



**ethnic
communities'
council of
victoria**

Let's Talk about Gambling in Multicultural Communities

ECCV Responsible
Gambling
Awareness Week
Forum

Forum Summary Report

Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria Inc. (ECCV) is the *Voice of Multicultural Victoria*. As the peak body for ethnic and multicultural organisations in Victoria, we are proud to have been the key advocate for culturally diverse communities in Victoria since 1974. For 40 years we have been the link between multicultural communities, government and the wider community.

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About Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) represents the voice of Victoria's multicultural community. As the peak body for ethnic and multicultural organisations in Victoria it has been the key advocate for culturally diverse communities since 1974 to all three levels of government. ECCV advocates for freedom, respect, equality and dignity for multicultural communities and strives to build a harmonious, vibrant Victorian society.

Introduction

This is a summary report of the ECCV Responsible Gambling Awareness Week (RGAW) public forum *Let's Talk about Gambling in Multicultural Communities*. The forum was held on 27 May 2014 at the Statewide Resources Centre, 150 Palmerston Street, Carlton VIC 3053.

The forum was attended by a mix of community leaders, managers and workers in ethnic and multicultural community organisations, local government, representatives from health and community organisations and academics with an interest in culturally diverse communities. In keeping with the 2014 RAGW theme, the ECCV forum focused on the changing face of gambling and the effect that has on multicultural communities.

Eddie Micallef Chairperson, ECCV welcomed the participants. He said that the ECCV policy unit will be responding to the issues raised at the forum around gambling in multicultural communities.

Ross Barnett EO, ECCV said the forum is part of *Responsible Gambling Awareness Week (RGAW)*. He noted that ECCV has been invited to be part of the *Victorian Gambling Ministerial Advisory Committee*.

Wesa Chau, RGAW Ambassador said the *Responsible Gambling Awareness Week* is trying to increase community awareness about responsible gambling. She told stories of problem gambling in ethnic communities. A young man gambled during the week and got fired eventually. His family was aware of the problem and wanted him to get help. He was in denial and wanted the family to support him financially. It was devastating for the family. His friend knew that if she gave him money it would make things worse so she started to make deals with him, that if he seeks help she will help him pay the rent.

The key message was we need to focus on the family not just the individual regarding gambling and multicultural communities. Some of the causes are social isolation and rejection from community. People from Chinese backgrounds play other gambling games such as mah-jong at home.

She gave an international example. There are no casinos in Hong Kong so most people catch a ferry to the island of Macau to do their gambling there. She therefore does not advocate for no gambling venues but rather for seeking the right help when it is needed

Rosa Billi Manager, Research, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (the Foundation - VRGF) said that RGAW is about raising awareness. People enjoy gambling; however it is important to recognise that there are risks involved. She said there are small numbers in CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) communities that gamble but within that group there are high rates of gambling. The Foundation has a strong focus on prevention and minimising harm in the community. It has bilingual support services. Evidence-based research is important to the Foundation. She pointed out that the research to be launched at the forum is supported and funded by the Foundation. She acknowledged the authors of the research: *A qualitative investigation of the experiences, attitudes and*

beliefs about gambling in the Chinese and Tamil communities in Victoria by Susan Feldman, Harriet Radermacher, Christopher Anderson and Marissa Dickins (May 2014). The research study is available at the VRGF website.¹

Dr Harriet Radermacher, Monash University, the keynote speaker spoke about the research project launched by Rosa. She said that if one ignores the multicultural community then the research is missing a large section of the community.

She pointed out that research is about perceptions, attitudes, what people think about gambling. She mentioned that copies were available at the forum and can also be downloaded. She thanked the VRGF for funding the research and for making the CALD community a priority.

Key points that Harriet mentioned in her PowerPoint presentation are as follows. The presentation is available from ECCV.

