

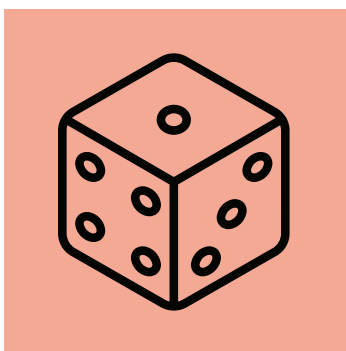
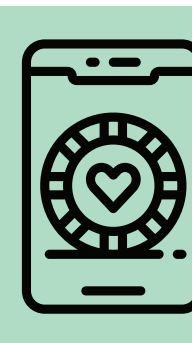
South Australian
Commissioner
for Children and
Young People
2024

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Teenagers and Gambling

Views and experiences
of South Australian young
people on gambling

PROJECT REPORT NO. 47 | NOVEMBER 2024



The Commissioner's Role

The South Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People is an independent statutory position, established under the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016*. The Commissioner's role includes advocating for systemic change to policies, programs and practices that impact the rights, development and wellbeing of South Australia's children and young people. This work is informed by the experiences and issues of children and young people themselves, with a specific focus on those who struggle to have their voices heard.

The Commissioner's strategic agenda was formulated with direct input from children and young people. In particular children and young people asked the Commissioner to facilitate their involvement in decision making and to create opportunities for them to experience authentic participation. The Commissioner is working with a number of partners on this agenda including ways in which children and young people can have input into the design and delivery of policies, processes, services and practices that affect their lives.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the South Australian young people who completed my Teenagers and Gambling Survey sharing their experiences and insights. Thank you also to the many young people with whom I have had conversations about gambling and their views on how it impacts their lives. Throughout this report your unedited quotes have been used to ensure your views are being faithfully communicated.

Suggested citation

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Commissioner's Foreword

The pervasiveness and risks associated with gambling and the ease with which people of all ages can access and participate in gambling throughout Australian society is gaining greater awareness. However, little attention is being given to the views and experiences that children and young people, and in particular teenagers, have in relation to gambling.

Media reports, government inquiries and research around gambling is primarily focused on the needs and experiences of adults. Discussions around the rules and regulations pertaining to gambling tend to mention children and young people only in relation to 'protecting' them from exposure to gambling advertising, or as experiencing harm from their parent/s or carers having issues with gambling.

Rarely are the ways in which young people under the age of 18 can access formal and informal gambling activities acknowledged, discussed, or addressed. It is also rare for the views teenagers have on gambling and gambling activities to be sought.

Current narratives around teenagers' participation in gambling tend to focus on boys who participate in sports betting or who buy loot boxes while gaming. There is currently little exploration of the broad range of ways in which children and young people come to be exposed to, and participate in, various forms of gambling within family, school and community settings.

This report aims to shed light on these areas, highlighting how teenagers view gambling, as well as how they engage with it across the day-to-day activity of their lives.

The more I look, the more I see how gambling and gambling-like activities have become so ubiquitous across our communities. Participation in gambling by teenagers is openly supported by their family and friends, their school, and environments they are in across their community, including sporting clubs and other venues where families are encouraged to gather. The message young people receive is that gambling is a normal and acceptable activity in Australian society that they can expect to engage with openly and regularly throughout their lives.

For example, arcade games such as claw machines, target children and young people from a young age via the prizes they offer and the locations in which these machines can be found. They're available at dedicated games arcades designed to appeal to children and young people. They're also available in

shopping centres, bowling alleys, pubs, clubs, holiday venues, and other places younger children are known to go, either on their own, or with a parent or carer.

Some forms of gambling, such as scratchies and lottery tickets, are regularly endorsed by parents and family members and are seen by adults and young people as being fun activities more akin to playing and good times than to being a form of gambling. These are gambling activities that become embedded within families and may even be a family tradition or something to do on a special occasion. Informal betting for money or other items is also endorsed amongst family and friends and we know forms of bingo are played regularly in the school classroom. Even though money is not being exchanged in classroom bingo, this activity replicates forms of gambling commonly in use throughout Australian society.

Teenagers who completed my survey said they want to be better informed about gambling, including what leads to gambling issues and addiction. Some expressed their cynicism about their chances of winning and knew that some forms of gambling are rigged. Some were critical about the current pervasiveness of gambling, which they see on TV, on social media and in public spaces. These are not just aimed at adults but are also targeted towards children and young people.

“ Only through asking teenagers directly about their views and experiences of gambling can we hope to provide them with the kind of support they want and need to avoid its potential to have a negative impact on their lives.”

Commissioner Helen Connolly

To have greatest impact, this support needs to be delivered via education, at home and at school, through policy and regulations, and through specially prepared resources that are designed for and with input from teenagers themselves. Only in this way can we be confident we are providing them with the knowledge they need to navigate gambling activities in ways that will not impact negatively on their overall health and wellbeing when they're young, or over the course of their whole lives.



Helen Connolly

Commissioner for Children and Young People,
South Australia

Context

Gambling is a pervasive and normalised aspect of Australian culture and society. It is embedded in sporting culture and family celebrations and forms the basis of some key social activities. Some forms of gambling are often seen as being a fun and harmless activity for all ages.

However, Australia has the biggest per capita gambling losses in the world.¹ In 2022–23, Australians lost a combined total of nearly \$31.5 billion on gambling, equating to an average of \$1,527.47 per person aged 18 years and over.²

South Australians lost more than \$1.79 billion; an average of \$1,057.14 per person aged 18 years and over.³ These gambling losses came from gaming machines (pokies) (\$917.5 million), wagering (betting) (\$487.2 million), lotteries (including scratchies) (\$188.5 million), casinos (\$175.5 million), and Keno (\$23.6 million).⁴

The statistics for South Australia do not include what is termed 'minor gaming' such as participating in bingo and raffles or 'interactive gaming' (lotteries, Keno, and gambling activities that are conducted on the Internet).

Neither do these statistics include forms of gambling that children and teenagers under 18 years of age are more likely to participate in, and which often evade legislation (eg buying loot boxes or playing arcade games such as claw machines). They also do not include informal gambling activities that involve money bets while playing card games or participating in informal football tipping competitions.

This means losses from gambling activities are even higher than those being reported.

A 2018 survey of over 20,000 SA residents 18 years and over classified 0.7% as problem gamblers and 2.2% as moderate-risk gamblers (which combined amounts to 2.9% who are considered to be 'at risk' gamblers).⁵ Other respondents were classified as low-risk gamblers (4.6%), non-problem gamblers (57.2%), or non-gamblers (35.3%).

'At risk' gamblers were more likely to be men, unemployed, in the lowest household income bracket, single, divorced/separated, aged 18–24 years, spoke a language other than English at home, and/or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.⁶

Gambling in Australia is mostly legislated at the state level, with the federal government overseeing some aspects of online gambling and advertising.⁷ South Australian legislation is focused on four key forms of gambling: 'gaming machines' (pokies), betting operations (eg sports betting including horse or other racing betting), casinos, and lotteries.⁸

The recent federal government inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm, included mention of children in terms of their exposure to gambling advertising. However, there was little acknowledgement that children and young people are already being exposed to and/or engaging with a vast array of both informal and formal gambling activities on a regular basis with or without parental awareness and/or consent.⁹

More broadly than gambling advertising, Australian teenagers report that the pervasiveness of gambling activities and their promotion seem to be everywhere they go and everywhere they interact.¹⁰

As the limited number of studies undertaken in Australia show, teenagers and younger children are already engaging in informal and (less often) formal gambling.¹¹

Children's gambling is often influenced by family members and takes place at 'culturally valued events'.¹² For example, a NSW survey of parents of children aged 12–17 years found that of those parents who had gambled in the last 12 months, more than two thirds (68.4%) had their child(ren) with them at the time.¹³

While teenagers who participate in gambling may often do so on a small-scale, some are known to be experiencing harm from their own gambling. Data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children relating to those aged 16–17 years, indicates that a small proportion of boys may be considered 'problem gamblers'.¹⁴

There appears to be little formal support for teenagers in South Australia who experience harm from their own or their parents or carers gambling behaviours. While there is a gambling helpline, there is little support aimed directly at teenagers, or which is inviting enough to make it likely they would reach out.



Key findings

There were 590 South Australian teenagers aged 13–17 years who participated in the Commissioner’s Young People and Gambling Survey undertaken from July to October 2023.

