

Analysis of Clients Presenting to Problem Gambling Counselling Services

July 1997—June 1998

Client and Service Analysis Report No. 4

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by the School of Social Work
The University of Melbourne
Parkville Victoria 3052
Australia

**Human
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Victoria



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Problem Gambling Research Program Team

Principal Investigator

Associate Professor Alun C Jackson

Principal Investigators

Dr Shane A Thomas

Dr Neil Thomason

Research Staff

Jennifer Borrell

Dr Beth R Crisp

Wei-ying Ho

Tangerine-Ann Holt

Serena Smith

Statistical Consulting Centre, The University of Melbourne

Dr Ian Gordon

Vicky Ryan

Lynda Ross

Problem Gambling Research Program Technical Consultants

Associate Professor Alex Blaszczyński

Associate Professor Margaret Hamilton

Associate Professor John Owen

Professor Jan McMillen

Professor Jerome C Wakefield

Dr Michael Walker

Telephone: +61 3 9344 9425

Fax: +61 3 9344 0999

Email: problem_gambling@social_work.unimelb.edu.au

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This Report is an analysis of client information collected by the eighteen Break Even problem gambling counselling services in Victoria between 1 July 1997 and 30 June 1998. The data is collected by the agencies using a common form of client data recording called the Minimum Data Set.

In evaluating the information contained in this Report, it is important to keep in mind that it contains information derived, in part, from self-reports of people who have presented to designated problem gambling counselling services, and from their service providers. One cannot make firm inferences from the data in this report as to the general community incidence of gambling and problem gambling behaviour or impact of problem gambling in Victoria. The clients of the problem gambling counselling services may not be typical of the total population of problem gamblers in Victoria. This is because many gamblers, as with other people with health and social problems, do not necessarily avail themselves of support services. However, the data are certainly representative of those clients presenting to designated problem gambling counselling services.

It is also important to note that changes in the rates and numbers of clients presenting to problem gambling counselling services over the last three years may reflect the impact of several different influences. These include:

- Higher rates of uptake as services become established. This is the growth phase following the establishment phase of both public and private ventures.
- Increased number and coverage of services now available.
- The underlying rate of problem gambling within the community combined with the propensity of problem gamblers to seek assistance for their problems.
- The impact of extensive media and information campaigns which have been conducted in Victoria.

Between 1 July 1997 and 30 June 1998, 3,149 new clients registered with Victoria's problem gambling counselling services with the majority (79.6 per cent) being people reporting problems with their own gambling behaviour. This is almost as many new clients as in the previous two years combined.

Demographic Profile

As in previous years, women comprised approximately half of all new clients who presented to Break Even for the resolution of problems associated with their own gambling. However, women represent the majority of people attending with concerns relating to another person's gambling. Consequently, they make up the majority of all Break Even clients. Approximately one-quarter (24.4 per cent) of all clients were born overseas, from a wide range of countries which is similar to the proportion of all Victorians born overseas as at the 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

The majority of Break Even clients were aged 30–39 (31.8 per cent of problem gamblers, 36.7 per cent of partners and others) or 40–49 (28.2 per cent of problem gamblers, 24.2 per cent of partners and others). However problem gamblers (24.0 per cent) were more likely to be aged under 30 than were partners and other clients (18.1 per cent).

The proportion of problem gambler clients who were divorced or separated was twice that of all Victorians, with divorce being more common for female than male problem gamblers.

Problem gamblers were twice as likely to be unemployed as all Victorians aged 15 and over at May 1998, although the participation rate¹ was similar. Nevertheless, problem gamblers with annual incomes of less than \$10,400 per annum were *under-represented* when compared to the income of all Victorians.

Gambling Activity

Problem gamblers presenting to services reported spending considerable amounts of time and money gambling. For many, gambling was funded at least partially from the household budget, although seeking other funds to pay for gambling was common. By the time the clients first presented to Break Even, the median debt for men was \$3,000, and for women, \$2,000.

The most common form of gambling behaviour was the use of electronic gaming machines (EGMs) (72.3 per cent). But as with previous studies, women were more likely to report this form of gambling than men. The next most often reported type of gambling was off-course betting at the TAB (13.0 per cent). No other type of gambling was reported by more than four per cent of problem gambler clients.

The Impact of Gambling Activity

Not surprisingly, gambling behaviour (89.1 per cent) was the most common reason given by problem gamblers for attending the problem gambling services. This is typically just one of a number of presenting problems, with financial (57.0 per cent), intrapersonal (56.0 per cent) and relationship (interpersonal) (49.2 per cent) issues also common. Although still pervasive, problem gamblers are seeking help earlier in their gambling 'career' with 44.3 per cent now presenting with three or less problems compared to 19.1 per cent in 1995–96.

The impact of gambling also affects many persons other than problem gamblers, although somewhat differently. Partners and others who seek assistance from Break Even do so primarily for relationship (61.6 per cent) and family (46.4 per cent) issues, and have less presenting problems than do problem gambler clients.

A considerable range of maladaptive behaviours was found to be connected with sustained gambling. Three quarters (76.2 per cent) of Break Even clients note five or more maladaptive behaviours which would indicate *persistent and recurrent maladaptive gambling behaviour*. Although a similar number of maladaptive behaviours was reported for both sexes, men were more likely to have committed illegal acts and risked relationships whereas women were more likely to report gambling as a form of escape from other problems.

The extensiveness of problems relating to a persons gambling activity makes the task of designing appropriate service responses difficult and complex, indicating a need for multifaceted and multi-modal interventions.

¹ The Australian Bureau of Statistics has defined the participation rate as being 'for any group, the labour force expressed as a percentage of the civilian population aged 15 years and over in the same group' (ABS, 1998: 33).

Service Activity

Between 1 July 1997 and 30 June 1998, 4,024 clients attended a total of 15,059 counselling sessions at Break Even services. In addition to these counselling sessions, Break Even counsellors recorded their involvement in 331 group sessions.

G-Line played a critical role in referring individuals to Break Even Services, although G-Line was more likely to be a referral source for problem gamblers than for partners and other clients. It is not known how those in the 'self-referred' category learnt about Break Even services, although some may have had prior contact with G-Line.

Partners and others were twice as likely to be attending an initial visit than were problem gamblers. For both groups, the focus of counselling changed as counselling progressed.

While individual counselling was provided to most problem gamblers (89.7 per cent), partners and others were more likely to be attending as part of a couple (36.0 per cent) or family group (10.4 per cent). Only one-fifth of all clients (20.7 per cent) were referred to other services by Break Even counsellors.

Supportive counselling was the most frequent modality used with clients irrespective of their status in respect of problem gambling. Cognitive behavioural approaches were twice as likely to be used with problem gambler clients than with partners and others. However, types of counselling vary between Break Even services.

Due to both the extent and nature of the presenting problems and the fact that half (51.9 per cent) of clients attended Break Even only twice during the 1997–98 year, a degree of unresolved problems is to be expected. As one might expect, problem resolution rates were much higher for problem gambler clients for whom no further contact was envisaged than for clients with whom further counselling sessions were planned. Interestingly, for partners and other clients, the difference in problem resolution rates between continuing and finishing clients was less marked.

Introduction

The purpose of the following report is to provide a detailed descriptive analysis of clients who attended Break Even problem gambling counselling services between 1 July 1997 and 30 June 1998. The analysis is focused on four particular features. These are:

- A demographic profile of service users.
- The gambling activity of service users.
- The impact of this gambling activity.
- An analysis of clients' use of the service and service activity.

The analysis includes an exploration of the findings, where possible in relation to other gambling-related research. The demographic profile is examined in relation to the Victorian population using Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data from the 1996 Census of Population and Housing and Labour Force Surveys.

As part of the standard operating procedures for the Break Even problem gambling counselling services, client details are collected at the point of registration, assessment and each client contact. This information is recorded by counsellors during (or immediately after) their contact with clients. These forms constitute the Problem Gambling Services Minimum Data Set (MDS). The MDS was established and implemented in 1995 to provide information for a range of purposes. These were:

- To assist the service provider with case management and assessment.
- To assist agencies in their service planning.
- To monitor, at a Regional and statewide level, trends in gambling activity and its effects.

This Report provides details of clients attending services at eighteen Break Even services operating from approximately 100 sites around Victoria between 1 July 1997 and 30 June 1998, as recorded on the Minimum Data Set collection forms and submitted to the Problem Gambling Research Program at the University of Melbourne for analysis. Where comparable data is available from previous years, this is included, but may differ slightly from what appears in previously published reports. This is due to corrections of anomalies in the database.

All clients' personal information is kept strictly confidential and the researchers who analyse the data see de-identified data only and no attempt is made to identify any client.

The figures presented below do not add up to all of the clients presenting at services. Answering questions is voluntary, and for those clients who choose not to answer a question, an answer is not recorded. In some instances missing data may reflect the primacy given to effective treatment and the creation of a therapeutic environment over data collection. Also, because of the change of data collection forms on 1 August 1997 (see Appendix B), some information was not asked of clients who attended in July. This is why the exact totals in tables vary slightly from table to table. These variations do not affect the results in any way. A system of rounding has been used which means that column totals do not always add to precisely 100 per cent. The potential for multiple responses to some questions means that the total number of responses is greater than the number of clients from whom this information was obtained. Cases with missing data on one or more of the variables reported in any particular analysis are excluded from that analysis.

The Minimum Data Set (MDS) has a number of limitations and the following points need to be considered when reading the findings:

- The information is based on client self-reports, which in gambling research to date has been found to be often unreliable and incomplete at times.
- Break Even clients may or may not be typical of 'problem gamblers' in the general population. The findings of the MDS cannot be extrapolated to a picture of general incidence and impact of gambling in the Victorian community. In the recently published VCGA report *Definition and Incidence of Problem Gambling, Including the Socio-Economic Distribution of Gamblers* (Dickerson, McMillen, Hallebone, Volberg and Woolley, 1997), the authors argue that five key data sets, of which the Problem Gambling Services Minimum Data Set is one, are required to provide a more accurate and balanced picture of the incidence of problem gambling in Victoria.
- The clients attending Break Even services are self-identified and may not include all the people who could be designated as 'problem gamblers'.

In this report, much of the analysis is of people we have called 'problem gamblers'. This term should only be taken as indicating that the person has presented themselves as being involved in problem gambling activity. It should not be taken as the authors agreeing (or disagreeing) with this self-assessment. Further, it should not be taken as agreeing (or disagreeing) that the person would necessarily satisfy the Department of Human Services or any other, criteria for problem gambling. Nevertheless, the authors do accept as a useful starting point the definition of problem gambling proposed in the recent Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority (VCGA) report noted above:

'Problem gambling' refers to the situation in which a person's gambling activity gives rise to harm to the individual player, and/or to their family, and may extend into the community. (Dickerson et al, 1997: 2)

The Report begins with an outline of the function of the Department of Human Services' Problem Gambling Services Strategy (PGSS) to which this research belongs.² An analysis of Break Even data follows, first providing a demographic overview of the client population, then exploring the gambling activity of clients and its impact, and finally examining the service use of clients.

Problem Gambling Services Strategy

The *Gaming Machine Control Act 1991* and its 1996 amendments provides for the establishment in the Public Account of the Community Support Fund, with the legislation requiring that 8.3 per cent of daily net cash balances from EGMs in hotels be paid into the fund. The Minister for Gaming, under the provisions of the Act, may apply for money in the fund for a range of purposes including:

- Funding of research by the Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority on the social impact of gambling.
- Sport and recreation clubs or programs and community services including financial counselling services, support and assistance for families in crisis, programs for prevention of compulsive gambling, programs for the treatment or rehabilitation of persons who are compulsive gamblers and government initiatives on youth homelessness.
- The promotion of arts and tourism (Auditor-General of Victoria, 1996:14).

² An overview of the policy and legislative context of gambling in Victoria during the 1990s which provides the backdrop to the recognition of a need for, and establishment of, the Problem Gambling Services Strategy is presented in Appendix A.

One of the triennial grants provided by the Community Support Fund was for the implementation of a Problem Gambling Services Strategy (PGSS) (see Appendix A). The Victorian government has implemented and developed such a Strategy since 1993, through a range of proposals by the Department of Human Services including the establishment of:

- Problem gambling counselling services.
- Problem gambling counselling services that are integrated with financial counselling services.

and

- A range of counselling and support services which address family issues which may arise as a result of problematic gambling, through the establishment of statewide family skills and Regional family resource centres.

The strategy comprises a number of important and inter-related components. These are to provide:

- Counselling services for those affected by problem gambling activity.
- Gaming liaison and community education officers in each Department of Human Services Region.
- Community education.
- Media campaigns.
- A problem gambling reference group chaired by the Department.
- G-Line, a free, 24-hour telephone counselling and referral service

and

- A research program to provide information regarding problem gambling in the community and inform appropriate service responses.

This research program is comprised of the following studies:

- Study 1: A Client and Service Analysis of Problem Gambling Counselling Services and G-Line.
- Study 2: A Longitudinal Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Problem Gambling Counselling Services, Community Education Strategies and Information Products.
- Study 3: An Examination of the Effectiveness of Various Theoretical Frameworks of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Medical Models which Inform Service Delivery Responses.
- Study 4A: The Impacts of Gambling on Women.

and

- Study 4B: The Impact of Gambling on Children and Adolescents.

The purpose of the first two research projects is twofold: to provide both client and service profiles based on research into individuals using problem gambling services and their utilisation of community and support services; and to provide the basis for future planning of prevention and education strategies for people with gambling related issues.

This Report has been prepared by a team of researchers who are undertaking Studies 1, 2 and 4B of this program.

Demographic Profile

Introduction

A considerable amount of research has been undertaken on the prevalence and incidence of problem gambling. Prevalence studies have shown that a typical problem gambler profile is male, under 30 years and not married (Ladoceur, 1996). Overseas studies have found the following cohorts to be over-represented amongst problem and pathological gamblers: male; non-Caucasian; not married (Abbot and Volberg, 1996; Volberg, 1994; Volberg and Steadman, 1989) under 30 years; unemployed (Abbot and Volberg, 1996) and to have lower education (Volberg, 1994; Volberg and Steadman, 1989).

The demographic profile of Break Even clients reporting as 'problem gamblers' provided in the following pages creates a quite different picture to the one from the studies above. Although more likely to be unemployed than the Victorian population overall, they differ from their overseas counterparts, in being older (in their thirties) and almost as likely to be female as male. Nevertheless, research data from service agencies in other jurisdictions where Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs) are readily accessible, in states, such as Queensland and South Australia, show an almost equal distribution of men and women in their 'problem gambler' client populations (Dickerson et al, 1997).

