

United Call for Action on Gambling Harm in the ACT

A coalition of local ACT organisations has united in a shared commitment to address the pervasive and corrosive impact of gambling harm across the Canberra community.

Recent findings from the ACT Gambling Prevalence Survey reveal that approximately one in six Canberrans—an estimated 58,000 people—are affected by gambling harm. Alarming, 5.7% of adults report experiencing harm due to someone else's gambling.

The evidence shows that people who already face disadvantage are being most impacted.

Young men were most susceptible to gambling harm as a result of their own gambling activities. Notably, young women without tertiary education were identified as the most likely to be harmed by another person's gambling. Broader evidence continues to show significant harm among women, young people, migrant communities, and individuals facing co-occurring challenges with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

These concerns are the focus of a community roundtable being held in Canberra, bringing together voices from across the Territory to discuss urgent solutions.

While gambling harm has been raised in previous terms of the Legislative Assembly, the undersigned organisations urge Members to take more decisive and immediate action. This includes addressing the gambling activities that cause the greatest harm and implementing robust consumer safeguards.

We call on all parties and independents in the ACT Legislative Assembly to commit to tangible reforms. These should include:

- A legislated reduction in the number of electronic gaming machines (EGMs) over the next two decades to provide long-term certainty, including a commitment to reduce EMGs by at least 500 in each term of government.
- Introduction of harm reduction measures that target addictive design features in gambling products.

We further encourage Members to unite in a joint motion that demonstrates cross-party commitment and sets a clear timeframe for action within this term of government.

The community deserves transparency and accountability. We call on the Assembly to report publicly on progress to reduce gambling harm before the end of this term.

ENDORSED BY THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS

Canberra Gambling Reform Alliance ACT

Council of Social Service

Youth Coalition of the ACT

The Hope Project Australia

Marymead CatholicCare

Women's Centre for Health Matters

Relationships Australia Canberra & Region

Mental Health Community Coalition

Alcohol and Other Drugs Association of the ACT

Advocacy for Inclusion

Multicultural Hub Canberra

Care Financial Counselling

YWCA Canberra