

Information Sheet
Figures and statistics about people and gambling

The number of problem gamblers in Australia differs in various publications and media articles. This is because how problem gambling is defined depends on how you view the issue. Some commentators regard problem gamblers only as those people who meet strict definitions through screening tests, which are themselves the subject of debates and studies.

Others see the number as including people who call themselves 'problem gamblers', or include people who have a moderate to high risk of developing problems related to gambling.

Figures and statistics depend on which base you measure from. The following figures are all true. They are based on the 2010 Productivity Commission Inquiry into Gambling. This report used 2008 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics that said there were around 21, 431,900 people including 16,000,000 adults in Australia:

- 80,000 and 160,000 of Australian adults are experiencing significant problems from gambling (0.5-1.0 % of adults).
- A further 250,000 to 350,000 are experiencing moderate risks that may make them vulnerable to problem gambling (1.4 to 2.1 % of adults)
- The prevalence rate is thought to be 0.7 and 1.7 % of adults with problem and moderate risk of gambling. (Comparisons are 0.15 of the adult population admitted to hospital for traffic accidents and 0.2 of the population have used heroin (p12)
The figures around Electronic gaming Machine, EGMs, pokies or poker machines are significant:
- 30% of adults have played EGMs in the last year and 600,000 adults (nearly 4%) in Australia play electronic gaming machines (pokies or poker machines) every week or more (s 5.1).
- 15% of weekly EGM players are problem gamblers and make up 40% of the spend on EGMs, with a further 15% at a moderate risk (s 5.1)
- 75-80% of problem gamblers play EGMs (p15)

The Victorian Auditor General said this year that in Victoria there are:

- 29,000 problem gamblers and 97,000 moderate risk gamblers of 4.1 million adults
- This means 0.7 % and 2.3% of adult Victorians are problem gamblers or have a high to moderate risk of becoming a problem gambler.

So it is a very significant issue for the Victorian Community.

More information:

- **Productivity Commission Inquiry into Gambling 2010**
<http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/gambling-2009/report>
- **Victorian Auditor General's Report: Taking Action on Problem Gambling 2010**
http://www.audit.vic.gov.au/reports_publications/reports_by_year/2010-11/20102807_problem_gambling.aspx
- **Problem Gambling Research and Treatment Centre – current research**
<http://www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/problemgambling/researchAreas.html>