

SECTION F

Responsible gambling

Aims and Overview

The worksheets in this section aim to help students:

- recognize a range of persuasive techniques used in media debates on problem gambling
- understand the concepts of chance and randomness in a gambling context
- explore superstitions in relation to cause and effect
- reflect on the Melbourne Cup in our culture and develop strategies to enjoy the day responsibly
- use information on problem gambling to analyse key messages in gambling advertising and to develop responsible gambling messages

Students will have the opportunity to complete the following tasks for assessment purposes:

- analysis of language in a media text
- persuasive writing
- verbal presentation
- class discussion
- group work
- informative writing
- stories and poems

Teachers may wish to collect examples of media text on gambling, including text discussing the management of problem gambling and advertising, or ask students to collect some in advance.

Background Information

Gambling is any activity where money (or anything of value) is put at risk on an event of uncertain outcome that relies, in part or entirely, on chance. Gambling includes:

Gaming – where the outcome is decided largely by chance. Examples include lotteries, poker machines, Bingo, Scratchies, casino and card games.

Betting or wagering – on the outcome of a future event. Examples include horse racing, sports betting, Internet betting and TAB betting.

Speculation – such as gambling on the stock market.

Appropriate definitions for teachers to use and refer to are:

Responsible gambling – Responsible gambling is about minimising harm caused by problem gambling while accommodating those who gamble without harming themselves or others.

Problem gambling – Problem gambling is defined as behaviour characterised by difficulties in limiting money and/or time spent on gambling, which leads to adverse consequences for the gambler, others or for the community.



Responsible gambling

Useful Resources

www.problemgambling.vic.gov.au

www.justice.vic.gov.au >gambling and racing> responsible gambling

www.melbourne-cup.com.au

www.olgr.qld.gov.au/responsibleGambling/educationInfo/schoolStuff/schoolstuff/index.html

www.olgr.qld.gov.au/resources/resGambling/index.shtml

www.austgamingcouncil.org.au

It is illegal for anyone under 18 to gamble, including on Scratchies and Lotto. In 2006, the Department of Justice published *Problem gambling: a guide for Victorian schools* (copies can be obtained by visiting www.problemgambling.vic.gov.au/contact-us). It cites a 2000 study that found that 41 per cent of year 8 students had gambled in some form over the past 12 months. Scratchies and lotto are the most common forms of gambling for young people. In the same study close to 50 per cent viewed gambling as a way to make money. The guide cites research that suggests that problem gambling in adolescents may be more prevalent than the adult population. Clinicians claim that these gamblers rarely identify as problem gamblers, possibly because the stereotyped gambler has little in common with an adolescent. Young problem gamblers are more likely than non-gamblers to report higher rates of depression and anxiety, participate in risky behaviour such as alcohol or drug use, be involved in crime and develop problems with family and friends. It has been shown that young adolescents are generally still forming their attitudes to gambling, leading to early intervention as a strategy to reduce problem gambling.

Issues raised in this section may lead to notice of problem gambling in students or within students' families. Any issues should be handled with sensitivity.

Gamblers' Help Line is 1800 858 858. Kidshelp Line – www.kidshelpline.com.au or 1800 551 800



What are my chances?

Exercise 1

Match up the following chances to the event. Answers are at the bottom of the next page

1. Dating a supermodel	A. 1 in 8,145,060
2. Injury from fireworks	B. 1 in 3,623
3. Winning Tattslotto from one game	C. 1 in 182,138,880,000,000
4. Injury from mowing the lawn	D. 1 in 19,556
5. A meteor landing on your house	E. 1 in 5,000
6. Being struck by lightning	F. 1 in 10
7. Getting a hole in one playing golf	G. 1 in 88,000
8. Getting the flu this year	H. 1 in 576,000

Source: www.funny2.com/odds.htm and Tattersalls

There is a 1 in 8,145,060 chance of winning First Division in Tattslotto, assuming you play one game. (You must buy a minimum 4 games to play which brings the chances to 1 in 2,036,265). This means that if that many games were played you would expect to win First Division once. And this is not guaranteed, it is just a chance. It is not guaranteed because each time the balls are drawn, it is a fresh game. The machine has no memory of what has gone before.

