

South Australian attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours regarding sports betting 2023

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Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a 2023 survey of 1,994 South Australian adults regarding their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours related to sports betting. It compares results to an earlier 2021 baseline survey to identify any changes over the two-year period. The study also evaluates community recall and sentiment towards the 'Here for the Game' public health campaign, which aims to counter the normalisation of sports betting and reduce harmful sports betting in South Australia.

Key findings on sports betting behaviours and problems:

- Significant increases were found from 2021 to 2023 in the proportion of sports bettors (from 36.1% to 41.0%) and the frequency of sports betting. Sports betting expenditure also notably increased over time.
- Concerningly, the percentage of respondents classified as problem gamblers rose significantly from 15.6% to 18.1% among those who gambled. However, these apparent changes in behaviour may reflect changes in sample composition and should be confirmed with population data. Accordingly, we report both simple differences in attitudinal variables between Wave 1 and Wave 2, as well as multivariate analyses that control for differences in the samples.

Changes in attitudes and normalisation:

- Most measures that indicate negative attitudes toward sports betting advertising strengthened from 2021 to 2023. However, irrational cognitions around sports betting slightly increased.
- Over time, there was strong and consistent concern about the impact of betting advertising and marketing on gambling problems and children.
- The overall sports betting normalisation index remained stable across time. However, when controlling for changes in sample composition using regression analyses, there was a small but significant decline in normalisation. This suggests that there was a slight reduction in normalised attitudes toward sports betting in the community.
- When controlling for covariates, we also detected more negative attitudes to sports betting, more negative opinions about gambling advertising in sport, and confirmed a slight increase in the prevalence of irrational cognitions around sports betting.

Campaign awareness and impact:

- 31% of respondents recalled seeing the 'Here for the Game' responsible gambling campaign. It garnered positive reactions regarding messaging quality and relevance.
- In presence of distractors (fictitious campaigns), 15.9% recalled campaign materials, as compared to 21.3% for the genuine Victorian campaign, and 6.2% to 16.1% for fictitious campaigns. No statistically significant campaign effects (based on recall) were observed for normalisation or attitudes towards sports betting. However, recall of campaign materials was associated with slightly more negative attitudes about gambling advertising in sports.

Young men are a group of special interest with regard to sports betting: They:

- tend to bet on sports more frequently

- tend to see betting as more normalised
- are more likely to report gambling problems, but
- are about twice as likely (29.5%) to recall the campaign materials than others (14.2%).

This suggests that the campaign materials appear to be reaching and are being remembered by the segment of the community most engaged in sports, and most likely to benefit from their effects.

In summary, this study reveals a complex picture around sports betting attitudes and behaviours in South Australia. Apparent growth in gambling participation and problems probably reflects sample changes more than genuine population trends. However, we observed signs of greater concern about the presence and promotion of sports wagering, its normalisation, and its potential for harm. Data gathered regarding 'Here for the Game' shows that the campaign has promise but would benefit from increased reach and leverage to impact community attitudes.

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Introduction

In 2021, a survey of South Australian adults' (18+) attitudes, beliefs and behaviours regarding sports betting was conducted (Browne et al., 2021). The present report describes findings from a second study, conducted in 2023, to update findings from the first study and identify any changes in sports betting attitudes and behaviours in South Australia. In addition, the current study monitors perceptions and the impact of the "Here for the Game" campaign, which aims to counter normalisation of sports betting and reduce harmful sports betting in South Australia.

The introduction to this report starts with a literature review detailing the prevalence and characteristics of sports betting in South Australia, including the normalisation of sports betting. As part of the 2021 report, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to inform that study. Key findings from that literature review are briefly summarised first, followed by a review of relevant literature published since the original report. The introduction section then briefly recaps the study conducted in 2021 and summarises the key findings. Finally, there is a short discussion about public health intervention campaigns and assessing their effectiveness.

Sports betting prevalence and characteristics of sports bettors

The 2018 South Australian Gambling Prevalence Study found that sports betting participation in South Australia was around 7% in 2018, which is a slight increase from 6% in 2012 and 4% in 2005 (Woods et al., 2018). In South Australia, the prevalence of adult problem gambling is 0.7%, moderate risk gambling 2.2% and low risk gambling 4.6%. However, this prevalence is higher among people participating in sports betting (3.5% problem gambling, 10.9% moderate-risk gambling and 17.7% low-risk gambling) (Woods et al., 2018). In the 2015 Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) data, around 41% of at-least monthly sports bettors in Australia showed signs of problem gambling, and 6% had a severe gambling problem (Armstrong & Carroll, 2017).

Sports betting is more popular among males, young adults, people living in Greater Adelaide, those who only speak English at home, higher income earners and single people (Woods et al., 2018). Sports bettors tend to have more cognitive distortions than non-sports gamblers and non-gamblers, believing they have greater control over the outcome or can overcome the odds through luck (Phua et al., 2022). Marketing and advertising can foster these distortions (Lopez-Gonzalez, Guerrero-Solé, Estévez, et al., 2018).

Normalisation of sports betting

This section summarises the literature review from the original study (Browne et al., 2021). The normalisation of gambling is understood to arise from the combination of sociocultural, environmental, commercial, and political factors that make gambling activities more accessible and accepted, encouraging frequent use among individuals and becoming a regular part of community life (Thomas et al., 2018). Some factors associated with normalising

sports betting include technology and accessibility, marketing and advertising, and social and cultural influences.

Technology and access

Easy access through online betting, particularly on smartphones, is a key element to sports-betting uptake and is the preferred method for sports gambling, especially among young people aged 18-24 years (Woods et al., 2018). Betting online via smartphones increases the risk of harmful betting behaviour and is associated with increased risk of harm (Hing, Russell, Browne, et al., 2021). Multiple studies have highlighted factors contributing to loss of control in online and smartphone betting (Corney & Davis, 2010; Drakeford & Hudson-Smith, 2015; Hing et al., 2015; Lopez-Gonzalez et al., 2021; McCormack & Griffiths, 2012). These factors include: easy smartphone access, which encourages frequent and impulsive bets; the use of electronic money and credit cards, which makes it easier to overspend; and online gambling being easier to hide, which reduces social pressure to moderate betting.

