

UNSW



CHETRE

Centre for Health, Equity, Training Research
& Evaluation

29 April 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTERACTIVE GAMBLING AMENDMENT (PROHIBITION ON CREDIT CARD USE) BILL 2020

Thank you for providing the Centre of Health Equity Centre for Health Equity Training, Research and Evaluation (CHETRE) opportunity to put forward a submission during the consultation period, relating to the Commonwealth Government's plan of amending the Interactive Gambling Act 2001 (the IGA).

CHETRE fully supports this reform which ensures operators of gambling services are not permitted to accept payments by credit card, either directly or through other payment methods that rely on an underlying credit card.

The scale of the problem in Australia

Total gambling expenditure in Australia increased from [\\$23.694 billion in 2016–2017 to \\$24.887 billion in 2017–2018 \(a 5.0 per cent increase\)](#). Latest research from the *Gambling in Australia during COVID-19 Survey* of over 2000 people who gambled from across Australia during June to July 2020 found:

- [Almost 1 in 3 survey participants signed up for a new online betting account during COVID-19, and 1 in 20 started gambling online;](#)
- [Young men \(aged 18-34 years\) were the sub-population most likely to sign up for new online accounts, to increase their frequency and monthly spending on gambling \(from \\$687 to \\$1,075\), and to be at risk of gambling-related harm;](#)

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- [Of concern, 79% of participants were classified as being at risk of, or already experiencing, gambling-related harm;](#)
- [Approximately 50% of the survey participants reported that their physical and/or mental health had been negatively affected during COVID-19.](#)

Domestic evidence shows those more likely to experience gambling related harm [include young people, single, unemployed or not employed \(excluding retirees and full-time students\), Indigenous, men, living in rental accommodation, in a low socioeconomic area.](#) It also found these subgroups [were more likely to draw their income from welfare payments than those who had no problems.](#)

Our position

CHETRE is committed to improving health equity among populations across Australia. CHETRE views gambling as a public health issue. CHETRE acknowledges and recognises the following policy decisions of Australian governments over the past 20 years have significantly prevented or reduced gambling-related harm throughout Australia:

- [Australian state and territory governments prohibited access to credit in casino and gambling areas of licensed venues in the early 2000s.](#) This means a person cannot use a credit card to gamble or withdraw cash from an ATM in gambling areas of licensed venues and casinos. When these reforms were introduced the online gambling did not operate in Australia;
- [In February 2018 the Federal Government prohibited online gambling operators from offering credit to gamblers as part of the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering;](#)
- [On 27 November 2019, the Federal Minister for Minister for Communications, the Hon. Paul Fletcher introduced legislation to establish the National Online Gambling Self-Exclusion Register.](#)

CHETRE strongly agrees, based on available evidence, that amending the Interactive Gambling Act 2001 (the IGA) to include the Interactive Gambling Amendment (Prohibition on Credit Card Use) Bill 2020 would prevent and minimise further gambling related harm in Australia. This is in line with some current international approaches, including the [United Kingdom \(UK\) implementing and imposing a similar ban in April 2020.](#)

CHETRE is part of the UNSW Sydney Research Centre for Centre for Primary Health Care & Equity (CPHCE), a unit of Population Health, SWSLHD and a member of the Ingham institute for Applied Medical Research. CHETRE's mission is to "co-create intelligence for better health" in and beyond South Western Sydney.

Yours Sincerely,

Professor Evelyne de Leeuw
Director, CHETRE

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