

## ***PROBLEM GAMBLING VULNERABILITY: FOCUS GROUPS***

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Thank you for considering participation in this research project, which aims to examine the thoughts and beliefs that are associated with involvement in gambling activities. In particular, this study will explore why it is that people choose to take part in particular gambling activities (e.g., scratch tickets, lotto, racing, Tabarets and casinos) and the way in which ease of access to these particular gambling products influences the decision to participate. The information revealed during these focus groups will be drawn upon to develop some questionnaires, which will then be used in a larger scale study on gambling. It is hoped that this research will inform policy makers and industry groups about ways that gambling venues can be adapted to help individuals regulate their gambling activities. It is also hoped that the study will reveal information that can be used in the future to help identify the kinds of people who are vulnerable to developing a gambling problem and to assist these individuals to manage their use of gambling products.

Participation in this study involves taking part in a focus group, with 4 or 5 other individuals who currently engage in gambling activities or have done so in the past. We will be setting up groups of different types, e.g., all female, all from a specific cultural group, all young people, gamblers who admit to problems with their gambling, social gamblers, etc. It is expected that the group session will take approximately 1 hour of your time. The purpose for the focus group is to gather information and identify issues related to your thoughts, beliefs and motivations about why people make the sorts of gambling choices that they do. For example, what brings people of different cultural backgrounds (such as differing age, gender and country of origin) to particular gambling activities (such as casinos, sports betting and poker machines)? How does access to and location of different types of gambling venues such as pokies venues or horse racing influence your involvement and that of other gamblers? What strategies do people use to restrict their gambling activities? Do these strategies involve steering clear of gambling venues, or are there better ways to manage?

The format of the focus group will be a general discussion amongst participants and a researcher. The researcher will ask some general questions about your gambling activities. These questions are not intended to compromise your privacy or put you in any social or legal jeopardy. Instead, they will be related to your beliefs about gambling and strategies for limiting your gambling. They will not be about how gambling is financed or amounts spent. There are of course no right or wrong answers to any of the questions, and we ask that you be as honest as possible in your responses. This will ensure that the research is a valid scientific study.

During the focus group you will not be required to provide any personal details, such as your name or other identifying information. The data that is collected will be treated as strictly confidential. Should you choose to participate in a focus group, we ask that you also respect the confidentiality of other participants in your group. When the research is published in an academic journal, only group data will be reported, so that anonymity will be maintained. If we use any interesting quotes from the focus groups in our publications, identifying information will be removed.

If you initially agree to participate in this study, you are entitled to withdraw your participation at any time, and should do so if any feelings of discomfort arise. If this

research does raise issues which you would like to discuss with a professional or support service, details of a variety of free and confidential services are available (<http://problemgambling.org.au/help.php>). We will tape the interviews but you can ask that the tape be stopped at any time. After the sessions, tapes will be transcribed and any identifying information removed. At the conclusion of the study, tapes will be wiped.

If you have any general questions about the study, please feel free to contact the senior investigator, Professor Mike Kyrios, by email: [mkyrios@swin.edu.au](mailto:mkyrios@swin.edu.au) or phone: (03) 9214 8823. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, you can contact: Research Ethics Officer, Office of Research and Graduate Studies (H68), Swinburne University of Technology, P O Box 218, HAWTHORN VIC 3122 or phone (03) 9214 5218.