Marketing and advertising

Gambling has become deeply embedded in sports culture. Gambling marketing contributes to its normalisation among youth by implying that these behaviours are an essential part of the sports experience (Nyemcsok et al., 2021; Pitt et al., 2016). Sports betting advertising has surged in Australia across all media platforms, including TV, radio, and digital media, and particularly during televised sports (Gainsbury et al., 2015; Hing, Russell, Rockloff, et al., 2018; O'Brien & Iqbal, 2019; Sproston et al., 2015). Betting companies are major sports sponsors, gaining visibility, particularly during live events, through advertising on player uniforms, scoreboards, and stadiums, as well as in traditional, online and social media (Hing, Gainsbury, et al., 2014; Lamont et al., 2011; Milner et al., 2013; Thomas et al., 2015). Direct marketing through push notifications and text messaging, is also used to direct users to betting opportunities (Hing, Russell, Li, et al., 2018). Additionally, betting inducements such as stake-back offers, sign-up bonuses, early cash-out options and inducements such as bonus bets, better odds, and cash rebates are widely promoted (Hing et al., 2015).

Gambling advertising, particularly around sports, aims to normalise gambling and highlight its benefits (Labrador et al., 2021). Advertisements are highly targeted and aim to boost brand awareness, promote complex inducements, and highlight betting odds (Newall et al., 2019). This type of marketing seems to influence vulnerable groups including children and people with gambling problems, which can exacerbate harmful gambling behaviour (Hing, Vitartas, et al., 2014; Newall et al., 2019). Marketing efforts have been made to rebrand betting as a mainstream and socially acceptable activity, with appeal to a broad demographic (Milner et al., 2013). However, sports betting advertising particularly targets young adult males and contributes to the normalisation of betting in this group (Deans, Thomas, Daube, & Derevensky, 2016; Deans, Thomas, Daube, et al., 2017; Gordon et al., 2015; Lopez-Gonzalez, Guerrero-Solé, & Griffiths, 2018; Milner et al., 2013; Sproston et al., 2015). These ads often depict young men betting in social settings, intending to portray betting as a normal, smart, and tech-savvy activity associated with sports and male bonding (Milner et al., 2013; Sproston et al., 2015). As a result, young men can feel encouraged to gamble and that betting is part of their sporting rituals (Deans, Thomas, Daube, et al., 2017; Gordon et al., 2015).

Australian research shows that exposure to sports betting ads leads to its normalisation among children and adolescents and strengthens the association between sports and gambling (Bestman et al., 2015; Hing, Russell, King, et al., 2021; Pitt et al., 2017, 2016; Sproston et al., 2015). Higher exposure and positive attitudes towards gambling advertisements are associated with greater betting intentions (Hing, Vitartas, et al., 2014; Sproston et al., 2015). Advertising also influences adolescents' conversations around sports, such as increased discussions around betting odds (Pitt et al., 2016). In adults, a meta-analysis has suggested a positive link between exposure to gambling ads and gambling-related attitudes, intentions, and behaviours (Bouguettaya et al., 2020). This link is strongest among those already facing gambling problems, as ads can act as cues which trigger more gambling (Binde, 2014). Betting ads and incentives lead to behaviours such as riskier bets, higher spending, and more attention to betting, especially for high-risk gamblers (Hing, Russell, Rockloff, et al., 2018). Greater exposure to advertising and inducements is correlated with increased spending, indicating a dose-response relationship (Hing, Russell, Rockloff, et al., 2018). Overall, the research indicates that Australians are highly exposed to sports betting ads, which tend to normalise betting as part of sports culture and encourage positive attitudes and intentions towards betting.

There is evidence of broad community concern about gambling advertising, its role in normalising sports betting, and its potential to increase harm. There is a high awareness of gambling advertising and promotions, with many participants reporting concern about sports betting advertising, particularly its impact on children (Australian Communications and Media Authority., 2019). Most parents are bothered by their children's exposure to these ads, especially parents of older kids who might have smartphones and can watch late-night content unsupervised (Australian Communications and Media Authority., 2019). Qualitative studies highlight that some sports bettors feel targeted and sometimes overwhelmed by betting advertising (Deans, Thomas, Derevensky, et al., 2017) and feel annoyed and uneasy about its normalising effect (Lamont et al., 2016). Parents are concerned about the impact on their children (Pitt et al., 2016), and adolescents have reported feeling that the ads are grooming them to gamble (Lamont & Hing, 2019; Sproston et al., 2015).

Social factors

Social factors, such as family and friends, also influence both the normalisation of gambling and problematic gambling, initially via parents through their attitudes, behaviour, and supervision (Dowling et al., 2017; McComb & Sabiston, 2010; Oei & Raylu, 2004) and then later peers and colleagues (McComb & Sabiston, 2010; Russell et al., 2018). Parents are primary facilitators in shaping a child's exposure to and attitudes about gambling. The NSW Youth Gambling Study 2020 found that 54 per cent of adolescents who are gambling usually gamble with parents and that online gambling, including sports betting, is often facilitated by a family member (Hing, Russell, King, et al., 2021). Parental gambling behaviour is a significant risk factor in gambling behaviour and harm, impacting young people through genetics, modelling, and increased gambling opportunities (Jacobs, 1989; McComb & Sabiston, 2010; Vitaro et al., 2014). Public education campaigns can equip parents with the skills to discuss risks with children and model appropriate behaviour.

Peers also have a significant impact on young people's gambling attitudes and behaviours (Dowling et al., 2017; Savolainen et al., 2019). Qualitative studies have examined peer influences on the normalisation of sports betting among young adults (Deans, Thomas, Daube, et al., 2017; Deans, Thomas, Derevensky, et al., 2017; González-Roz et al., 2017; Lamont & Hing, 2019, 2020; McCarthy et al., 2020; McGee, 2020; Raymen & Smith, 2020). The research underscores that sports betting has become a normalised part of leisure among certain peer groups, especially young adult males. Peer dynamics encourage sports betting as a way to bond, show off skills, maintain a masculine identity, and conform to group norms. Online social networks further shape attitudes towards gambling (Sirola et al., 2021).