Of all teenagers completing the survey:

4 out of 5 had ever participated in at least 1 form of gambling

80.3%

2 out of 3 had participated in 2 or more forms

63.9%

Fewer than 1 in 2 had participated in 3 or more forms

43.7%

The 5 MOST common forms of gambling SA teenagers had ever participated in were:



arcade machines
(66.0%)



betting amongst family or friends
(47.8%)



bingo (40.7%)



scratchies
(33.0%)



loot boxes in gaming
(19.5%)

The 5 LEAST common forms of gambling SA teenagers had ever participated in were:



betting on racing in person
(4.0%)



playing the pokies (3.9%)



paying to play poker online
(3.7%)



betting on fantasy sports
(3.0%)



betting on esports (2.4%).



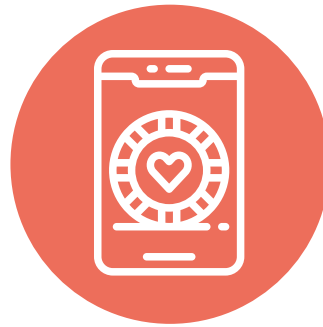
When teenagers gambled it was often:

- with family (particularly parents) and friends
- occasionally; and/or
- for small amounts of money or small items.



The top reasons shared by teenagers as to why young people might gamble were:

- money
- fun and entertainment
- addiction and the 'thrill'
- influence by other people
- lack of understanding; and/or
- escape from boredom and/or stress.



Of those teenagers who completed the survey 96.1% recalled seeing and/or hearing advertisements for gambling. Teenagers recalled seeing and/or hearing gambling advertisements:

- in games
- on social media
- when watching videos online
- in emails
- on the news
- in newspapers
- on the radio
- in pamphlets
- on billboards
- on the sides of buses
- on posters in stores
- on toilet stalls in pubs; and
- at the supermarket.

Most teenagers recalled seeing and/or hearing gambling advertisements on TV, on social media and/or in public spaces for:

Lotteries

94.6%

Betting apps

94.4%

Online casino games involving money

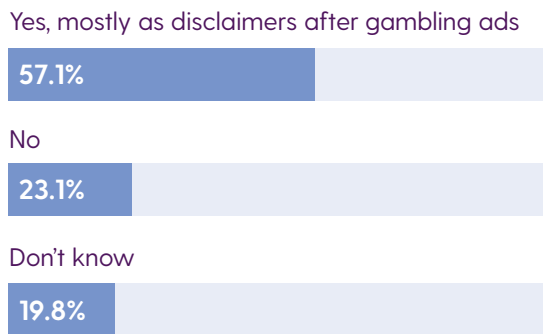
85.6%

Casinos

79.5%



Teenagers were far less likely to recall seeing or hearing anti-gambling ads or messaging. When asked if they had recalled seeing or hearing anti-gambling ads or messaging, teenagers completing the survey responded:



Locations in which teenagers recalled hearing about or seeing others gambling:

- on social media (eg YouTube, TikTok, Instagram)
- in games
- at shops
- at pubs; and
- at school.

Teenagers recalled seeing people gambling or talking about gambling on social media with:

2 in 3 reporting that they had seen young people gambling on social media



More than 1 in 2 reporting that they had seen influencers talking about gambling on social media



Less than 1 in 2 reporting that they had seen friends talking about gambling on social media



Teenagers say what is needed is more gambling education and information about key aspects of gambling.

They want to know more about:

- gambling addiction
- how gambling works
- gambling industry and regulations
- why people gamble; and the
- impacts and consequences of gambling.

They also want:

- adults to have more open discussion with teenagers about gambling
- a reduction in gambling advertising and accessibility; and
- improvement in anti-gambling messaging.

Key messages

- Gambling activities are available to teenagers in many forms and in many places. These activities are often supported by the adults who are around teenagers (particularly their parents) and are a normalised part of social activities and events.
- Most teenagers have participated in at least one form of gambling. The most common forms of gambling are often less regulated or informal. Teenagers are most likely to gamble occasionally, and for small amounts of money or small items.
- Some teenagers under 18 years of age are known to be engaging in gambling activities that are regulated for participation by adults only. Their participation in these gambling activities is often being supported by their parents.
- Gambling is often seen as a social activity enjoyed with family and friends and is regularly considered to be a form of fun and entertainment that is harmless and accessible to teenagers.
- Many teenagers are bombarded with gambling advertising and other gambling content on TV, on social media, and in public spaces.
- Anti-gambling advertising and messaging is often only experienced in the form of disclaimers that appear after a gambling advertisement. Unlike gambling advertising and promotion, anti-gambling messaging is rarely directed toward teenagers.
- Teenagers have different understandings of gambling. Many want to be better informed about gambling addiction and how gambling works. Some are already sceptical about the likelihood of making money from gambling, and critical of the gambling industry. This includes the high levels of advertising aimed at encouraging participation in gambling to which they are regularly exposed.
- Teenagers are also exposed to and encouraged to engage in a range of gambling-like activities. Teenagers can't always distinguish between these gambling-like activities and gambling activities. It may not always be useful to discuss gambling and gambling-like activities as distinct from each other, particularly given all these activities expose children and teenagers to the processes and habits of gambling, thereby encouraging them to learn and adopt gambling-like behaviours and attitudes from a young age.

Recommendations

1

Policymakers and legislators need to take notice of teenagers gambling and monitor potentially harmful gambling activity they are participating in. This includes regularly collecting data on gambling by young people under 18 years of age and exploring potentially harmful gambling teenagers are already engaged in.

2

Better education programs and information sources are needed to inform teenagers about gambling and its risks. Teenagers are asking for more knowledge and want to be better informed. This needs to be provided via the school curriculum as well as by service providers supporting those experiencing gambling harm. These resources needed to be co-developed with teenagers, particularly those with lived experience of gambling harm.

3

Supports need to be available for teenagers before their gambling causes them or others harm. There is currently a lack of targeted supports available for teenagers who are engaging in gambling. This is partly because gambling is viewed as an activity that only those who are 18 years and over participate in, and because what constitutes gambling is often viewed too narrowly. Supports need to be developed with input from teenagers, and delivered in ways that are accessible and meaningful to them. Additional supports for parents/carers who are worried about their teenager's gambling behaviours are also needed.

What we did

The Commissioner conducted a Young People and Gambling survey from July to October 2023. The survey focused on teenagers' experiences of and views on gambling, including their participation in gambling and what they considered to be issues.

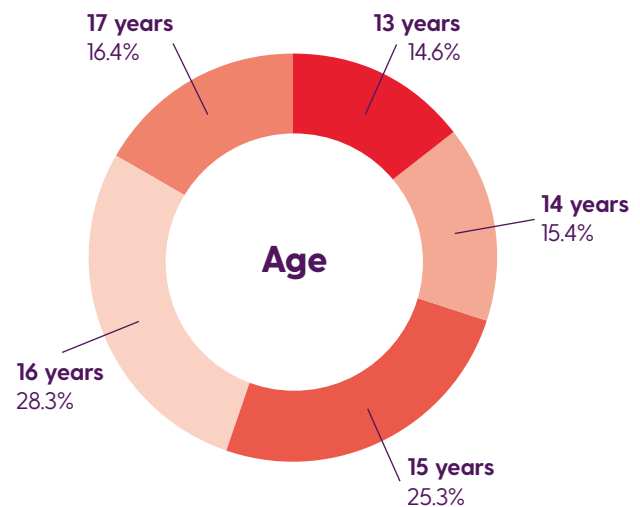
A total of 590 young people aged 13–17 years completed the survey. This report summarises their responses and makes recommendations in relation to their views and experiences about what they think should be done about gambling amongst teenagers and its impact on them and others more broadly.

The survey explored teenagers' participation in gambling, their reasons for gambling, their awareness of gambling advertising and anti-gambling messaging, along with their exposure to gambling in a variety of formal and informal settings and forms. Some survey questions were adapted from the UK Gambling Commission's annual Young People and Gambling Survey.¹⁵

The survey was originally open to young people aged 13 to 22 years old and received a total of 698 responses. Only 79 responses were received from young people aged 18 to 22, so these responses were removed from the analysis to bring the focus onto responses from young people who were under the legal age for regulated gambling at the time. A further 12 responses were removed due to them being considered unreliable (eg selecting 'yes' for all options in each question).

