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Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Inquiry into the 2025-26 Budget Estimates

Hon Enver Erdogan MLC

Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

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Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation – A Year in Review

2024-25 has been a year of major change across the Portfolio



New tobacco business licensing scheme

- From 1 July 2025 tobacco retailers and wholesalers must apply for a licence to sell tobacco products in Victoria
- Supporting Victoria Police and other law enforcement groups to fight serious organised crime and disrupt the supply of illegal tobacco
- Deter unsuitable people from selling tobacco and running tobacco businesses
- Tough powers to respond to contraventions



Improving liquor regulation in Victoria

- Liquor Control Victoria is processing liquor licences 35% faster
- Focus on improving the user experience through digital applications and better website
- Protecting Victorians from harm through compliance inspections, enforcement, and education



Legislation to support gambling reform and modernise licences

- Legislation introduced into Parliament to:
 - establish a new tobacco business licensing scheme, strengthen law enforcement and increase penalties including for supplying illicit tobacco introduced
 - support gambling reforms in clubs and hotels
 - modernise licence frameworks for the gaming machine monitoring and public lottery licences

Introduction of tobacco business licensing scheme

The 2025-26 Budget provides \$46 million over 5 years to establish the tobacco business licensing scheme



to establish tobacco licensing, compliance and enforcement



to deter unsuitable people from selling tobacco and running tobacco businesses



to deliver enabling technology to be utilised by the scheme



Additional funding for Victoria Police to support the regulator to ensure the suitability of licensees

The new tobacco retail and wholesale business licensing scheme will be in place from 1 July 2025:

- Tobacco Amendment (Tobacco Retailer and Wholesaler Licensing Scheme) Act 2024 passed in November 2024.
- Department of Justice and Community Safety to deliver a licence scheme for tobacco retailers and wholesalers in Victoria.
- Enforcement of the scheme to begin on 1 February 2026. By this stage, you must have a licence if you want to sell tobacco.
- Tough new penalties introduced for anyone operating without a licence or caught possessing or selling illicit tobacco.
- The scheme introduces some of the toughest penalties in the country.
- The scheme covers cigarettes, cigars and other tobacco products designed for human consumption.



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Strong gambling regulator

The Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission (VGCCC) continues to hold the gambling industry to the highest standards.

A key focus has been strong action against venues that allowed minors to gamble.

The VGCCC has also taken on a new function in raising awareness for consumers about gambling products and their risks.

97%

of **high harm gambling breaches resulted in regulatory action**, compared to a target of 95%

1,900

gambling audits completed, compared to a target of 1,600

20%

of **gambling audits conducted at high-risk times**, compared to a target of 12%

Gambling Harm Prevention and Response Model



New Gambling Harm Prevention and Response Model established

The 2024-25 Budget invested \$165.7 million over 4 years to prevent and respond to gambling harm, including \$41.1 million for the 2025-26 financial year.

The new model began on 1 July 2024 after the closure of the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, and the transfer of its functions and staff.



Gambling harm research priorities 2025-2028 released and key research published

Coordination across Government provides direction and facilitates collaboration to ensure all agencies work together to respond to gambling harm, enabling stronger connections to health and social supports.

Insights from people who have personal experience of gambling harm inform the model through a Lived Experience Advisory Committee to ensure it meets the needs of people experiencing gambling harm.



Sustained delivery of Gambler's Help services, campaigns and research

Major achievements of the new model so far include:

- the release of the Victorian population gambling and health study
- delivery of Gambling Harm Awareness Week
- sustained delivery and investment in high-quality gambling prevention and support programs



Liquor Control Victoria

Strengthening liquor regulation in Victoria

Liquor Control Victoria is improving licence processing times.

Focus on improving the user experience – including 10 new digital applications and better website.

Active inspections and enforcement program with a focus on high harms.

Delivery of 77 forums for licensees and the community to improve education, awareness, and harm reduction.



Licensing

Liquor licences processed 35% faster in 2024-25, supporting the hospitality industry and small business.



Inspections

3,900 inspections took place across Victoria, resulting in 199 fines.



Enforcement

66 enforcement actions and tribunal decisions protected Victorians from underage and unlicensed supply.



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Thank you

