

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **Credit data not telling the whole truth on consumer gambling spend**

Tuesday 21 July 2020

Reports of gambling spending surges based on consumer credit data don't tell the full picture, and Responsible Wagering Australia is urging caution in interpreting headline figures.

"Historical consumer credit data is being used to create alarmist reports that gambling has surged during the COVID crisis," said Responsible Wagering Australia CEO, Brent Jackson.

"Without context people assume that increases in online gambling during COVID automatically mean an increase in overall gambling activity. This isn't the industry experience, and credible data sources aren't suggesting that either.

"With over-the-counter betting and gambling outlets closed by COVID restrictions, people have migrated to online platforms, as with nearly every retail business in the country.

"Our concern is that a lot of the growth in online gambling has gone to unlicensed overseas betting websites that offer no consumer protections at all.

"Online casinos and pokies operate illegally in Australia despite hundreds of overseas websites being accessible with the click of a button. While it's against the law for businesses to provide these betting games to the Australian market, it isn't actually illegal for Australians to access them, and this puts consumers (including children and vulnerable people) at major risk.

"The growth of smartphones combined with the high number of illegal overseas gambling websites targeting Australians 24/7 means that many people are walking around with an unlicensed casino in their pocket.

"Growth in online gambling has been a normal market response to a changing retail environment. If this growth is fuelled by unlicensed overseas gambling websites, then this is a major threat to responsible gambling in Australia," Jackson said.

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RWA is an independent peak-body for Australian-licensed WSPs. RWA Members include Australia's leading wagering service providers (bet365, Betfair, GVC Australia, Sportsbet and Unibet. RWA and its members are committed to ensuring that Australia has the best conducted, socially responsible, wagering industry in the world. A copy of RWA's Code of Conduct can be found [here](#).

**Media contact:**

Sara Ross  
0402 419 962