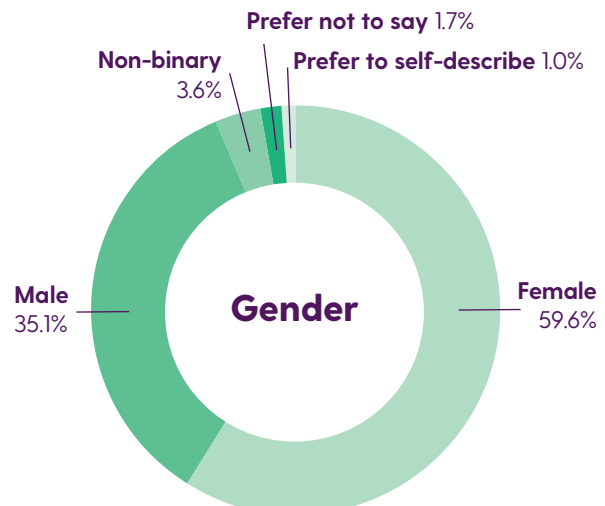
Age of respondents

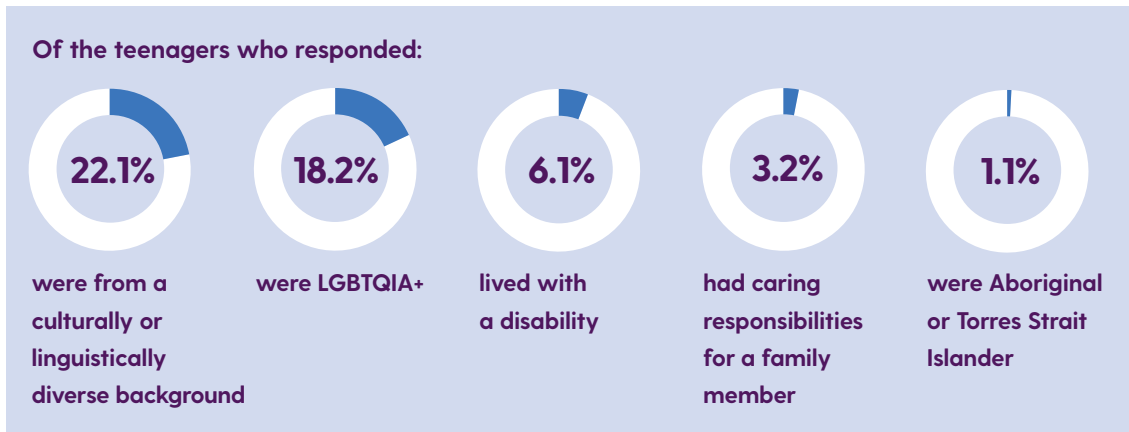
Of the final sample of 13–17 year olds over half were 15 or 16 years old.



Gender of respondents

Females made up more than half (59.6%) of the 13–17 year old respondents, with males making up over a third (35.1%). Other respondents were non-binary (3.6%), self-described their gender in other ways (eg agender, genderqueer, transgender demi-boy) (1.0%), or preferred not to say (1.7%). The higher proportion of females completing this survey reflects many previous CCYP surveys.



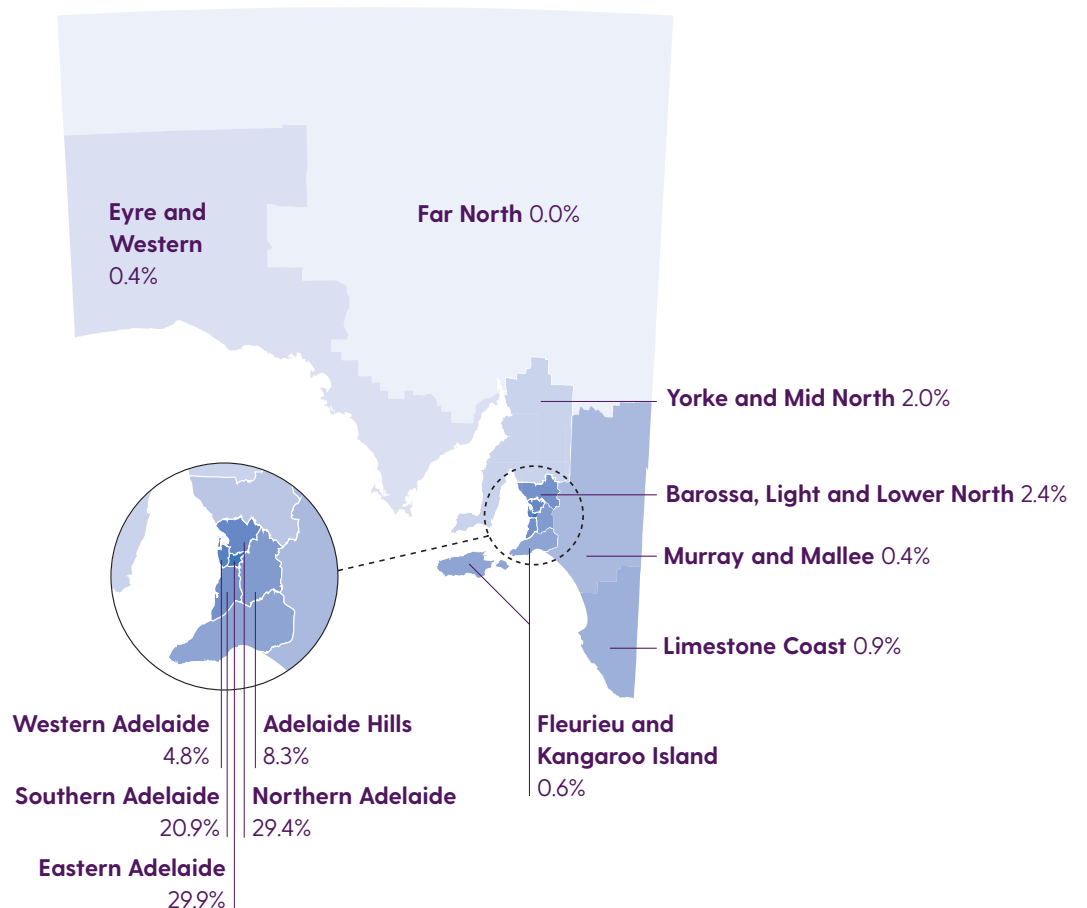


Region

Respondents came from all regions across South Australia (excluding Far North), although most lived in metropolitan Adelaide. Most respondents were from Eastern Adelaide (29.9%), Northern Adelaide (29.4%), and Southern Adelaide (20.9%), with smaller proportions from the Adelaide Hills (8.3%) and Western Adelaide (4.8%).

School sector

Most respondents attended secondary school (98.1%). Some attended TAFE (1.2%), university (0.7%) and/or were completing an apprenticeship or traineeship, sometimes in conjunction with school.



Teenagers participation in gambling

While gambling is often seen as an activity that is only available to people aged 18 years and over, teenagers reported they had participated in a broad range of forms of gambling, and that this participation was often with, or supported by, their families.

Which forms of gambling do teenagers participate in?

Using a broad definition of gambling, 4 out of 5 teenagers said they had participated in some form of gambling.¹⁶ Some teenagers reported that they had participated in multiple forms of gambling. Nearly two thirds had participated in 2 or more forms of gambling, and over 40% of teenagers reported that they had participated in 3 or more forms of gambling.

The most common forms of gambling teenagers reported participating in were playing arcade games (such as claw machines), betting amongst family and/or friends, playing bingo, scratching scratchies, and/or buying loot boxes while participating in online gaming. The least common forms of gambling amongst teenagers were betting on esports, betting on fantasy sports, and paying to play online poker.

More than 1 in 6 teenagers reported ever participating in at least one form of betting (sports or racing online or in person) or paying to play casino and gaming machines (online casino games, pokies, or poker).

Females were more likely than males to have ever participated in gambling (ie to have ever participated in at least one form of gambling). However, when looking at how many forms of gambling individuals had participated in, males were more likely to have participated in three or more forms.

In terms of the most common forms of gambling, females were slightly more likely to play arcade games and scratchies, with similar proportions of females and males betting amongst family and/or friends. Slightly more males reported having participated in bingo.

Males were more likely to have purchased loot boxes. While participation numbers were relatively small, males were also more likely to have paid to participate in football/sports tipping competitions or to have bet online on sports or racing.

Participation in gambling was relatively similar between younger teenagers (13–15 year olds) and older teenagers (16–17 year olds). Those who were 13–15 years were more likely to have participated in bingo and were slightly more likely to have used arcade machines, whereas 16–17 year olds were slightly more likely to have placed online sports bets.

When responses were elaborated on, it was clear that some forms of gambling did not involve money. These included bingo when it was participated in at school, loot boxes when they were bought with in-game currency, and some betting done amongst family and friends.

While these may not technically be considered gambling, they show the broad range of ways in which gambling-like activities are made available to, enjoyed by, and actively encouraged amongst teenagers. These responses also highlight the difficulties some teenagers (and adults) have in distinguishing between what is and isn't considered to be gambling.