Cultural factors

Since colonisation, gambling has been historically embedded within Australian culture as a socially acceptable past time and is even tied to national identity (McMillen & Eadington, 1986). Gambling is seen as aligned with core Australian values like mateship and friendly competition, as well as popular activities like sports and racing (Gordon et al., 2015; Thomas & Lewis, 2012).

Updated Literature Review

This section summarises the more recent literature on factors contributing to the normalisation of sports betting. In addition to those areas discussed above, we also review research that deals with the prevention of the normalisation of gambling in sports and attitudes around sports and betting.

Characteristics of sports bettors

Recent systematic reviews have continued to explore the characteristics of people who participate in sports betting. A systematic review of 54 articles has examined the clinical correlates of sports betting (Valenciano-Mendoza et al., 2023). The review identified that younger males with high levels of impulsivity are more likely to engage in sports betting and. Most studies in the review found a significant association between sports betting and experiencing harm from gambling. Some studies found that sports betting was associated with psychological distress, alcohol use, and other addictions. Another systematic review of 42 studies, examined sports gambling among adolescents, again finding a higher prevalence of young males participating in sports betting (Kape et al., 2023).

Technology and access

A recent scoping review examined the structural features of online sports betting (Torrance et al., 2023). The review examined literature and utility patents of online sports betting products (patents that cover the creation of new or improved products, devices, or processes) from 2015-2022, identifying 26 papers and 8 patents. They found that online sports betting offers fast, easy access, continuous betting options, and interactive features like instant deposits and cash-outs. The review identified that the market is expanding into areas like esports, which

may be even more harmful than traditional sports betting (Greer et al., 2021). In examining utility patents, Torrance et al. identified that future trends may include peer-to-peer competition, augmented reality, and highly targeted notifications. They concluded that the online sports betting environment has made sports betting faster and more accessible, and also more harmful.

In a 2022 study of 161 young sports bettors (18-29 years) highly value technological features of betting platforms, including convenience, easy access to information and promotions, multiple operator options, electronic transactions, and the flexibility to bet privately or socially (Hing, Russell, et al., 2022). However, these features were linked to higher gambling intensity and, in some cases, an elevated risk of gambling harm. The portability of smartphones, in contrast to computer access and land-based venues, was reported to enhance the ease and speed of betting. This convenience, while appreciated by customers, contributes to harmful behaviours such as more frequent and impulsive betting, less-informed wagers, and increased betting in social situations. Three situational features associated with smartphone betting (i.e., privacy, the ability to bet anywhere at any time, and greater access to inducements and options) were significantly associated with harm. The results of a qualitative study found that the increased speed and accessibility also increased gambling opportunities, which may lead to betting more than planned (Hing, Smith, et al., 2022). Online betting technology also allows targeted push messages such as inducements, increasing marketing exposure (Hing, Smith, et al., 2022). The technology associated with online sports betting, makes sports betting more easily accessible for adolescents despite them being too young to bet legally (Kape et al., 2023).

Marketing and advertising

Sports betting marketing and promotion is more prominent in Australia and the UK than in other countries (Etuk et al., 2022). A systematic umbrella review examined the impact of gambling advertising on harm (McGrane et al., 2023). It found that gambling marketing and advertising was strongly and consistently causally related to positive attitudes towards gambling, greater intention to gamble, and increased gambling activity. The review identified a dose-response relationship, with greater exposure leading to more participation, which is associated with a greater likelihood of experiencing harm. There was evidence that vulnerable groups, such as young people, may be at increased risk from exposure.

One interview study with 19 young adult sports bettors examined the attitudes of sports bettors to gambling advertising in the UK (Killick & Griffiths, 2022). The participants reported that gambling increased their temptation to gamble because it grabs their attention and is difficult to avoid. They also reported that promotion of odds around live-sporting events increased their perception of control and desire to bet. Participants were aware of strategies that aim to increase betting, such as 'free bet' promotions and welcome offers. Advertising that promoted betting was viewed as being a normal part of sport. Because of this, participants were more comfortable placing bets. Finally, they reported that gambling companies were not interested in protecting consumers from harm and did not believe the warning messages in advertisements were particularly useful or effective. Some participants believed gambling advertising should be treated more like advertising for tobacco or alcohol, with much stronger restrictions.

In one qualitative study of Australian adolescents, participants reported seeing gambling advertising across different media (i.e., television, websites, social media) and settings (i.e., own and other's homes, shopping centres, sporting matches) and depictions of gambling within television shows and movies (Hing, Rockloff & Browne, 2023). This exposure to gambling alongside (non-gambling) everyday activities is felt to contribute to the normalisation of gambling in young people. A large qualitative exploration of gambling in NSW adolescents (Hing et al., 2023) found that all participants recalled seeing televised gambling advertisements during their childhood, most commonly for sports betting. By adolescence, they reported being exposed to online social media advertising. Another study of Danish adolescents found evidence that gambling advertising educated young people on the availability of gambling products (Kristiansen & Severin-Nielsen, 2022).

Social factors

A study of nearly 15,000 Australian sports fans examined the relationship between gambling attitudes to sports betting and gambling choices, such as the type and number of bets (Seal et al., 2022). Compared to non-sports bettors and non-bettors, people who bet on sports felt more strongly that sports betting had a place in sports and were less concerned about the harms associated with sports betting. The researchers attributed this to the normalisation of betting in sports. More sports bettors agreed that discussions around betting and placing bets are the norm in their family and peer groups. The study also examined attitudes to sports betting across different demographic characteristics. Women believed that sports betting was common in broader society, while males agreed it was common within their peer group. Males were more likely than females to discuss odds and betting while socialising, have friends who bet, have discussions that normalise sports betting and were less likely to think it is risky and potentially harmful.

Recent qualitative studies have examined social factors associated with normalising sports betting in Australia in adolescents and young adults. A study of Victorian adolescents aged 11 to 16 years identified two key themes around the normalisation of gambling in sports (Nyemcsok et al., 2021). The first theme related to participants' belief that gambling on sports was a regular activity in which most people participated. This perception was formed by the frequency of gambling discussions they were exposed to by adults within their social circle, such as who would win and what team they were betting on. The second theme was advertising, with the volume and content of the marketing and advertising they were exposed to shaping their perceptions of normality.