Exercise 2

Name three things that have a greater chance of occurring than winning Tattslotto, and one thing that has a smaller chance of occurring.

Exercise 3

Make up either

- i) a metaphor or simile
- ii) a short poem
- iii) a jingle or slogan

to express your view of the chance of winning First Division in Tattslotto.

Exercise 4

The numbers that turn out to be drawn in Lotto are entirely random. What does random mean? In small groups place three events from the table above on this line

entirely random

entirely non-random

Write down why you placed those events in that order. Why are some events less random than others?



What are my chances?

Exercise 5 -What do you currently believe?

Indicate whether the following are True or False. You can check the answers on the next page

1. Choosing the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 in Tattslotto has less chance of winning than scattering the numbers	
2. Lightning can strike in the same place twice	
3. Someone won Tattersalls three times – this makes me more likely to win at least once	
4. If you flip a coin and it comes up heads several times in a row, there is no reason to think tails is due to come up	
5. Mr. Dawe, used six of the key code words for the Normandy Invasion in WWII in crosswords he compiled for The Daily Telegraph in the two months leading up to the invasion.* He was clearly a spy.	

Source: www.funfacts.com.au

Exercise 6

There is a 1 in 4 chance of winning a Scratchie prize (including minor prizes). This means that 3 out of every 4 tickets in a pool will be losing ones and one will be a score a prize. How those tickets are mixed up in the pool is random though. You could win nothing for a long while and then 3 in a row, or 2 in a row and then nothing for a very long time or you might win once and then never again, or you might never win. And because there are lots of players, there is no way of knowing if the big prizes have already gone.



What are my chances?

Read the following story

Scratch lottery tickets: Jackson's* story

A friend gave me a scratch lottery ticket for my 18th birthday. When I scratched it I won \$50. 'Wow', I thought. 'This is great!' I went to the local newsagency and cashed in the ticket. I bought two more \$5 tickets and put the \$40 in my wallet. When I got home I scratched the two tickets. I didn't win anything with the first one but I won \$20 with the second. 'How easy is this!' I thought. I started buying more tickets. I went to different newsagencies as no one would know how many tickets I was buying; most didn't ask me if I was over 18**. In the beginning I won on about half of the tickets. I guess it was just beginner's luck, because after a while I wasn't winning much, but I was sure a big win was getting close. I kept buying tickets and I'd scratch things like two \$50 000 and one \$5000. I was so close, I was convinced it was only a matter of a few more tickets and I'd win the big prize.

When I ran out of money I started stealing money from my mother's wallet and from other students at school. I'd fake being sick so I could get out of PE. When everyone else was involved in sport I'd go through bags and clothes to steal money. One day I nearly got caught trying to take money from one of the teachers' staffrooms. I said I was looking for my assignment book. They believed me and I was sure my luck had changed.

All I could think about was how to get the money to buy more tickets. I started being in trouble for not concentrating on my schoolwork and not doing my homework, but I wasn't interested in school stuff. I knew I wasn't really winning anything, but I couldn't stop buying tickets. I knew I needed help but I didn't know what to do. Then I got caught stealing money from the bags in the library.

Jackson

* Jackson is not his real name

**You must be 18 years of age or older to buy lottery products (including scratch tickets). It is against the law to sell lottery products to a person who is under 18. Reproduced from *What are the odds: Understanding the risks education kit*, Sue Thompson, Powerhouse Museum, 2004



What are my Chances?

Exercise 7

Imagine that you are Jackson's friend, and that this is the story he told you after he got caught stealing. He has asked for your help. Write down what you would say to Jackson, or work with a partner and script and perform a role play. Here are some extra things to consider in your response:

Does a 1 in 4 chance of winning mean that every four tickets bought should have a prize?

People often remember a big early win and this feeling leads them to exaggerate their chances of winning in the long run. Does winning early mean that winning is going to continue? Why?

Does scratching two \$50,000 mean getting close to scratching three and winning the prize?