Teenagers participating in several forms of gambling:

“ arcade machines: spent lots of money trying to win stuff with my friends. lootboxes: buying lootboxes on several games often and continuously bingo: haven't gambled but have played it (13, female, Northern Adelaide)

“ lottery and scratches - with grandparents. bet on sports - the matildas in the world cup bet amongst family - we are a competitive family arcade machines - at bowling places

and stuff loot boxes - bought a few in like 2017-2019 mostly on epic-games games. (16, female, Eastern Adelaide)

“ I remember my dad getting scratchies and letting me scratch them to see what we got. I've played bingo as a game before. I have a family betting competition going on and finally I've done claw machines before. (14, male, Northern Adelaide)

Teenagers occasionally participating in gambling:

“ I have bet twice with friends about events that could happen but with very small amounts of money for fun. (15, female, Southern Adelaide)

“ Bingo, well, everyone has done it at least once. Betting in card games, I would only jokingly bet a maximum of 50c so it's not really an actual bet. Arcade machines are just obvious, the dangle the prize in front of you. (15, male, Northern Adelaide)

Teenagers not participating in any form of gambling:

“ I share no interest in gambling (16, male, Eastern Adelaide)

“ I don't understand why people do it. (16, female, Eastern Adelaide)

“ I do not know much about gambling. I think it is [a] Waste of Time. (15, male, Northern Adelaide)

“ in my religion (Islam) gambling is prohibited (16, female)

Forms of gambling that teenagers reported having ever participated in: ■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Arcade machines (eg claw grab machines)



Bets amongst family or friends (eg card games, sports)



Bingo



Scratchies



Bought loot boxes while online gaming



Lottery (eg Powerball) or Keno



Bet on sports (eg Sportsbet) – online



Paid to play football or other sports tipping competition



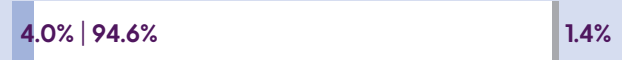
Bet on sports – in person



Bet on racing (eg horses) – online



Paid to play casino games (eg roulette) – online



Bet on racing (eg horses) – in person



Pokies



Paid to play poker (eg Texas hold 'em) – online



Bet on fantasy sports (eg football)



Bet on esports (eg League of Legends)



Who are teenagers gambling with?

For teenagers, gambling is often viewed as a social activity that is done with parents (parents were usually referred to generally, or sometimes specifically as their dad or mum), other family members (grandparents, siblings, and extended family members), and friends.

There were many examples of teenagers gambling with families or friends in the form of scratchies, lotteries, and sports betting, as well as informally within families or amongst friends.

Several teenagers shared that their parents or other family members, such as grandparents, purchased things like scratchies and lottery tickets, which were then given to them to do, sometimes as much younger children.

Keno and bingo were also sometimes played with family members. These 'quick' gambling activities were often initiated by parents or other adults. While teenagers often enjoyed them, some didn't. As one teenager wrote, 'I've been forced to play bingo at a club with my mum'.

A small number shared that they had formally bet on sports such as racing or football with other people, including family members. This could be initiated by adults or teenagers or be a mutually proposed/agreed upon activity. Legally people need to be 18 years or over to place bets on sports and racing, and some mentioned parents doing this for them. In other cases, some teenagers seemed to be able to access this gambling activity by themselves, regardless of their age.

Arcade machines were often played by teenagers in the company of friends and family, whether they were in game arcades or other locations. This was the gambling activity that teenagers reported having the most access to.

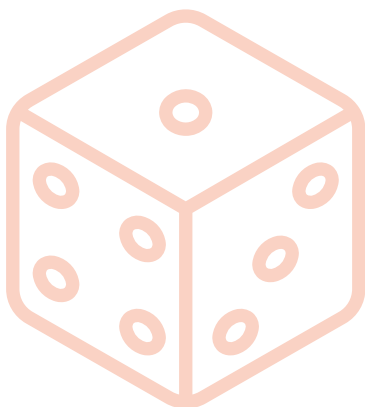
There were also numerous examples of informal gambling activities amongst family and friends. These activities included betting while playing games (such as poker or other card and boardgames), engaging in sports tipping competitions, and betting on sports amongst family and friends. Informal gambling also included betting on particular everyday activities and conversations, such as 'who's right', 'who was faster in a race' and who would win at 'golf and other stuff like who can cook better, and who can dance better'.

Gambling with others was often a social activity, perhaps a 'Family tradition/activity' or the chance to 'have a bit of fun with friends'. Social aspects were noted whether this was when gambling amongst family or friends, or done with them in various other forms of gambling such as playing arcade games, doing scratchies or betting on sports online.

Some respondents shared that scratchies were a 'family tradition during birthdays, the younger children do it for good luck' and they were given these as birthday presents (or they were given to their parents). Scratchies were also done 'in honour of a relative passing away' and 'during weddings' that some teenagers had attended.

A smaller number of teenagers mentioned participating in gambling activities on their own. These most likely involved buying loot boxes, but they sometimes related to online betting on sports and racing, or playing online casino and poker games.

- “ All that were ticked yes, involve activities completed with or against family members with their consent. (15, male, Eastern Adelaide)
- “ i didnt take it very seriously, but just a few times as children adults have encouraged to pick a horse or let us scratch scratchies, etc. i wouldnt say it has been too excessive (15, female)
- “ I do most of these with the supervision of my parents, but overall, things like bingo and stuff, are like things i would play with my family (as my family is vietnamese, there is a vietnamese style bingo) (15, female, Northern Adelaide)
- “ I've only gone for the lottery around two times. as i am underage, i just transferred money to my parents and put the ticket through their name, and it was a joint effort not just because i wanted to. (17, female, Adelaide Hills)
- “ When ever port power play my family places a 5 dollar bet on the team. Sometimes (like once a year) my parents get a scratchie and they let me do it. When I was little I would get \$1 for claw machines and we went to the horse races once and bet \$20 on my dad's friends horse. (13, female, Adelaide Hills)



Where do teenagers gamble?

As well as in home-based settings, teenagers reported that they engaged in gambling in numerous locations, showing the wide availability of gambling activities made available to them in different settings, including those online.

Teenagers often wrote about going to arcades to play arcade games, sometimes mentioning the names of specific places in the city or shopping centres that have standalone machines. Some locations combine arcade games with other activities targeted at children and young people, such as water-slides, sideshow rides and mini golf.

Public places such as bowling alleys, pubs, shopping centres, restaurants, and ice-skating rinks were all mentioned. These were often places where teenagers would find arcade games (such as claw machines) they could use on some outings, sometimes when they were bored and/or looking for entertainment.

Teenagers said they often participated in gambling-like activities at school, although this appeared to usually involve bingo in class, which teenagers did not pay to play and for which students were sometimes given small prizes, such as chocolate rewards. There were only a couple of examples of gambling activities undertaken by teenagers while at school, such as playing poker with friends.

Some forms of gambling were done online, like buying loot boxes. Online gambling was also mentioned in relation to some forms of sports betting and tipping, playing bingo with friends online and poker against AI. In person betting at sporting venues (sports stadiums or greyhound racing tracks) were mentioned at times too.

Numerous other places where teenagers had participated in gambling or gambling-like activities were also mentioned. These included at service stations, in nursing homes, at special events such as parties and weddings, at community events, in holiday locations and on cruises, at play cafes, and in bingo halls.

- “ I play arcade machines at bowling or at the Barcade which is this cool arcade bar thing that sells food. (14, female, Southern Adelaide)
- “ The claw machines are usually just due to the fact that maybe we got bored at the pub and were given 2 dollars for the claw machine. (13, female, Adelaide Hills)
- “ In a mobile game i play, i have sometimes paid real money for “mystery boxes” with a chance to win prizes. (13, male, Northern Adelaide)

How often do teenagers participate in gambling?

Teenagers tended to share that they only participated in forms of gambling occasionally, or had only gambled once or twice before.

This related to many forms of gambling including arcade games, scratchies, lotteries, and bets amongst family and friends. They shared that they ‘did claw machines like 3 times in my life’ and ‘I do scratchies rarely, only when given one’.

Special occasions were also mentioned, such as when they were on holidays, and attending family events, including Christmas and birthdays.

Arcades were sometimes visited for birthday parties or other special events. Sports finals and large horse races were also mentioned as occasions when they had been involved in a gambling activity of some kind.

Some shared that they frequently participated in gambling activities, although this wasn’t common. These teenagers shared that they often played arcade games such as claw machines, bought many loot boxes (currently or in the past), participated in weekly tipping competitions, and for one male respondent ‘Bet on variety of sports and races 5-6 days a week’.