A number of factors need to be considered when accounting for this finding, particularly the difference in help-seeking behaviour between men and women. It is a general finding in other health and human service contexts that women tend to have a greater propensity for help seeking than men (Cockerham, 1997; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 1996). Furthermore, although the amount of time it takes for an individual to develop gambling related difficulties from a newly legalised form of gambling may be lengthy, recent evidence suggests that female players in particular may seek help within 1–2 years of beginning to gamble on a newly available product (Dickerson et al, 1997).

Demographic profiles of 'problem gamblers' drawn from overseas literature, unlike the present study, have often been based on in-patient and/or hospital based and/or substance abuse clients (Volberg, 1994; Taber, McCormick, Russo, Adkins and Ramirez, 1987; Greenberg and Rankin, 1982) and in each study the majority of the 'problem gamblers' were male.

Client Data

Between 1 July 1997 and 30 June 1998, 3,149 new clients registered with Victoria's problem gambling counselling services. As shown in Table 1, the clear majority of those presenting for services (79.6 per cent) were people who reported that they had problems with their own gambling behaviour. While the numbers of men and women presenting in respect of their own gambling issues was almost identical, women were more than twice as likely to present due to concerns arising from the impact of another person's gambling, most notably their partner. A comparison with ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing data which found that women constituted 51.4 per cent of all Victorians aged 15 and over, indicates that women are slightly overrepresented as a proportion of all Break Even clients (54.3 per cent).

Table 1: New Clients—Client Status by Sex

| Client Status | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Self-identified gambling problem | 1,223 | 1,233 | 2,456 | 79.6 |
| Partner | 129 | 307 | 436 | 14.1 |
| Parent | 23 | 50 | 73 | 2.4 |
| Sibling | 7 | 14 | 21 | 0.7 |
| Other relative | 12 | 37 | 49 | 1.6 |
| Friend | 11 | 17 | 28 | 0.9 |
| Work colleague or employer | 2 | 3 | 5 | 0.2 |
| Other | 9 | 8 | 17 | 0.6 |
| Total | 1,416 | 1,669 | 3,085 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 64

While the proportion of clients who present because of the gambling of others has almost doubled from 11.9 per cent in 1995–96 to 20.4 per cent in 1997–98, the more remarkable change reported in Table 2 is the sheer increase of client numbers. In 1997–98 almost as many individuals attended Break Even services as in the previous two years combined. This may reflect the large increase from 30 in 1996–97 to approximately 100 sites from which Break Even services are provided.

Table 2: New Clients—Client Status by Sex by Year of Registration

| Client Status | 1997–98 | | 1996–97 | | 1995–96 | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Self-identified gambling problem | 1,223 | 1,233 | 813 | 694 | 581 | 560 |
| Partner | 129 | 307 | 46 | 140 | 37 | 88 |
| Other | 64 | 129 | 24 | 70 | 5 | 24 |
| Total | 1,416 | 1,669 | 883 | 904 | 623 | 672 |

Age

As in previous years, women who present for resolution of problems associated with their own gambling are older than their male counterparts. However, as Table 3 indicates, the overall age profile of problem gambler clients has remained reasonably similar over the last three years.

When compared with the age distribution of Victorians aged 15 and over at the 1996 Census, problem gamblers are over-represented in the 30–39 years (31.8 per cent—cf 20.2 per cent of all Victorians) and 40–49 years (28.2 per cent—cf 18.4 per cent) age groups. They were under-represented in the under 20 years (0.9 per cent—cf 9.0 per cent) and over 60 years (4.1 per cent—cf 20.2 per cent) age groupings. They were consistent with the overall population in the 20–29 years (23.1 per cent—cf 19.5 per cent) and 50–59 years (11.9 per cent—cf 12.7 per cent) age groups.

Table 3: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Sex by Age by Year of Registration

| Year | Sex | Age Cohort (years) | | | | | | Total |
|---------|-------------|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|
| | | <20 | 20–29 | 30–39 | 40–49 | 50–59 | >60 | |
| 1997–98 | Male no. | 12 | 305 | 384 | 276 | 97 | 37 | 1,111 |
| | Female no. | 8 | 202 | 316 | 344 | 164 | 54 | 1,088 |
| | Persons no. | 20 | 507 | 700 | 620 | 261 | 91 | 2,199 |
| | Persons % | 0.9 | 23.1 | 31.8 | 28.2 | 11.9 | 4.1 | 100.0 |
| 1996–97 | Male no. | 8 | 227 | 290 | 174 | 72 | 16 | 787 |
| | Female no. | 5 | 123 | 205 | 195 | 95 | 27 | 650 |
| | Persons no. | 13 | 350 | 495 | 369 | 167 | 43 | 1,437 |
| | Persons % | 0.9 | 24.4 | 34.4 | 25.7 | 11.6 | 3.0 | 100.0 |
| 1995–96 | Male no. | 4 | 126 | 192 | 136 | 60 | 15 | 533 |
| | Female no. | 5 | 84 | 151 | 141 | 78 | 39 | 498 |
| | Persons no. | 9 | 210 | 343 | 277 | 138 | 54 | 1,031 |
| | Persons % | 0.9 | 20.4 | 33.3 | 26.9 | 13.4 | 5.2 | 100.0 |

The age profile of partners and others, which appears in Table 4, is different from that of the problem gamblers who present for counselling. Most notable is the fact that persons aged under 20 represent 4.1 per cent of partners and others compared to just 0.9 per cent of self-identified problem gambler clients. Furthermore, the proportion of clients in this age group has increased each year.

Table 4: New Clients, Partners and Others—Sex by Age by Year of Registration

| Year | Sex | Age Cohort (years) | | | | | | Total |
|---------|-------------|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|
| | | <20 | 20–29 | 30–39 | 40–49 | 50–59 | >60 | |
| 1997–98 | Male no. | 7 | 9 | 39 | 36 | 21 | 12 | 124 |
| | Female no. | 11 | 53 | 123 | 71 | 43 | 17 | 318 |
| | Persons no. | 18 | 62 | 162 | 107 | 64 | 29 | 442 |
| | Persons % | 4.1 | 14.0 | 36.7 | 24.2 | 14.5 | 6.6 | 100.0 |
| 1996–97 | Male no. | 0 | 14 | 17 | 15 | 16 | 3 | 65 |
| | Female no. | 6 | 41 | 59 | 50 | 32 | 9 | 197 |
| | Persons no. | 6 | 55 | 76 | 65 | 48 | 12 | 262 |
| | Persons % | 2.3 | 21.0 | 29.0 | 24.8 | 18.3 | 4.6 | 100.0 |
| 1995–96 | Male no. | 0 | 5 | 10 | 12 | 5 | 1 | 33 |
| | Female no. | 0 | 25 | 28 | 27 | 13 | 6 | 99 |
| | Persons no. | 0 | 30 | 38 | 39 | 18 | 7 | 132 |
| | Persons % | 0.0 | 22.7 | 28.8 | 29.5 | 13.6 | 5.3 | 100.0 |

Ethnic Background

Approximately one-quarter of clients (24.4 per cent) were born overseas, from a wide range of countries. This is consistent with ABS 1996 Population Census data, which found that 27.5 per cent of Victorians were not Australian born. As shown in Table 5, over half of those born overseas (61.1 per cent) were born in Europe.

To protect the very small numbers of clients born in many countries, the data in Table 5 for most countries has been aggregated into geographical Regions. Thus while it is possible that ‘problem gamblers’ from various countries may be over-represented, as is often suggested, comparison of the Regional data with Census data reveals Break Even clients to be similar to all Victorians.

Table 5: New Clients—Birthplace

| Birthplace | Persons no. | Persons % |
|---|--------------------|------------------|
| Australia | 2,299 | 75.6 |
| New Zealand | 47 | 1.5 |
| Polynesia | 8 | 0.3 |
| Other Oceania and Antarctica | 4 | 0.1 |
| Oceania and Antarctica | 2,358 | 77.5 |
| Europe and the Former USSR | 8 | 0.3 |
| The United Kingdom and Ireland | 178 | 5.9 |
| Southern Europe | 187 | 6.1 |
| Western Europe | 47 | 1.5 |
| Eastern Europe | 34 | 1.1 |
| Europe and Former USSR | 454 | 14.9 |
| The Middle East and North Africa | 55 | 1.8 |
| South East Asia | 73 | 2.4 |
| North East Asia | 30 | 1.0 |
| Southern Asia | 26 | 0.9 |
| North America | 11 | 0.4 |
| Southern America, Central America and the Caribbean | 9 | 0.3 |
| Africa (excluding North Africa) | 26 | 0.9 |
| Total | 3,042 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 107

Given that clients born in Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and North America comprised 83.3 per cent of all clients, the data presented in Table 6, which indicate that English is the main language spoken at home for 85.3 per cent of clients, is hardly surprising. While the remaining clients speak a wide range of languages, only 40 (1.3 per cent) required an interpreter. None of the 45 (1.5 per cent) clients who identified themselves as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders primarily spoke an indigenous language at home. The slightly higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients compared to all Victorians at the 1996 Census (0.5 per cent), may be due to outreach work that has been conducted by some Break Even services with Aboriginal communities.

Table 6: New Clients—Language Spoken at Home

| Language | Persons no. | Persons % |
|--|--------------------|------------------|
| English | 2,432 | 85.3 |
| Language Other Than English | | |
| Northern European Languages | 17 | 0.6 |
| Southern European Languages | 175 | 6.1 |
| Eastern European Languages | 95 | 3.3 |
| South West Asian and North African Languages | 39 | 1.4 |
| Southern Asian Languages | 10 | 0.4 |
| South East Asian Languages | 35 | 1.2 |
| Eastern Asian Languages | 39 | 1.4 |
| Australian Indigenous Languages | 0 | 0.0 |
| Other Languages | 9 | 0.3 |
| Total Language Other Than English | 419 | 14.7 |
| Total | 2851 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 298

Marital Status

Overall, half (50.6 per cent) of all problem gamblers are currently living as a married person (legally or de facto), with a further quarter (26.1 per cent) indicating that they have never married. However, there were considerable differences between the sexes in respect of marital status. Male problem gamblers (34.4 per cent) were almost twice as likely not to have married as their female counterparts (18.0 per cent). These clients were more likely to be widowed, divorced or legally married. The likelihood of being separated or in a de facto relationship was similar for both sexes. Further details about the marital status of problem gamblers can be found in Table 7.

A comparison of the marital status of problem gamblers with that of all Victorians as of the 1996 Population Census suggests problem gamblers are less likely to be married (41.0 per cent) than are all Victorians aged 15 and over (53.5 per cent). However, as the census data did not include the category 'de facto relationship', which 9.6 per cent of problem gamblers indicated to be their marital status, this may account for some of this apparent difference. Problem gamblers were also twice as likely to be divorced (12.7 per cent—cf 5.8 per cent of all Victorians aged 15 and over) or separated but not divorced (8.0 per cent—cf 3.2 per cent).

Table 7: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Marital Status by Sex

| Marital Status | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Never married | 416 | 220 | 636 | 26.1 |
| Widowed | 11 | 44 | 55 | 2.3 |
| Divorced | 123 | 186 | 309 | 12.7 |
| Separated but not divorced | 99 | 95 | 194 | 8.0 |
| De facto | 110 | 124 | 234 | 9.6 |
| Married | 447 | 551 | 998 | 41.0 |
| Other * | 5 | 2 | 7 | 0.3 |
| Total | 1,211 | 1,222 | 2,433 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 42

* Option on Pre 1 August 1997 MDS forms only.

The marital status of problem gamblers is substantially different from that of partners and others who present at Break Even services, of whom more than three-quarters (78.1 per cent) are living in a legal or de facto marriage. A comparison of Tables 7 and 8 reveals that partners and others are also much less likely to have never married or be divorced than problem gambler clients.

Table 8: New Clients—Partners and Others, Marital Status by Sex

| Marital Status | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Never married | 27 | 31 | 58 | 9.4 |
| Widowed | 1 | 7 | 8 | 1.3 |
| Divorced | 10 | 17 | 27 | 4.4 |
| Separated but not divorced | 11 | 27 | 38 | 6.2 |
| De facto | 17 | 50 | 67 | 10.9 |
| Married | 121 | 293 | 414 | 67.2 |
| Other * | 1 | 3 | 4 | 0.6 |
| Total | 188 | 428 | 616 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 18

* Option on Pre 1 August 1997 MDS forms only.

Household and Family Structure

The differences in marital status between male and female problem gamblers are reflected in their living arrangements. Whereas three-quarters (74.6 per cent) of female problem gambler clients lived with other family members (partner and/or children), only half (49.7 per cent) of the men lived with family. Living alone was far more common for male (20.2 per cent) than female problem gamblers (13.6 per cent), and more common for problem gamblers than for all Victorians aged 15 and over living in private dwellings at the 1996 Population Census. Of these, only 8.1 per cent lived alone. However, given that 48 men (4.2 per cent) and 16 women (1.4 per cent) indicated being homeless, in some instances these living situations may not be stable.

Table 9: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Living Arrangement by Sex

| Living Arrangement | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Couple with children | 379 | 459 | 838 | 34.6 |
| Couple no children | 161 | 190 | 351 | 14.5 |
| Family or couple, nfs * | 40 | 50 | 90 | 3.7 |
| One parent family | 17 | 212 | 229 | 9.5 |
| Group or share household | 206 | 92 | 298 | 12.3 |
| Lone person household | 243 | 166 | 409 | 16.9 |
| Other | 148 | 48 | 196 | 8.1 |
| Other ** | 7 | 4 | 11 | 0.5 |
| Total | 1,201 | 1,221 | 2,422 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 53

*** Option on Pre 1 August 1997 MDS forms only.

** Not living alone, family or couple or single parent family.

The living arrangements of problem gamblers presenting to Break Even services have changed somewhat over the past three years. Women presenting in 1997–98 are more likely than in previous years to be living in a single parent family and, like their male

counterparts, they are less likely to be living with a partner. Increasingly, both sexes are reporting living arrangements other than by themselves or with family.

Table 10: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Living Arrangement by Sex by Year of Registration

| Living Arrangement | 1997–98 | | 1996–97 | | 1995–96 | |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Family or couple | 580 | 699 | 476 | 470 | 477 | 470 |
| One parent family | 17 | 212 | 14 | 70 | 14 | 70 |
| Lone person household | 243 | 166 | 213 | 110 | 213 | 110 |
| Other | 361 | 144 | 94 | 34 | 94 | 34 |
| Total | 1,201 | 1,221 | 797 | 684 | 798 | 684 |

Not surprisingly, partners or others of both sexes were far more likely to be living with a partner and/or children (86.9 per cent), than were problem gambler clients. Moreover, only one per cent (four women, two men) reported being homeless at the time of registration. Further details of the living arrangements for partners and others are presented in Table 11.