- 2% of Australians develop gambling problems and while CALD people are less likely to gamble they are more likely to have gambling problems.
- Migration has risk factors such as isolation from families and communities and are more likely to develop problem gambling
- The study included interviews with the Tamil and Chinese speaking communities.
- Chinese are well established and perceived to have high rates of gambling.
- Tamils are more recent and we know nothing about them.
- Different perceptions about gambling exist in the two communities.
- Religious beliefs influence negative perceptions to gambling amongst Tamil people.
- Beliefs around luck and superstitions influence perceptions to gambling amongst people from a Chinese-speaking background.
- The allure and status of the casino is significant. It seems to have a pull associated with high status lifestyle, wealth and class. It is glamorous. It is the destination in Australia that one shows off to visitors as a good social outing. The casino was seen as safe, familiar and culturally appropriate
- The impact of immigration is significant. People spoke about the sense of freedom when they arrive in Australia. International students think like this and gambling is sometimes a reaction to stress. The casino is warm, safe and well-lit so gambling is perceived as a positive, safe activity.
- It is difficult to get people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds into help services. There is a need to save face and gambling problems remain secret.
- There are many different factors that impact on peoples' attitudes.
- The potential implications of gambling are the underreporting of gambling problems in the communities studied. There is a need to acknowledge the huge issues of shame and stigma around gambling.

¹ http://www.responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/8002/Feldman-Chinese-and-Tamil-communities-May-2014.pdf

- More research work is needed around the area of shame and cultural diversity; on how messages of more self-control are not always effective; on the need for more culture-specific services and how to focus on consumer protection.

Panel Speakers

The following topics and areas of interest were covered by panel speakers

The City of Darebin is very multicultural. About \$82m is lost to gambling and about 1,000 pokies machines exist in the Darebin City council. Darebin has put that money into an Intercultural Centre to provide an alternative to gambling. It created a centre that is warm and welcoming, with free tea and coffee, that promotes feelings of belonging and at the same time replicates those positive feelings in the casino venues. The Village Games evenings held by the Darebin Council runs are a main draw card to overcome social isolation. The Intercultural Centre has been a success.

The Darebin Council Gaming Policy was very rigid. The Council had to rethink its policy and is rewriting it. These days it is important to have an evidence-based for a solid policy. The new policy includes where gaming venues are and whether they are located in pockets of poverty.

A crucial point was that in Victoria 8.33% of gambling revenue goes to support funds but very little goes back to local government where most of that money is lost.

Gamblers Help Northern

The speaker had a special insight having personally experienced a gambling problem background. Problems are complex and there is no distinction between those on CentreLink and those that have a lot of money as eventually through gambling they both do not have any money. Gambling problems cause a lot of domestic violence. These issues are complex as there is a lot of shame around gambling problems.

The Monash University researcher noted that mobile phones and online gambling are increasing. Current research into treatment and significant harm provides useful insights. People often have other quite complex issues in their lives such as financial and family stresses and the related stigma.

The Chinese Peer Connection Program is staffed by volunteers who have recovered from gambling. Migration is a transition time for people to come from one culture and then live in another culture. There are a lot of stresses that can trigger the gambling behaviour.

The Maltese Community Council of Victoria (MCCV) noted that it is difficult to address gambling in the Maltese community. If you ask someone about gambling they will say they don't have an issue but know someone else who does. People's main aims in migrating to Australia were to make their families safe and financially secure. The MCCV used posters that were very graphic to address the lack of literacy such as posters with pictures of families in distress. They produced an audio CD for families with gamblers, that CD is available free of charge.

The main problems are isolation and therefore Maltese clubs were doing pokies trips. One initiative developed by the MCCV was the *Gambling on an Alternative* project. Funds were provided to help clubs organise alternative activities to pokies outings. On one best example was a 1940s dance for all their older members and only charged \$15 per head for a three course dinner. Other bus trips to restaurants

The City of Moreland delivered a PowerPoint presentation about gambling. The Moreland City Council has a proud record for policy reform and approaches to gambling problems. In 2013 Australians lost \$18.4billion on a per person basis and Victorians spent \$5.4billion on gambling in 2012-13 mainly in pubs and clubs. About \$69.7million was lost in Moreland.

The pokies losses were mapped by the ABS SEIFA Index 2011/12 showing huge losses in areas of greater density of machines and ethnic groups. Gaming venues tend to be concentrated in less affluent areas. About 75-80% of people with gambling problems play the pokies.

