

# Gambling Prevalence In South Australia



Government of South Australia

Department for Families  
and Communities

## Methodology of the Survey

This study of Gambling Prevalence in South Australia was conducted from October to December 2005. It involved a sample size of over 17,000 adults and 605 young people aged 16-17 years (the previous prevalence study conducted in 2001 involved a sample of over 6,000 adults). The study was prepared for, and jointly funded by, the Department for Families and Communities and the South Australian Independent Gambling Authority.

### Aims of the 2005 study

The objectives of the survey were to:

- obtain an updated prevalence of gambling and problem gambling among the South Australian adult population (age 18 years and over), which in 2001 had been determined as 2.0% (95% CI 1.7–2.4) using the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS)\*;
- obtain a prevalence of gambling and problem gambling among young South Australians aged 16 and 17 years;
- examine gambling patterns in South Australia; and
- gain approval from two cohorts identified during the prevalence study—adult problem gamblers and young people—to participate in further research projects.

### How the 2005 study was undertaken

Over 17,000 South Australian adults, and 605 young people aged 16 and 17 years, were interviewed for the gambling survey.

Telephone interviewing was used, with numbers being randomly selected from the Electronic White Pages. A letter introducing the survey was sent to the household of each selected telephone number. This informed residents of the purpose of the survey and indicated that they could expect to be contacted by telephone.

This gambling survey follows the methodology of the 2001 study, which was, at that time, the largest survey undertaken to examine gambling patterns in South Australia. The current survey is three times larger than the 2001 survey.

The survey examined a wide range of gambling patterns. These included:

- how frequently people gamble;
- types of gambling most commonly used; and
- awareness of support services to assist gamblers with a problem.

Poker (gaming) machine use was examined in considerable detail, including questions on myths and beliefs that poker machine players have about playing these machines.

Frequent gamblers (respondents who gambled every week or fortnight) were asked about issues that indicated problems with gambling, and about the impacts that gambling may be having on their life.



Gambling behaviours among people aged 16 and 17 years were investigated for the first time in a major population survey in South Australia.

### Comparison with 2001 survey

There were some key differences and some similarities between the 2001 and 2005 surveys, including the following:

- The sample size was increased from 6,045 in the 2001 study to 17,745 respondents, thus improving the reliability of the data obtained in the latest survey;
- The screening tool to identify problem gamblers in the 2001 study, the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS), was replaced with the more reliable Canadian Problem Gambling index (CPGI). The SOGS has only been validated on clinical populations whereas the CPGI has been used on general populations. The CPGI is considered to be a more conservative measurement of problem gambling. It has been used in other population based studies within Australia, for example, in Queensland and Victoria.
- The latest study also included a specific focus on gambling amongst young people 16 and 17 years of age. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Version IV, Juvenile Criteria (DSM IV-J) was used to identify problem gamblers within this age group.
- The questionnaire developed for the 2005 study was based on questions used in the South Australian prevalence survey conducted in 2001, Health Monitor surveys, and the Queensland Household Gambling Survey undertaken in 2001 (repeated in 2003).

### Definition of problem gambling using the CPGI

In 2005, the Ministerial Council on Gambling, through Gambling Research Australia, determined the following national definition of 'problem gambling', which has subsequently been endorsed by all States and Territories:

Problem gambling is 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.

Further to this definition, the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI) was recommended as the instrument for measuring gambling risk in Australian population surveys. The CPGI was used in this study. It identifies and classifies 'non-problem' and 'at-risk' (low, moderate and high risk) gamblers among the general population. This report has grouped moderate and high risk gamblers into the problem gambling category

---

\* Lesieur H, Blume S. The South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS): a new instrument for the identification of pathological gamblers. *American Journal of Psychiatry* 1987;144:1184–1188.

This fact sheet draws on the information presented in the report **Gambling Prevalence in South Australia** (DFC 2006), specifically **Chapter 1: Introduction** and **Chapter 4: Moderate and High Risk Gambling Among Adults**.

Copies of the report and fact sheets are available at: [www.problemgambling.sa.gov.au](http://www.problemgambling.sa.gov.au)