Gamblers' Help Line is 1800 858 858 and Kidsline is 1800 551 800

Exercise 1 Answers: 1-G; 2-D; 3-A; 4-B; 5-C; 6-H; 7-E; 8-F

Exercise 5 Answers

1. False – they have an equal chance of winning. No system of choosing numbers in Lotto gives you a better or worse chance than random as the draw of the numbers is not influenced by any method.
2. True – of course it can! It is just that the chance of it happening is very small.
3. False – One person's outcomes has no bearing on yours. The chances of winning three times is very, very small, but because millions and millions of people enter into Tattsлото over a number of years, it is not surprising that occasionally very unlikely things occur.
4. TRUE – each flip of a coin is a fresh flip and the outcome does not depend on what was flipped before
5. FALSE – authorities investigated Mr. Dawe, who was found not to be a spy. The use of the words was pure coincidence, not a covert message to the enemy!



Believe it or not

Exercise 1

Have you heard that:

- 87 is an unlucky score in Test cricket
- It is lucky in Bingo to walk three times around your chair
- People in the Victorian era thought Saturdays the unluckiest day to marry
- It is considered good luck if the bride finds a spider in her wedding gown
- Thinking positively can improve your chances on the pokies

Only 12 batsmen have been dismissed on 87 compared to 20 on 88 and 22 on 85 for example. No Australian batsman has been dismissed on 139. A duck is the most common score*. Bingo and Poker Machines use random number generators to produce the outcomes of a session. This means that nothing you do can influence the numbers drawn or how the pokie reels stop. Poker machines are programmed to give more back to the house than to the player. Like any other entertainment, you have to pay to play and the more you play, the more you pay.

*Source: Geoff McClure, *The Age*, 20/11/07

- a) Discuss whether knowledge of the statistics on 87 is likely to change cricketers' belief in it as an unlucky number. Is 139 a lucky number for Australian batsmen?
- b) The divorce rate is higher than ever before. Could this be due to more weddings than ever before on Saturdays?
- c) Does the machine that generates the balls in Bingo and the symbols on poker machines know if you have walked three times around your chair or are thinking positively?
- d) Discuss and write down any superstitions that you know of or hold yourself. Compare these with the rest of the class and note similarities and differences

Exercise 2

Consider the following advertisement for a \$1 Lucky Charms Scratchie game that was run in Western Australia.

There's over \$900,000 to be won this Chinese New Year, including one top prize of \$5,000 and you couldn't find a 'luckier' ticket – featuring 6 lucky charms including Fortune Cookie, Lucky Coin, Four Leaf Clover, Lucky Bamboo, and Lucky Lantern.

Source: www.lottery.wa.gov.au

- a) What is the key message of this ad?
- b) What is the persuasive device used to try to sell Scratchie tickets?
- c) If every ticket has a lucky charm design, could they all be lucky? Does the design of any Scratchie ticket have any bearing on the chance of a prize?



Believe it or not

Exercise 3

Below is an extract of an article by Mark Hayes (Herald Sun, 13/01/08)

OENONE Wood is not superstitious, but don't be surprised if you see her with a lucky charm on her helmet come the Olympics.

Herald Sun January 13 2008 by Mark Hayes

The Canberra rider put a bad week behind her yesterday to win the Australian women's road race title in Ballarat, giving her the inside running for one of three berths for the Beijing Games.

The former World Cup overall champion, riding without a wooden trinket given to her by a Dutch cousin, fell from the starting ramp in Wednesday's time-trial.

However yesterday, with the charm back on her helmet, Wood stamped her authority on the last climb up the gruelling Mt Buninyong circuit to win from newcomer Sharon Laws, with long-time Australian teammate Sara Carrigan third.

"I think it's really good to come up with a win like this after a disastrous start to the week, I'm just really happy today," Wood said.

"I'm going to start with that lucky charm on my helmet (in future), obviously it works.

"I don't normally use lucky charms, but I think if somebody gives you a lucky charm, it's unlucky not to use it.

"I didn't have it on my helmet for the time-trial, so I thought I'd better learn my lesson and put it back on."

- Why did Wood think she won the race? What do you think a non believer in lucky charms would think were the causes of her winning the race?
- The lucky charm may have caused Wood to have more confidence going into the race. Could this confidence have assisted her in her win? How is this case different to thinking positively at the poker machines?
- What relationship does confidence have with the outcomes of games of chance and skill?
- Can you think of other examples of the use of lucky charms, talismans, lucky objects or rituals by sportspeople or celebrities?
- Do you think your family uses any of the above?
- Do you think superstition has declined with the advent of science or are we still as superstitious as we always have been?