At Moreland they try a number of support initiatives such as a Smart Phone App to help people control their behaviour in a pokies venue or near pokies venues. The App beeps to help people break the zone out of time and also has links to support services and community forums. The Smart Phone App represents a *friend to tap you on the shoulder* to remind a person that it is time to leave the gaming machines. The Quit Pokies initiative offers practical help to manage the risks of the pokies and it is free.

Q&A raised the following issues for discussion

- How to get more data about online gambling on total losses.
- Regarding shame and stigma in CALD communities, how effective is financial counselling as a more inviting entry point to seek help.
- The Australian gambling culture developed in the 1970 - how does it compare to other countries. Apparently it is much the same around the world however spin rates in gaming machines in Australia are faster than in other countries.
- Responsible gambling needs responsible reforms as well as helping people to moderate their risk behaviour.
- Currently, local councils can exert influence over pokie machines but not over online gambling services.
- Pokie machines are designed to be addictive, thus the focus of local councils is justified.
- Global rates of problem gambling are about 1%-2%.
- Australia's high rates of problem gambling may be related to faster spin rates.

Workshop

The forum evaluation survey showed overwhelming positive feedback. For the Forum Evaluation Report see Appendix 1. The second part of the forum was a workshop that took the format of small-group discussions where participants responded to three questions. First the participants individually identified the social and economic effects of gambling on multicultural communities. Next, they worked on the remaining questions of access and future actions as a team. For the Questionnaire Sheet see Appendix 2.

This section contains the findings of the workshop consultations

These are some key themes that were reported back by the teams

- The community must be involved in solutions to problem gambling, especially within CALD communities.
- Theatre and other art forms are a 'soft', resource-light way to engage the community regarding the issue.

- Cultural and ethnic diversification of employees and service providers that cater to problem gamblers within ethnic or multicultural communities.
- Engaging multicultural or ethnic communities in their own language.
- Advertising and promotion of the issue must be more serious, harder-hitting and more intense.
- Services collaboration, i.e. General Practitioners collaborating with Gambler's Help services.
- Train stations as a good place for advertising.
- Having a CALD engagement option that is managed by non-CALD individuals, for those that do not want to engage with their own ethnic or multicultural community.
- Alternatives to gambling.
- Illegal promotion and advertising of gambling, i.e. credit vouchers to attract non-gamblers.

Social and Economic Effects

The participants identified the following social and economic effects of problem gambling on ethnic or multicultural communities

Financial effects

- Economic hardship and financial burdens for problem gamblers and their families. Especially difficult for women and children.
- Financial distress is compounded by the socio-economic disadvantage of CALD persons.
- Reductions of funds within the family unit, as well as within the community as gambling losses are corporatised instead of returning into the local community.
- In extreme cases problem gambling may lead to unemployment and homelessness.

Psychological effects

- Problem gambling may cause depression, stress, desperation, relationship breakdown and general psychological distress.
- These conditions may impact the gambler as well those close to them and the wider community in general.
- Problem gambling is highly stigmatised. The large amount of stigma and shame placed on problem gamblers may further exacerbate their problem and the negative effects.
- In extreme cases, problem gambling may lead to suicide.

Domestic/family effects

- Underreporting of family violence and elder abuse.
- Negative financial and psychological effects may exacerbate tensions in the home and disrupt the family unit. May have adverse effect on personal friendships also.
- Suffering of children at home may lead to problems at school and problems with further development.
- As gambling is seen as a form of social interaction for many multicultural communities, problem gambling may develop in several generations of the same family.

Effects on society/community

- The increasing availability of ECG/pokie machines presents a legalised gateway to problem gambling.
- There is a lack of culturally specific support services and alternative community activities to gambling.
- Cultural acceptance/normalisation of (problem) gambling within Asian cultures.
- Negative and stigmatising attitudes towards counselling or seeking help with problem gambling. People are more concerned with 'saving face' than with helping problem gamblers.

