to stakeholders, enabling translation into policy and practice across Victoria, Australia and internationally.

# Actions for 2019–2020

The second annual plan to address our 2018–2021 strategic priorities will see the Foundation consolidate and build on our achievements of the previous 12 months.

We will place particular emphasis on continuing to move away from the concept of ‘responsible gambling’, which underscores the role of the individual, to position gambling harm more appropriately as a public health issue that requires a whole-of-community response.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

### PREVENT GAMBLING HARM THROUGH A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

#### RESEARCH

The Foundation will release the next in our series of gambling harm population studies. This major piece of work will add significantly to our knowledge of gambling harm in Victoria and guide future prevention, intervention and treatment activities. We will also award up to \$1 million to research grants and strategic projects that align with the Foundation’s Research Agenda 2018–2022.

#### COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MARKETING

The Foundation’s information and behaviour change campaigns play a fundamental role in raising awareness about harm, encouraging critical thought, and influencing consumer behaviour. We will focus on the effects of gambling harm and combatting the normalisation of gambling in sport.

#### YOUNG PEOPLE

We will learn from young people and draw on their perspectives in developing a youth strategy to prevent gambling harm before it occurs, and to intervene early, and effectively, if it does.

#### STIGMA

By working with people who are willing to share their personal experiences of gambling harm with us, we will refine our approach to overcoming stigma. Our goals are to normalise discussions about gambling harm and empower those affected to seek support.

#### LOCAL SUPPORT

We will invest \$16 million in local Gambler’s Help services to enable our delivery partners across the state to provide tailored, professional therapeutic and financial counselling and targeted community outreach.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: FOCUS	STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: 2019–2020 ACTIONS
<p>Create broad awareness and understanding that gambling harm is a public health issue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Partner with Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees to engage with Aboriginal communities across Victoria to raise awareness of gambling harm</li> <li>■ Leverage the voices of influential individuals to highlight the drivers and consequences of gambling harm and the role we can all play to prevent it</li> </ul>
<p>Build knowledge, expertise and the evidence base to constructively inform and influence gambling harm-related policies, practices and decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Complete and disseminate the findings of our gambling harm population study, and translate them into policy and practice</li> </ul>
<p>Lead influential communication and behaviour change strategies that engage the Victorian community in preventing and reducing gambling harm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop and implement social marketing campaigns that address the normalisation of gambling, highlight the possible effects of gambling and encourage individuals to seek support</li> <li>■ Engage with community stakeholders and partners to deliver a high-impact Gambling Harm Awareness Week that encourages open conversations about gambling harm</li> <li>■ Build and share a common, consumer-friendly language for talking about gambling harm</li> </ul>
<p>Develop and implement gambling harm prevention strategies and initiatives focused on Aboriginal, multicultural, youth, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex community (LGBTQI)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Implement our gambling harm prevention framework through strategic partnerships, a third round of Prevention Partnership Program grants, and community engagement initiatives</li> <li>■ Develop a youth strategy to prevent gambling harm</li> <li>■ Evaluate progress against <i>Our commitment to work with communities in outer metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria to reduce harm from gambling</i></li> <li>■ Design and deliver a statewide multicultural strategy, including a gambling harm prevention campaign</li> <li>■ In collaboration with Wadawurrung and Wathaurong communities, design and implement a new gambling awareness program</li> <li>■ Review the outcomes of research into gambling harm in LGBTQI communities to inform our approach to supporting those affected</li> </ul>
<p>Identify, intervene early and support specific populations, communities and settings across Victoria that may be at risk of gambling harm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop a pilot initiative with the Neighborhood Justice Centre to support people in the justice system affected by gambling harm</li> <li>■ Work with other parts of government, including Sport and Recreation Victoria, and key stakeholders to reduce the amount of gambling advertising in the public domain to which young people are exposed</li> <li>■ Explore early intervention initiatives for implementation by staff working in gambling settings</li> </ul>
<p>Reduce the stigma associated with gambling harm to enhance inclusion of those affected within the community and encourage help seeking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Finalise and implement a gambling harm stigma prevention/reduction approach to support people experiencing harm and strengthen community responsiveness to the issue</li> </ul>

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: FOCUS	STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: 2019–2020 ACTIONS
Deliver effective treatment and support for people and communities affected by gambling harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Deliver a digital self-help tool to increase support options for consumers</li> <li>■ Review referral pathways to Gambler's Help services to improve accessibility of services</li> <li>■ Consult with stakeholders to co-design a revised client outcomes framework to inform the delivery of Gambler's Help services</li> </ul>

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

# WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THOSE WHO SHARE OUR VISION TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING

### STRATEGIC PREVENTION PARTNERSHIPS

We will invest in strategic partnerships with community-based, not-for-profit, local government and public health organisations to prevent gambling harm. Partnerships will include funding across regional, rural and at-risk CALD communities.

### COMORBIDITIES

We will work closely with our partners to explore the co-existence of, and any relationships between, gambling harm and other social issues, such as poor mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, relationship breakdown and family violence.