Table 11: New Clients—Partners and Others, Living Arrangement by Sex

| Living Arrangement | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| Couple with children | 94 | 225 | 319 | 52.0 |
| Couple no children | 42 | 96 | 138 | 22.5 |
| Couple or family nfs * | 9 | 17 | 26 | 4.2 |
| One parent family | 6 | 44 | 50 | 8.2 |
| Group or share household | 13 | 12 | 25 | 4.1 |
| Lone person household | 14 | 16 | 30 | 4.9 |
| Other | 10 | 14 | 24 | 3.9 |
| Other ** | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0.2 |
| Total | 188 | 425 | 613 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 21

* ** Option on Pre 1 August 1997 MDS forms only.

** Not living alone, family or couple or single parent family.

An interesting change over the three years is that the proportion of partners and other clients seeking assistance who live with their partner is decreasing.

Table 12: New Clients—Partners and Others, Living Arrangement by Sex by Year of Registration

| Living Arrangement | 1997–98 | | 1996–97 | | 1995–96 | |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Family or couple | 145 | 338 | 59 | 181 | 36 | 95 |
| One parent family | 6 | 44 | 2 | 13 | 2 | 8 |
| Lone person household | 14 | 16 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 7 |
| Other | 23 | 27 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 188 | 425 | 69 | 208 | 42 | 110 |

Almost half (41.4 per cent) of all problem gambler clients report having one or more dependent children. This was a far more common occurrence for women (51.4 per cent) than men (31.4 per cent) than one would expect from their relationship status and living arrangements. Further details concerning the number of dependent children of problem gamblers are shown in Table 13.

Table 13: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Number of Dependent Children by Sex

| Number of children | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 0 | 820 | 589 | 1409 | 58.6 |
| 1 | 132 | 186 | 318 | 13.2 |
| 2 | 144 | 269 | 413 | 17.2 |
| 3 | 70 | 108 | 178 | 7.4 |
| 4 | 21 | 44 | 65 | 2.7 |
| 5 | 4 | 6 | 10 | 0.4 |
| 6 or more | 4 | 9 | 13 | 0.5 |
| Total | 1,195 | 1,211 | 2,406 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 69

Having dependent children was far more common for partners and others, with more than half of both of men (50.5 per cent) and women (59.6 per cent) having responsibilities for one or more children.

Table 14: New Clients—Partners and Others, Number of Dependent Children by Sex

| Number of Children | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|--------------------|------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| 0 | 90 | 167 | 257 | 43.2 |
| 1 | 19 | 76 | 95 | 16.0 |
| 2 | 43 | 108 | 151 | 25.4 |
| 3 | 23 | 51 | 74 | 12.4 |
| 4 | 6 | 8 | 14 | 2.4 |
| 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0.2 |
| 6 or more | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0.5 |
| Total | 182 | 413 | 595 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 39

Labour Force Status

Table 15 reveals that almost three-quarters (71.9 per cent) of problem gamblers were participants in the labour force and were either employed or looking for work. As in Australian society more generally, the participation rate was higher among men than women. However, with an unemployment rate of 16.9 per cent, this is double that for all Victorians aged 15 and over (8.5 per cent) as at May 1998 (ABS, 1998).

Table 15: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Labour Force Status by Sex

| Employment Status | Male no. | Female no. | Persons % |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Employed full-time | 647 | 312 | 959 |
| Employed part-time | 111 | 292 | 403 |
| Employed, hours unknown* | 40 | 32 | 72 |
| Unemployed | 187 | 107 | 294 |
| Unemployment rate | 19.0% | 14.4% | 17.0% |
| Not in the labour force | 206 | 452 | 658 |
| Not in paid employment * | 6 | 12 | 18 |
| Participation rate | 82.3% | 61.6% | 71.9% |

Missing data = 71

* Option on Pre 1 August 1997 MDS forms only.

As can be seen in Table 16, the participation rate for problem gamblers appears to have been increasing over the past three years. At 71.9 per cent for the 1997–98 period, this figure is similar to that of all Victorians aged 15 and over (73.7 per cent as at May 1998 (ABS, 1998). It is possible, however, that this apparent change is due to changes in how labour force data is collected by the MDS (see Appendix B).

Table 16: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Labour Force Status by Year of Registration

| Employment Status | 1997–98 | 1996–97 | 1995–96 |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Employed | 1447 | 778 | 628 |
| Unemployed | 295 | 135 | 90 |
| Unemployment rate | 16.9% | 14.8% | 12.5% |
| Not in the labour force | 681 | 569 | 402 |
| Participation rate | 71.9% | 61.6% | 64.1% |

A comparison between Table 15 and Table 17 shows that the participation rates for both male and female clients who are partners and others are almost the same as for problem gambler clients presenting to Break Even. However, the unemployment rates for partners and others are less than half those reported for problem gambler clients.

Table 17: New Clients—Partners and Others, Labour Force Status by Sex

| Employment Status | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Employed full-time | 115 | 126 | 241 |
| Employed part-time | 11 | 97 | 108 |
| Employed, hours unknown* | 6 | 14 | 20 |
| Unemployed | 11 | 14 | 25 |
| Unemployment rate | 7.7% | 5.6% | 6.3% |
| Not in the labour force | 36 | 157 | 193 |
| Not in paid employment* | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Participation rate | 79.9% | 61.1% | 66.8% |

Missing data = 44

* Option on Pre 1 August 1997 MDS forms only.

While there has been an increase in the unemployment rate of partner and other clients over the past three years, these rates, which are presented in Table 18, are still lower than that in the wider community.

Table 18: New Clients—Partners and Others, Labour Force Status by Year of Registration

| Employment Status | 1997–98 | 1996–97 | 1995–96 |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Employed | 370 | 162 | 93 |
| Unemployed | 27 | 10 | 2 |
| Unemployment rate | 6.8% | 5.8% | 2.1% |
| Not in the labour force | 198 | 102 | 57 |
| Participation rate | 66.7% | 62.8% | 62.5% |

As can be seen from Table 19, problem gamblers who are employed reported holding a wide range of jobs. When compared to all employed Victorians aged 15 and over, the occupational categories of problem gamblers were very similar in all categories except professionals (10.9 per cent—cf 19.0 per cent of all Victorian) and labourers and related workers (19.3 per cent—cf 9.7 per cent) (ABS, 1998).

Table 19: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Occupation by Sex

| Occupation | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Manager or administrator | 120 | 58 | 178 | 9.3 |
| Professional | 108 | 101 | 209 | 10.9 |
| Associate or para-professional | 70 | 105 | 175 | 9.1 |
| Tradesperson | 217 | 18 | 235 | 12.2 |
| Clerical or service worker | 176 | 399 | 575 | 29.9 |
| Production or transport worker | 121 | 57 | 178 | 9.3 |
| Labourer or related worker | 224 | 147 | 371 | 19.3 |
| Total | 1,036 | 885 | 1,921 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 554

Employed partner and other clients also reported a wide range of job types, but compared to problem gamblers are more likely to be employed in the categories of manager or administrator, professional and associate or para-professional and less likely to be employed as either production and transport workers or labourers.

Table 20: New Clients—Partners and Others, Occupation by Sex

| Occupation | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Manager or administrator | 27 | 25 | 52 | 12.1 |
| Professional | 29 | 42 | 71 | 16.5 |
| Associate or para-professional | 13 | 44 | 57 | 13.3 |
| Tradesperson | 38 | 14 | 52 | 12.1 |
| Clerical or service worker | 14 | 113 | 127 | 29.5 |
| Production or transport worker | 11 | 8 | 19 | 4.4 |
| Labourer or related worker | 19 | 33 | 52 | 12.1 |
| Total | 151 | 279 | 430 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 204

Where counsellors were aware of clients who had activities other than paid employment as their dominant activity, these were recorded. These activities may be alternatives, or recorded as an addition to, any paid employment. It is possible that the reported extent of involvement in activities other than paid employment is underestimated. The involvement of problem gamblers in these activities is reported in Table 21.

Table 21: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Dominant Activity by Sex

| Dominant Activity | Male no. (n=1223) | Female no. (n=1233) | Persons no. (n=2361) |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Voluntary work | 41 | 54 | 95 |
| Home duties | 19 | 478 | 497 |
| Student | 31 | 36 | 67 |
| Retired | 30 | 42 | 72 |
| Not currently looking for work | 243 | 197 | 440 |

The same data for partners and others is presented in Table 22.

Table 22: New Clients—Partners and Others, Dominant Activity by Sex

| Dominant Activity | Male no. (n=193) | Female no. (n=436) | Persons no. (n=629) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Voluntary work | 6 | 14 | 20 |
| Home duties | 5 | 176 | 181 |
| Student | 5 | 13 | 18 |
| Retired | 18 | 22 | 40 |
| Not currently looking for work | 29 | 56 | 85 |

Income

The self-reported individual income of problem gamblers are not confined to a particular income level and varies considerably from less than \$120 to over \$1,500 per week. Nevertheless, over half (56.6 per cent) reported incomes of less than \$400 per week. This is explained somewhat by the data in Table 29 which shows that 33.5 per cent of the problem gamblers were in receipt of pensions or benefits. A further 23.1 per cent of problem gamblers reported weekly incomes of between \$400 and \$599 per week. The lower incomes of women was not unexpected and reflects this situation in the wider community. Further details of the incomes reported by problem gamblers are presented in Table 23.

The income distribution of problem gamblers is quite similar to that of all Victorians aged 15 and over who provided details about their income in the 1996 Population Census:

- 1.9 per cent had income of \$1,500 or more per week
- 8.7 per cent received between \$800 and \$1,499
- 10.0 per cent received between \$600 and \$799
- 18.1 per cent received between \$400 and \$599
- 21.9 per cent received between \$200 and \$399
- 22.1 per cent received between \$120 and \$199
- 17.4 per cent had a weekly income of less than \$120.

Table 23: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Individual Income by Sex

| Income | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| \$1,500 per week or more (greater than \$78,000 p.a.) | 33 | 5 | 38 | 1.7 |
| Greater than \$60,000 p.a. * | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0.1 |
| \$800–\$1,499 per week (\$41,600–\$77,999 p.a.) | 106 | 33 | 139 | 6.2 |
| \$600–\$799 per week (\$31,200–\$41,599 p.a.) | 195 | 82 | 277 | 12.3 |
| \$400–\$599 per week (\$20,800–\$31,119 p.a.) | 289 | 229 | 518 | 23.1 |
| \$200–\$399 per week (\$10,400–\$20,799 p.a.) | 182 | 352 | 534 | 23.8 |
| \$120–\$199 per week (\$6,240–\$10,399 p.a.) | 210 | 220 | 430 | 19.2 |
| Less than \$10,000 p.a. * | 10 | 12 | 22 | 1.0 |
| Less than \$120 per week (less than \$6,240 p.a.) | 102 | 181 | 283 | 12.6 |
| Total | 1,129 | 1,114 | 2,243 | 100.0 |

Prior to 1 August 1998 the coding options for income were:

- Less than \$10,000 per annum
- \$10,000 to \$14,999 per annum
- \$15,000 to \$19,999 per annum
- \$20,000 to \$29,999 per annum
- \$30,000 to \$39,999 per annum
- \$40,000 to \$49,999 per annum
- \$50,000 to \$59,999 per annum
- More than \$60,000 per annum.

With the exception of the two income brackets—less and \$10,000 and greater than \$60,000—all previous income brackets were merged with the closest corresponding income bracket.

As may be expected, problem gamblers who were employed were more likely to have higher incomes than those not employed. As Table 24 indicates, one-third of employed problem gamblers (32.6 per cent) reported weekly incomes of more than \$600 per week, compared to just 1.9 per cent of problem gamblers who were not employed.

Table 24: Problem Gamblers—Individual Income by Sex and New Employment

| Income | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Employed | | | | |
| \$1,500 per week or more (greater than \$78,000 p.a.) | 32 | 3 | 35 | 2.6 |
| Greater than \$60,000 p.a. * | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0.1 |
| \$800–\$1,499 per week (\$41,600–\$77,999 p.a.) | 104 | 29 | 133 | 9.9 |
| \$600–\$799 per week (\$31,200–\$41,599 p.a.) | 193 | 75 | 268 | 20.0 |
| \$400–\$599 per week (\$20,800–\$31,119 p.a.) | 276 | 196 | 472 | 35.2 |
| \$200–\$399 per week (\$10,400–\$20,799 p.a.) | 109 | 211 | 320 | 23.9 |
| \$120–\$199 per week (\$6,240–\$10,399) | 21 | 51 | 72 | 5.4 |
| Less than \$10,000 p.a. * | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Less than \$120 per week (less than \$6,240 p.a.) | 9 | 29 | 38 | 2.8 |
| Not employed | | | | |
| \$1,500 per week or more (greater than \$78,000 p.a.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0.3 |
| Greater than \$60,000 p.a. * | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| \$800–\$1,499 per week (\$41,600–\$77,999 p.a.) | 2 | 4 | 6 | 0.7 |
| \$600–\$799 per week (\$31,200–\$41,599 p.a.) | 1 | 7 | 8 | 0.9 |
| \$400–\$599 per week (\$20,800–\$31,119 p.a.) | 10 | 32 | 42 | 4.7 |
| \$200–\$399 per week (\$10,400–\$20,799 p.a.) | 73 | 138 | 211 | 23.8 |
| \$120–\$199 per week (\$6,240–\$10,399) | 189 | 166 | 355 | 40.0 |
| Less than \$10,000 p.a. * | 10 | 12 | 22 | 2.5 |
| Less than \$120 per week (less than \$6,240 p.a.) | 90 | 151 | 241 | 27.1 |

* Option on Pre 1 August 1997 MDS forms only.

For employed problem gamblers, income also varies according to age, with the proportion having a weekly income of \$600 per week or more varying between a low of 23.4 per cent for 20–29 year-olds and a high of 38.1 per cent for 30–39 year-olds. Very few problem gamblers of any age who were not employed reported incomes of this magnitude.