Exercise 4

Write down a key message about superstition that you think is important for other teenagers to know.

Express that key message through one of the following:

- a story
- a newspaper or magazine article
- a comedy sketch
- a speech

ust be honest on regarding fatal bird flu, d human lives s of chickens. Alexander had no infor- st China was when it said it of the virus, borders with e infected. were tardy in ded to SARS realised their Chinese gover- very decisive SARS." Down- broader ques- countries in earn from the and that is: as you find a as possible. rybody knows al with it, and

do what it cou bours address "There need effort to comb otherwise we'r down the path with SARS," h The bird flu deeper into A seventh human victim and the first in Thailand while Indonesia to face an outbreak The disease in Taiwan, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Indon rapidly the World Health Orga- nisation called Indonesia said farms across its vast archipela- go suffered ou South Korea fresh case at a and planned to slaughter chickens in the culture Ministry said WHO said



The race that stops the nation

Exercise 1

Read Chapter 16 (extract) of Mark Twain's *Following the Equator*, first published by American Publishing Company, 1897

Melbourne spreads around over an immense area of ground. It is a stately city architecturally as well as in magnitude...It is the largest city of Australasia, and fills the post with honor and credit. It has one specialty; this must not be jumbled in with those other things. It is the mitered Metropolitan of the Horse-Racing Cult. Its race-ground is the Mecca of Australasia. On the great annual day of sacrifice - the 5th of November, Guy Fawkes's Day - business is suspended over a stretch of land and sea as wide as from New York to San Francisco, and deeper than from the northern lakes to the Gulf of Mexico; and every man and woman, of high degree or low, who can afford the expense, put away their other duties and come. They begin to swarm in by ship and rail a fortnight before the day, and they swarm thicker and thicker day after day, until all the vehicles of transportation are taxed to their uttermost to meet the demands of the occasion, and all hotels and lodgings are bulging outward because of the pressure from within. They come a hundred thousand strong, as all the best authorities say, and they pack the spacious grounds and grandstands and make a spectacle such as is never to be seen in Australasia elsewhere.

It is the "Melbourne Cup" that brings this multitude together. Their clothes have been ordered long ago, at unlimited cost, and without bounds as to beauty and magnificence, and have been kept in concealment until now, for unto this day are they consecrate. I am speaking of the ladies' clothes; but one might know that.

And so the grand-stands make a brilliant and wonderful spectacle, a delirium of color, a vision of beauty. The champagne flows, everybody is vivacious, excited, happy; everybody bets, and gloves and fortunes change hands right along, all the time. Day after day the races go on, and the fun and the excitement are kept at white heat; and when each day is done, the people dance all night so as to be fresh for the race in the morning. And at the end of the great week the swarms secure lodgings and transportation for next year, then flock away to their remote homes and count their gains and losses, and order next year's Cup-clothes, and then lie down and sleep two weeks, and get up sorry to reflect that a whole year must be put in somehow or other before they can be wholly happy again.

The Melbourne Cup is the Australasian National Day. It would be difficult to overstate its importance. It overshadows all other holidays and specialized days of whatever sort in that congeries of colonies. Overshadows them? I might almost say it blots them out. Each of them gets attention, but not everybody's; each of them evokes interest, but not everybody's; each of them rouses enthusiasm, but not everybody's; in each case a part of the attention, interest, and enthusiasm is a matter of habit and custom, and another part of it is official and perfunctory. Cup Day, and Cup Day only, commands an attention, an interest, and an enthusiasm which are universal - and spontaneous, not perfunctory. Cup Day is supreme it has no rival. I can call to mind no specialized annual day, in any country, which can be named by that large name - Supreme. I can call to mind no specialized annual day, in any country, whose approach fires the whole land with a conflagration of conversation and preparation and anticipation and jubilation. No day save this one; but this one does it.



The race that stops the nation

In small groups and then as a class, discuss the following:

- a) How do you observe Melbourne Cup Day? Are there any traditions within your family?
- b) If Mark Twain came into the future 110 years, what similarities and differences would he notice about today's Melbourne Cup?

