

Responses to Questions on Notice from 2017-18 Budget Estimates Hearing for Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

- 1 In relation to the Sex Work Regulation Fund financial information reported in the Consumer Affairs Victoria 2015-16 annual report (p.45), please provide:**
 - a. further details of the \$166,992 expenditure on contractors, consultants and professional services**
 - b. further details of the \$2.3 million (or \$225,000) spent on 'other operating costs'.**
 - a. The main expenditure in the \$166,992 spend on contractors, consultants and professional services include:
 - \$117,372 relates to the provision of legal professional services, most of which relate to one court matter
 - \$35,155 relates to the provision of contractors to support CAV's service delivery
 - \$12,198 relates to the provision of IT services.
 - b. The main expenditure in 'other operating costs', which total \$225,000 include:
 - \$120,000 for the contribution by the Sex Work Regulation Fund to the Department of Justice and Regulation overhead costs
 - \$41,000 due to a legal settlement where costs were awarded against Consumer Affairs Victoria
 - \$18,769 relates to probity checks for the various Sex Work applications
 - \$9,475 for communication, postage and courier expenses
 - \$16,501 for printing and stationery and office supplies
 - \$12,447 for training and development.
- 2. In relation to the 'Pathways to Exit – Expansion' output initiative (Budget Paper No.3, p.78), please explain 'who is doing that assertive outreach program to exit these women out of sex work ... and if any of that money [\$1 million per year] [is] going to Project Respect '.**

This question has been referred to the Department of Health and Human Services who have advised the Minister for Health will respond directly to PAEC.

3. How many referrals are being made to Victoria Police by CAV regarding unlicensed/illegal operators in the sex industry?

During 2016-17, CAV referred 14 suspected unlicensed/illegal operators to Victoria Police.

4. What research has been done on intergenerational gambling and cultures over-represented in problem gambling?

One of the functions of the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation is to conduct research. In 2016-17, the Foundation spent \$2.1 million on research projects. The Foundation has published several reports on intergenerational gambling and gambling among culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

For example, the recent report *Assessing gambling-related harm in Victoria* examined harms that impact on a person who gambles, affected others and the broader community as a result of gambling. This report, led by Associate Professor Matthew Browne of Central Queensland University, included consideration of harms that may affect children of people with gambling problems, or intergenerational harms. This report also drew attention to cultural harms that result from gambling, such as feelings of cultural shame due to gambling behaviour.

Another report published in 2014 examined gambling in Chinese and Tamil communities. This report, led by Associate Professor Susan Feldman, found that views on gambling were diverse both within and between communities, and are tied to practices and perceptions in an individual's country of origin. These attitudes and beliefs, along with stresses related to migration, were seen to impact help-seeking behaviours and service accessibility.

A major report on intergenerational gambling is *Children at risk of developing problem gambling*, funded by Gambling Research Australia and led by Associate Professor Nicki Dowling. This report found that children with parents or siblings who had problems with gambling were more likely to develop problem gambling themselves.

5. Please advise the Committee of annual losses for Victorian gamblers by product.

Annual losses for 2016-17 are not available until the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation has published its annual report later in 2017.

Annual losses for 2015-16 are shown below.

Source	Player loss (\$ million)
Gaming machines - hotels and clubs	2,616.7
Melbourne casino – gaming machines and table games	1,851.7
Wagering-racing (totalisator), football, track-side and sports betting	826.9
Lotteries	525.0
Keno	19.7
Total	5,840

6 What work is being undertaken in relation to educating the community about how to address problems encountered in the retirement village setting?

CAV provides comprehensive information to potential Victorians choosing, living in, or leaving a retirement village, to help them make the right decisions. The information covers fees, contracts, disputes and selling.

The primary source of information is available on the CAV website. The CAV website was recently redesigned to ensure all information is accessible and easy to find along with a new 'Listen' button which reads pages to the user should they require it. In the last four financial years, the average number of page views for information regarding retirement villages has been over 54,000.

CAV also produces a publication: *Guide to choosing and living in a retirement village*, which summarises the information available on CAV website. This guide can be viewed online, downloaded or ordered from CAV by prospective and current retirement village residents. It is available as a bulk order, should village operators wish to provide copies to prospective residents in addition to referring to the online material in the factsheet.

In addition, CAV provides a range of services to ensure older Victorians have accessible information that suits their needs, including interpreter and national relay services via our telephone enquiries line.

As part of its community education program, CAV staff run information sessions to inform older Victorians who may be future retirement village residents of their rights and key aspects in relation to retirement village living, including contracts.

Since 2014, CAV has delivered two education campaigns to educate Victorians about retirement villages through multiple channels including print, TV and online with a focus on targeting culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The 2014 campaign targeted Victorians aged 65-79 considering moving into a retirement village. The campaign aimed to increase awareness of new retirement village legislation that came into effect on 1 July 2014 and information available on the CAV website on choosing a retirement village.

The 2015 campaign was part of a Victorian Government commitment to actively promote a better understanding of retirement village residents' rights and obligations both prior to entry to a village and also while a resident. The campaign targeted Victorian seniors 65+ - both those considering moving into a retirement village and existing residents - on what retirement village living involves from a lifestyle, contractual and financial point of view.