Table 25: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Individual Income by Age and Employment

| Income | Age Cohort (years) | | | | | | Total |
|--|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|
| | <20 | 20–29 | 30–39 | 40–49 | 50–59 | >60 | |
| Employed | | | | | | | |
| \$1,500 per week or more (greater than \$78,000 p.a.) | | 1 | 12 | 15 | 4 | 3 | 35 |
| Greater than \$60,000 p.a. * | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| \$800–\$1,499 per week (\$41,600–\$77,999 p.a.) | | 15 | 62 | 37 | 13 | 6 | 133 |
| \$600–\$799 per week (\$31,200–\$41,599 p.a.) | 2 | 56 | 90 | 80 | 21 | 23 | 272 |
| \$400–\$599 per week (\$20,800–\$31,119 p.a.) | 2 | 123 | 146 | 124 | 36 | 43 | 474 |
| \$200–\$399 per week (\$10,400–\$20,799 p.a.) | 6 | 80 | 97 | 87 | 31 | 24 | 325 |
| \$120–\$199 per week (\$6,240–\$10,399) | 1 | 20 | 12 | 18 | 14 | 9 | 74 |
| Less than \$10,000 p.a. * | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Less than \$120 per week (less than \$6,240 p.a.) | 0 | 8 | 12 | 14 | 2 | 2 | 38 |
| Not employed | | | | | | | |
| \$1,500 per week or more (greater than \$78,000 p.a.) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Greater than \$60,000 p.a. * | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| \$800–\$1,499 per week (\$41,600–\$77,999 p.a.) | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| \$600–\$799 per week (\$31,200–\$41,599 p.a.) | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 8 |
| \$400–\$599 per week (\$20,800–\$31,119 p.a.) | 0 | 7 | 16 | 4 | 5 | 10 | 42 |
| \$200–\$399 per week (\$10,400–\$20,799 p.a.) | 4 | 37 | 49 | 56 | 22 | 46 | 214 |
| \$120–\$199 per week (\$6,240–\$10,399) | 3 | 74 | 78 | 79 | 54 | 67 | 355 |
| Less than \$10,000 p.a. * | 1 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 22 |
| Less than \$120 per week (less than \$6,240 p.a.) | 5 | 53 | 66 | 62 | 30 | 28 | 244 |

* Option on pre 1 August 1997 MDS forms only.

Like problem gamblers, partners and others also reported a diverse range of incomes. A comparison of this data which is reported in Table 26, with that in Table 23, indicates similar income levels between the two groups of Break Even clients.

Table 26: New Clients—Partners and Others, Individual Income by Sex

| Income | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| \$1,500 per week or more (greater than \$78,000 p.a.) | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0.4 |
| \$800–\$1,499 per week (\$41,600–\$77,999 p.a.) | 19 | 13 | 32 | 6.4 |
| \$600–\$799 per week (\$31,200–\$41,599 p.a.) | 40 | 24 | 64 | 12.9 |
| \$400–\$599 per week (\$20,800–\$31,119 p.a.) | 41 | 93 | 134 | 26.9 |
| \$200–\$399 per week (\$10,400–\$20,799 p.a.) | 19 | 75 | 94 | 18.9 |
| \$120–\$199 per week (\$6,240–\$10,399) | 18 | 57 | 75 | 15.1 |
| Less than \$10,000 pa* | 3 | 2 | 5 | 1.0 |
| Less than \$120 per week (less than \$6,240 p.a.) | 9 | 83 | 92 | 18.5 |
| Total | 150 | 348 | 498 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 136

* Option on pre 1 August 1997 MDS forms only

As individuals may have access to money in addition to their individual income, clients were also asked to provide details of their family income. For problem gambler clients this information is presented in Table 27.

Table 27: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Family Income

| Income | Persons no. | Persons % |
|---|--------------------|------------------|
| \$1,500 per week or more (greater than \$78,000 p.a.) | 109 | 5.4 |
| \$800–\$1,499 per week (\$41,600–\$77,999 p.a.) | 361 | 17.9 |
| \$600–\$799 per week (\$31,200–\$41,599 p.a.) | 341 | 16.9 |
| \$400–\$599 per week (\$20,800–\$31,119 p.a.) | 480 | 23.8 |
| \$200–\$399 per week (\$10,400–\$20,799 p.a.) | 377 | 18.7 |
| \$120–\$199 per week (\$6,240–\$10,399) | 276 | 13.7 |
| Less than \$120 per week (less than \$6,240 p.a.) | 77 | 3.8 |
| Total | 2,021 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 454

While the proportion of partners and others who had family incomes in the lowest and highest categories was similar to that of problem gambler clients, as can be seen in Table 28, partners and others generally had higher family incomes than problem gamblers. This is in some way explained by the differential living arrangements presented earlier in this Report.

Table 28: New Clients—Partners and Others, Family Income

| Income | Persons no. | Persons % |
|---|--------------------|------------------|
| \$1,500 per week or more (greater than \$78,000 p.a.) | 24 | 5.2 |
| \$800–\$1,400 per week (\$41,600–\$77,999 p.a.) | 121 | 26.4 |
| \$600–\$799 per week (\$31,200–\$41,599 p.a.) | 100 | 21.8 |
| \$400–\$599 per week (\$20,800–\$31,119 p.a.) | 97 | 21.2 |
| \$200–\$399 per week (\$10,400–\$20,799 p.a.) | 71 | 15.5 |
| \$120–\$199 per week (\$6,240–\$10,399) | 29 | 6.3 |
| Less than \$120 per week (less than \$6,240 p.a.) | 16 | 3.5 |
| Total | 458 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 176

Approximately one-third (33.5 per cent) of problem gambler clients were in receipt of a pension or benefit. This form of income was more common for women (37.8 per cent) than men (29.3 per cent). Approximately twice as many men (14.3 per cent) as women (7.4 per cent) were in receipt of the Newstart allowance, whereas women (4.5 per cent) were more than twice as likely as men (1.9 per cent) to be in receipt of other types of pension. These differences reflect the differential age distribution of male and female gamblers reported earlier in this Report. Consistent with the data in Table 9, which indicate that the overwhelming majority of clients from single parent families are female, women (12.9 per cent) are far more likely to be in receipt of a Sole Parent Pension than men (0.4 per cent).

Table 29: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Benefit Type by Sex

| Benefit | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Age pension | 22 | 53 | 75 | 3.2 |
| Disability support pension | 81 | 84 | 165 | 7.0 |
| Sole parent pension | 5 | 152 | 157 | 6.7 |
| Mature age allowance | 7 | 6 | 13 | 0.6 |
| Newstart allowance | 168 | 87 | 255 | 10.9 |
| Youth training allowance | 3 | 2 | 5 | 0.2 |
| Sickness benefit | 17 | 17 | 34 | 1.4 |
| Other | 41 | 43 | 84 | 3.6 |
| Total Number on a Benefit | 344 | 444 | 788 | 33.5 |
| Not on a benefit | 830 | 732 | 1,562 | 66.5 |
| Total | 1,174 | 1,176 | 2,350 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 125

As Table 30 indicates, the proportion of problem gamblers in receipt of a pension or benefit is lower in 1997–98 than for either of the two previous years. This is consistent with the findings reported in Table 16 which report a growing proportion of problem gamblers being employed.

Table 30: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Benefit Type by Year of Registration

| Benefit | 1997–98 | 1996–97 | 1995–96 |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Age pension | 75 | 50 | 41 |
| Disability support pension | 165 | 75 | 56 |
| Sole parent pension | 158 | 104 | 77 |
| Unemployment | 273 | 275 | 187 |
| Sickness benefit | 35 | 41 | 28 |
| Other | 86 | 47 | 133 |
| Total Number on a Benefit | 792 | 592 | 522 |
| Not on a benefit | 1,577 | 806 | 685 |
| Total | 2,369 | 1,398 | 1,207 |

Partners and others (24.3 per cent) were less likely to be receiving pensions or benefits than the problem gambler clients, and just as likely to be received by both sexes. In contrast to problem gamblers, among partners and others age pensions were as likely to be received by men (7.0 per cent) as by women (7.1 per cent). Further details of the pensions and benefits received by partners and others are presented in Table 31.

Table 31: New Clients—Partners and Others, Benefit Type by Sex

| Benefit | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Age pension | 12 | 28 | 40 | 7.1 |
| Disability support pension | 9 | 13 | 22 | 3.9 |
| Sole parent pension | 1 | 18 | 19 | 3.4 |
| Mature age allowance | 1 | 3 | 4 | 0.7 |
| Newstart allowance | 11 | 10 | 21 | 3.7 |
| Youth training allowance | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0.2 |
| Sickness benefit | 5 | 2 | 7 | 1.2 |
| Other | 1 | 22 | 23 | 4.1 |
| Total Number on a Benefit | 41 | 96 | 137 | 24.3 |
| Not on a benefit | 130 | 297 | 427 | 75.7 |
| Total | 171 | 393 | 564 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 70

Like problem gambler clients, the proportion of partners and others in receipt of a pension or benefit is less in 1997–98 than in either of the previous two years.

Table 32: New Clients—Partners and Others, Benefit Type by Year of Registration

| Benefit | 1997–98 | 1996–97 | 1995–96 |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Age pension | 40 | 7 | 7 |
| Disability support pension | 22 | 5 | 3 |
| Sole parent pension | 19 | 24 | 12 |
| Unemployment | 27 | 22 | 10 |
| Sickness benefit | 7 | 7 | 1 |
| Other | 24 | 7 | 31 |
| Total Number on a Benefit | 139 | 72 | 64 |
| Not on a benefit | 430 | 175 | 113 |
| Total | 569 | 247 | 177 |

Gambling Activity

Gambling Behaviours

Information gathered from the MDS Client Assessment Form summarises the type, frequency and intensity of problem gamblers' gambling activity. Clients were asked to provide information about: hours spent gambling and dollars spent gambling on most recent day of gambling by gambling type, and days spent gambling during a typical month by type of gambling.

While Table 33 shows that problem gamblers report involvement in a wide range of types of gambling, the most common by far is electronic gaming machines (EGMs), which are used by almost three-quarters (72.3 per cent) of all problem gambler clients. This has remained the most common form of gambling undertaken by Break Even clients over the last three years. The next most often reported type of gambling was off-course betting at the TAB (13.0 per cent). No other type of gambling was reported by more than four per cent of clients. Not one client was reportedly involved in forms of gambling over the internet. This could be explained by the fact that this form of gambling is quite new and that there may be a lag period between the introduction of this type of gambling and clients presenting themselves for problem gambling counselling in respect of this type of gambling.

Table 33: Problem Gamblers—Type of Gambling During a Typical Gambling Episode by Sex

| Type of Gambling | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|---|----------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| Lotto or lottery or pools or keno | 49 | 39 | 88 | 3.9 |
| Bet on races at TAB (off-course betting) | 280 | 16 | 296 | 13.0 |
| Bet at races (on-course betting) | 70 | 9 | 79 | 3.5 |
| Electronic gaming machines | 681 | 970 | 1,651 | 72.3 |
| Bingo | 8 | 56 | 64 | 2.8 |
| Bet on card games | 70 | 10 | 80 | 3.5 |
| Numbers | 37 | 4 | 41 | 1.8 |
| Internet or on-line gambling | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Other kind of gambling | 18 | 9 | 27 | 1.2 |
| Not known | 46 | 25 | 71 | 3.1 |

These findings concur with previous research that problem gambling is typically associated with particular types of gambling, such as: electronic gaming machines (EGMs), races, video draw poker and casino gaming (Blaszczynski, Walker, Sagris and Dickerson, 1997). The availability of EGMs in particular has been shown to have a strong association with problem gambling (Dickerson et al, 1997) and gamblers who regularly prefer racing and gaming machines have been found to be more likely to score in the 'at risk' categories in the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS) (Lesieur and Blume, 1987), the most commonly used screen for identifying problem gambling activity. Although surveys indicate that between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of adult Australians play lotto as a weekly habit with few, if any, manifest signs of associated problems (Blaszczynski et al, 1997).

These findings also lend support to research indicating that women are more likely to gamble on activities based on chance, such as Gems and bingo and men are more likely to gamble on forms of gambling based on skill, such as TAB and racing. (Walker, 1994).

Despite the majority of ‘problem gamblers’ reporting using EGMs on their most recent day of gambling, the following issues should be taken into consideration in interpreting the data:

- Staff in EGM gaming venues are now more aware of Break Even services as the result of the gaming industry’s support of Break Even, its community awareness or education campaigns and the introduction of Responsible Gaming policies in many venues. Thus they are more likely to be in a position to refer on ‘problem gamblers’.
- The high proportion of women playing EGMs Women ‘problem gamblers’ seek help more frequently and sooner than their male counterparts.

Although the amount of money and time spent gambling varies between different types of gambling, as Table 34 indicates, problem gamblers report spending considerable amounts of time and money on most forms of gambling.

Table 34: Problem Gamblers—Gambling Behaviour During a Typical Gambling Episode

| Type of Gambling | Median number of hours per episode | Median number of dollars spent per episode | Median number of episodes per month |
|--|---|---|--|
| Lotto or lottery or pools or keno | 1 | 20 | 4 |
| Bet on races at TAB (off-course betting) | 3 | 100 | 8 |
| Bet at races (on course betting) | 5 | 125 | 4 |
| Electronic gaming machines | 3 | 100 | 8 |
| Bingo | 3 | 30 | 4 |
| Bet on card games | 4 | 400 | 5 |
| Numbers | 4 | 250 | 4 |
| Other kind of gambling | 3 | 175 | 6 |
| Not known | 5 | 250 | 6 |

For problem gambler clients, their involvement in gambling can vary over time, and as Table 35 attests, Break Even attracts problem gamblers with wide ranging patterns of gambling. While almost one-quarter (23.1 per cent) presented to Break Even when their gambling was increasing, one-third (33.7 per cent) of problem gamblers had already decreased their gambling. This represented a total reduction for some, as they were not currently gambling.

Table 35: Problem Gamblers—Pattern of Gambling Behaviour by Sex

| Pattern of Gambling | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Ascending | 207 | 285 | 492 | 23.1 |
| Descending | 148 | 172 | 320 | 15.0 |
| Stable | 242 | 197 | 439 | 20.6 |
| Chaotic | 172 | 174 | 346 | 16.2 |
| Binge | 73 | 63 | 136 | 6.4 |
| Not currently gambling | 217 | 181 | 398 | 18.7 |
| Total | 1,059 | 1,072 | 2,131 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 170

Table 36 presents information on the current pattern of gambling for individuals involved in the two most common types of gambling: electronic gaming machines and off-course betting at the TAB. While the patterns for both groups are somewhat similar, clients who use electronic gaming machines are less likely to be not gambling (15.3 per cent) than TAB clients (18.8 per cent).

Table 36: Problem Gamblers—Pattern of Gambling Behaviour for Selected Types of Gambling

| Pattern of Gambling | Electronic Gaming Machines | | Bet at TAB (off-course betting) | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|--|--------------|
| | no. | % | no. | % |
| Ascending | 423 | 25.9 | 72 | 25.0 |
| Descending | 257 | 15.7 | 47 | 16.3 |
| Stable | 331 | 20.3 | 50 | 17.4 |
| Chaotic | 260 | 15.9 | 45 | 15.6 |
| Binge | 112 | 6.9 | 20 | 6.9 |
| Not currently gambling | 250 | 15.3 | 54 | 18.8 |
| Total | 1,633 | 100.0 | 288 | 100.0 |

Gambling Expenditure

The amount of money problem gamblers report having access to for gambling purposes is shown in Table 37.