A study of NSW adolescents identified parents as the most important source of influence in developing gambling attitudes and behaviours in young people (Hing et al., 2023). Parents' attitudes, views and participation in gambling could be a positive protective influence. This occurred when the parents minimised their own gambling participation, provided education to their children on the risks and harms associated with gambling, and supervised their child's activities, particularly online. On the other hand, introducing their children to gambling, allowing them to share the experience, teaching them skills and knowledge about gambling, facilitating early gambling experiences and normalising gambling as a fun and positive experience can lead to increased gambling and harm in children.

A study of young sports bettors in NSW described mobile sports betting apps as ‘mateship objects’ that facilitate socialising among young Australian men (Waitt et al., 2022). However, participants also described negative feelings, such as shame and guilt, associated with sports betting in the presence of other people, particularly partners. They reported that they would stop betting in the family home, but not when out with mates.

A study of young Australian men who regularly bet on sport examined the factors that influenced their conceptualisation of risk in sports betting (Nyemcsok et al., 2022). The study identified four themes that contributed to risk perceptions in these young men. The first theme was participants’ early exposure as children to gambling within their social networks and through advertising and marketing. A second theme was the influence of peers, particularly peer rivalry, with competitions and bets within social groups perceived as enjoyable. Bets with peers were perceived to enhance social connections but also increased participants’ engagement with betting, meaning they were less likely to consider the associated risks. The normalisation of gambling within everyday activities also perceived by participants to contribute to their concept of risk. Social cues to gamble were said to be everywhere in their everyday lives, and they believed that betting was accepted and permitted across most of their social environments, including work, recreation, and education. It was embedded in conversations and social media, contributing to a reduced perception of risk according to participants. Finally, participants believed that sports betting was more associated with skill than other forms of gambling, and that they had the required skills and knowledge to succeed. Participants also generally believed that they were able to gamble responsibly and would be able to control their gambling if required.

Cultural influences

Hing, Rockloff et al. (2023) examined the "gambification" of sports over the past 25 years via a narrative literature review. The report identified many factors discussed in this review, such as the harmful consequences associated with sports betting, technological and access contributions to harm such as greater accessibility through smartphones, innovative betting options that appeal to gamblers experiencing harm; the negative impact of marketing and advertising on harm, including through sponsorship deals; and the normalisation of betting within sport, particularly in young people. These forces have embedded sports betting into leisure lifestyles, cultural identity, and fandom while downplaying the associated risks and harms. Consequently, sports betting has become a commonly accepted, habitualised and increasingly intrinsic part of being a sports fan. The authors concluded that this “gambification” of sports presents reputational risks for sports organisations due to rising community backlash over the role of sports betting in normalising gambling and causing harm. With growing regulatory attention in some jurisdictions, the paper identified that sports organisations need to plan for losing this revenue stream. More broadly, they encouraged sports organisations, teams, and players to be proactive and leverage their influence to help reduce harm from gambling.

A qualitative study of Australian adults examined the normalisation of gambling in Australia through social acceptance and cultural accommodation of gambling (Marko et al., 2022). Participants perceived gambling as an important and culturally significant part of Australian life due to historical traditions of gambling in Australia and perceived economic benefits.

Participants believed that gambling is a way for the working class, charities, and local communities to make money and for the economy to benefit through taxation revenue. Participants also perceived gambling as common and socially acceptable for all Australians, with ‘most people’, for example, betting on the Melbourne Cup. Gambling was reported to be embedded within everyday Australian life, and gambling products were “everywhere”. However, some participants reported being unsure whether gambling should be considered such a normal part of Australian life. Some also believed gambling was normal in all countries, others that it was a ‘marketing ploy’, and others felt it was not something to be proud of due to the potential for harm.

Attitudes towards sports and gambling

A study by the Australian Institute of Family Studies ($N = 1,765$) examined community attitudes towards gambling, finding that the majority of Australians believe that there are too many opportunities to gamble (77%), that it should be discouraged (59%), and that many believe that gambling is dangerous for family life (68%). A large quantitative study of NSW parents (examined attitudes that parents hold towards gambling in general, and also in relation to their adolescent children (Dittman et al., 2023). In general, the respondents' attitudes towards gambling were negative, with the majority disagreeing that gambling was a good way to relieve boredom (68%), and a way for communities (73.8%) or individuals to make money (73%). However, the study found that parents were less concerned about adolescent gambling than other adolescent issues. Around half reported having conversations with their children about responsible gambling (58.0%) and gambling risks/harms (49.3%). Most parents did not approve of adolescent exposure to gambling. However, around a third felt that it was okay for adolescents to gamble online if it was not for money or for them to watch television shows showing gambling (i.e., poker tournaments). Only around a quarter (25.7%) of respondents reported keeping conversations about betting and gambling away from their children.

In another recent paper, Lis-Clarke and Walsh (2023) argued that normalising the relationship between sports and betting changes how fans see and value sports. Due to technology and cultural shifts, betting has become closely associated with sports. The authors called this "hypercommodification", meaning sports are seen more like products to buy and sell. They argue that this view could make fans appreciate sports in a less meaningful way. They also suggest that continuing to combine sports and gambling can harm the way society values sport.

Preventing the normalisation of gambling

Several qualitative studies have aimed to understand how young Australians might address the normalisation of gambling in Australia. In one study, adolescents identified strategies to reduce the normalisation of gambling (Pitt et al., 2022). These strategies included reducing accessibility, improving technological safeguards, distancing the relationship between gambling and sports, restricting gambling advertising and marketing, and providing increased messaging to educate on harm and counteract gambling advertising. Nyemcsok et al. (2021) identified similar strategies, particularly highlighting the need for advertising restrictions and

increased public health awareness campaigns. Nyemcsok et al. (2023) aimed to understand their perceptions of public health promotion strategies in young men aged 18 to 24, and their recommendations to reduce the harm associated with sports betting. Key themes identified in the study included the need for increased regulation and consumer protection; for example, by making limit setting compulsory and limiting the accessibility of mobile sports betting. They also identified the need for public information campaigns that provide education about harm, particularly associated with sports betting. Finally, they identified the need for online and in-person support for young sports bettors seeking help. Hing et al.'s (2023) large-scale investigation of NSW adolescents highlighted the need for multifaceted protective and environmental approaches. Young people identified factors including parental modelling of appropriate behaviour, guidance, and limits; school-based gambling education; a reduction of gambling advertising on television and online; gambling reforms such as age-gating and restrictions and reducing the use of highly appealing factors such as lights, sound and colour; the need for positive peer influences; availability of alternative recreation and spending opportunities; fear of addiction; and critical thinking abilities. Based on their findings, Hing et al. proposed initiatives like parent and youth education, restrictions on gambling advertising paired with increased harm awareness messaging, tightened gambling regulations, and youth-focused information on obtaining support for gambling issues.

