



MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW SUPPORT SERVICES HELP TACKLE PROBLEM GAMBLING

Minister for Hospitality and Racing George Souris is encouraging people battling a gambling problem to take advantage of the NSW Government's network of free, effective and confidential counselling and support services.

Speaking on the eve of Responsible Gambling Awareness Week 2012 (14 – 20 May), Mr Souris said **Gambling Help** services provide high quality face to face, telephone and online counselling for problem gamblers and their families.

He said help is available 24 hours a day by calling 1800 858 858 or visiting www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au.

The NSW Government also today launched a new DVD developed in six languages - Mandarin and Cantonese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Greek, and Italian - to help tackle problem gambling across multicultural communities.

“Problem gambling can affect all parts of the community, regardless of cultural background, and Responsible Gambling Awareness Week 2012 is a chance for people to reflect on why they gamble and the impact it may be having on their lives and loved ones,” Mr Souris said.

“By openly discussing the issue of problem gambling, and promoting the free services that are available from the NSW Government, we’re hoping to help people with gambling problems take that important first step towards getting help.”

Mr Souris said warning signs of a gambling problem include:

- increasingly spending more time and money on gambling
- repeatedly promising to stop gambling but not actually stopping
- borrowing money to gamble or pay off gambling debts
- losing time from work or study due to gambling
- lying to cover up gambling activity
- suffering from feelings of remorse or depression due to gambling
- gambling ‘until the last dollar is gone’.

Mr Souris said the “*What’s Gambling Really Costing You?*” DVD aims to break through cultural barriers to address the issue.

“This free DVD, also available online at www.youtube.com/gamblinghangover, includes interviews with counsellors, doctors and community leaders as well as information on free, confidential and culturally-sensitive counselling services,” Mr Souris said.

“Importantly, it emphasises there is no shame in seeking professional help for a gambling problem, which can be an issue in some multicultural communities.

“The DVD is part of the NSW Government’s Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Problem Gambling Awareness Campaign.

“In 2010, the NSW Government launched a problem gambling awareness campaign in Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Vietnamese and Italian as part of a \$2.4 million, three-year early intervention and prevention strategy.”

Mr Souris said the NSW Government’s Responsible Gambling Fund (RGF) is investing more than \$11 million in its network of **Gambling Help** counselling and support services this financial year (2011/12).

“This includes 44 face-to-face counselling services operating at more than 200 locations across the State, which in 2010/11 provided a total of 19,819 counselling sessions to 4,237 clients,” Mr Souris said.

“We also have a 24-hour **Gambling Help** telephone counselling service which provided assistance to 6,700 callers in 2010/11 including problem gamblers or family members.

“There is also online assistance available from the national **Gambling Help Online** service which provided 1,491 live online counselling sessions in 2010/11 including 586 in NSW as well as further information support via email interactions.”

Details of counselling services and their locations can be found on the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing website at http://www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/gaming_rgf_counselling_support_services.asp.

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