Table 37: Problem Gamblers—Access to Money for Gambling Purposes by Sex

| Access to Money | Male no. | Female no. | Persons % | |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|
| \$1,500 per week or more (greater than \$78,000 p.a.) | 86 | 44 | 130 | 6.4 |
| \$800–\$1,400 per week (\$41,600–\$77,999 p.a.) | 88 | 82 | 170 | 8.3 |
| \$600–\$799 per week (\$31,200–\$41,599 p.a.) | 147 | 86 | 233 | 11.4 |
| \$400–\$599 per week (\$20,800–\$31,119 p.a.) | 202 | 194 | 396 | 19.4 |
| \$200–\$399 per week (\$10,400–\$20,799 p.a.) | 182 | 268 | 450 | 22.0 |
| \$120–\$199 per week (\$6,240–\$10,399) | 166 | 194 | 360 | 17.6 |
| Less than \$120 per week (less than \$6,240 p.a.) | 150 | 152 | 302 | 14.8 |
| Total | 1,021 | 1,020 | 2,041 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 260

Problem gamblers report funding their gambling from a variety of sources. While for many gambling is (at least partially) funded from the household budget, many individuals require additional funds to pay for their gambling. These may be obtained by depletion of resources either by using savings or selling assets, borrowing money and or engaging in illegal acts. The extent to which problem gamblers report funding their gambling in these differing ways is reported in Table 38.

Table 38: Problem Gamblers—Source of Funds Used for Gambling by Sex

| Source of Funds | Male no. (n=1088) | Female no. (n=1098) | Persons no. (n=2186) | Persons % |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Budgeted leisure money | 484 | 461 | 945 | 43.2 |
| Deducted from normal household expenditure | 847 | 924 | 1,771 | 81.0 |
| Savings | 493 | 528 | 1,021 | 46.7 |
| Asset sales | 128 | 69 | 197 | 9.0 |
| Borrowed money from family and friends | 373 | 322 | 695 | 31.8 |
| Borrowed money from other sources | 265 | 189 | 454 | 20.8 |
| Illegal actions | 141 | 88 | 229 | 10.5 |
| Other | 56 | 28 | 84 | 3.8 |

As Table 39 reveals, approximately two-thirds (67.6 per cent) of problem gamblers report funding their gambling from more than one of the sources of funds listed in Table 38.

Table 39: Problem Gamblers—Number of Sources of Funds Used for Gambling by Sex

| Number of sources | Male no. | Female no. | Persons | % |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 0 | 40 | 30 | 70 | 3.2 |
| 1 | 305 | 334 | 639 | 29.2 |
| 2 | 252 | 277 | 529 | 24.2 |
| 3 | 204 | 236 | 440 | 20.1 |
| 4 | 147 | 133 | 280 | 12.8 |
| 5 | 80 | 55 | 135 | 6.2 |
| 6 | 42 | 25 | 67 | 3.1 |
| 7 | 18 | 8 | 26 | 1.2 |
| Total | 1,088 | 1,098 | 2,186 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 115

The extent of gambling related debts is reported in Table 40 and shows that men report being far more in debt as a result of their gambling than women. This is consistent with the data presented in Table 38 that men are more likely to borrow money to fund their gambling.

Table 40: Problem Gamblers—Total Amount of Gambling Related Debt by Sex

| Debt | Male | Female | Persons |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| Maximum debt | \$2,000,000 | \$1,000,000 | \$2,000,000 |
| 75% quartile | \$10,000 | \$7,000 | \$8,250 |
| Median debt | \$3,000 | \$2,000 | \$3,000 |
| 25% quartile | \$800 | \$500 | \$600 |
| Minimum debt | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Mean debt | \$19,940 | \$8,135 | \$14,140 |

The Impact of Gambling Activity

Presenting Problems

In a specialist problem gambling counselling service it is hardly surprising that overwhelmingly the problem gamblers (89.1 per cent) are concerned about their gambling behaviour. Other presenting problems as reported by half or more of these clients were financial (57.0 per cent), intrapersonal (56.0 per cent) and relationship (interpersonal) (49.2 per cent) issues. While some problems were similarly likely to be reported by both sexes, there were some substantial differences between the sexes in respect of some problem types. Employment or work-related issues and legal issues were more frequently among the presenting problems for men whereas women were more likely to report relationship and family problems, and having physical symptoms associated with their gambling. Further details concerning the presenting problems of problem gamblers are shown in Table 41.

Table 41: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Presenting Problems by Sex

| Presenting Problem | Male no. (n=1,223) | Female no. (n=1,233) | Persons no. (n=2,456) | Persons % |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Financial issues | 692 | 721 | 1,413 | 57.0 |
| Employment and work related issues | 364 | 226 | 590 | 23.8 |
| Leisure use issues | 513 | 571 | 1,084 | 43.7 |
| Interpersonal related | 613 | 607 | 1,220 | 49.2 |
| Intrapersonal | 649 | 739 | 1,388 | 56.0 |
| Family issues | 431 | 530 | 961 | 38.8 |
| Legal issues | 155 | 95 | 250 | 10.1 |
| Physical symptoms | 126 | 186 | 312 | 12.6 |
| Gambling behaviour | 1,085 | 1,124 | 2,209 | 89.1 |

The data in Table 41 are not inconsistent with previous research, although comparisons are difficult in some cases, due to the varying categories used to describe gambling correlated problems.

Financial issues have been registered as an associated issue by people with gambling related problems in various studies. Of women in a recent Melbourne-based study 89 per cent reported financial issues as a problem connected with their gambling (Brown and Coventry 1997). Issues which could be categorised as ‘intrapersonal’ also featured prominently including ‘feeling out of control’, ‘guilt’, ‘health and well-being’ (which included depression) and ‘emotional, non-specific’.

‘Financial’, ‘family’ and ‘legal’ issues were most commonly registered as negative impacts for regular gamblers in a recent NSW study (Dickerson et al, 1997), though to a lesser extent than in this study. This would be expected in comparing self-identified ‘*problem gamblers*’ and ‘*regular gamblers*’. In particular, these findings correspond with the high frequency with which financial and family issues were registered during the period of the study.

Partners and others who seek assistance from Break Even services do so for somewhat different reasons than do problem gamblers, and it is hardly surprising that the most common reasons for attending are due to relationship (61.6 per cent) and family (46.4

per cent) issues. Intrapersonal (43.7 per cent) and financial (32.3 per cent) concerns were also common reasons for attendance, but less frequently cited than by problem gambler clients.

Table 42: New Clients—Partners and Others, Presenting Problems by Sex

| Presenting Problem | Male no. (n=193) | Female no. (n=436) | Persons no. (n=629) | Persons % |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Financial issues | 51 | 153 | 204 | 32.3 |
| Employment and work related issues | 12 | 21 | 33 | 5.2 |
| Leisure use issues | 7 | 19 | 26 | 4.1 |
| Interpersonal related | 120 | 269 | 389 | 61.6 |
| Intrapersonal | 81 | 195 | 276 | 43.7 |
| Family issues | 88 | 205 | 293 | 46.4 |
| Legal issues | 8 | 20 | 28 | 4.4 |
| Physical symptoms | 5 | 21 | 26 | 4.1 |
| Gambling behaviour | 38 | 94 | 132 | 20.9 |

There is no doubt that problem gambling activity has pervasive and harmful impacts on people's lives. As in previous years, most problem gambler clients report more than one presenting problem. However, the number of presenting problems has decreased over the years, suggesting that individuals are seeking help from Break Even earlier in their 'career' as problem gamblers. Almost half (44.3 per cent) of problem gamblers in 1997–98 presented with three or less of the problems listed in Table 41 compared to 19.1 per cent in 1995–96. The number of gambling correlated problems reported by problem gamblers for each year are detailed in Table 43. The extensiveness of problems relating to a person's gambling activity makes the task of designing appropriate service responses difficult and complex, perhaps giving support for multifaceted and multi-modal interventions.

Table 43: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Number of Presenting Problems by Year of Registration

| Presenting Problems | 1997–98 | | 1996–97 | | 1995–96 | |
|----------------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|--------------|
| | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % |
| 0 | 115 | 4.6 | 10 | 0.8 | 2 | 0.2 |
| 1 | 321 | 13.0 | 28 | 2.2 | 24 | 2.2 |
| 2 | 297 | 12.0 | 125 | 9.9 | 78 | 7.0 |
| 3 | 364 | 14.7 | 165 | 13.1 | 109 | 9.8 |
| 4 | 445 | 18.0 | 205 | 16.2 | 157 | 14.1 |
| 5 | 350 | 14.1 | 223 | 17.6 | 194 | 17.4 |
| 6 | 274 | 11.1 | 264 | 20.9 | 221 | 19.9 |
| 7 | 193 | 7.8 | 188 | 14.9 | 208 | 18.7 |
| 8 | 88 | 3.6 | 56 | 4.4 | 99 | 8.9 |
| 9 | 28 | 1.1 | 0 | 0.0 | 21 | 1.9 |
| Total | 2,475 | 100 | 1,264 | 100 | 1,113 | 100.0 |

Partners and others typically report fewer problems associated with gambling than do problem gambler clients, with 80.2 per cent reporting three or fewer problems in 1997–98. Table 44 details the number of gambling correlated problems as reported by partners and others.

Table 44: New Clients—Partners and Others, Number of Presenting Problems

| Presenting Problems | Persons no. | Persons % |
|----------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 0 | 41 | 6.5 |
| 1 | 199 | 31.4 |
| 2 | 154 | 24.3 |
| 3 | 114 | 18.0 |
| 4 | 81 | 12.8 |
| 5 | 34 | 5.4 |
| 6 | 8 | 1.3 |
| 7 | 1 | 0.2 |
| 8 | 1 | 0.2 |
| 9 | 1 | 0.2 |
| Total | 634 | 100.0 |

Maladaptive Behaviours

The Client Assessment Form measures the extent to which gambling has become problematic by using the DSM-IV criteria to measure the type, frequency and intensity of gambling behaviours and their adverse affects. Although the DSM-IV is a widely used psychiatric diagnostic classification tool and the list of behaviours presented in Table 45 was based on DSM-IV, these data should not be used to construct a diagnosis of problem gambling—more sensitive tests are required for that.

Table 45: Problem Gamblers—Maladaptive Behaviours by Sex

| Maladaptive Behaviour | Male no. | Male % | Female no. | Female % | Persons | Persons % |
|---|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Preoccupied with gambling | 657 | 60.1 | 682 | 61.9 | 1,339 | 61.0 |
| Needs to gamble increasing amounts of money | 601 | 55.1 | 581 | 52.6 | 1,182 | 53.8 |
| Has repeated unsuccessful efforts to control gambling | 845 | 77.0 | 803 | 72.1 | 1,648 | 74.5 |
| Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down | 604 | 56.1 | 627 | 57.4 | 1,231 | 56.8 |
| Gambles as a way of escaping | 908 | 82.1 | 1,022 | 90.7 | 1,930 | 86.4 |
| After losing money, chases losses | 920 | 83.9 | 867 | 77.8 | 1,787 | 80.8 |
| Lies to family members, therapist or others | 845 | 77.7 | 854 | 76.8 | 1,699 | 77.3 |
| Has committed illegal acts | 274 | 25.3 | 162 | 14.8 | 436 | 20.0 |
| Has jeopardised relationships, job, education, etc. | 761 | 69.3 | 535 | 48.3 | 1,296 | 58.8 |
| Relies on others to provide money | 671 | 61.6 | 605 | 55.0 | 1,276 | 58.3 |

Between January and June 1996 G-Line, a gambling specific telephone counselling and referral service, registered the most common reasons for contact as 'expenditure' and 'relationship'. Boredom and loneliness were registered as motivating factors for women with gambling issues (Brown and Coventry, 1997). This corresponds with a finding of the present study that women primarily gamble as a way of escape, whereas men were much more likely to have committed illegal acts or to have jeopardised relationships, jobs, education, etc.

When compared with Table 38, which revealed illegal actions to be a source of funding for 10.5 per cent of problem gamblers, the DSM-IV data revealed twice as many gamblers (20.0 per cent) had committed illegal acts which were associated with their gambling. The apparent discrepancy may be explained by the fact that Table 38 reports *current* sources of money as a result of illegal actions, whereas DSM-IV asks if clients have *ever* committed illegal acts associated with their gambling.

As Table 46 demonstrates, the extent to which maladaptive behaviours manifest themselves also varies according to the type of gambling. Comparing those who gamble on electronic gaming machines to those who gamble at the TAB, the TAB clients were more likely to report being preoccupied with gambling, chasing losses, relying on others for money and having jeopardised relationships, jobs, education, etc., than EGM users. EGM users were more likely to report gambling as a form of escape.

Table 46: Problem Gamblers—Maladaptive Behaviours by Selected Types of Gambling

| Maladaptive Behaviour | Electronic Gaming Machines | | Bet at TAB (off-course betting) | |
|---|----------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|
| | no. | % | no. | % |
| Preoccupied with gambling | 982 | 60.9 | 204 | 68.7 |
| Needs to gamble increasing amounts of money | 894 | 55.4 | 172 | 60.8 |
| Has repeated unsuccessful efforts to control gambling | 1196 | 73.8 | 227 | 77.7 |
| Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down | 912 | 57.1 | 170 | 60.3 |
| Gambles as a way of escaping | 1471 | 89.2 | 243 | 83.5 |
| After losing money, chases losses | 1330 | 81.8 | 252 | 87.2 |
| Lies to family members, therapist or others | 1282 | 79.4 | 233 | 82.6 |
| Has committed illegal acts | 275 | 17.2 | 94 | 33.2 |
| Has jeopardised relationships, job, education, etc. | 893 | 55.0 | 210 | 73.9 |
| Relies on others to provide money | 936 | 58.1 | 196 | 69.0 |

If five or more of the maladaptive behaviours are present, and no other psychiatric condition is present, an individual meets the DSM-IV criteria to be classified as a pathological gambler. Although the appropriateness of this criteria is open to question (Dickerson et al, 1997), the fact that three-quarters (76.2 per cent) of problem gamblers attending Break Even report five or more of these behaviours, suggests gambling has become a highly problematic behaviour by the time clients attend Break Even.

Therefore, even though Table 43 indicated that the number of presenting problems has been decreasing, the behaviour itself is still very problematic.