- “ When I’m in a mall or shopping centre and there’s one there (this usually happens like maybe twice a year or less, it’s very rare) I will play arcade games and do claw machines but not often because I think they’re rigged and I don’t want to waste my money (17, female, Southern Adelaide)
- “ Not very often but when I was younger I would in pubs with family. With sports betting i’d do it a lot when I was younger (15, non-binary, Northern Adelaide)
- “ I have bet twice with friends about events that could happen but with very small amounts of money for fun. (15, female, Southern Adelaide)
- “ I do scratchies at important family events such as christmas and birthdays for fun. I sometimes use arcade machines but rarely. I used to spend so much money on gaming lootboxes but not anymore. (16, male, Northern Adelaide)
- “ sometimes bet on footy games depending on the importance of the game, e.g - finals, and bet on horse racing depending on how big the race is, e.g Melbourne cup, Caulfield Cup (15, male, Eastern Adelaide)

How much are teenagers spending on gambling activity?

Teenagers tended to emphasise that gambling was done with small amounts of money or without any money. Gambling amongst family and friends with small amounts of money was described as being with a ‘tiny bit of money’ or for ‘minimal stakes’. Small amounts of money were also mentioned in relation to playing arcade machines with ‘loose change’ or with a ‘gold coin’, buying ‘cheap’ scratchies, and betting on cards and sports but ‘only for a dollar’. In this way, many teenagers viewed gambling as a cheap way to have fun.

Teenagers also sometimes emphasised that they did not pay money to gamble, but that their parents or other family members bought items such as scratchies and lottery tickets for them, or they used their parents’ money to place bets, but were still involved in the process in some way.

Teenagers mentioned a broad range of things they used instead of money when gambling informally (or doing gambling-like activities) with family and friends. This included betting with food (eg with chocolates, lollies, cookies), with small items (eg coloured pencils, pens, bookmarks) or with poker chips, matchsticks, buttons, or coins that stayed with the game. Some also said they gambled for things – such as having to do the other person’s chores, or to ‘tell u their secrets or do something embarrassing’.

In-game currency was also referred to by teenagers as a way they did not pay money to engage in gambling-like activities.

“ I do it very rarely, and I don’t pay for them. Eg. we did a scratches in honor of a relative passing away. I bet on cards and sports VERY rarely- like 2 times ever and only for a dollar. (15, female, Western Adelaide)

“ Scratchies and Lottery with my dad. He buys them but i am a part of it. (15, female, Southern Adelaide)

“ I don’t often do these chosen activities but when I do I do it with either my family or my friends. We don’t bet on money though, instead we turn it into something fun like we bet our cookies or we say, “if she wins you have to do all my chores for a week”. That kind of thing. (16, female, Northern Adelaide)

“ I only do them with friends/family with fake money or in games that only use in-game currency and not real currency. (14, male, Eastern Adelaide)

“ My family and friends for candies or chocolates or even something they have and I really want. (13, female, Northern Adelaide)

Only a few teenagers mentioned spending large amounts of money on gambling activities, such as on loot boxes or arcade games.

“ Usually do sports betting with my dad and hundreds of dollars worth of online gaming loot boxes. (16, male, Northern Adelaide)

Reasons why young people gamble

Teenagers shared a broad range of reasons why young people might gamble. Most often they felt it was because of the money that could be won, for the fun, because it's addictive, or for the thrill. When asked about their own gambling, teenagers often mentioned they did it for fun, or sometimes to win a particular prize.

Making money

Teenagers most often viewed the prospect of winning money as the main reason why young people gamble. However, some were critical of the likelihood of making money from gambling.

Money as a motivation for gambling was often simply described as 'money' or to 'get', 'earn' or 'win' money. They also shared that young people may view gambling as a way to win 'easy' and 'quick' money, or 'win big' by getting a large amount of money, or a major prize.

They noted young people can lack money, so this was a way to make money. Some shared that this may be because young people might have 'financial struggles', or are 'broke' or 'desperate' for money. Others suggested that young people might gamble 'to get more money, because they don't get paid as much, plus [don't] get as much work hours'.

They also noted that young people thought they had a chance of winning money or hoped that they would win money by gambling,

though some teenagers also highlighted the unlikelihood of them actually winning money through gambling.

- “ Young people gamble to make more money. they want to make money in a easy way and they are thrilled by the risk involved in gambling. (16, male, Eastern Adelaide)
- “ Young people might gamble because they think they will earn back more money. (16, female, Eastern Adelaide)
- “ Because it's funny but also probably for money - think about the living situations these days, it's not out of line to think they want money to live in the future. (16, female, Southern Adelaide)
- “ Because we don't have much money, and gambling might be a way for some people to get more. (16, non-binary, Eastern Adelaide)
- “ its a fun and risky activity that results in collecting money - i think that the chance of gaining a lot of money it is what reels people in (17, female, Northern Adelaide)
- “ For the thrill of possibly winning a big load of cash (14, non-binary, Limestone Coast)

Fun and entertainment

Gambling is viewed as a fun and entertaining way for some young people to spend their time. Teenagers shared that young people might gamble for 'a bit of fun and laughter'. They also expressed this as gambling for 'entertainment', 'enjoyment', because young people are 'interested' in it, as a 'hobby' and because it's 'funny'.

- “ *because it feels fun while they are playing and every time they win they get excited and forget about how terrible they felt when they lost (15, female, Eastern Adelaide)*
- “ *Because they make it sound fun and it's a place they can escape from the real world. Also to try and win money. (14, female, Southern Adelaide)*
- “ *To find something fun to do and have a bit of fun with friends. Also the fact of winning lots of money if the bet pays out. (16, male, Northern Adelaide)*

Teenagers often mentioned 'fun' when asked about their own gambling activities. They often viewed that it was worth a small amount of money to participate in a 'fun' activity such as playing arcade machines, betting (often informally), or playing scratchies, as it was seen as essentially paying money to play a game. These teenagers generally did not expect to win money or a major prize.

- “ *I've use arcade machines as a recreational activity to do with friends. (16, male, Eastern Adelaide)*
- “ *The one I do the most is probably claw machines, and I only do them occasionally when I have a set budget to spend. I only do it for fun. (15, female, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island)*

- “ *Friends and family with footy matches for fun, only ever a few dollars (17, male, Southern Adelaide)*
- “ *My family occasionally by one or two cheap (\$2 to \$10) scratchies, typically around an event such as a birthday or holidays, to do all together for fun. (16, female, Southern Adelaide)*

Addiction and the 'thrill'

Teenagers shared that some young people may view gambling as a 'thrill' and that it can be addictive. They shared that young people might enjoy the 'thrill' and 'risk' and get a 'blast of excitement when winning'. They also shared that young people gambled 'For the dopamine rush, the excitement' and the 'adrenaline rush'.

They also were aware that gambling can be addictive, highlighting this was a reason why young people may continue to gamble. They viewed gambling as 'enticing', where it is 'designed to keep you hooked' and is 'hard to stop'.

- “ *E.g., thinking "I'm going to be the lucky one this time!", for the thrill of being a winner, making a profit. (16, female, Southern Adelaide)*
- “ *because they might try gambling and get a big win and then keep betting thinking they are gonna get more (16, male, Eastern Adelaide)*
- “ *Because it can be addicting. If they dont get the result they want, they will go back again to achieve the outcome they want. (16, female, Eastern Adelaide)*

Influence of other people

Other people were viewed as contributing to young people deciding to gamble. This included others directly influencing them, such as friends and family (parents, siblings and extended family). They noted that young people might gamble 'because their friends and family do' or be influenced by parents.

Some teenagers emphasised that gambling was a social activity, which could be done with friends and family. It was a good way to 'have fun with mates' and 'join in'.

However, they also noted that young people may experience 'peer pressure' to gamble 'because everyone is'. They shared that teenagers might gamble because they 'think it's cool', 'To look cool', and 'To show off'. Some gambled because they enjoyed the 'competitiveness'.

Young people were also viewed as being more broadly influenced by other people through advertising, what they saw online, influencers, TV, games, and arcades.

- “ Because their family might teach them to gamble or they might see it on tv and want to try (13, female, Southern Adelaide)
- “ Family tradition/activity, the risk factor, for fun (16, prefer not to say, Southern Adelaide)
- “ Because they have witnessed other people close to them do so and think it is either cool or normal (16, male, Northern Adelaide)

Not understanding the odds

Some teenagers viewed the reasons for young people gambling as relating to not understanding the low chances of winning and the value of money. They shared that some young people 'don't understand how gambling works'. This lack of understanding meant that they thought they could win, that the odds were good, and that they may think they are 'lucky' and would therefore be able to win.