### INNOVATIVE COLLABORATIONS

We will continue to seek out opportunities to collaborate with organisations that have interests that intersect with gambling harm, such as those in the banking and financial services sector.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: FOCUS	STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: 2019–2020 ACTIONS
Elevate the voices of people with lived experience of gambling harm to inform the work of the Foundation and our partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Embed the role and influence of the Lived Experience Advisory Committee in guiding the Foundation's work</li> <li>■ Partner with Banyule Community Health to deliver an enhanced lived experience program</li> </ul>
Extend our reach and impact through innovative, collaborative and effective partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Drive change through settings-based programs in sporting clubs and gaming venues, and renew the School Education Program</li> <li>■ Implement an Aboriginal community engagement strategy that includes the production of a video about Aboriginal people's experiences of gambling to share with Elders and community leaders</li> </ul>
Engage with governments and communities to better understand and address gambling harm as a contextual factor linked to other social issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop a framework that articulates the comorbid nature of gambling harm to encourage government and community sector partners to increase screening for gambling harm in related services</li> <li>■ Establish a clinical steering group comprising key influencers in mental health, gambling, drug, alcohol, and family and relationship services to inform an integrated response to these issues</li> </ul>
Contribute to local, national and international efforts to prevent and reduce gambling harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lead public presentations and discussions at key forums on strategic issues related to the Foundation's work</li> <li>■ Collaborate with international partners on the development of gambling harm research projects</li> </ul>

## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

In 2019–2020, the Foundation will enter into several multi-year strategic partnerships identified by the Victorian Government to prevent gambling harm. These partnerships will ensure the continuation of tested and successful methods for tackling gambling harm, and trial new approaches to emerging challenges. They will enable:

- the City of Moreland to expand the Libraries After Dark pilot, allowing more municipal libraries across the state to extend nightly opening hours and offer alternative recreational activities to vulnerable and socially isolated Victorians
- Incolink to extend its program with building and construction industry apprentices to prevent and reduce gambling harm through tailored, face-to-face sessions delivered at TAFEs in metropolitan and regional Victoria
- IPC Health to expand the successful Young Leaders of the West program, which supports young people to raise awareness of gambling risks and harms, especially sports betting, into municipalities neighbouring Brimbank
- people in the Latrobe Valley who have received large superannuation or redundancy payments to build protective factors against gambling harm as they head towards retirement or move into new employment
- women in Vietnamese communities in Melbourne's east and west to improve financial literacy and understanding of gambling harm with the aim of reducing incarceration rates and the incidence of gambling-related crimes.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

### BUILD A COLLABORATIVE AND RESPECTED CENTRE OF EXPERTISE TO DELIVER OUR MISSION FOR ALL VICTORIANS

#### NEW TECHNOLOGIES

We will identify digital trends that shape the gambling landscape and consumer preferences and leverage new technologies to develop an organisation-wide digital strategy to enhance services and resources, and enable broader access to them.

#### KNOWLEDGE MOBILISATION

We will create a framework that supports the use of our expanding evidence base to influence prevention, practice and policy. We will also work collaboratively to communicate key research findings to stakeholders and develop their capacity to put new knowledge into practice.

#### PERFORMANCE REPORTING FRAMEWORK

We will finalise the development of, and implement, a framework to comprehensively assess the short-, medium- and long-term outcomes of our work.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: FOCUS	STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: 2019–2020 ACTIONS
Develop a strong, collaborative and values-led organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Further develop the Foundation's capabilities and culture to support and encourage personal and professional growth and the achievement of our outcomes</li> </ul>
Foster an environment of learning, knowledge sharing and innovation for our staff and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Deliver the Foundation's biennial professional development conference for partners and stakeholders working to prevent gambling harm</li> <li>■ Create reciprocal learning opportunities with our Aboriginal partners through the implementation of our first RAP</li> </ul>
Build the leadership, engagement and research capability required to achieve our mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Establish a network of early career researchers to build capacity in research related to gambling harm</li> <li>■ Expand our knowledge mobilisation function to more effectively communicate research findings and translate them into policy, practice and service delivery</li> </ul>
Enhance our governance, reporting and evaluative capability to more effectively demonstrate the impact and outcomes of our work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Finalise and implement the Foundation's outcomes-focused reporting framework</li> <li>■ Develop and implement a new behaviour change evaluation framework for Foundation campaigns</li> </ul>
Enable the Foundation's work through best practice corporate support functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop a Foundation-wide digital strategy that can be adapted to respond to the complex and constantly changing gambling environment and provide a roadmap for online service delivery, professional development, information access and engagement</li> </ul>
Develop authentic, relevant and trusted relationships to represent and promote the work of the Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continue to build relationships with stakeholders and collaborate on issues of mutual interest to minimise the gambling harm experienced by Victorians</li> </ul>

# Summary budget 2019–2020

Funding of \$153 million has been confirmed for the next four-year period through the Expenditure Review Committee process and announced by the Victorian Government in the 2019 budget.

A summary of the budget allocated to our three strategic priorities for 2019–2020 is below.

	2019–2020 \$ million
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1</b>	
<b>PREVENT GAMBLING HARM THROUGH A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH</b>	<b>25.5</b>
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2</b>	
<b>WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THOSE WHO SHARE OUR VISION TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING</b>	<b>5.8</b>
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3</b>	
<b>BUILD A COLLABORATIVE AND RESPECTED CENTRE OF EXPERTISE TO DELIVER OUR MISSION FOR ALL VICTORIANS</b>	<b>6.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>37.5</b>

Note: The 2019–2020 budget does not include forecast funding carryover from the previous financial year.

The indicative budget for the remaining three years of the four year funding cycle is below.

	2020–2021	2021–2022	2022–2023
Indicative budget (\$ million)	38.3	38.4	38.8

# Demonstrating impact

The Foundation's framework for comprehensively measuring the impact and outcomes of our work with partners and stakeholders across the community continues to evolve. A key focus this year will be the co-design of an evaluation of the impact of local gambling harm prevention initiatives.

We evaluate our effectiveness using the following high-level measures:

- consumer engagement with the Foundation's face-to-face counselling and digital support channels and resources
- participant satisfaction and achievement of personal goals with support from Gambler's Help services
- community awareness and understanding among at-risk communities of harms associated with gambling.

Together with our partners across the state, our goals are to reduce the:

- number of Victorians experiencing harm from gambling
- social, health and economic cost of gambling harm throughout Victoria.

## OUR ANNUAL PLAN 2019–2020

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