Table 47: Problem Gamblers—Number of Maladaptive Behaviours by Sex

| Maladaptive Behaviour | Male | Male | Female | Female | Persons | Persons |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % |
| 0 | 9 | 0.9 | 11 | 1.0 | 20 | 1.0 |
| 1 | 18 | 1.8 | 26 | 2.5 | 44 | 2.1 |
| 2 | 31 | 3.0 | 52 | 4.9 | 83 | 4.0 |
| 3 | 64 | 6.2 | 87 | 8.2 | 151 | 7.2 |
| 4 | 94 | 9.1 | 104 | 9.9 | 198 | 9.5 |
| 5 | 111 | 10.8 | 131 | 12.4 | 242 | 11.6 |
| 6 | 153 | 14.9 | 165 | 15.6 | 318 | 15.3 |
| 7 | 167 | 16.2 | 160 | 15.2 | 327 | 15.7 |
| 8 | 170 | 16.5 | 147 | 13.9 | 317 | 15.2 |
| 9 | 144 | 14.0 | 124 | 11.8 | 268 | 12.9 |
| 10 | 67 | 6.5 | 48 | 4.5 | 115 | 5.5 |
| Total | 1,028 | 100 | 1,055 | 100 | 2,083 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 218

As can be seen in Table 48, the proportion of gamblers reporting five or more maladaptive behaviours has decreased slightly from previous years, from 81.7 per cent in 1995–96.

Table 48: Problem Gamblers—Number of Maladaptive Behaviours by Year of Assessment

| Maladaptive Behaviours | 1997–98 | | 1996–97 | | 1995–96 | |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % |
| 0 | 20 | 1.0 | 14 | 1.1 | 7 | 0.6 |
| 1 | 44 | 2.1 | 31 | 2.4 | 21 | 1.9 |
| 2 | 83 | 4.0 | 62 | 4.8 | 28 | 2.5 |
| 3 | 153 | 7.3 | 109 | 8.5 | 59 | 5.4 |
| 4 | 199 | 9.5 | 123 | 9.6 | 86 | 7.8 |
| 5 | 247 | 11.8 | 164 | 12.8 | 140 | 12.7 |
| 6 | 322 | 15.3 | 193 | 15.0 | 186 | 16.9 |
| 7 | 327 | 15.6 | 218 | 17.0 | 202 | 18.3 |
| 8 | 321 | 15.3 | 190 | 14.8 | 174 | 15.8 |
| 9 | 269 | 12.8 | 111 | 8.7 | 133 | 12.1 |
| 10 | 116 | 5.5 | 68 | 5.3 | 65 | 5.9 |
| Total | 2,101 | 100.0 | 1,283 | 100.0 | 1,101 | 100.0 |

Service Activity

Referral Source

The routes by which people get to problem gambling counselling services are quite varied. Some problem gambler clients (6.8 per cent of men, 4.3 per cent of women) attend Break Even services to fulfil legal orders that they receive counselling for issues associated with their gambling. While the majority may not have a legal requirement to attend, pressure from significant others to seek help is not uncommon. In fact, 12.6 per cent of problem gamblers cited family and friends as a source of referral. However, the most common source of referral to Break Even mentioned by problem gambler clients was the telephone counselling service G-Line. G-Line contributed to the referral of one-third of all new clients (37.1 per cent). It is interesting to note that, given the high incidence of financial problems and some attempts to integrate problem gambling counselling with financial counselling services, only 1.3 per cent of clients were referred to Break Even by financial counsellors.

One-quarter (28.8 per cent) of clients were reportedly self-referred. This concept of self-referral is a difficult one. While clients may be urged by others to seek help for their gambling associated problems, unless an actual referral is made, the client is regarded as self-referred. Self-referral data, therefore, should not be taken in itself as evidence of insight or motivation. Conversely, if a client self-refers to an agency, and that agency subsequently advises that Break Even is a more suitable agency to deal with the client's problem, then a referral from another health or welfare service is recorded, even though the client initiated the original contact. The sources of referral for problem gambler clients are presented in detail in Table 49.

Table 49: New Clients—Problem Gamblers, Source of Referral by Sex

| Source of Referral | Male no. (n=1,223) | Female no. (n=1,233) | Persons no. (n=2,456) | Persons % |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Self-referral | 301 | 404 | 705 | 28.5 |
| Family or friends | 167 | 144 | 311 | 12.6 |
| Community agency | 66 | 70 | 136 | 5.5 |
| Media | 86 | 107 | 193 | 7.8 |
| Self-help group | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Gamblers anonymous | 18 | 6 | 24 | 1.0 |
| Other client of problem gambling service | 3 | 11 | 14 | 0.6 |
| Problem gambling service staff | 8 | 4 | 12 | 0.5 |
| G-Line | 471 | 449 | 920 | 37.1 |
| Other therapist | 22 | 28 | 50 | 2.0 |
| Legal service | 29 | 13 | 42 | 1.7 |
| Health service | 32 | 42 | 74 | 3.0 |
| Financial counsellor | 17 | 16 | 33 | 1.3 |
| Court order or correctional system | 54 | 20 | 74 | 3.0 |
| Other | 60 | 49 | 109 | 4.4 |

G-Line, self-referral and family and friends were also the most commonly cited sources of referral to Break Even for partners and other clients. However, family and friends (20.6 per cent) were more likely and G-Line (26.3 per cent) was less likely to have been the source of referral than for problem gambler clients. Table 50 details the sources of referral for partners and other clients.

Table 50: New Clients—Partners and Others, Source of Referral by Sex

| Source of Referral | Male no. (n=193) | Female no. (n=436) | Persons no. (n=629) | Persons % |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Self-referral | 56 | 140 | 196 | 31.1 |
| Family or friends | 49 | 81 | 130 | 20.6 |
| Community agency | 7 | 20 | 27 | 4.3 |
| Media | 12 | 34 | 46 | 7.3 |
| Self-help group | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0.3 |
| Gamblers anonymous | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0.2 |
| Other client of problem gambling service | 11 | 13 | 24 | 3.8 |
| Problem gambling service staff | 1 | 6 | 7 | 1.1 |
| G-Line | 41 | 125 | 166 | 26.3 |
| Other therapist | 8 | 7 | 15 | 2.4 |
| Legal service | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0.3 |
| Health service | 5 | 11 | 16 | 2.5 |
| Financial counsellor | 3 | 1 | 4 | 0.6 |
| Court order or correctional system | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0.3 |
| Other | 7 | 16 | 23 | 3.6 |

Client Contacts

Between 1 July 1997 and 30 June 1998, 4,024 clients attended a total of 15,059 counselling sessions. This is substantially more clients than accounted for by the 3,149 new client registrations, but includes contacts with clients who were first registered prior to 1 July 1997. Also included are contacts with unregistered clients, which may occur where client contact ceased prior to registration details being obtained. In addition to these counselling sessions with individuals, couples or families, Break Even counsellors recorded their involvement in 331 group sessions. However, unless indicated otherwise, data about client contacts does not include group sessions.

Details relating to the nature of the last visit during the 1997–98 year are presented in Table 51. This reveals that partners and others (44.3 per cent) were twice as likely to be new clients on an initial visit than were problem gamblers who were far more likely to be attending a follow-up session. Re-presentation rates were similar for both groups, as was attending for a planned final visit.

Table 51: All Clients—Nature of Last Contact by Client Status

| Nature of Contact | Problem gamblers | | Partners and others | | Persons | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % |
| Initial visit—new client | 571 | 22.5 | 274 | 44.3 | 845 | 26.8 |
| Initial visit—re-presentation | 81 | 3.2 | 23 | 3.7 | 104 | 3.3 |
| Follow-up visit | 1669 | 65.8 | 289 | 46.8 | 1958 | 62.1 |
| Planned final visit | 167 | 6.6 | 27 | 4.4 | 194 | 6.2 |
| Did not attend * | 47 | 1.9 | 5 | 0.8 | 52 | 1.6 |
| Total | 2,535 | 100.0 | 618 | 100.0 | 3,153 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 871

* Option on Pre 1 August 1997 MDS forms only.

Although the vast majority (86.5 per cent) of client contacts are scheduled, partners and others (18.4 per cent) were more likely to have unscheduled contacts with counsellors than problem gamblers (12.2 per cent), and more than twice as likely to have an unscheduled contact arising out of an emergency.

Table 52: All Clients—Type of Contact at Last Contact by Client Status

| Type of Contact | Problem gamblers | | Partners and others | | Persons | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % |
| Scheduled contact | 1,975 | 87.8 | 471 | 81.6 | 2,446 | 86.5 |
| Unscheduled non-emergency contact | 230 | 10.2 | 76 | 13.2 | 306 | 10.8 |
| Unscheduled emergency contact | 45 | 2.0 | 30 | 5.2 | 75 | 2.7 |
| Total | 2,250 | 100.0 | 577 | 100.0 | 2,827 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 1,197

Clearly there is wide variation in the number of clients serviced by each agency. This variation reflects the fact that there are differences in the population served by each agency and the amount of funding received by each agency to provide for a Break Even service. Although all of the agencies were funded for the full year between 1 July 1997 and 30 June 1998, some services operated for only part of the year between 1 July 1996 and 30 June 1997. This explains, in part, why increases in the numbers of clients serviced was much larger for some agencies than for others.

Table 53: Number of Cases Registered and Assessed for Each Agency by Year

| Service name | Cases Registered | | Cases Assessed | |
|--|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| | 1997–98 | 1996–97 | 1997–98 | 1996–97 |
| Banyule Community Health Service | 537 | 228 | 370 | 122 |
| Bethany Family Support | 153 | 105 | 130 | 93 |
| Bendigo Community Health Service | 124 | 73 | 106 | 59 |
| Brimbank Community Health Service | 279 | 126 | 243 | 143 |
| Colac Community Health Service | 12 | 12 | 9 | 12 |
| East Bentleigh Community Health Centre | 546 | 303 | 417 | 263 |
| Gippsland Family Services | 180 | 125 | 119 | 85 |
| Goulburn Valley Community Health Service | 93 | 17 | 46 | 13 |
| Mallee Family Care | 83 | 50 | 60 | 39 |
| Maroondah Social and Community Health Centre | 453 | 201 | 310 | 182 |
| Mitchell Community Health Service | 40 | 17 | 24 | 17 |
| Palm Lodge Rehabilitation Centre | 20 | 28 | 15 | 22 |
| Relationships Australia | 133 | 88 | 79 | 61 |
| Salvation Army | 122 | 165 | 108 | 106 |
| South West Community Care | 68 | 30 | 37 | 20 |
| Upper Hume Community Health Service | 106 | 63 | 51 | 56 |
| Victorian Relief Committee | 159 | 168 | 129 | 143 |
| Western Region Alcohol and Drug Centre | 40 | 16 | 48 | 14 |
| Total | 3,148 | 1,815 | 2,301 | 1,450 |

Data pertaining to overall number of client contacts (individual and group sessions) is presented in Table 54. As with the previous table, any interpretation must take into account the fact that not all agencies were funded for all of the 1996–97 year.

Table 54: Total Number of Client Contacts—Including Group Contacts) for Each Agency by Year

| Service name | 1997–98 | | 1996–97 | |
|--|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | no. | % | no. | % |
| Banyule Community Health Service | 1,639 | 10.6 | 2,048 | 15.7 |
| Bethany Family Support | 623 | 4.0 | 710 | 5.4 |
| Bendigo Community Health Service | 997 | 6.5 | 600 | 4.6 |
| Brimbank Community Health Service | 1,213 | 7.9 | 879 | 6.7 |
| Colac Community Health Service | 88 | 0.6 | 115 | 0.9 |
| East Bentleigh Community Health Centre | 3212 | 20.9 | 2,654 | 20.3 |
| Gippsland Family Services | 870 | 5.7 | 757 | 5.8 |
| Goulburn Valley Community Health Service | 479 | 3.1 | 81 | 0.6 |
| Mallee Family Care | 385 | 2.5 | 315 | 2.4 |
| Maroondah Social and Community Health Centre | 2,090 | 13.6 | 1,321 | 10.1 |
| Mitchell Community Health Service | 300 | 1.9 | 98 | 0.8 |
| Palm Lodge Rehabilitation Centre | 217 | 1.4 | 259 | 2.0 |
| Relationships Australia | 685 | 4.5 | 628 | 4.8 |
| Salvation Army | 681 | 4.4 | 818 | 6.3 |
| South West Community Care | 229 | 1.5 | 158 | 1.2 |
| Upper Hume Community Health Service | 421 | 2.7 | 422 | 3.2 |
| Victorian Relief Committee | 1,106 | 7.2 | 1,097 | 8.4 |
| Western Region Alcohol and Drug Centre | 155 | 1.0 | 104 | 0.8 |
| Total | 15,390 | 100.0 | 13,064 | 100.0 |

Service Inputs

Whereas most problem gamblers (89.7 per cent) are seen on their own, almost half (46.4 per cent) of the partners and others who receive counselling from a Break Even service are treated as part of a couple or family. Interestingly, twice as many partners and others (60) than problem gamblers (27) reported attending a family session at their last contact with Break Even. This raises the question of whether families are being treated without the problem gambler or whether problem gamblers, having attended a session of family counselling, then continue contact with Break Even in individual counselling. Further details about the type of intervention at last contact may be found in Table 55.

Table 55: All Clients—Type of Intervention at Last Contact by Client Status

| Type of Intervention | Problem Gamblers | | Partners and Others | | Persons | |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % |
| Individual | 2,011 | 89.7 | 305 | 53.0 | 2,316 | 82.2 |
| Couple | 205 | 9.1 | 207 | 36.0 | 412 | 14.6 |
| Family | 27 | 1.2 | 60 | 10.4 | 87 | 3.1 |
| Self-help options | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 0.5 | 3 | 0.1 |
| Total | 2,243 | 100.0 | 575 | 100.0 | 2,818 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 1206

Problem gamblers who attend for counselling are treated with a variety of techniques by Break Even counsellors, the most common being supportive counselling (60.2 per cent) or cognitive behavioural approaches (32.6 per cent). Interestingly, although as the

previous table revealed, only 10.3 per cent had attended the last counselling session as part of a couple or family, systemic therapies, which are used in dealing with family or relationship issues were reportedly used in 19.4 per cent of last counselling sessions. As Table 56 shows, the modes of counselling used with problem gamblers were similar for both sexes.

Table 56: Problem Gamblers—Counselling Modes at Last Contact by Sex

| Counselling Mode | Male | Female | Persons | |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------|
| | (n=1,282) | (n=1,283) | (n=2,565) | |
| | no. | no. | no. | % |
| Assessment or referral | 323 | 292 | 615 | 24.0 |
| Systemic therapies, structural strategic family therapy, psychodrama, etc. | 257 | 241 | 498 | 19.4 |
| Supportive counselling | 744 | 801 | 1,545 | 60.2 |
| Psychodynamic therapies, use of transference | 12 | 22 | 34 | 1.3 |
| Cognitive approaches or CBT or RET | 406 | 429 | 835 | 32.6 |
| Other | 134 | 130 | 264 | 10.3 |

Like problem gamblers, almost two-thirds (63.0 per cent) of partners and others who attend Break Even received supportive counselling on their most recent contact, and one-quarter (27.8 per cent) of sessions involved an element of assessment and or referral to other services. As noted earlier in this Report, the presenting problems of partners and others differ somewhat from those of problem gamblers, and hence it is not surprising to find some differences between these groups regarding the modes of counselling utilised by counsellors. Most notably, cognitive behavioural approaches (18.8 per cent) were used approximately half as often with partners and others compared to problem gamblers. This suggests that counsellors are less likely to attempt to change the behaviour of partners and others, or that this group of clients is more resistant to changing their own behaviour. However, promising research in the addictions field has found that when significant others change their behaviour this in turn can effect changes in persons whose behaviour has been defined as problematic (for example, Barber and Crisp, 1995; Yoshioka, Thomas and Ager, 1992).

