



MEDIA RELEASE

NEW MIGRANTS AT RISK OF GAMBLING PROBLEMS

Embargoed to: Friday, 14 October 2016

Australia's strong gambling culture and the stress of migration are placing migrants and refugees at risk of developing problems with gambling, according to a discussion paper by the Australian Gambling Research Centre, based at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

The discussion paper, *Gambling in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Australian Communities* indicates that while people in these communities are less likely to gamble, those who do are at significantly greater risk of developing gambling problems than the general population.

The Director, Anne Hollonds said people from Arabic, Chinese and Greek communities gambled less than the general community but were far more likely than Australian gamblers to develop severe problems with gambling.

"It has also been estimated, for example that in the Australian Chinese community, problem gambling rates are significantly higher than in the general community," she said.

"International students are also at greater risk of experiencing problems with their gambling compared to Australian domestic students, despite gambling less frequently.

"A detailed examination of international students identified English-speaking males as the most at risk, followed by students from China and other Asian countries."

The Centre Manager, Dr Anna Thomas said beliefs about luck, chance and good fortune took on added significance in the gambling context.

"In some cultures, such as Vietnamese and Chinese, luck is linked with one's character and a display of good luck through gambling wins provides evidence of an individual's good character," she said.

"Individuals may think that gambling on lucky numbers, colours or days gives them a better chance of winning or that certain rituals give them an edge, leading to larger and more risky betting.

"Within the Australian context, people from Chinese cultural backgrounds have been shown to have stronger beliefs in their ability to control gambling outcomes, compared to the Australian community generally.

"Migrants overall are at greater risk of developing gambling problems due to factors including welcoming gambling environments, increased exposure and access to gambling and the stress of migrating to a new country.

"Many casinos, for example, offer culturally specific food, drink and entertainment and special games that are inexpensive and designed to make people from a wide variety of minority cultures feel welcome.

"These venues may be particularly attractive to those who have recently arrived from a country with a distinctly different culture or those who have not integrated well into the majority culture.

"Added to that is the high accessibility and wide variety of gambling activities in Australia compared to many other countries, especially Asian and Muslim majority countries.





Australian Government

Australian Institute of Family Studies

“Studies have shown that greater access to gambling increases the uptake and frequency of gambling as well as the likelihood of people developing gambling problems.

“For some communities, shame and stigma is attached to gambling which may increase migrants’ vulnerability as they try to keep gambling hidden from family and friends.

“Both mainstream and culturally-specific gambling help services are needed to support CALD gamblers and their families.

“New arrivals should also be provided with appropriate information about gambling to ensure that they understand the risks and how they may vary across different types of gambling activities.”

Media contact: Luisa Saccotelli 0400 149 901 or Aileen Muldoon 0419 112 503.

The Australian Gambling Research Centre is based at the Australian Institute of Family Studies; the Australian Government’s key research body in the area of family wellbeing. AIFS conducts original research to increase understanding of Australian families and the issues that affect them. Go to: aifs.gov.au