Some teenagers suggested that young people who gamble 'may not be fully aware of the value of money' and are not 'responsible' with their money. Some suggested that young people are 'vulnerable to bad decision making' and that their brains were 'still developing' which impacted on their 'emotion and logic'.

- “ Because they do not understand the risks and are too focused on what they could be potentially gaining, despite not having a realistic chance. (17, male, Eastern Adelaide)
- “ because they think they can win more money than they loose but it is acctually the other way around. (13, female, Southern Adelaide)
- “ It gives them a false sense of control, which is something a lot of young people are lacking these days. (15, female, Northern Adelaide)
- “ Because it is generally promised to be high-risk, high-reward, and they are attracted to this high reward, not seeing the risk or how much they are truly losing. Young people also act a lot more on emotion and impulse, gratifying these effects. (14, male, Northern Adelaide)

“ Young people think they're invincible, or at least think they're strong. That mindset can spread to their actions such as thinking that they're luckier than most people or have better odds than older people. (15, male, Northern Adelaide)

As a way to escape

Teenagers suggested that some young people may gamble due to boredom, or for a range of emotional reasons. Young people might be bored at school, or not have places in the community that they are able to go, so that gambling was seen as an 'escape from being bored'. As one teenager wrote 'what else is there to do?'

Some teenagers viewed gambling as a coping mechanism for stress and other issues. They said gambling could be a way to 'escape' and 'a way of coping with continuous stress and life itself'. Stress, depression and loneliness were all viewed as reasons why young people may gamble.

“ Because they make it sound fun and it's a place they can escape from the real world. Also to try and win money. (14, female, Southern Adelaide)

“ To cope with boredom or escape from stress or other problems (16, male, Limestone Coast)

“ Because it can be away to escape emotions and socialise. (14, male, Eastern Adelaide)

“ Young people might gamble because it can help relieve short-term stress and escape from problems. (15, female, Eastern Adelaide)



Pervasiveness and normalisation of gambling

Gambling was often perceived by teenagers as being pervasive and normalised. Nearly all teenagers recalled seeing or hearing gambling advertising and many had encountered gambling opportunities on social media. They were also familiar with many forms of gambling and gambling-like activities, even if they hadn't participated in them.

Experiences of gambling advertising

Nearly every teenager completing the survey recalled seeing or hearing advertisements for gambling (96.1%). They had seen these advertisements in a broad range of places including on TV, on social media, in public spaces and in other forms of media and communication.

Teenagers had seen advertisements for gambling in games, on social media, when watching videos online, in emails, on the news, in newspapers, on the radio and in pamphlets. They had also seen gambling advertisements in public spaces, including on billboards, on the sides of buses, on posters in stores, on toilet stalls, in pubs, and at the supermarket.

Most teenagers had seen or heard advertisements for lotteries (94.6%), betting apps (94.4%), online casino games involving money (85.6%) and casinos (79.5%). Different forms of gambling were advertised more in some places than others, with betting apps and lotteries seen most on TV, online casino games on social media, and casinos relatively evenly spread across TV, social media, and public spaces.

- “ In mobile games (especially ones aimed at 8-15 yr olds) there are mountains of gambling ads, usually online casino games. (16, female, Adelaide Hills)
- “ I play free games on my phone and there are always tonnes there because they want to market to young people. (14, non-binary, Southern Adelaide)
- “ Ive seen ads for online casino games in games ive played, i dont know why they are advertising this to kids (ive seen these on games ive played since a young age) (15, female, Adelaide Hills)
- “ Mobile game ads are notorious for promoting virtual casino apps/websites (17, male, Southern Adelaide)
- “ Often when I am playing games or looking at things online, there might be gambling pop up ads either on the side of the screen or in the middle - ie. pops up during a video or game. (16, female, Southern Adelaide)
- “ I've seen some gambling ads on those TV boards above the road when you drive. (15, female, Eastern Adelaide)

Teenagers recalled seeing and/or hearing gambling advertisements:

Type	On TV (free-to-air or streaming)	On social media	In public spaces (e.g. bus stops, billboards)
Lotteries (e.g. Powerball)	78.5%	43.1%	50.2%
Betting apps (e.g. Sportsbet)	78.3%	58.1%	43.1%
Online casino games involving money	34.2%	62.4%	16.8%
Casinos (e.g. SkyCity)	42.0%	41.9%	39.3%

Teenagers recalled seeing advertisements for gambling on the following platforms:

YouTube	Instagram	TikTok	Facebook	Snapchat	Twitch
54.1%	33.4%	29.8%	17.3%	14.9%	8.3%

Nearly three quarters (73.2%) of teenagers who completed the survey had seen advertisements for gambling on at least one social media platform. YouTube was the most common platform, with more than 1 in 2 (54.1%) seeing gambling advertisements there.

However, whether teenagers see gambling advertisements on social media is also dependent on how much they use these social media, including these particular forms of social media. Some teenagers noted that they did not see gambling advertisements often, or at all. Some shared that they did not use social media, only used some platforms, or did not use social media very often.

- “ ad’s for gambling are every where i am. (13, female, Southern Adelaide)
- “ I just want to add that betting apps, and extremely so for sportsbet, are all over TikTok, they are pretty much the only ads I ever see on there now and it is becoming larger on YouTube too. (16, female)
- “ Facebook is the worst for it. There are a lot of ads everywhere for stuff like sportsbet (17, genderqueer, Murray and Mallee)

Seeing people gambling and talking about gambling

As well as advertising, teenagers often see people gambling, or talking about gambling online and in everyday places. While teenagers shared that they engaged in gambling and gambling-like activities with their families, they mentioned less often other forms of gambling by the adults in their lives (eg parents going to play the pokies).

Teenagers shared that they had seen people gambling, or talking about gambling, in many places. This included on social media (eg YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook), in online games, at shops, at pubs, and at school.

“ I have seen lottery tickets at the shop and I have seen people gambling at the pub not online anywhere. (13, female, Barossa, Light and Lower North)

“ I have seen people gambling and talking about gambling at school more frequently within the past four months. (17, female)

“ I don't have any social media but Youtube, and I occasionally see someone betting. (14, female, Northern Adelaide)

When asked specifically about social media, teenagers often recalled seeing people gambling or talking about gambling, with 2 in 3 (65.4%) saying they had seen people gambling on social media. More than 1 in 2 (56.1%) had seen Influencers talking about gambling on social media, and less than 1 in 2 (44.2%) had seen friends talking about gambling on social media.

YouTube, TikTok and Instagram were the three most common platforms on which teenagers who participated in the survey said they saw gambling, or people talking about gambling, with this reflecting the most common forms of social media used by teenagers.¹⁷ Other teenagers said they did not use social media, or only used it occasionally.

Teenagers recalled seeing people gambling (eg scratchies, bingo, poker) on:

YouTube	TikTok	Instagram	Snapchat	Facebook	Twitch
40.3%	36.8%	27.1%	13.4%	11.9%	8.6%

Teenagers recalled seeing influencers talking about gambling on:

YouTube	TikTok	Instagram	Twitch	Snapchat	Facebook
34.2%	31.5%	24.4%	10.7%	9.7%	8.3%

Teenagers recalled seeing friends talking about gambling on:

TikTok	YouTube	Instagram	Snapchat	Facebook	Twitch
20.2%	18.3%	18.0%	16.3%	8.3%	5.6%

Awareness of forms of gambling and gambling-like activities

The pervasiveness of gambling messaging was also evident from the familiarity teenagers had with many forms of gambling and gambling-like activities. They were much more likely to recall hearing about the different forms of gambling and gambling-like activities than to have participated in them.

For example, nearly all teenagers reported that they had heard of group betting on sports, but only 6.9% said that they had actually participated in a group bet. Similarly, most had heard of cryptocurrency, but only 4.3% had bought or sold cryptocurrency.