Table 57: Partners and Others—Counselling Mode at Last Contact by Sex

| Counselling Mode | Male no. | Female no. | Persons no. | Persons |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | (n=184) | (n=445) | (n=629) | % |
| Assessment or referral | 52 | 123 | 175 | 27.8 |
| Systemic therapies, structural strategic family therapy, psychodrama, etc. | 50 | 102 | 152 | 24.2 |
| Supportive counselling | 123 | 273 | 396 | 63.0 |
| Psychodynamic therapies, use of transference | 4 | 4 | 8 | 1.3 |
| Cognitive approaches or CBT or RET | 39 | 79 | 118 | 18.8 |
| Other | 16 | 38 | 54 | 8.6 |

Although eighteen services bear the name 'Break Even', the question arises as to whether all offer a similar service to clients. One response to this question is to examine the counselling modes used during the last counselling session. This reveals quite different patterns in respect of the types of counselling provided. While to some extent this may be due to differences in clients and the issues with which they present, a more likely explanation is that this represents the different training and perspectives on counselling which counsellors have brought to Break Even.

Table 58: All Clients—Counselling Modes at Last Contact by Agency

| Service name | Assessment or referral | | Systemic therapies | | Supportive counselling | | Psycho-dynamic therapies | | Cognitive approaches | | Other | |
|--|------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|------------|----------------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % |
| Banyule Community Health Service | 112 | 19.8 | 163 | 28.8 | 323 | 57.2 | 1 | 0.2 | 52 | 9.2 | 116 | 20.5 |
| Bethany Family Support | 37 | 21.8 | 9 | 5.3 | 108 | 63.5 | 1 | 0.6 | 47 | 27.6 | 14 | 8.2 |
| Bendigo Community Health Service | 26 | 13.2 | 3 | 1.5 | 123 | 62.4 | 0 | 0.0 | 58 | 29.4 | 2 | 1.0 |
| Brimbank Community Health Service | 88 | 28.1 | 199 | 63.6 | 146 | 46.6 | 2 | 0.6 | 24 | 7.7 | 15 | 4.8 |
| Colac Community Health Service | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 14 | 70.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| East Bentleigh Community Health Centre | 188 | 23.2 | 68 | 8.4 | 502 | 61.8 | 29 | 3.6 | 306 | 37.7 | 56 | 6.9 |
| Gippsland Family Services | 20 | 8.0 | 11 | 4.4 | 160 | 64.0 | 7 | 2.8 | 90 | 36.0 | 6 | 2.4 |
| Goulburn Valley Community Health Service | 22 | 19.6 | 4 | 3.6 | 48 | 42.9 | 3 | 2.7 | 23 | 20.5 | 40 | 35.7 |
| Mallee Family Care | 26 | 27.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 60 | 63.8 | 0 | 0.0 | 19 | 20.2 | 14 | 14.9 |
| Maroondah Social and Community Health Centre | 138 | 24.9 | 155 | 28.0 | 277 | 50.0 | 1 | 0.2 | 157 | 28.3 | 44 | 7.9 |
| Mitchell Community Health Service | 3 | 5.3 | 16 | 28.1 | 38 | 66.7 | 4 | 7.0 | 18 | 31.6 | 1 | 1.8 |
| Palm Lodge Rehabilitation Centre | 1 | 3.4 | 2 | 6.9 | 23 | 79.3 | 2 | 6.9 | 17 | 58.6 | 3 | 10.3 |
| Relationships Australia | 32 | 18.7 | 22 | 12.9 | 102 | 59.6 | 2 | 1.2 | 79 | 46.2 | 3 | 1.8 |
| Salvation Army | 78 | 44.1 | 13 | 7.3 | 101 | 57.1 | 13 | 7.3 | 76 | 42.9 | 4 | 2.3 |
| South West Community Care | 16 | 18.8 | 6 | 7.1 | 53 | 62.4 | 0 | 0.0 | 34 | 40.0 | 4 | 4.7 |
| Upper Hume Community Health Service | 18 | 13.5 | 55 | 41.4 | 49 | 36.8 | 1 | 0.8 | 61 | 45.9 | 1 | 0.8 |
| Victorian Relief Committee | 58 | 24.2 | 4 | 1.7 | 154 | 64.2 | 13 | 5.4 | 96 | 40.0 | 40 | 16.7 |
| Western Region Alcohol and Drug Centre | 12 | 26.7 | 1 | 2.2 | 39 | 86.7 | 2 | 4.4 | 26 | 57.8 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 875 | 21.7 | 731 | 18.2 | 2,320 | 57.7 | 81 | 2.0 | 1,183 | 29.4 | 363 | 9.0 |

Another way of exploring whether all clients receive a similar service is to examine the number of sessions (individual and group contacts) which clients attend over the year. While the number of sessions an individual attended ranged between one and 66, half of all clients (51.1 per cent) came only once or twice between 1 July 1997 and 30 June 1998. Although these data may be confounded somewhat by the fact that clients do not necessarily begin and end contact within the same data collection period, the overall impression one forms from the data in Table 59 is that the majority of clients (80 per cent) attend five sessions or less and very few (7.0 per cent) attend Break Even on more than ten occasions.

Table 59: Number of Contacts Per Client—Including Group Contacts by Year

| Number of contacts | 1997–98 | | 1996–97 | | 1995–96 | |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % |
| 1 | 1,226 | 30.2 | 524 | 21.1 | 181 | 30.6 |
| 2 | 848 | 20.9 | 450 | 18.1 | 137 | 23.1 |
| 3 | 543 | 13.4 | 359 | 14.5 | 126 | 21.3 |
| 4 | 381 | 9.4 | 234 | 9.4 | 37 | 6.3 |
| 5 | 247 | 6.1 | 202 | 8.1 | 60 | 10.1 |
| 6–10 | 529 | 13.0 | 433 | 17.4 | 45 | 7.6 |
| 11+ | 285 | 7.0 | 282 | 11.4 | 6 | 1.0 |
| Total | 4,059 | 100.0 | 2,484 | 100.0 | 592 | 100.0 |

Although a range of counselling modes are used by Break Even counsellors, the fact that two-thirds (64.9 per cent) of all counselling sessions were between 31 and 60 minutes duration suggests that the convention of the counselling hour endures despite Break Even being a relatively new service. This convention would appear to apply for both problem gambler and partner and other clients. Further details about the duration of counselling sessions can be found in Table 60.

Table 60: All Clients—Length of Last Contact by Client Status—minutes)

| Length of Session | Problem Gamblers no. | Partners and others no. | Persons no. | Persons % |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 0–30 | 415 | 98 | 513 | 16.1 |
| 31–60 | 1,670 | 395 | 2,065 | 64.9 |
| 61–90 | 375 | 112 | 487 | 15.3 |
| 91–120 | 41 | 13 | 54 | 1.7 |
| 121–150 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 0.1 |
| 151–180 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0.0 |
| 181 or more | 52 | 8 | 60 | 1.9 |
| Total | 2,557 | 627 | 3,184 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 840

As the presenting problems which partners and others bring to Break Even differ somewhat from those of problem gamblers, the data presented in Table 61 concerning the focus of the last counselling session by client status are hardly surprising. Gambling behaviour, employment-related and leisure issues were much more likely to be the focus of counselling sessions for problem gamblers. Nevertheless, there were some points of commonality between the two groups of clients, with financial, intrapersonal, interpersonal and family issues being issues which arose frequently irrespective of client status.

Table 61: All Clients—Focus of the Last Contact Session by Client Status

| Focus of Session | Problem gamblers no. (n=2,585) | Partners and others no. (n=633) | Persons no. (n=3,218) | Persons % |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|------------------|
| Financial issues | 844 | 180 | 1,024 | 31.8 |
| Employment and work related issues | 512 | 54 | 566 | 17.6 |
| Leisure use issues | 757 | 54 | 811 | 25.2 |
| Interpersonal related | 1,163 | 379 | 1,542 | 47.9 |
| Intrapersonal | 1,441 | 328 | 1,769 | 55.0 |
| Family issues | 852 | 290 | 1,142 | 35.5 |
| Legal issues | 180 | 41 | 221 | 6.9 |
| Physical symptoms | 176 | 17 | 193 | 6.0 |
| Gambling behaviour | 1,877 | 168 | 2,045 | 63.5 |

Given the findings in Table 43, which indicated that most problem gamblers came to Break Even with multiple presenting problems, it may not be possible to deal with all of these in any one counselling session. Therefore there is a need to identify the most urgent problems to work on as they arise. One way of determining whether the issues change over the course of intervention is to look at the focus of the last contact session by the nature of that contact. For problem gamblers, these data are reported in Table 62, and reveal some change in focus over time. Whereas gambling behaviour is an issue in almost all (93.9 per cent) initial visits with new clients, it is an issue in 79.0 per cent of first sessions for re-presenting clients (that is, clients who have been to Break Even previously but where the case had been closed or treatment considered to have ceased). It is also an issue in 69.4 per cent of follow-up visits and in 61.1 per cent of planned final visits. Financial issues also become markedly less likely to be the focus of counselling sessions over the course of treatment, whereas issues relating to employment, leisure, relationships or intrapersonal issues are as likely to be the focus of treatment irrespective of the nature of the session.

Table 62: Problem Gamblers—Focus of the Last Contact Session by Nature of Visit *

| Focus of Last Contact Session | Initial visit —new client (n=571) | | Initial visit — re-presentation (n=81) | | Follow-up visit (n=1,670) | | Planned final visit (n=167) | | Persons (n=2,489) | |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------|---|----------|----------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|----------|
| | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % |
| Financial issues | 247 | 43.3 | 32 | 39.5 | 523 | 31.3 | 38 | 22.8 | 840 | 33.7 |
| Employment and work related issues | 119 | 20.8 | 13 | 16.0 | 347 | 20.8 | 31 | 18.6 | 510 | 20.5 |
| Leisure use issues | 186 | 32.6 | 24 | 29.6 | 502 | 30.1 | 44 | 26.3 | 756 | 30.4 |
| Interpersonal related | 247 | 43.3 | 38 | 46.9 | 805 | 48.2 | 70 | 41.9 | 1,160 | 46.6 |
| Intrapersonal | 333 | 58.3 | 45 | 55.6 | 977 | 58.5 | 81 | 48.5 | 1,436 | 57.7 |
| Family issues | 189 | 33.1 | 24 | 29.6 | 592 | 35.4 | 44 | 26.3 | 849 | 34.1 |
| Legal issues | 37 | 6.5 | 12 | 14.8 | 114 | 6.8 | 16 | 9.6 | 179 | 7.2 |
| Physical symptoms | 32 | 5.6 | 4 | 4.9 | 129 | 7.7 | 10 | 6.0 | 175 | 7.0 |
| Gambling behaviour | 536 | 93.9 | 64 | 79.0 | 1159 | 69.4 | 102 | 61.1 | 1,861 | 74.8 |

* Excludes 47 persons who did not attend (see Table 51).

Some variations in the focus of counselling, according to the nature of the contact, were also apparent for partners and others attending Break Even services, especially in respect of intrapersonal issues. These were an issue in more than half of the initial visits of both new clients and re-presenters, as well as in follow-up visits. However, intrapersonal issues were a focus in less than a third (29.6 per cent) of planned final visits. Table 63 provides further details about the focus by the nature of the last contact for partners and others.

Table 63: Partners and Others—Focus of the Last Contact Session by Nature of Visit *

| Focus of the Last Contact Session | Initial visit — new client (n=274) | | Initial visit — re-presentation (n=23) | | Follow-up visit (n=288) | | Planned final visit (n=27) | | Persons (n=612) | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------|--|------|-------------------------|------|----------------------------|------|-----------------|------|
| | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % |
| Financial issues | 88 | 32.1 | 5 | 21.7 | 75 | 26.0 | 9 | 33.3 | 177 | 28.9 |
| Employment and work related issues | 23 | 8.4 | 0 | 0.0 | 27 | 9.4 | 4 | 14.8 | 54 | 8.8 |
| Leisure use issues | 26 | 9.5 | 2 | 8.7 | 21 | 7.3 | 4 | 14.8 | 53 | 8.7 |
| Interpersonal related | 174 | 63.5 | 8 | 34.8 | 176 | 61.1 | 14 | 51.9 | 372 | 60.8 |
| Intrapersonal | 147 | 53.6 | 13 | 56.5 | 156 | 54.2 | 8 | 29.6 | 324 | 52.9 |
| Family issues | 127 | 46.4 | 11 | 47.8 | 137 | 47.6 | 13 | 48.1 | 288 | 47.1 |
| Legal issues | 17 | 6.2 | 2 | 8.7 | 22 | 7.6 | 0 | 0.0 | 41 | 6.7 |
| Physical symptoms | 7 | 2.6 | 0 | 0.0 | 10 | 3.5 | 0 | 0.0 | 17 | 2.8 |
| Gambling behaviour | 94 | 34.3 | 6 | 26.1 | 57 | 19.8 | 7 | 25.9 | 164 | 26.8 |

* Excludes five persons who did not attend (see Table 51)

Due to the nature of issues raised in counselling, there are times when Break Even counsellors feel that it is appropriate to refer clients onto other specialist services, especially financial counselling. Referrals emanating from the last contact session are detailed in Table 64.

Table 64: All Clients—Referrals to Other Support Services at Last Contact by Client Status

| Type of support service | Problem Gamblers (n=2,347) | Partners and Others (n=595) | Persons (n=2,942) | Persons % |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| | no. | no. | no. | % |
| Family counselling or support service | 19 | 11 | 30 | 1.0 |
| General health services | 45 | 11 | 56 | 1.9 |
| Self-help services | 35 | 9 | 44 | 1.5 |
| Mental health professionals | 39 | 6 | 45 | 1.5 |
| Gamblers anonymous | 57 | 11 | 68 | 2.3 |
| Legal services | 30 | 16 | 46 | 1.6 |
| Financial counselling services | 135 | 44 | 179 | 6.1 |
| Relationship counselling | 18 | 10 | 28 | 1.0 |
| Material aid | 33 | 6 | 39 | 1.3 |
| Other support services | 177 | 30 | 207 | 7.0 |

Although referral is always an option, counsellors took this action on only one-fifth (20.7 per cent) of all last contacts. As can be seen in Table 65, the number of referrals to other services was similar for both problem gamblers and partners and other clients. As to the majority of clients for whom no referral was made, the Minimum Data Set is unable to distinguish whether this was because the counsellors believed themselves competent to deal with a client's issues or due to a paucity of other services.