7. The Budget Papers say that the Government wants to promote stability for renters:

“To give renters greater long-term security, the Government is funding a range of initiatives. These include:

- **establishing a new optional standard long-term lease agreement available for landlords and tenants wishing to enter into arrangements of more than five years;**
- **a dedicated website to connect landlords and tenants interested in a long-term lease; and**
- **Considering the feasibility of a long-term lease intermediary service.**

The Minister has been quoted as saying that the new website will be like online dating but for rentals. (The Age March 2, 2017

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/longterm-leases-set-to-give-victorian-renters-a-chance-to-put-down-roots-20170302-quot2s.html>)

People who are looking for a place to rent are in a much more vulnerable position than someone offering a property for rent.

Please indicate why the Government is funding a website to connect landlords and tenants?

Establishing a website to connect landlords and tenants interested in longer term tenancy arrangements is one measure to promote stability and affordability for renters announced by the Government in the housing strategy statement *Homes for Victorians*.

The proposed website will complement: legislative reforms to expand the scope of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* so that the Act will apply to all tenancies regardless of length of fixed term; and the development of an optional, standard long-term tenancy agreement. The website will both encourage and support landlords and tenants who are interested in entering into longer term tenancy arrangements.

8. **There are concerns that the website could effectively turn into a portal where people enter into a bidding process for rental homes.**
- a. **What consumer protections will be included on this new government website?**
 - b. **How will the government ensure that no rental bidding occurs on its website?**
 - c. **Rental bidding is currently not unlawful in Victoria. Will the Government ban rental bidding?**
- a. The new website will be consistent with the requirements and consumer protections set out in the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* and the Australian Consumer Law. Consideration will be given to including links from the website to relevant consumer and landlord/tenant advice. The final form and content of the website is yet to be developed.
- b. The proposed matching service, and the platform through which it will be provided, is not designed to promote any activity other than identifying landlords and tenants interested in long fixed term tenancies. It is not intended to include any function promoting or allowing rental bids to be submitted.
- c. Advertising a rental property at a price that is lower than a landlord will accept may contravene the prohibition on misleading or deceptive conduct in the Australian Consumer Law. Otherwise, residential tenancies laws do not explicitly prohibit rental bids or auctions. The review of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* recently sought public views on a series of possible reform options that included a ban on rental bidding. Submissions to the options paper are available on the website for the review, engage.vic.gov.au/fairersaferhousing. The government is currently finalising a package of recommended reforms based on the outcomes of public consultation, with a view to introducing amendment legislation in the Victorian Parliament in 2018.

9. The Budget Papers say that the Government wants to promote stability for renters:

- a. Will this long-term lease agreement facility be managed and incorporated under the Residential Tenancies Act or will people in long term leases be governed by a different legislative regime than standard leases?**
 - b. If they will be governed by a different legislative regime, will they have the same protections or fewer protections than those governed by the Residential Tenancies Act?**
 - c. Why has the government chosen to define a long-term lease as being five years or more? What is the rationale behind that decision?**
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- a. The Government intends to amend the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* so that it will apply to all tenancy agreements irrespective of the length of the term of the tenancy. Currently, the protections of the Act only apply to tenancy agreements for a fixed term of not more than five years.
 - b. Tenancy agreements for a fixed term of more than five years will generally be subject to the same protections under the Act as shorter tenancies.
 - c. The Act currently provides that it does not apply to a tenancy agreement for a fixed term of more than five years. In the context of the proposed reforms, a tenancy for a term of greater than five years is considered to be a 'long-term' tenancy.

10. In relation to the YourPlay pokies pre-commitment scheme, in December 2016 the government introduced the YourPlay scheme, which allows pokies users to make a commitment on how much they are willing to lose in that session before starting to play. However the scheme is entirely voluntary and appears to have very little uptake. Please indicate:

- a. How many people are actually using the YourPlay card?**
- b. According to the budget, revenue from pokies taxes is expected to grow over the next few years. In forecasting this growth, is it assumed that YourPlay will have little impact on the amount of money Victorians lose to poker machines?**
- c. Can the interim report on YourPlay be supplied to the Committee?**

The YourPlay scheme commenced on 1 December 2015 and it is available on all gaming machines in the state, including the Melbourne casino. The YourPlay scheme enables players of gaming machines to set limits on the time and/or money they spend playing gaming machines and it also enables players to track the time and money they spend playing gaming machines over time.

- a. As at 30 April 2017, over 42,000 YourPlay cards had been activated across the state.
- b. There are many factors that impact the growth in gaming machine expenditure and taxes from that expenditure. These include economic growth, household income movements, population growth and the relative position of gaming machines within all gambling products available. It is not possible to measure the effect of YourPlay on gaming machine expenditure and taxes in the short term because of these broad macroeconomic factors.

YourPlay is a consumer protection measure that has already delivered more than 7.4 million responsible gambling information messages to players advising them of their losses, in real time, as they play. Behavioural change is required to embed the use of YourPlay into the gambling environment and long term behaviour change is slow, but on early signs, the outlook is positive.

- c. There is no interim report on YourPlay. The evaluation of YourPlay is a complex project with many components. It would be misleading to release data from the various evaluation components at this stage until all the analysis is complete.