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Research – A summary of the latest Australian Institute of Family Studies research into gambling activity among teenagers

A useful start to this month's blog post is to outline the different parts of Commonwealth Government relevant to the National Self-Exclusion Register (NSER) and your bookmaking operations:

- Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) – Has regulatory responsibility over the NSER, the NSER Operator and bookmakers
- Department of Social Services (DSS) – Has policy responsibility
- Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) – Is the research arm of DSS and likely candidate to evaluate whether the NSER is effective at reducing gambling-related harm.

For this reason, we believe you need to take note of AIFS research because it will influence best practices that the ACMA adopt to enforce your self-exclusion obligations.

Their latest publication provides a snapshot of gambling among Australian teenagers¹. It found:

- One in six 16–17 year olds have gambled in the past year
- At age 16–17, around one in four boys (24%) and one in seven girls (15%) have played gambling-like games in the past 12 months (think Zynga Poker, Big Fish Casino)
- Some psychologists suggest that these games increase the likelihood of teenagers punting in adult life because simulated gambling normalises this behaviour early. A recent Senate inquiry into gaming micro-transactions for chance-based items heard similar views².

Insight: Health promotion messages

In our December blog, we analysed the NSER legislation as it passed parliament. The legislation sets nine new actions, five of which relate to changing your general approach to business. One of these is that your bookmaking operations will effectively promote the NSER to punters³.

Gambling by young people is clearly an issue that all governments care deeply about. Contemporary thinking among policymakers is focussed on ensuring that health promotion messages are tailored to the appropriate consumer demographics. In an environment where interactive wagering becomes an important and growing market segment, we anticipate that the NSER may be designed to push tailored messages to those demographics where gambling harm is most acute. In turn, this burden may cascade to you.

Australian Wagering Compliance encourage you to think about the sorts of proactive messaging and compliance needed to operate in this environment.

Two questions for bookmaking clients and stakeholders to provoke thinking:

- Question 1: How will you anticipate and respond?
- Question 2: How will the data and insights you already hold on existing punters change your response?

Notes:

1. Gambling activity among teenagers and their parents, Chapter 7 of the LSAC Annual Statistical Report 2018, Australian Institute of Family Studies (December 2019), pages 69-80
2. Senate Inquiry Report into Gaming micro-transactions for chance-based items, Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications – Parliament of Australia (November 2018)
3. Explanatory Memorandum for the Interactive Gambling Amendment (National Self-exclusion Register) Bill 2019 as circulated by the authority of the Minister for Families and Social Services, Senator the Hon Anne Ruston

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