Access to Gambling Support

The participants identified the following ways of improving access to gambling support for CALD individuals

Research, education, community engagement and cultural appropriateness

- A policy that prevents and alleviates problem gambling in CALD communities needs to be developed in partnership with peak CALD agencies and implemented in coordination with those agencies. A bottom-up approach is necessary.
- More research on and more utilisation of consumer and community voices. More collaboration is needed between private and public sectors and communities as well as service providers need to be educated more.
- CALD communities as a whole need to be informed thoroughly about the dangers of problem gambling. This education should not only target potential and current gamblers, but also their families.
- Culturally competent services need to be developed. These services need to employ a diverse mix of people from the corresponding community. It is important for service providers to be multicultural themselves.
- www.gamblinghelponline.org.au needs to be translated into different languages with the translation symbol featured prominently on the main page.
- Problem gamblers need to be offered alternative activities that satisfy the same urges that gambling does.

Improvements in services

- Potential clients need to be given options. Firstly they should have services available inside and outside of their communities. Not all CALD individuals have an interest in engaging with their native CALD groups, thus a mainstream option is also necessary. Secondly, there needs to be variety in the method of service provision. Clients need be able to access these services through friends, family, legal and financial services, over the internet, face-to-face and over the telephone.
- Financial counselling is needed as an initial point of contact with problem gamblers. A lot of stresses that problem gamblers experience in attempting to seek out help is related to the intensity of gambler's help services. Thus a 'soft' option such as financial counselling is a good option for removing that stress.
- Ideally financial, legal and gambler's help services should be combined into a 'one-stop-shop'.

- Multicultural clients need to be encouraged to utilise problem gambling services over the telephone, as currently only a small portion of them does.
- Gambler's help services need to be inconspicuous. They should be located in a complex with for example legal, financial or immigration services. So that individuals may maintain anonymity in their quest for help. There should be a combination of community-based and mainstreamed services.

Media, promotion and advertising

- Theatre and other art forms are an effective and resource-light way to deal with issues of shame and stigmatisation.
- The issue of problem gambling in multicultural communities should be promoted in multilingual formats over a range of ethnic media, i.e. SBS, Antena Hispana, 3zzz and other community newspapers and publications.
- Responsible gambling needs to be promoted within ethnic or multicultural communities with very visual advertising, so as to be most effective with non-English speakers. The advertising needs to be serious, confronting (i.e. TAC ads) and visually illustrate the negative effects of problem gambling on CALD communities.
- Train stations are good places for responsible gambling promotion, as most gambling hot-spots are located roughly along the train lines.
- A larger focus needs to be placed on the families of problem gamblers and others who are affected by it indirectly.

Role of Victorian State Government

- Not enough taxes collected from gambling revenue go back into the community. The State Government needs to reinvest more gambling taxes into prevention and treatment programs.
- Woolworths Inc. should not be allowed to possess a pokie machine monopoly in Victoria.

Future Action

The participants identified the following steps which they could take within their organisations to further promote and combat the issue of problem gambling in CALD communities and to promote responsible gambling

- Conduct further research to adequately define the parameters of gambling and problem gambling. At what point does responsible gambling become problem gambling?
- Providing affordable alternative activities to gambling, especially for the elderly in multicultural and ethnic communities.
- Connecting appropriate programs and services, and providing those in multiple languages.
- Conducting research within a multiplicity of communities and coordinating the results to develop a comprehensive strategy that still allows for autonomy in implementation in the different ethnic communities.
- Engage ethnic and multicultural communities more with education and promotion of the issue. Identify what CALD communities want to see in a gambling policy.

- To garner more consumer participation in the development of products and services. This can be gathered through a broad consultation with ethnic communities.
- Launch targeted community intervention programs that focus on factors leading to problem gambling, i.e. boredom, social isolation, self-esteem issues.
- Hold culturally specific workshops and sporting events in individual ethnic communities to engage them on this issue as individual organisations.
- Expanding peer support groups.
- Ensure that the focus of information, education, research and reform generally goes to where the greatest part of the problem is i.e. pokies, as well as emerging issues such as online gambling.
- Seek Victorian Multicultural Commission funding for theatre (or similar media) productions with scripts around awareness of gambling and gambling stories from responsible gambling to irresponsible gambling and how to recognise the symptoms, stages and consequences of problem gambling and when to seek help. This type of community engagement would illicit an emotional response, rather than an intellectual one. It encourages people to identify with the characters and their stories. This would be a great way to promote the human impact of problem gambling.