Wave 1 of the South Australian Study on Sports Betting Normalisation

The first wave of the South Australian adults' (18+) attitudes, beliefs and behaviours study (Browne et al., 2021) aimed to identify measures to form a comprehensive assessment of sports betting normalisation and provide a baseline prior to a public education campaign. Respondents ($N = 2,030$) consisted of adults aged 18 years and over residing in South Australia. They were recruited through panel aggregator Qualtrics. Approximately half of the participants were male (48.3%). Just over a quarter (27.8%) were aged between 18 and 34, a similar proportion were aged 35 to 49 years (27.0%), and the remainder (45.1%) were aged over 50 years.

Summary of findings

Almost all participants felt that sports betting was readily accessible (92%), while a smaller proportion (60%) felt that betting on sports was a part of South Australian culture. There was high awareness of the potential dangers involved in sports betting and problems caused by wagering advertising (e.g., 89% agreed that sports betting could destroy families, and 87% agreed that sports advertising makes it hard for people with problems to resist gambling). The sentiment toward advertising and promoting sports betting was negative (e.g., 81% agreed that sports betting advertising and promotion needs to be more tightly regulated or restricted). Sports bettors generally reported sticking to a dedicated budget (82%); however, a smaller proportion (61%) avoided betting if they felt depressed or upset. Erroneous beliefs about sports betting were more likely in younger respondents.

Respondents who cared for children or adolescents and non-caregivers both reported strong intentions to talk to family members if their sports betting was a problem and disapproved of harmful behaviours. However, this disapproval tended to be higher among non-caregivers.

Only around half (51%) of the caregivers who were sports bettors reported keeping their sports conversations private so that children and adolescents did not overhear, and a similar number agreed that it was okay if children or adolescents see them betting on sports. However, most (67%) did not agree that ‘It’s OK to include children or adolescents in your sports betting’. Protective behaviours differed for those with gambling problems. For example, only 43% of the problem gambling group disagreed that it is OK to include children or adolescents in their sports betting, compared with 88% of non-gamblers.

Conclusions

Overall, the survey conducted an in-depth evaluation of multiple key factors that shaped community views on sports betting. One significant result was the creation of a sensitive normalisation index intended to serve as a baseline before the rollout of an intervention campaign by the SA Office for Problem Gambling to alter public perceptions. Psychometric testing indicated high reliability, which suggested the measure to be an appropriate measure of changes in subjective normalisation. This index was designed to be complemented by other core metrics assessed in the study: false beliefs about personal gambling habits, viewpoints on sports betting and its advertising, and the value placed on protective behaviours around family and friends.

The report concluded that the findings were not discouraging but indicated considerable scope to alter the public's acceptance of sports betting in South Australia. Residents were aware of the risks and were largely opposed to betting advertising. However, they seemed resigned to its prevalence in sports and showed complacency about keeping young people away from it.

The current study represents the second wave of this project that aims to monitor perceptions and the impact of the “Here for the Game” campaign, which aims to counter normalisation of sports betting and reduce harmful sports betting in South Australia. Accordingly, it is useful to review attempts in related fields to accomplish similar objectives.

Public health intervention campaigns and their effectiveness

Public health initiatives aiming to disrupt normalisation have predominantly been targeted at tobacco. Research suggests that effective strategies to disrupt the normalisation of tobacco are comprehensive and multi-layered, including individual, school, and community interventions (SAMHSA, 2020). In Australia, the “Every cigarette is doing you damage” National Tobacco Campaign was one of Australia's longest-running, most successful and most extensively evaluated campaigns (Department of Health and Aged Care, 2000; Hill & Carroll, 2003). The campaign was evaluated via criteria including awareness and recall, how favourably the campaign was viewed, how relevant it was to the target audience, and how well it educated the audience. It also focused on assessing the degree of agreement with campaign-related attitudes such as “smoking causes strokes”, “it would improve my health if I quit smoking”, “the dangers of smoking have been exaggerated” and “smoking the occasional cigarette doesn’t cause any damage to your health”. The evaluation criteria also included the volume of help-seeking calls to Quitline and the long-term reduction in smoking prevalence rates.

The research on disrupting the normalisation of gambling is less extensive. Thomas et al. (2018) identified four key areas for action: developing a research agenda focused on gambling harm prevention; creating 'industry-free' coalitions for unbiased policy consultation; shifting public debate from blaming individuals to focusing on harmful gambling products; and distributing clear, evidence-based information. Public health campaigns around sports betting have been run in several Australian states, aiming to reduce the normalisation of gambling within sport. These include South Australia's "Here for the Game", "Betiquette" in New South Wales, and "Love the Game, Not the Odds" in Victoria.

"Betiquette" was a campaign launched by the NSW Office of Responsible Gambling in 2017 to reduce the normalisation of sports betting, raise awareness of the risk of harm and encourage responsible gambling, especially among young males (NSW Office of Responsible Gambling, 2022; Parkinson, 2019). Several metrics evaluated the effectiveness of the campaign. One metric of evaluation was exposure, perceptions, and message take-out. Radio and social media advertisements were the most effective, and TV ads on catch-up TV and social media. In young at-risk sports bettors, 20% recalled seeing the campaign. The majority of those who were exposed to the campaign felt it was easy to understand (93%), the messages were believable (92%), and they learnt something new (80%). Most people exposed (82%) could recall at least one campaign message when prompted. A smaller proportion (37%) considered the advertising highly appealing, and only 21% felt that the campaign was relevant to them. The campaign was also evaluated via the actions in response to the campaign. Most of those exposed (83%) reported having taken positive action regarding their gambling and that they would do so in the future (86%). Changes in attitudes towards sport and race betting were evaluated pre- and post-campaign in a sample of NSW adults (Parkinson, 2019). The measures included asking participants to agree/disagree/neither agree nor disagree to the following statements: "if I win at betting, this means I have good knowledge of the game/race", "the amount of betting in NSW is acceptable", "losses are bound to be followed by a series of wins", "if I'm on a winning streak, I'm likely to win again", and "sports/race betting very rarely leads to gambling problems or issues". Overall, as reported by Parkinson (2019), there did not appear to be any significant improvement in attitudes over time.

