RGF Research Agenda 2021-2024

Office of Responsible Gambling

The Responsible Gambling Fund (RGF) recognises the key role that research plays in providing the evidence base to address gambling harm in NSW.

The RGF Research Agenda provides a high-level framework to guide development of relevant, rigorous and impactful gambling research over the three-year period 2021-2024. The research agenda aligns with the objectives of the Office of Responsible Gambling Strategic Plan 2021-2024.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The RGF Research Agenda aims to build an evidence-base for gambling harm prevention and minimisation that:

- informs improvements to policy and regulation

- evaluates and guides improvements to programs and support

- contributes to an informed public debate on gambling harm, increasing community awareness and understanding

- anticipates and keeps pace with emerging trends.

The RGF, through its research agenda, also aims to promote increased gambling research capacity, innovation, collaboration and cross-disciplinary approaches.

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RESEARCH THEMES

Based on the understanding that gambling harm is a complex public health issue requiring a holistic approach, the RGF Research Agenda 2021-24 covers a broad spectrum of themes, from studies on what works in prevention and early intervention, to research supporting effective regulation of gambling environments, practices and products, through to research to improve the effectiveness of support for those affected by gambling harm.

The priority themes for 2021-24 are:

1. Individual and community level gambling harm minimisation

This theme will strengthen the evidence base for prevention and early intervention initiatives, including systematic evaluations of medium and long-term program outcomes and impacts. Research areas of focus are:

- evaluating education programs and awareness campaigns

- evaluating local and community-focused prevention initiatives

- trialling and evaluating interventions tailored to the needs of vulnerable groups

- understanding community resilience building approaches and their contribution to addressing gambling harm.

2. Regulation of gambling products, practices and environments

This theme has a strong focus on supporting regulatory effectiveness to address gambling harm. Key focus areas include:

- evaluating regulatory responses in, or relevant to, Australian gambling settings

- assessing the impacts of gambling advertising and marketing

- analysing data to support evidence-based regulatory decision making, such as player and location-specific data

- trialling and evaluating venue and operator-based harm minimisation practices, including staff training programs, limit-setting tools and player messaging

- understanding the impact of specific gambling products and forms and their accessibility.

3. Gambling among vulnerable groups

This theme will build understanding of gambling and help seeking behaviour, as well as risk and protective factors for individuals and communities vulnerable to gambling harm. This includes understanding factors around resilience and peers, community and family. Research within this theme will focus on:

- young people

- Aboriginal people and communities

- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

- people experiencing gambling co-morbidities such as mental health issues, substance abuse, homelessness, suicide and domestic violence.

4. Emerging technologies and new trends

This theme will enable us to be future-focused and stay abreast of the rapid changes shaping gambling and the opportunities for harm minimisation. Key areas of focus are:

- emerging technologies and trends in payment methods, such as cashless gaming

- technological approaches to gambling harm minimisation

- new or growing forms of gambling, such as e-sports betting and skill-based gaming

- the convergence of gambling and gaming, such as loot boxes.

5. Measuring and understanding gambling prevalence and harm

This theme will help us to understand the impact of gambling on individuals and communities, to inform responses through harm minimisation programs, policies and regulation. Potential focus areas include:

- studying gambling prevalence and gambling harm in the NSW population

- developing more nuanced, location-based understandings of gambling prevalence, risk factors and harm

- examining causal relationships, risk and protective factors, and transitions between levels of risk, through approaches such as prospective longitudinal studies

- contributing to the understanding and conceptualisation of gambling harm, including improved tools for measuring harm.

6. Efficacy and effectiveness of treatment

As well as longer term research on treatment effectiveness, this theme will help us understand ways to assist those who may not currently seek professional support. Focus areas include:

- understanding help-seeking preferences, motivators and barriers

- trialling screening tools in non-gambling settings to support early intervention

- evaluating service options and treatment for addressing co-morbidities

- evaluating treatment and service responses for people affected by other's gambling

- evaluating the effectiveness of different treatment modalities, such as online and self-directed, for different cohorts

- medium and long term follow up studies to test treatment effectiveness over time.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The Office of Responsible Gambling will action the RGF Research Agenda though an annual Research Plan. The Research Plan sets the yearly priorities for funding of research projects that address the research objectives of the RGF.

A wide range of large and small-scale research activities will be considered, including research that builds sequentially on what is already known, data analysis, longitudinal studies, pilots and trials to test feasibility and longer-term evaluations of current programs and services to determine effectiveness.

A key driver of the impact of the RGF Research Agenda will be the translation of research findings into accessible insights, practical resources and applications that can be used to inform and support prevention activities, policy development and regulatory decision making, harm minimisation practices, and support and treatment services.

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