Table 65: All Clients—Number of Referrals to Other Support Services at last Contact by Client Status

| Number of referrals | Problem Gamblers | | Partners and others | | Persons | |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % |
| 0 | 1,867 | 79.5 | 465 | 78.2 | 2,332 | 79.3 |
| 1 | 391 | 16.7 | 108 | 18.2 | 499 | 17.0 |
| 2 | 75 | 3.2 | 20 | 3.4 | 95 | 3.2 |
| 3 | 11 | 0.5 | 2 | 0.3 | 13 | 0.4 |
| 4 or more | 3 | 0.1 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 0.1 |
| Total | 2,347 | 100.0 | 595 | 100.0 | 2,942 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 1082

While referrals to other services may be part of the process of terminating with a client, referrals to other services can happen at any stage of the treatment process. Therefore, Table 66 presents the total number of referrals to other services made during the year, with financial counselling being the most frequently made referral.

Table 66: All Client Contacts—Referrals to Other Support Services by Client Status

| Type of support service | Problem Gamblers no. (n=9,181) | Partners and Others no. (n=1,543) | Persons no. (n=10,724) | Persons % |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| Family counselling or support service | 68 | 21 | 89 | 0.8 |
| General health services | 193 | 17 | 210 | 2.0 |
| Self-help services | 129 | 16 | 145 | 1.4 |
| Mental health professionals | 123 | 21 | 144 | 1.3 |
| Gamblers anonymous | 185 | 20 | 205 | 1.9 |
| Legal services | 106 | 32 | 138 | 1.3 |
| Financial counselling services | 568 | 99 | 667 | 6.2 |
| Relationship counselling | 63 | 16 | 79 | 0.7 |
| Material aid | 111 | 11 | 122 | 1.1 |
| Other support services | 574 | 64 | 638 | 5.9 |

Service Outcomes

There are various ways in which counselling outcomes can be established. One such way is to ascertain whether further contact is planned. Due to the severity and multiplicity of problems which many clients bring to Break Even, it would be unrealistic to expect the resolution of all problems within a single session of counselling. Therefore, for clients whose problems have not been resolved in a counselling session, the fact that further sessions are planned may be an indicator of counsellor effectiveness, at least on the level of client engagement.

Counsellors' understandings of client intentions for further contact are presented in Table 67. While the proportion of clients who will not be attending further is similar for both problem gamblers and partner and other clients, counsellors appear to be far less clear of the intentions of the latter group. Whether this difference is due to partner and other clients being less decisive about whether to continue in counselling or counsellor skills in working with this group is unknown.

Table 67: All Clients—Client Plans for Further Contact at Last Contact by Client Status

| Further contact | Problem Gamblers | | Partners and Others | | Persons | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % |
| Yes, further contact planned | 1,857 | 76.3 | 357 | 58.4 | 2,214 | 72.7 |
| No, presenting problem(s) unresolved | 79 | 3.2 | 35 | 5.7 | 114 | 3.7 |
| No, presenting problem(s) resolved | 313 | 12.9 | 83 | 13.6 | 396 | 13.0 |
| Not known | 186 | 7.6 | 136 | 22.3 | 322 | 10.6 |
| Total | 2,435 | 100.0 | 611 | 100.0 | 3,046 | 100.0 |

Missing data = 978

Counselling outcomes can also be established in respect of each of the client's presenting problems. Table 68 provides details for problem gambler clients on the extent of problem resolution for a range of presenting problems at their last contact session by their intention to attend further counselling sessions. As may be anticipated, these data show a lower degree of resolution for clients who are intending returning for further counselling. Nevertheless, even those who intend to have further counselling sessions may have achieved full resolution of some presenting problems.

Table 68: Problem Gamblers—Progress Indicators at Last Contact by Plans for Further Contact

| | Unresolved | | Partially resolved | | Fully resolved | | Not an issue | |
|---|------------|------|--------------------|------|----------------|------|--------------|------|
| | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % |
| Further contact planned | | | | | | | | |
| Financial issues | 465 | 32.6 | 679 | 47.6 | 102 | 7.2 | 180 | 12.6 |
| Employment and work related issues | 288 | 22.3 | 262 | 20.2 | 61 | 4.7 | 683 | 52.8 |
| Leisure use issues | 418 | 30.8 | 580 | 42.7 | 73 | 5.4 | 286 | 21.1 |
| Interpersonal related | 509 | 35.4 | 612 | 42.6 | 82 | 5.7 | 235 | 16.3 |
| Intrapersonal | 455 | 31.3 | 793 | 54.5 | 77 | 5.3 | 129 | 8.9 |
| Family issues | 405 | 30.1 | 479 | 35.6 | 85 | 6.3 | 376 | 28.0 |
| Legal issues | 89 | 7.1 | 90 | 7.2 | 21 | 1.7 | 1052 | 84.0 |
| Physical symptoms | 176 | 14.0 | 197 | 15.7 | 34 | 2.7 | 847 | 67.5 |
| Further contact not planned or unknown | | | | | | | | |
| Financial issues | 112 | 19.7 | 248 | 43.6 | 101 | 17.8 | 108 | 19.0 |
| Employment and work related issues | 83 | 15.9 | 99 | 19.0 | 59 | 11.3 | 281 | 53.8 |
| Leisure use issues | 91 | 17.3 | 207 | 39.4 | 96 | 18.3 | 132 | 25.1 |
| Interpersonal related | 106 | 18.7 | 226 | 39.9 | 102 | 18.0 | 133 | 23.5 |
| Intrapersonal | 90 | 16.3 | 297 | 53.9 | 109 | 19.8 | 55 | 10.0 |
| Family issues | 92 | 17.6 | 183 | 35.0 | 96 | 18.4 | 152 | 29.1 |
| Legal issues | 33 | 6.8 | 28 | 5.8 | 25 | 5.1 | 400 | 82.3 |
| Physical symptoms | 42 | 8.6 | 72 | 14.7 | 45 | 9.2 | 330 | 67.5 |

The comparable data for partners and other clients are presented in Table 69. However, unlike problem gambler clients, for partners and others there is less of a marked difference in problem resolution rates between those intending to continue in counselling and those who intend ceasing counselling or for whom their intentions are unknown.

Table 69: Partners and Others—Progress Indicators at Last Contact by Plans for Further Contact

| | Unresolved | | Partially resolved | | Fully resolved | | Not an issue | |
|---|------------|------|--------------------|------|----------------|------|--------------|------|
| | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % | no. | % |
| Further contact planned | | | | | | | | |
| Financial issues | 66 | 26.4 | 98 | 39.2 | 8 | 3.2 | 78 | 31.2 |
| Employment and work related issues | 19 | 8.3 | 25 | 10.9 | 2 | 0.9 | 183 | 79.9 |
| Leisure use issues | 22 | 9.6 | 36 | 15.7 | 9 | 3.9 | 162 | 70.7 |
| Interpersonal related | 115 | 40.5 | 119 | 41.9 | 7 | 2.5 | 43 | 15.1 |
| Intrapersonal | 75 | 28.4 | 139 | 52.7 | 17 | 6.4 | 33 | 12.5 |
| Family issues | 76 | 29.9 | 97 | 38.2 | 7 | 2.8 | 74 | 29.1 |
| Legal issues | 12 | 5.3 | 12 | 5.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 203 | 89.4 |
| Physical symptoms | 11 | 4.9 | 27 | 12.1 | 2 | 0.9 | 183 | 82.1 |
| Further contact not planned or unknown | | | | | | | | |
| Financial issues | 47 | 23.7 | 59 | 29.8 | 13 | 6.6 | 79 | 39.9 |
| Employment and work related issues | 11 | 6.6 | 4 | 2.4 | 7 | 4.2 | 145 | 86.8 |
| Leisure use issues | 14 | 8.3 | 16 | 9.5 | 7 | 4.2 | 131 | 78.0 |
| Interpersonal related | 61 | 29.5 | 73 | 35.3 | 20 | 9.7 | 53 | 25.6 |
| Intrapersonal | 51 | 26.2 | 98 | 50.3 | 22 | 11.3 | 24 | 12.3 |
| Family issues | 58 | 29.7 | 67 | 34.4 | 16 | 8.2 | 54 | 27.7 |
| Legal issues | 10 | 6.0 | 9 | 5.4 | 1 | 0.6 | 148 | 88.1 |
| Physical symptoms | 6 | 3.6 | 8 | 4.8 | 3 | 1.8 | 148 | 89.7 |

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Appendix A

Overview of Trends in Gaming Policy and Legislation

Except in the case of gambling for the purposes of raising revenue for church-based welfare services, Victoria's approach to gambling was one of prohibition until 1953, when a campaign by the Anglican and Wesley churches against government moves to introduce a State lottery was defeated. In 1954, Tattersalls, a private corporation, won a license to run regular lotteries in Victoria. As a direct result of a Victorian State Government Royal Commission into off-course betting, which was established to explore revenue collection potential as well as to investigate illegal gambling operations which had thrived despite state opposition, the government established the Totalliser Agency Board (TAB) in 1961.

Since the late 70s, a global economic downturn and cutbacks in funding from the Commonwealth to the States have led to all Australian states increasingly looking to gaming to meet revenue shortfalls and this has been a key component in the creation of Victorian gambling policy. In 1972 the Victorian Government licensed Tattersalls to run Tattslotto and lifted the law that banned the advertising of lotteries on television and radio (Cathcart and Darian-Smith, 1996).

The *Gaming Machine Control Act 1991* together with other relevant legislation sets out the general framework for regulation of gaming activities in Victoria. The Act provides for crime prevention measures, specifies probity standards for the granting of licenses, provides for gaming operators as a buffer between manufacturers and venues, and specifies on-line monitoring, technical standards and inspection of operations. This Act sets out the returns to each of the parties involved in gaming, that is, the split of gaming revenue between Government, gaming operators and venues and includes measures designed to reduce adverse social impacts of gambling.

There is also provision for the funding of social programs from a proportion of gaming revenue, so that the costs are borne by electronic gaming machine (EGM) users in general rather than the wider community. The Act provides for the powers and functions of the Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority (VCGA) which was established under the *Gaming and Betting Act 1994*.

In Victoria gambling revenue is the third highest source of revenue after Payroll Tax and Stamp Duty, equalling liquor, tobacco and petrol taxes combined. Total revenue from gaming increased from A\$401.722 million in the year 1992–93 to A\$1,036.122 million in 1996–97. Total revenue from EGMs, video gaming machines (VGMs) and Club Keno increased from A\$10.918 million in 1991–92 to A\$629.010 million in 1996–97. At the same time gambling taxation revenues from racing, a more traditional form of gambling in Australia, has decreased from A\$174.160 million to A\$121.317 million.

During the 90s there has been a rapid rise in the percentage of household income per capita spent on gambling. Per capita gambling expenditure in Victoria has increased from A\$309.16 in the 1991–92 financial year to A\$804.71 in the year 1996–97. Much of this increase can be traced to gambling on electronic gaming machines, as per capita expenditure on this form of gambling increased from A\$9.90 to A\$424.96 per annum in the same period (Tasmanian Gaming Commission, 1998).

Expressed as a percentage of household income in Victoria for the period from 1991–92 to 1996–97 gambling expenditure rose from 1.35 per cent to 3.21 per cent, and for

gaming (gambling excluding racing) from 0.74 per cent to 2.71 per cent in the same period. Over the same time period, gambling expenditure as a percentage of household income for the whole of Australia, rose from 2.07 per cent to 3.03 per cent (Tasmanian Gaming Commission, 1998). VCGA research carried out in 1997 indicates that the rise in household expenditure on newly introduced forms of gambling is due to the use of savings rather than diversion of spending money from other retail forms. However, local shifts in spending patterns cannot be captured in the aggregate statistical analyses employed. This is consistent with a study of gambling taxation in Australia in which a survey of Victorians showed that 75 per cent of gambling was financed by reducing household savings or increasing debt (Smith, 1998).

The *Gaming Machine Control Act 1991* and its 1996 amendments provides for the establishment in the Public Account of the Community Support Fund, with the legislation requiring that 8.3 per cent of daily net cash balances from EGMs in hotels be paid into the fund. The Minister for Gaming, under the provisions of the Act, may apply for money in the fund for a range of purposes including:

- Funding of research by the Victorian Casino and Gaming on the social impact of gambling.
- Sport and recreation clubs or programs and community services including financial counselling services, support and assistance for families in crisis, programs for prevention of compulsive gambling, programs for the treatment or rehabilitation of persons who are compulsive gamblers and government initiatives on youth homelessness.
- The promotion of arts and tourism (Auditor-General of Victoria, 1996:14).

Appendix B

Minimum Data Set

Revisions to the Minimum Data Set

The Minimum Data Set (MDS) was revised by the University of Melbourne in 1997 and these changes were implemented on 1 August 1997. However, counsellors were able to continue to record details of clients registered prior to 1 August 1997 on Pre 1 August 1997 MDS Forms if they chose to do so. Copies of both the Pre 1 August 1997 MDS Forms and Post 1 August 1997 MDS Forms are attached and the main changes to the forms are outlined below.

The Registration Form collects demographic information about clients presenting to problem gambling counselling services. However, the data collected on Pre 1 August 1997 MDS Forms were not compatible with main Australian demographic data collections. This made it difficult to compare the profile of problem gamblers presenting at Break Even with that of the general Victorian community. As a result, the Registration Form was redesigned such that the coding options corresponded with the main Australian demographic data collections. The scope of the data collected was also increased with a number of additional questions added to the Registration form.

The main alteration made to the Assessment Form involved the first question which collected information about the client's gambling behaviour. The Pre 1 August 1997 MDS Forms collected information about the client's most recent day of gambling. A number of counsellors stated this question did not accurately portray their client's gambling habits. Thus the question was altered such that counsellors recorded the behaviour of a 'typical gambling episode'.

Analysis of the Case Closure Forms revealed that even though the majority of clients attended less than six counselling sessions, very few Case Closure Forms were completed. The Case Closure Form was thus eliminated and the Case Closure Form questions were transferred to the new Individual Client Contact Form. This means that even if the case is not formally closed, we still obtain valuable data on counselling mode and setting of intervention.

Some Break Even agencies hold group counselling sessions. Therefore in the Post 1 August 1997 MDS Forms we added a Group Contact Form. The Group Contact Form allows the counsellor to record the contact details of all clients attending a group session on one form, reducing overall administrative burden on counsellors.

Problem Gambling Services Minimum Data Set Collection Forms Pre 1 August 1997

Problem Gambling Services Minimum Data Set Collection Forms From 1 August 1997