In Victoria, a media campaign around reducing the belief that gambling is a normal part of sport was "Love the Game, Not the Odds". The campaign's effectiveness was evaluated by reach and attitudes (Victorian Auditor-General's Office, 2021). Around half of Victorians aged 30-55 (49%) and parents of 12 to 17-year-old children (51%) recalled the promotion, mainly via television. The campaign was reported to have some success in raising awareness (which was not detailed). However, it was reported that this awareness was not sustained over time. An auditor general's review of gambling education and awareness campaigns in Victoria found that the campaigns are often difficult to evaluate as they generally lack clear aims and outcome-based measures (Victorian Auditor-General's Office, 2021). However, the report also accepted that it is "difficult to change attitudes and behaviours using short media campaigns" (p. 31), particularly when the advertising spend of the gambling industry cannot be matched.

Public health intervention campaigns can effectively produce positive changes in attitudes and behaviour, but are logistically difficult and costly (Wakefield et al., 2010). Anti-smoking campaigns, such as the 'Every cigarette is doing you damage' campaign, have been highly

successful. However, that campaign was well-funded and was not directly competing with more highly funded tobacco advertising (Department of Health and Aged Care, 2000), as tobacco advertising was no longer legal. According to Wakefield et al. (2010), several obstacles can hamper the effectiveness of mass media campaigns. These factors include competing ads with contradictory messages, strong social norms, and the addictive nature of some products. These are all factors associated with gambling-harm intervention campaigns. Therefore, gambling campaigns require extensive and prolonged investment, wide-reaching exposure across a broad range of media and meticulous planning and testing of the campaign's content and format with the target audience (Wakefield et al., 2010).

Aims

In line with the specification requirements from the South Australia Office for Problem Gambling, the current study involved an online survey of South Australian adults' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours related to sports betting. Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. Conduct time comparisons between the 2021 and current 2023 waves of the survey; and
2. Measure community recall and sentiment towards the 'Here for the Game' campaign.

Method

The cross-sectional survey was approved by the CQUniversity Human Research Ethics Committee (24511). Participants were recruited via online market research panels, with the recruitment process managed by Qualtrics. While online market research panels are not necessarily representative of the population, the primary interest was comparisons with the 2021 study. To facilitate this, we used the same recruitment, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and quotas, as the previous study. This includes using the same online market research panels to recruit the same proportions of the sample from the previous study. Inclusion criteria were living in South Australia and being aged 18 or older. An additional IP address check was incorporated to determine whether participants were currently in Australia, and standard bot detection procedures were employed (RelevantID and Recaptcha). The target sample size was 2,000 participants. Quotas were set so that the sample had similar demographic characteristics to the South Australian population in terms of age and gender (nested quotas) and location (Adelaide vs elsewhere in South Australia). Because online panels often include large proportions of people who gamble, a soft quota was set for non-gamblers (~30%). A soft launch started on 25th September 2023. Responses from the initial 81 participants were checked for any issues. Only minor issues were detected (e.g., missing embedded data for a small number of participants, which did not impact the survey in any way), which were rectified before the full launch on 27th September 2023. Approximately 90% of the required sample was achieved by 18th October 2023, with the final 10% completed on 8th November 2023.

A total of 2,432 participants started the survey. It is not known how many participants were invited to take part, so a response rate cannot be calculated. Some participants were excluded for: being outside of Australia based on their IP address ($n = 26$), reporting that they did not currently live in South Australia ($n = 114$) and reporting that they were under 18 ($n = 33$). Two members of the research team and Qualtrics independently examined the data on three occasions to check for data quality issues. These data quality checks identified participants for exclusion for: being duplicate responses ($n = 25$), showing inattention by straightlining (i.e., selecting the same response through a matrix table, $n = 22$), speeding through the survey (defined as completing the survey in less than one-third the median response time from a soft launch, indicating inattention, $n = 2$) and potential bots based on RelevantID and Recaptcha values ($n = 20$). Of the remaining 2,190 participants, 196 started but did not complete the survey and were excluded, giving a completion rate of 91.1% and a final sample of $n = 1,994$. The final proportion of non-gamblers was 27.8%.

Measures

The full survey instrument, including exact question and response option wording, can be found in Appendix A.

Information and consent

Respondents clicked a link from their panel provider, which opened an information screen. This screen introduced the survey as the "Survey of Attitudes about Sports Betting in South Australian". It outlined what was involved in the study and provided information about

confidentiality and their rights to withdraw. Participants were asked to click "next" to provide consent and proceed with the survey.

Screening and quota questions

Respondents were asked their age, which state or territory they lived in, and if they lived in Adelaide or elsewhere. They were not asked any further questions if they were ineligible to continue (under 18 or lived outside of South Australia), or if a relevant quota was full (e.g., if the quota of males in an age group was full and the participant was male and of that age group). Instead, they were thanked for their time and exited the survey.

Gambling behaviour

Gambling status was determined by two questions about whether the respondent had participated in sports betting and/or any other type of gambling during the last 12 months. Respondents were asked how often they had bet on sporting events/matches for money, including bets placed online, by telephone or at land-based venues. They were also asked how often they bet on other forms of gambling (excluding sports) in the last 12 months. Response options were never, 1-6 times (once every two months or less), 7-12 times (once a month or less), 13-24 times (once or twice a month), 25-52 times (once or twice a fortnight), and 53+ times (once a week or more). Participants who reported never for both questions were classified as non-gamblers for quota purposes.

Respondents who identified as having bet on sports at least once in the past 12 months were asked questions about their sports betting behaviour. They were asked what proportion of their bets was placed by smartphone, laptop or desktop computer, by telephone calls, and at land-based venues (with responses required to sum to 100%). They were asked to input their typical monthly expenditure on sports betting (open-ended question), and the percentage of their sports betting that was in-play or live betting.