“ I sometimes see people betting with their in game currency while playing a multiplayer game. Also some games like one I do play let you enter the lotto once a year (The Sims) (13, female, Northern Adelaide)

“ I have heard about it [all forms in the question] but never really cared. (13, male, Northern Adelaide)

“ A lot of this knowledge has come from the advertisement of these activities (17, female)

Form of gambling and gambling-like activity	Heard of this and done this	Heard of this but never done this	Never heard of this
Paying to open loot boxes to get items while gaming (eg skins)	18.8%	58.3%	22.9%
Betting using in-game items like skins while gaming	9.2%	62.7%	28.2%
Group betting on sports (eg Ladbrokes Mates Mode Pots)	6.9%	79.9%	13.3%
Free online social casino games	6.0%	75.1%	18.9%
Buying and/or selling cryptocurrency (eg Bitcoin)	4.3%	80.7%	15.0%
Day trading (ie same day buying and selling of shares)	2.9%	65.5%	31.6%

What teenagers say is needed

When asked what they thought teenagers needed in relation to gambling, they had a broad range of suggestions to make. These included providing more education and information about key aspects of gambling and having more open conversations about gambling between teenagers and adults. They also wanted to see a reduction in gambling advertisements and more barriers put in place to limit accessibility to gambling. They also wanted to see an improvement in anti-gambling messaging.

Education and information about key aspects of gambling

Teenagers wanted to be better informed about gambling and asked for more education about gambling addiction, how gambling works, and how the gambling industry operates and what regulations are in place. They also wanted to know why people gamble and the impacts and consequences of gambling.

Gambling addiction

Many teenagers were interested in learning more about gambling addiction. They wanted to know how and why people get addicted, what makes some people more susceptible to gambling addiction than others, and how likely it is someone will become addicted to gambling. This indicates they are hearing messaging about gambling and addiction, but that this needs to be unpacked further.

They were interested in how to prevent gambling addiction and the risks and signs of it. They wanted to learn how to avoid temptation and 'how to keep it in control'. Some teenagers said they wanted to know if there was a way to gamble which was 'safe' and 'responsible'. This could be linked back to anti-gambling messaging about 'gambling responsibly'.

Some teenagers wanted to know how to stop a gambling addiction, including how to help others. This included knowing what services are available and 'How to break out of the cycle'.

“ Why has it become so addictive and how to stop people from developing addictions? (17, female, Adelaide Hills)

“ Is there any way to gamble safely? If not, how can we avoid it? (14, female, Southern Adelaide)

“ We need more, accessible information about how to help people and ourselves from the various levels of gambling addiction. (17, male, Northern Adelaide)

- “ I haven't been exposed to gambling much, so I'm afraid that one day I may get caught in it without realising, so I think it would be helpful to have more information on it and how to avoid it, as well as how to get out if you do find yourself stuck in gambling (17, female, Northern Adelaide)

How gambling works

Some teenagers wanted to know more about how gambling works. This included knowing the success rates and maths involved. They wanted to know how many people win and how many lose, what the chances of winning are, and how much money people spend and get back.

Some teenagers were interested in the likelihood of the success of particular forms of gambling and what 'the true odds of winning' actually are. This included understanding the 'risk level of each type of gambling', such as 'poker chances and mathematics'. Others wanted to know how to win, how much you can win, and how to 'earn money' from gambling.

- “ How many people have won and how does it really work. (13, female, Northern Adelaide)
- “ how much money people lost and/or gain from gambling (15, male, Northern Adelaide)
- “ I would like to know what the chances of actually winning something in a casino. (13, female, Southern Adelaide)
- “ The ratios of ages that gamble, how much they lose, win, etc. (17, male, Eastern Adelaide)

Gambling industry and regulations

Teenagers were interested to learn more about gambling and the gambling industry. Some wanted to know the history of gambling and 'Why it is even invented'. They were curious about 'How it works internally', such as how prizes are funded and 'the ins and outs of betting agencies'.

Other teenagers wanted to be better informed about the laws and regulations around gambling. This included why the government did not ban gambling, or why it was not limited more broadly. Some wanted to know if gambling was illegal, or if there are 'any regulations on it'. One teenager specifically questioned 'How it's legal to rig the machines and the card related gambling games'.

Some teenagers also asked about age limits placed on gambling. Others wanted to know about different forms of gambling including what counted as gambling and what didn't. Some were not aware that certain activities such as claw machines and cryptocurrency were considered as being gambling.

- “ How it works behind the scenes, the industry scheme as a whole. (15, female, Eastern Adelaide)
- “ Why does it exist, how did it start up, why is it so popular? (17, female, Adelaide Hills)
- “ why can't they ban it (gambling), if it's so bad? (13, female, Southern Adelaide)
- “ Different types of gambling; I hadn't even considered things like claw machines were a form of gambling. (16, female, Southern Adelaide)

Why people gamble

Some teenagers wanted to know why people gamble. They wanted to know why people do it and ‘What’s the point’. They wanted to know why people would risk their money when it was likely that they would lose it.

“ Why people do serious gambling if there’s a chance of losing all your money? (13, female, Eastern Adelaide)

“ Why do people do it? What is the fun in risking losing money and not being able to gain it back? (16, female)

Impacts and consequences of gambling

The impacts and consequences of gambling were also issues teenagers said they are interested in. Generally, they want to know how gambling can affect people and what the impact of gambling is on society.

They wanted to know about the financial impacts of gambling, such as how easy it is to go into debt, how much money people have lost to gambling (including the ‘demographics’) and the statistics around gambling and homelessness. Some also wanted to know about the mental health impacts of gambling.

A few wanted to know if any research had been done about young people and gambling, such as ‘if any research has been done on the effects of exposure to gambling at a young age’ and ‘the brain science behind gambling in adolescents’.

“ I would like to know the consequences of gambling, money wise for those who are considered addicted. (15, male, Eastern Adelaide)

“ I’d like to get more resources in classrooms with real stories of real people who have lost everything through gambling. Spread awareness. (17, genderqueer, Murray and Mallee)

“ The factors that it can take affect on anyone that gambles (eg. psychological factors, social factors, etc. (17, transgender demi-boy, Southern Adelaide)

Open discussions with teenagers about their gambling

Teenagers want adults to talk to them and ‘check in’ with them about their gambling and their lives more broadly. They said they wanted more ‘open discussions’ and that adults being available to talk and have a conversation with them about gambling would be helpful.

In some cases, respondents suggested it was important to talk with teenagers about their gambling before it causes them or others any harm. Adults, particularly parents, need to create ‘a space of trust and feeling of safety’ to ‘make the child feel more comfortable in opening up to their parent and telling the truth about their habit of gambling’.

Some shared that this does not necessarily mean adults should stop teenagers from participating in some forms of gambling, but that they should know ‘what their kids are doing’ and ‘If your kid has done it, ask more questions to see if it is actually bad’.

They suggested that adults should not ‘make these things a forbidden fruit’ which would only tempt young people more and maybe stop them from going to adults if they needed help with their gambling behaviour.

- “ Check in with your kids if they are gambling and see how much they are loosing. (16, male, Eastern Adelaide)
- “ Teach them kids not to gamble. Even though they might still do it, at least talk about what could happen if it becomes an addiction. (13, prefer not to say, Northern Adelaide)
- “ Being addicted to gambling has a much deeper meaning behind it than just wanting to make money, and it is important to pay attention to your child when they start to gamble and try and understand what is going on. (15, female, Northern Adelaide)
- “ I think they should probably understand the reasons why individual young people have turned to gambling, and provide them alternatives, e.g. if a young person has turned to gambling for quick money, helping them find opportunities for casual work. (17, female, Northern Adelaide)
- “ I personally think adults e.g. parents, teachers and health professionals should be keeping track of what young people get themselves into simply for the well-being of that person but also what, where and how these people are gambliing. (15, female, Northern Adelaide)

Teenagers highlighted the role that adults can play in helping teenagers who have issues with gambling. They said adults can be particularly important in helping teenagers who gamble because, as one teenager put it, ‘There aren’t enough accessible/known resources to assist young people with a gambling problem’.

- “ For any young people going through addiction, don’t try and guilt them out of these things. And don’t try to take away their options, either; that can make them feel trapped and like gambling is the only viable option left. (14, female, Southern Adelaide)
- “ there are a fair few young people who are already addicted to it at such a young age and dramatic measures need to be taken to stop this. (17, female, Adelaide Hills)
- “ to help them to stop doing it because it is a waste of money. (15, female, Northern Adelaide)

Reduction in gambling advertising and accessibility

Teenagers want widespread changes that will reduce gambling advertising and for limits to be placed on people’s ability to access gambling.

Reducing or banning gambling advertising was one suggestion teenagers made to help lower teenage participation in gambling. Some teenagers commented on the way gambling advertisements target young people, frequently appearing on their social media and in online gaming.

