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| **PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT** |  |

Journeys towards gambling harm among young adults who gamble regularly on sports and race betting

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This study is examining online betting in young adults who gamble regularly on sports and races. It aims to provide a holistic picture of the journey from early experiences of sports and race betting, through to regular gambling. It will examine the early influences on betting such as parents, simulated gambling (games with gambling in them) and friendship groups. We will be looking at why young adults bet on sports and races, who they bet with and where they bet. We will also be looking at the first experiences of harm where these occur.

This Plain Language Statement contains detailed information about this research project. Its purpose is to explain all of the procedures involved in this project to you, as openly and clearly as possible, so you can make an informed decision about whether you would like to participate. Please read this Plain Language Statement carefully. Participation is entirely voluntary and there is no consequence for not participating. This project has been approved by the Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee (DUHREC 2023-283).

**Who can participate?**

We are looking for people living in Australia, aged 18-30 years (inclusive), who currently gamble online at least fortnightly on sports and/or race betting, and who own a smartphone. If you know anyone who may be interested in participating in this study, you are welcome to invite them to participate by passing on the study information.

**What does participation involve?**

1. *Initial online survey:* An initial 25-minute online survey, where we will ask you to provide explicit consent to participate in this study by selecting a tick box, before completing questions about your online sports/racing gambling (e.g., when you started gambling, how much you gamble, your motivations for gambling). We will also ask you some questions about your family and friends’ gambling (e.g., their attitudes towards sports/racing gambling and their own sports and race betting). We will ask you for your email address and mobile number so that you can receive instructions on how to enrol to receive ‘mini-surveys’ over the following 30 days and so we can reimburse you for taking part. The survey will end by asking you whether you provide consent to be contacted about an optional, follow-up interview and if you consent to be contacted about future research by selecting a tick box. Consenting to these additional contacts is entirely voluntary and does not impact your participation in this study.
2. *Download the app:* We will ask you to download an app called ‘MetricWire’ to your smartphone. This allows you to complete the mini-surveys.
3. *3-minute mini-surveys:* Once you download the MetricWire app and enrol, the mini-surveys start. For the following 30 days, the MetricWire app will send you a notification to complete two mini-surveys per day. These are very short (1-3 minutes to complete). They will ask you about your sports or race betting over the past 12 hours and a few questions about what was happening while you were gambling (e.g., where you were and who you were with). These surveys will be sent at 8.30am and 8.30pm each day. Once you receive the notification for a mini-survey you have two hours to complete it. We will monitor MetricWire over the 30 days; we will send you weekly reminders and may send you a reminder via email, SMS, or phone call if we notice that you haven’t been completing the mini-surveys over a 48-hour period.
4. *Optional interview*: We will be doing some follow up interviews by phone or zoom to ask a bit more about the journeys into sports and race betting with around 20 participants. You will be asked if you consent to be invited to an interview at the end of the initial survey by selecting a tick box. This is entirely voluntary and saying yes or no does not impact your participation in this study. Not all participants who consent to being contacted will be invited to this interview, as we will only be recruiting a sub-sample of people who have experienced problems or harms from their sports/race gambling.

Overall, participation in this study will take up to approximately 3.5 hours to complete the initial survey, download the app, and complete all of the mini-surveys, and up to an additional 1 hour to complete the optional interview for the sub-sample of participants who complete an interview too. For participants completing the entire study, participation will take up to approximately 4.5 hours.

**How will I be reimbursed?**

We understand your time is important. To recognise the time it takes to participate in this study, we will compensate you with up to $170 in Coles e-gift vouchers. This will include: $40 for completion of the initial online survey and at least two mini-surveys, $1 for each additional mini-survey completed, and a $20 bonus at the end of the 30-day period if you complete over 80% of the mini-surveys (up to $120 in total for participation for the initial survey and mini-surveys).

People who complete the additional optional interview will be compensated with an additional $50 in Coles e-gift vouchers via email.

All gift vouchers will be sent to you via email; therefore, you will be asked to provide an email address during the initial online survey.

**What are the possible risks and benefits of participating?**

Your participation will help us to better understand the social and environmental context of sports and race betting for young adults and journeys toward gambling harms in this group. This information will help to inform the development of appropriate prevention and intervention programs for young adults at risk of gambling harm. Some of the questions asked may be uncomfortable or distressing because of their personal nature. If you experience any discomfort or distress, you can contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or the Gambling Helpline on 1800 858 858 at any time. These are free and confidential help services that operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you would like to follow up on issues raised by this study, please contact Dr Anna Thomas on (03) 9244 5610 or anna.thomas@deakin.edu.au.

**How will my confidentiality be protected?**

We are asking personal questions so your confidentiality is important to us. If you agree to participate in the study, any information that you share with us is confidential, except where disclosure is required by law (given that research data is not privileged data).

Any data that you provide during this study will be de-identified to protect your confidentiality. Your initial survey responses will be stored on the Qualtrics online survey platform, which is a secure U.S. based platform subjected to U.S. privacy laws, which are expected to be similar to Australian Privacy Principles. Similarly, your mini-survey responses will be stored on the secure MetricWire app platform. Once data collection has been completed, your initial survey and mini-survey responses will be downloaded onto secure, password-protected files at Deakin University, along with the responses of other participants. To protect your confidentiality, your identifiable information (email address and mobile number) will be separated from your survey responses and stored in a separate, password-protected file at Deakin University. The file containing identifiable information will be permanently destroyed once the study has completed data collection; we will only keep identifiable information (in a separate password-protected file) for those participants who consent to being contacted about future research during the initial survey. Data will be permanently deleted from the Qualtrics and MetricWire platforms once a de-identified version has been uploaded on the Deakin University Research Data Store, which is a secure storage system for digital data.

The study information and results will be reported in a form that does not permit the identification of participants, which includes scientific papers and research reports. De-identified data may be shared for research purposes (upon request); but rest assured that none of your identifiable information will ever be released to any other party at any time. Your de-identified data will be kept for a minimum of five years after the final publication of the study results.

**What if I want to withdraw?**

Participation in this study is completely **voluntary**. You can withdraw from the study any time before we start the analysis of the findings. After this point, we won’t know what data belongs to you and therefore cannot withdraw your data. If you would like to withdraw from the study, any data collected will not be included in any publications. If at any time you would like to withdraw, please email the research team on [anna.thomas@deakin.edu.au](mailto:anna.thomas@deakin.edu.au).

**How is this study funded?**

This project has been awarded a Grant for Gambling Research (Round 12) from the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (VRGF) to the value of $99,702 (GST exclusive).

**How can I find out about the study findings?**

At the completion of the study, a summary of the findings will be made available for participants. If you are interested in receiving this summary of findings or a copy of any published outputs from this study, please email [anna.thomas@deakin.edu.au](mailto:anna.thomas@deakin.edu.au).

**How can I get more information?**

If you would like further information about this study, please contact the research team on:

**Dr Anna Thomas**

E: [anna.thomas@deakin.edu.au](mailto:anna.thomas@deakin.edu.au)

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If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact: Human Research Ethics Office, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Telephone: 9251 7129, [research-ethics@deakin.edu.au](mailto:research-ethics@deakin.edu.au). Please quote project approval number [2023-283].