Cognitions

Participants who bet on sports were asked about their thoughts and behaviours in relation to betting on sports. The questions were the same as those asked in the 2021 survey, which were adapted from the Erroneous Beliefs and Emotional Involvement Scale (Jones & Noël, 2021). Participants were asked to rate how strongly they disagreed or agreed with a set of statements, for example, "When I win my sports bet, it's due to my skill and knowledge of sports" and "I can often estimate the true odds better than the advertised odds". The final three items probed safe gambling practices, for example, "If I'm not having fun gambling in sports, I stop" and "I stick to a dedicated budget for sports betting". Responses for all items were "strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree", and "strongly agree".

Sports betting advertising and promotions

Whether or not they had bet on sports, all participants were asked about their attitudes towards sports betting advertising and promotions. Respondents were asked to rate how strongly they agreed with nine items, such as "sports betting advertising during sports games should be banned" and "sports betting advertising increases gambling problems in Australia", with response options, "strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree", and "strongly agree". These items were the same as asked in the 2021 study. New questions asked participants if they had seen material for some advertising campaigns and they were able to select all that applied. The campaigns included the South Australian campaign "Here for the Game", some campaigns from other states, and some distractors (i.e., fictitious campaigns). Respondents were then asked how often, over the last 12 months, they had seen messaging that discourages sports betting. Response options included "never", "sometimes", "most of the time", and "almost always".

Sports betting attitudes

Participants were asked the same questions as the 2021 survey, probing their attitudes towards sports betting. These were drawn from prior Australian gambling surveys, adapted from items assessing more general attitudes towards gambling in general, or devised in collaboration with the SA Office for Problem Gambling. Participants were asked to rate how strongly they disagreed or agreed with each of the ten items, including "there is too much sports betting today" and "occasional sports betting is harmless". Responses for all items were "strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree", and "strongly agree".

Watching and involvement in sport

All respondents were asked how often they watched sports during the last 12 months on television, live at the ground, via video on a device or computer, or at a venue such as a pub or club. The last option was not included in the 2021 survey but was included in this survey at the request of the SA Office for Problem Gambling. Participants were also asked how often they had watched sports with friends, family (children under 18) and adult family members. Response options for both questions were never/not relevant, 1-6 times (once every two months or less), 7-12 times (once a month or less), 13-24 times (once or twice a month), 25-52 times (once or twice a fortnight), and 53+ times (once a week or more).

Normalisation of sports betting

The 2021 study developed a betting normalisation scale (Browne et al., 2021) to track subjective perceptions of sports betting normalisation. The scale included items assessing three facets of sports betting normalisation associated with the community, friends and family, as detailed below.

To assess community norms, respondents were asked to use slider scales to rate the normalisation of sports betting for people living in South Australia. Specifically, they rated the degree to which sports betting is a normal part of life in South Australia ("not at all normal" to "completely normal"; whether betting on sports is part of South Australian culture ("not part of the culture" to "completely part of the culture"), and how socially accepted

sports betting is in South Australia ("not at all" to "completely"). Respondents were asked to provide a percentage of adults in South Australia they believe bet on sports regularly (e.g., "every month"), recently (e.g., "within the last month"), and ever (i.e., "at any time in their life"), using slider scales from 0 to 100. These items were modified for use in the 2021 survey from gambling items in a study of normalisation (Thomas et al., 2018), based on the five dimensions of normalisation (Parker et al., 2002).

The items assessing social norms (friends and family) were based on items from the Subjective Norms Scale (Moore & Ohtsuka, 1999), with some items modified to refer to sports betting, some items added, and some removed as they had poor loadings on the betting normalisation scale in the 2021 study (Browne et al., 2021). That is, items were consistent across surveys. There were six items each for friends and family and participants were asked to rate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each statement. Items included "My friends are OK with sports betting" and "My friends and I discuss sports betting in-person or in messaging apps". One new item was included for both family and friends, based on a request from the SA Office for Problem Gambling "my friends and I share tips and bets for sports betting in person or in apps". Response options are "strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree", and "strongly agree". This new item for both family and friends was not used in the calculation of the normalisation index to retain comparability with the 2021 study.

In total, the normalisation index comprised of 16 items (6 items relating to community norms, and 5 each relating to family and friends). Scores could range from 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived normalisation (see Browne et al., 2021 for further psychometric details). Reliability for the normalisation index in the current study was $\alpha = .779$.

Protective strategies related to sports betting

Respondents were asked about their attitudes towards discussing sports betting and sports betting problems. This included asking participants whether they felt that it was a good idea to talk to an adult family member or friend who was betting a lot on sports about whether their sports betting was a problem, and whether they felt confident talking to a friend or family member about the risks of sports betting. Valid response items for both questions were "strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree", and "strongly agree". Next, participants were asked if, during the last 12 months, they had spoken to someone close to them (an adult family member or friend) about the risks involved in sports betting and if they had seen any messaging about safe sports betting practices in the last 12 months. The response options to these items were "never", "once or twice", "sometimes" and "often".

The participants were asked similar questions about children/adolescents. They were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements, including "It is important to talk to children and adolescents about the risks of betting on sports" and "It's OK if children and adolescents see you betting on sports". Responses were "strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree" or "strongly agree". Participants were also asked if they had, during the last 12 months, spoken to a child or adolescent about the risks involved in sports betting and whether they had seen messaging during that time about keeping children or adolescents safe around

sports betting. The response options to these items were "never", "once or twice", "sometimes", and "often".

Participants were asked if they had cared for their own or someone else's child/children or adolescents during the last 12 months, including full-time parenting to casual child-minding. Those who responded "yes" were asked their role (e.g., parent, grandparent, foster parent, babysitter, other family member, family friend, or other). If they had indicated earlier that they had bet on sports within the previous 12 months, then those respondents were asked about behaviours near the children or adolescents within their care. The items included "If I make a win betting on sports, I take care not to mention it to them" and "If I talk about betting on sports, I take care not to let them overhear." Valid responses were "never", "rarely", "sometimes", "usually" and "always". Finally, all respondents with children or adolescents in their care were asked to rate their agreement in the following statements: "I feel informed enough to talk to children or adolescents in my care about the risks of sports betting" and "I feel comfortable talking to children or adolescents in my care about the risks of sports betting". Response options were "strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree", and "strongly agree".