Exercise 2

Mark Twain's piece above is an example of the travel writing genre. What images does Mark Twain use to help people who have never been to Australia understand the Melbourne Cup and its cultural significance?

Write a travel article based on your experience/your family or your friends' traditions on Melbourne Cup Day from the perspective of a foreign visitor.

Exercise 3 – Small group activity

Gambling is a legal activity if you are over 18. It is important to manage decisions and behaviours so that gambling doesn't become a problem. The table below shows information about problem gamblers and then has a column to convert that information into a strategy on how to enjoy yourself responsibly. The first one is done for you.

Fill in the following table and then discuss your strategies with the rest of the class

Information	Strategy
People caught up in a game might spend more than they intended	Leave credit cards and other ATM cards at home. Set aside a certain amount of cash and when that is gone, stop
People are often more reckless gamblers when they have been drinking alcohol	
Some people try to recover losses by placing more bets, not realising that as time goes on they are more likely to keep losing	
Some people keep gambling when they would rather stop because their friends pressure them to	
Some people gamble with more than they can really afford to lose	
Some people borrow money from friends to keep gambling	
Some people need to gamble with larger and larger amounts to get the same feeling of excitement	



The race that stops the nation

Exercise 4

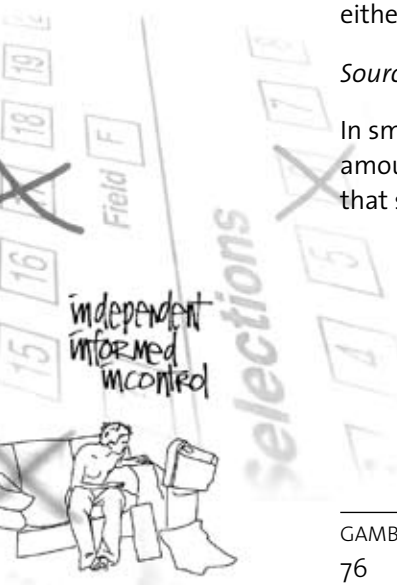
Prepare either a brochure, podcast script or a travel writing piece to assist a tourist in understanding the Melbourne Cup as 'the race that stops the nation' and to help them enjoy the day and gamble responsibly. You may wish to refer to the following information.

Victoria is Australia's racing capital. The Victorian Racing Industry comprises three major codes: Thoroughbred racing, Harness racing and Greyhound racing. Over 1800 race meetings are conducted annually at 83 licensed racecourses across Victoria. Thoroughbred racing is the second most popular spectator sport in Australia (second to Australian Rules Football) with the Melbourne Cup being the most widely known event. Research conducted by Roy Morgan revealed that 284,000 Victorians (6.7%) visited a racetrack within a three month period during July 2003 and June 2004. This figure is higher than any other State in terms of total number of visitors and proportion of population. Racing is ranked alongside the largest manufacturing sectors in its contribution to economic activity and employment. (Source: www.tourismvictoria.com.au)

The Melbourne Cup Carnival has played a principal role in establishing the Victorian Spring Racing Carnival as Australia's major annual sporting event. Visitors to the Spring Racing Carnival inject more than \$500 million into the Victorian economy. In 2008, on Melbourne Cup day \$154 million was bet at TAB outlets around Australia. They spent record amounts on corporate race-day packages, choosing to wine and dine in marquees, on and around the track. 7,000 corporate leaders and guests will spend \$1 million hiring marquees, and another \$1.5 million celebrating the Cup at Flemington Racecourse. They also spent \$20 million on their outfits, purchasing over 300,000 items, including dresses, gloves, hats, jewellery, shoes, sunglasses, ties and more. They ate 7,000 oysters, drank 32,000 bottles of champagne and used 26,000kg of ice. The \$5.1m Melbourne Cup is more than just a horse race - it is a 145-year old social and cultural tradition that literally brings Australia to a standstill. The race draws competitors from all over the world with the annual invasion of northern hemisphere-trained horses making it a truly international event. The Melbourne Cup attracts a worldwide television audience of around 700 million people in 120 countries and territories while millions more either view or listen to the event via the internet.

