

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
ANSWERS TO INQUIRY QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

IQ17

Division: Content

Inquiry Name: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Inquiry Date: 17/07/2020

Topic: Online Gambling

Question Type: Written

Senator Griff asked:

1. Has the Federal Government requested state and territory governments provide reports on total gambling expenditure in each jurisdiction to monitor for signs of increased gambling harm during and after the lockdown? If so, will the Government release those reports? If not, why not?
2. What non-English resources have been made available through health, ACMA or other pathways to alert Australians from CALD communities about the risks of online gambling during the COVID lockdowns? If so, what uptake of these resources has occurred?
3. Has the Department tracked the volume of gambling advertising across broadcast and digital platforms during the COVID lockdown and the extent to which this correlates with the rise in both legal and illegal forms of online gambling?
4. Have there been additions to existing programs, or have any new programs been developed, to address vulnerabilities to gambling in Indigenous communities during the COVID-19 crisis?

Answer:

1. The Department continues to work with both the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) who work closely with representatives from the relevant agencies in each state and territory on possible changes in people's gambling habits during the coronavirus pandemic.

Advice has been consistent that there has not been a significant increase in overall gambling activity. While there has been an increase in online gambling activity, other gambling activity has decreased due to the closure of land-based gambling venues.

States and territories will continue to monitor this issue over the next few months as venues reopen to see if the trend is temporary or ongoing.

2. ACMA relaunched its digital campaign on 20 May 2020 around the risk of using illegal online gambling services.

The campaign alerted consumers to the lack of consumer protections available on these sites and raised awareness that that offshore gambling sites are provided to Australians illegally. The campaign linked people to the ACMA's webpage for further information and details on how to make a complaint. This campaign has not been provided in languages other than English.

3. No, the Department has not tracked the volume of gambling advertising across broadcast and digital platforms during the COVID lockdown.
4. The Department continues to work with both DSS and ACMA who work closely with representatives from the relevant agencies in each state and territory on possible changes in people's gambling habits during the coronavirus pandemic.

There is limited information available on the effects of the pandemic on gambling activity levels by consumers, including amongst cultural communities, however advice has been consistent that there has not been an increase in overall gambling activity, with some states reporting a reduction in requests for gambling assistance support.

States and territories will continue to monitor this issue over the next few months as venues reopen to see if the trend is temporary or ongoing.