Recommendations

Partnerships

Recommendation 1 – The ECCV recommends that gambling support service providers create partnerships with multicultural and ethnic organisations, and that they consult these organisations and be guided by their input.

Research

Recommendation 2 – The ECCV recommends that further evidence-based research be conducted into gambling in multicultural and ethnic communities.

Education

Recommendation 3 – The ECCV recommends that a culturally responsive informative/educative campaign be targeted at multicultural and ethnic communities to promote an understanding of responsible gambling.

Cultural Responsiveness

Recommendation 4 – The ECCV recommends that gambler’s help services be made to be culturally responsive and multilingual. Also that they are set-up in such a way, that individuals can access their services while remaining anonymous.

Affordable Alternatives

Recommendation 5 – The ECCV recommends that affordable and culturally appropriate social activities be provided as an alternative to gambling in ethnic and multicultural communities. These activities should be widely available as an alternative to gambling for isolated seniors and the elderly from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Promotion

Recommendation 6 – The ECCV recommends that promotion of gambling related issues to ethnic or multicultural communities is done multilingually and with strong visual components.

Workshop Theatre

Recommendation 7 – The ECCV recommends that artistic workshop theatres be established in ethnic or multicultural communities and that these are used to promote responsible gambling and dissuade problem gambling.

For further information

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Appendix 1



Evaluation Survey Results

of

ECCV Responsible Gambling Awareness Week Forum

Let's Talk about Gambling in Multicultural Communities

At the conclusion of the ECCV Responsible Gambling Awareness Week Forum Let's Talk about Gambling in Multicultural Communities held in Carlton on 27 May 2014, 16 participants responded to the evaluation survey. Approximately 45 people attended the forum.

Positive feedback

Of those who replied, 93.75% indicated that overall the topics presented were useful and relevant.

100% of the respondents agreed that the forum workshop had been useful and relevant.

After attending the forum, 87.5% of participants said their understanding of issues around problem gambling in multicultural or ethnic communities had increased.

87.5% of respondents said that the contacts and networks they established during the forum would be useful to their work.

Presentation, Panel and Workshop

Typical feedback comments on the presentation were:

- 'The research presented was very interesting'
- '... Overall, the content discussion was great'

One participant suggested that a presentation by a specialist psychologist would have been an interesting and important addition. Another participant thought that some input and direct information from individuals who are gamblers would have helped gain more of an understanding.

One participant offered critical feedback on the workshop section of the forum. They felt that some of the panel discussion was not relevant enough to CALD communities.

One participant felt the forum was somewhat disorganised at times, despite leaving with a positive impression.

One person commented, 'It is scary to see that gambling is everywhere 24/7. More regulations need to be done. More community consultations.'

One participant commented that, within their profession, they hope to be able to discern people with gambling problems and be able to provide help or assistance.

One person specifically complemented the 'workshop, panel and keynote' format, which they thought was very good.

Overall the vast majority of participants were satisfied with the environment, organisation, format and content of the forum and had very little criticism to offer.

Future forums on gambling in multicultural communities

Participants expressed an interest in future forums on the following topics or with the following elements:

- CALD involvement
- How to deal with gambling and early intervention
- More organised activities for ECCV members
- Issues faced by ethnic ageing communities
- More forums and conversations
- A greater understanding of Islam and its communities
- Further brainstorming on what changes can be made, what programs and policies can be changed or implemented, and who to talk to make these changes occur.
- More gambling related discussion
- More personal accounts instead of problems
- More into multiculturalism and gambling
- Working groups facilitated with different communities
- How to promote inclusiveness across different cultures

General feedback comments

- 'Well organised. Good crowd.'
- 'Great event with an interesting bunch of people.'
- 'Thank you for organising this great event.'
- 'Very excellent event and presentations.'
- 'Very friendly environment to discuss the topic. I feel very comfortable & benefited from the discussion.'
- 'Great event, very interesting. I learned a lot.'

Appendix 2

WORKSHOP QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

Q1 What are the social and economic effects of gambling in multicultural communities in Victoria that I have perceived?

Q2 How can we improve access to gambling support services for people from culturally diverse backgrounds?

Q3 What else can my organisation do to raise awareness about issues related to responsible gambling and gaming in multicultural communities in Victoria?

THANK YOU!