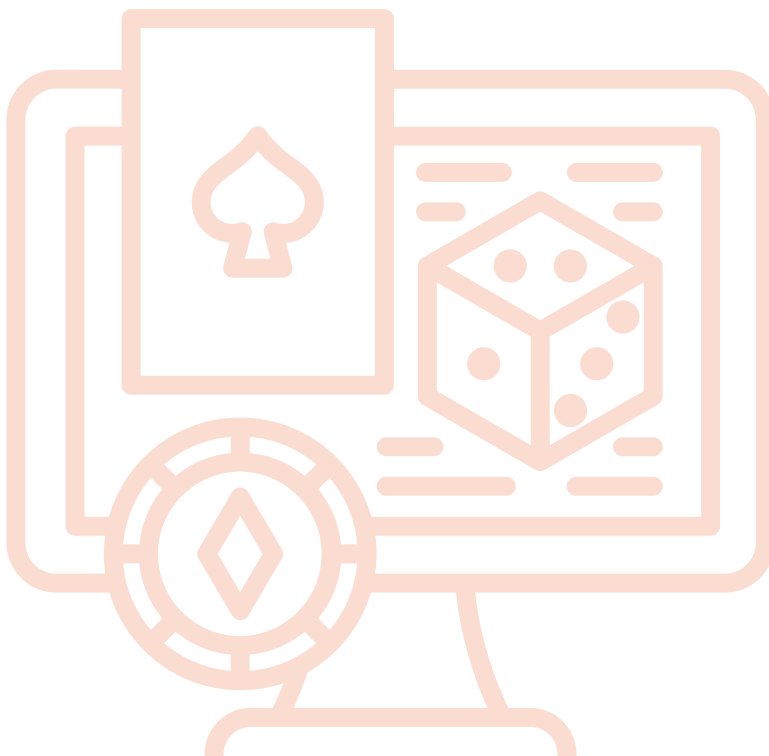
- “ I think the acceptance of gambling ads have led policymakers to forget about how intense the advertising can be for young people. (17, female)

- “ Gambling ads, etc. should be banned for young-people demographics on social media and on TV, etc. (17, female, Adelaide Hills)
- “ It needs to have more education around it and be advertised less. Despite the fact that gambling lobbies own most of our political parties. (17, non-binary)
- “ That the continuous ads only encourage young people to go out and gamble, especially on sports with friends, as that is the most advertised about. (17, female, Eastern Adelaide)
- “ Don't make the ads so bright and eye catching. (using animations on tv to advertise the lotto used to catch my attention when i was little because of the colours and cartoon looking lotto balls and characters.) (15, female, Southern Adelaide)
- “ Just try to keep the adds for gambling off until past midnight or something, its ridiculous how many gambling adds I see during the day. (13, female, Adelaide Hills)

The easy access teenagers have to gambling because of its availability was also raised as an issue. They shared that gambling ‘is more accessible than it should be’ and ‘too accessible to young people in innocent forms eg mobile games, loot boxes’.

In some cases, they shared how they felt that children and young people were being deliberately targeted with gambling advertising and promotion. One teenager asked ‘Why is gambling promoted where children are able to see?’

- “ That even though we are children (especially to those belonging to younger age groups) there are still plenty of us that still have access to gambling online or online purchases. (15, non-binary, Adelaide Hills)
- “ personally, i think that the betting to open loot boxes etc. part of gambling that is ingrained in a game marketed towards children is actually going to start like conditioning children to gamble and take risks from a young age and not fully understanding what they are doing. (15, female)



Improvement of anti-gambling messaging

While nearly all teenagers (96.1%) recalled having heard or seen advertisements for gambling, over half (57.1%) recalled seeing anti-gambling advertisements or messaging. Nearly a quarter (23.1%) had not seen anti-gambling ads or messaging at all, and a fifth (19.8%) reported that they didn't know.

Most of the anti-gambling advertisements and messaging that teenagers saw appeared to be disclaimers which followed an advertisement for gambling. Some repeated the messages they had heard in these disclaimers, particularly to 'gamble responsibly', along with other slogans and messages such as 'you win some you lose more'.

Some teenagers, however, were cynical about the usefulness of the warnings, or suggested there were not enough of them. They mentioned that disclaimers following advertisements for gambling were 'quick' or only 'tiny' or 'small' warning messages. Some were not sure if these disclaimers counted as anti-gambling advertisements at all and wanted more dedicated messaging to dissuade young people from gambling.

“ Only “gamble responsibly”, but that doesn't say how to gamble responsibly, and doesn't have an impact anymore. (17, male, Northern Adelaide) ”

“ The fine print speed-talking at the end of gambling ads. And 1 purely anti-gambling ad once on the TV. (17, genderqueer, Murray and Mallee) ”

“ How come there are warnings on the TV after gambling ads but there aren't warnings on social media during/after the ad? I thought it was legislated that gambling had to have warnings with it? (16, female, Northern Adelaide) ”

Only a small number of teenagers recalled seeing dedicated anti-gambling advertising. These were often posters and signs in places where gambling may occur, such as places in which lottery tickets were sold, in casinos, at shops and football venues, and in pubs.

Some teenagers said there wasn't enough anti-gambling advertising and wanted to know 'why there aren't more prevention campaigns'.

“ i would like to see more of these [anti-gambling] ad's because its so hard to not get addicted to something and once you start you cant stop. (13, female, Southern Adelaide) ”

Others felt educating teenagers about gambling would be more effective than having more anti-gambling messaging or advertisements.

“ Putting scary thoughts about gambling into young peoples head doesn't stop them but the right education let's them know when they need to stop (16, female, Northern Adelaide) ”

Next steps

The ubiquitous nature of gambling across Australian society is evident through these survey responses. Of the 590 teenagers aged 13 to 17 years who completed the survey, nearly all had been exposed to gambling and gambling advertising in some form. Many had participated in formal and informal gambling activities at some point in their lives, sometimes from a young age.

For teenagers, gambling is often viewed as a fun, entertaining and harmless activity that can be enjoyed with family and friends from childhood. Teenagers are most likely to gamble occasionally, and for small amounts of money or small items. Teenagers are also exposed to and encouraged to engage in a range of gambling-like activities, such as bingo in class, where they learn the processes and habits of gambling. For some teenagers distinguishing between gambling and gambling-like activities is often just a technicality (eg no money or item of value is involved) and this distinction may not always be useful when thinking about teenagers and gambling.

The pervasive and widespread use of gambling advertising, and the exposure and accessibility teenagers have to some forms of gambling is extensive, even amongst those who say they aren't particularly interested in gambling. Anti-gambling messaging is less prevalent and rarely aimed at teenagers.

While there are regulations in place to prevent young people under 18 years of age from participating in some forms of gambling, teenagers surveyed said their participation is often done with the knowledge and involvement of their parents and/or other family members, including siblings and grandparents. Some teenagers surveyed confirmed that they have also gambled with their friends, although this is often informally.

While gambling is often discussed in relation to participation by teenage boys, it is evident from the survey responses that teenage girls are also participating in gambling. This points to a need for more consideration to be given to the impact of gender on gambling participation, forms of gambling, and frequency.

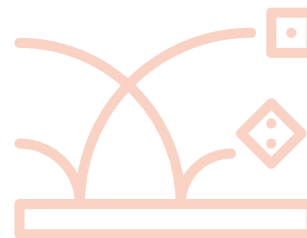
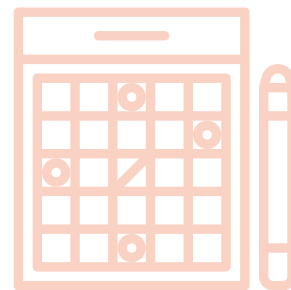
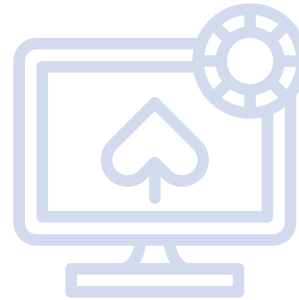
Many teenagers who participated in the survey are aware there are some risks associated with some forms of gambling. They want to see more open discussion between teenagers and adults about gambling, so they can develop a better understanding of what gambling harm looks like and seek support if needed.

Developing education resources about gambling and gambling-like activities aimed at teenagers needs to be done with input from teenagers themselves. There is very little public facing information or support for teenagers in relation to gambling harm, how to prevent it, or what to do about it if it does happen. There should also be additional supports and resources made available to parents and carers, so they can talk to their teenager/s about gambling and can recognise when participation in gambling may be causing harm.

“ In short, teenagers want more information about gambling and its risks made available to them at a younger age.”

Commissioner Helen Connolly

They want to learn how gambling works and how harmful gambling practices can be avoided. They also want to be able to talk openly with adults, suggesting that checking in with teenagers about their lives more broadly will lead to safe spaces to discuss gambling, including potential gambling harm.



Endnotes

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