Source: <http://www.melbourne.org.au/325.o.html>

In small groups, discuss the above and then set up a debate on the subject: the amount of money bet and spent on the Melbourne Cup is an Australian tradition that should be upheld and maintained.



Gambling and advertising

Exercise 1 – persuasive techniques

Consider this list showing the main reasons for commencing gambling

- leisure/fun/entertainment/outing
- relieving boredom
- wanting to, or feel I have to, do the same as my friends
- providing company for another person who is already gambling
- parents may encourage it
- may be expected as ‘something we do in our family’
- hoping to win money
- wanting to do something dangerous or risky
- being around other people (easing loneliness)
- wanting to do something ‘just for me’.

Source: What’s the Real Deal? Responsible Gambling Education Kit. This kit is available for download from www.dhhs.tas.gov.au > Future Communities > Reform Implementation Unit > Disability, Child, Youth and Family Services > Program & Strategies > Gambling Support Program > What’s the Real Deal?

Now, for each of the following slogans, write down the reason/s for commencing gambling (see above) that the slogan is appealing to:

- a) TAB Sportsbet – Get Ahead of the Game
- b) TAB racing – The Joy of Racing
- c) Scratchies – Win in an Instant
- d) \$2 million guaranteed – Super 7s Oz Lotto – this Tuesday
- e) Tattslotto – Life could be a dream
- f) Tatts Pokies – Just for fun!
- g) Crown Casino – Paint the Town

Exercise 2

- a) Is the ‘Just for fun!’ slogan consistent with a responsible gambling message?
- b) Choose 3 of the other slogans and discuss the faulty conclusions that someone might draw from these slogans.



Gambling and advertising

Exercise 3

Using the information below and also that given in Exercise 1:

- i) Construct 2 different posters for youth, each with a different key message, warning them against problem gambling.
- ii) State where you would have the posters displayed and why.
- iii) For each poster, explain how you came up with the key message and design, including which pieces of information informed your thinking.
 - Boys gamble more than girls
 - Most youth gambling is on lottery products (Scratchies) but also includes card games, track racing and sports event
 - Many young people hold unrealistic views about making money from gambling, particularly if they have had an early win
 - Only a very small proportion of young people with gambling problems seek professional help; Gamblers' Help Line is 1800 858 858 and Kidslines is 1800 551 800
 - The effects of problem gambling (the young person's gambling or a family member's gambling) on young people include depression, anxiety, isolation, low self-esteem, thoughts of and attempts at suicide, and poor academic achievement
 - Other signs that a young person may have a gambling problem include selling or pawning valuables, stealing money, sometimes having plenty of money, but more often having none, neglect in appearance and dress

Source: *What's the Real Deal?* See above for details.



Responsible gambling in the media

Read the media text extracts below and complete the exercises that follow

New problem gambling campaign on track to protect consumers

Media Release Wednesday, June 25, 2008 from the Minister for Gaming

The Brumby Government will use a Melbourne icon - the tram - as the centrepiece of its latest problem gambling advertising campaign to highlight the importance of gambling responsibly.

The \$950,000 campaign, which is based on new Player Information Standards for gaming machines being implemented in gaming venues across the state, aims to minimise harm associated with the effects of problem gambling.

The campaign uses the images and messages from the new standards and encourages Victorians to change high risk behaviour and to identify their own actions when it comes to gambling. The campaign will be featured on billboards and at outdoor locations such as bus and tram stops, on the internet and will also reach culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

However both the campaign and the new standards are aimed at all Victorians who choose to gamble – not just those at risk of problem gambling.

Gaming Minister Tony Robinson said the new standards reminded Victorians to stay in control when gambling and to ‘walk away and not chase their losses’.

“When people walk into gaming venues across Victoria, this is the image they will see – regular Australians reminding them to stay in control of their gambling habits,” he said.

“These standards, based on extensive market research and consultation between government, industry and the community sector, are intended to reach all people who choose to gamble – not just problem gamblers or people at risk of problems associated with gambling.

“Gambling is a legitimate recreational activity in Victoria, but it’s important that people remember to set themselves a limit of how much they are willing to play with, and not exceed that.”

The Gambling Regulation Regulations 2005 require that all gaming venues display printed player information standards to provide information about gaming machines to people who play them. Gaming venues have until 31 August 2008 to display the new standards.

