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## Introduction

The Warruwi Gambling Help Program works with communities to promote a healthy approach to gambling and seeking help. We provide face-to-face counselling services for Aboriginal people at various locations and raise awareness of gambling in Aboriginal communities.

**11% of problem gamblers in Australia are Indigenous (compared to 2.3% of the Australian adult population).**

**One in five Aboriginal people battle gambling addiction.**

## Partners



## Objectives

- To raise community awareness about gambling, related issues and local interventions for Aboriginal people
- To provide information on local gambling related issues and how they can be addressed, including seeking professional assistance from local gambling help services
- To provide information to gambling services on how to work more effectively with Aboriginal people in their local community and facilitate help-seeking
- To provide opportunities for Aboriginal Community members & service providers to talk about gambling issues and the impact on family etc.
- Encourage the discussion and acknowledgment of gambling and related problems as an important issue within the Aboriginal community
- Provide information about gambling interventions and available services
- Facilitate collaboration between local stakeholders in Aboriginal and mainstream settings
- Facilitate cultural awareness discussions, encourage and support positive interactions between services and Aboriginal people.

## Methods

- Deliver Aboriginal Gambling Information Sessions/ Workshops
- Introduction to community awareness concepts and strategies
- Identify referral pathways
- Discuss possible community responses to gambling
- Community awareness raising activities: art competitions, entertainment, celebrity guest visits to the community, event sponsorship etc
- Facilitate further development of local community plans and Warruwi grants Follow up after information sessions about progress of participants in the Aboriginal Gambling Information Sessions/Workshops
- Meetings with various people from the community
- Media interviews, publicity and promotion of the issues around gambling.

*We provide opportunities for Aboriginal community members and service providers to talk about gambling issues and the impact on family.*  
*We engage high profile sports players to increase attendance at workshops*



## Lessons Learned

Statistics will prove that Aboriginal people do not seek help from gambling counselling services or telephone help lines. There are numerous reasons why Aboriginal people are not seeking help for problems caused by gambling; the most significant are cultural and personal factors. Interestingly most gambling counselling services lack the ability to attract Aboriginal people to their service; again the reasons are cultural and personal factors.

Unfortunately in NSW our Aboriginal health services are not funded to screen or address problem gambling. Research indicates that approximately 18% of Aboriginal people are experiencing significant harm from problem gambling, furthermore they will impact up to 15 to 20 of their family members and relatives. This is a damaging societal trend that requires change before the gambling problem escalates to the level of damage felt by Aboriginal communities as a result of alcohol and substance abuse.

**“Aboriginal people need to talk about gambling, we need to acknowledge the issue, and then we need to think of strategies to help those who need our help!!”**

There's a need to target all socio-demographic groups (e.g. males and females, adults and children, workers and non-workers, married and single).



Warruwi is run by former Newcastle Knights player Ashley Gordon. Ashley is a Gambling Researcher with the Centre for Gambling Education and Research in Lismore.



The program works with Elders as well as existing men's and women's sheds groups, as well as organisations such as Lifeline.



The NSW Gambling Survey 2019 - a major new study commissioned by the NSW Responsible Gambling Fund

## Impact/What's Next?

### IMPACT

- ✓ Raised awareness of gambling in Aboriginal communities
- ✓ Increased capacity of Aboriginal community members to seek help for gambling problems
- ✓ Increased capacity of Aboriginal communities, workforce and mainstream support services to deal with problem gambling

### WHAT'S NEXT?

1. Identify local mechanisms to carry forward discussions and actions on gambling issues for Aboriginal people
2. Identify strategies for raising awareness about gambling issues in Aboriginal communities and how to make them happen
3. Identify strategies for improving access and uptake of gambling issues for Aboriginal people, e.g. referral pathways and links

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