Mr Robinson said Victoria had led the way in tackling problem gambling.

“In 2006 we introduced the five year, \$132 million Taking Action on Problem Gambling commitment; this year we have announced we will ban ATMs from gaming venues and introduce new mechanisms that allow players to pre-commit to the amount of time and money they spend on machines,” he said.

“However, we recognise a continual effort is needed to fight problem gambling and to help protect vulnerable Victorians.

“These new standards and new campaign will remind Victorians to stay in control when playing on the machines.”

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Responsible gambling in the media

Victorians lose \$4.8 billion gambling

The Age October 30, 2008

Victorians lost a record \$4.8 billion in gambling last year.

- Record gambling losses
- Anti-gambling groups angry
- Pokies responsible for lion's share

Poker machines in pubs and clubs were the biggest money magnet, draining \$2.6 billion from players' pockets.

The remainder was blown at Crown Casino and on lotteries and wagering.

The biggest winner was the Victorian government, with gambling revenue injecting almost \$1.6 billion into state coffers in taxes and levies.

This is about \$36 million up on revenue the previous year when losses were about \$85 million less.

The windfall - detailed in a Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation report, tabled in state parliament today - has raised the ire of the opposition and anti-gambling groups.

Opposition gaming spokesman Michael O'Brien said the government was relying on gaming revenue to run the state and warned that would only worsen with the slowing economy.

"Labor is now so dependent on gambling to fund basic services that its gaming tax collections are around the same as Victoria Police's annual budget," he said.

"Victorians don't want police numbers dependent on pokie numbers. Hospital beds shouldn't rely on horse racing. The state Labor government should be prepared to fund basic

services without this over-reliance on gambling taxes," Mr O'Brien said.

There are almost 27,000 poker machines at 520 licensed venues across the state - excluding Crown Casino.

The \$2.6 billion lost at the pokies equates to \$647 per Victorian adult.

Victorian Interchurch Gambling Taskforce chairman, Mark Zirnsak, said the cost of problem gambling was mounting and called on the government to act.

"There's still a long way to go before you can argue they've taken all reasonable measures to reduce the harm, and these losses are paid for in the sense of more people going through marriage break-ups ... losing their homes and all the hardships families have to go through as a result of gambling problems."

Dr Zirnsak called for an urgent increase in funding for research into problem gambling solutions. The current \$1.4 million yearly budget equated to less than \$1 for every \$1,000 reaped in gambling taxes, he said.

Dr Zirnsak also wants maximum pokies betting limits further reduced to \$1 per spin, plans for mandatory time and spend limits fast-tracked and training to enable staff to intervene when problem gamblers are playing.

Health Minister Daniel Andrews said the government had provided record funding of about \$130 million to help problem gamblers.

"For the vast majority of people gambling is a legitimate recreational activity but there are some in our community who do have a problem and our job is to properly support them," he said.

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do what it cou bours address "There need effort to comb otherwise we'r down the pat with SARS," h The bird flu deeper into A seventh huma first in Thai while Indones to face an out The disease in Taiwan, Jap Vietnam, Tha Laos and In rapidly the W nisation called Indonesia s farms across t go suffered ou South Kor fresh case al and planned chickens in th culture Minist WHO said



Responsible gambling in the media

1. Why is problem gambling an issue? What aspects of managing problem gambling are at issue in these articles? Who is the audience?
2. Write down the arguments in each article. To do this, write down the claim the person is making and what reasons they give to support their claim.
3. Find an example of each of the following persuasive language devices in the articles and fill in the table to assist in the analysis of them:

Device	Example in the text	Meaning in the text	Purpose – why is it used?
Simile			
Metaphor			
Satire			
Attacking the person and not the argument			
Exaggeration			
Loaded Language			

4. Problem gambling is often an issue that comes up around election time. Which article do you find the most persuasive? Why? Which do you find the least persuasive? Is problem gambling an issue that would influence your vote?
5. How do you think each of the following would react to the points raised in these articles?
 - a problem gambling charity
 - an organization competing for government gambling revenue with problem gambling charities
 - a problem gambler who gambles on poker machines and wants help
 - someone with a job at a licensed gaming venue