Gambling problems

Respondents who reported gambling within the previous 12 months were asked to complete the 9-item Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI; Ferris & Wynne, 2001). Participants were instructed to complete the PGSI based on their gambling in general in the past 12 months rather than just their sports betting. Response options were never (0), sometimes (1), most of the time (2) and almost always (3). Scores for each item were summed for a total between 0 and 27. From the total score, participants were classified into non-problem (PGSI = 0), low-risk (PGSI = 1 to 2), moderate-risk (PGSI = 3 to 7), and problem gambling (PGSI = 8 to 27) categories. Reliability in this sample was $\alpha = .957$.

Campaign awareness

All participants were asked about their awareness of the Here for the Game campaign. They were asked whether they had seen or heard advertising involving fans and SA professional sports clubs encouraging people to be 'Here for the Game' ("yes" or "no"). Respondents who answered "yes" were then asked more about the campaign. Specifically, they were asked how often they had seen campaign material ("Just once", "A few times over the last year", "Every one or two months", "Every one or two weeks", or "Weekly or more often"). They were also asked how much they agreed with seven statements about the messages in 'Here for the Game', which included "The messages were easy to understand", "The messages are helpful to gamblers", and "The messages go too far" ("strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"). Their behaviours after seeing the campaign ("Visited the 'Here for the Game' website", "Reflected on my own gambling", "Reflected on someone else's gambling", "Talked to someone about the 'Here for the Game' campaign", "Talked to someone about my gambling", "Talked to someone about their gambling", "I looked for help online" or "I did nothing") were also examined. Participants were asked how memorable the advertising was (rated on a 5-point scale "Not at all" to "Extremely"); where they saw or heard the advertising campaign ("On

TV", "On the radio", "On social media", "On the internet", "On YouTube adverts", "On a moving billboard", "At a sports ground/stadium" and "On a fixed billboard"). Participants were then asked to select all the key messages they could remember from the advertising. Valid options were "Here for the Game, not the Gambling", "Here for the atmosphere, not the bonus bets", "Here for my heroes, not for my multi", "Here for the loyalty, not the odds", "Here for the memories, not the early bet payout", "Here for the fans, no the odds on favourite" and "None of the above". Participants were asked to rate their overall impression of the 'Here for the Game' advertising, from 5 options ranging from "Very negative" to "Very positive". Finally, participants were asked, "Which SA professional sports clubs have you seen in the advertising?" They could select all that applied from the following options: "AUFC", "36ers", "Giants", "Crows" and "None of the above".

Demographics

In addition to age, respondents were asked to identify their gender, how many adults and children/adolescents lived in their household during the last 12 months (and their ages if children/adolescents were present); their marital status; household composition; highest educational qualification; work status; total household pre-tax household income; country of birth; main language spoken at home; and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander status (Table 1).

Overall, the demographic characteristics between 2021 and 2023 were quite similar with only subtle shifts in most categories. The current wave slightly skewed to being older, female, and more representative of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. Other trends also included more participants being born in Australia and fewer households with no children.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics

Variable	2021 N = 2030 n (%)	2023 N = 1994 n (%)
<i>Age (years)</i>		
18-34	565 (27.8%)	507 (25.4%)
35-49	549 (27.0%)	502 (25.2%)
50+	916 (45.1%)	985 (49.4%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	981 (48.3%)	893 (44.8%)
Female	1036 (51.0%)	1092 (54.8%)
Other	9 (0.4%)	6 (0.3%)
Prefer not to say	4 (0.2%)	3 (0.2%)
<i>Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin</i>		
No	1979 (97.5%)	1903 (95.4%)
Yes, Aboriginal	44 (2.2%)	69 (3.5%)
Yes, Torres Strait Islander	5 (0.2%)	7 (0.4%)
Yes, Both	2 (0.1%)	15 (0.8%)
<i>Education</i>		
No schooling	7 (0.3%)	4 (0.2%)

Did not complete primary school	3 (0.1%)	9 (0.5%)
Completed primary school	32 (1.6%)	24 (1.2%)
Year 10 or equivalent	224 (11.0%)	244 (12.2%)
Year 12 or equivalent	401 (19.8%)	434 (21.8%)
A trade, technical certificate or diploma	601 (29.6%)	646 (32.4%)
A university or college degree	492 (24.2%)	438 (22.0%)
Postgraduate qualification	270 (13.3%)	195 (9.8%)
<i>Employment</i>		
Worked full-time	683 (33.6%)	645 (32.3%)
Worked part-time or casual	385 (19.0%)	393 (19.7%)
Self-employed	108 (5.3%)	104 (5.2%)
Unemployed and looking for work	103 (5.1%)	105 (5.3%)
Full-time student	73 (3.6%)	56 (2.8%)
Full-time home duties	126 (6.2%)	107 (5.4%)
Retired	452 (22.3%)	438 (22.0%)
Sick or disability pension	73 (3.6%)	101 (5.1%)
Other	27 (1.3%)	45 (2.3%)
<i>Household income</i>		
Less than \$25,000	236 (11.6%)	241 (12.1%)
\$25,000 to \$49,999	453 (22.3%)	425 (21.3%)
\$50,000 to \$74,999	385 (19.0%)	390 (19.6%)
\$75,000 to \$149,999	689 (33.9%)	667 (33.5%)
\$150,000 or more	267 (13.2%)	271 (13.6%)
<i>Country of birth</i>		
Australia	1598 (78.7)	1668 (83.7%)
Other	432 (21.3)	326 (16.3%)
<i>Main language spoken at home</i>		
English	1935 (95.3%)	1928 (96.7%)
Other	95 (4.7%)	66 (3.3%)
<i>Marital status</i>		
Single/never married	458 (22.6%)	474 (23.8%)
Living with partner/de facto relationship	365 (18.0%)	330 (16.5%)
Married	951 (46.8%)	899 (45.1%)
Divorced or separated	211 (10.4%)	231 (11.6%)
Widowed	45 (2.2%)	60 (3.0%)
<i>Household</i>		
Single person	366 (18.0%)	417 (20.9%)
One parent family with children	153 (7.5%)	176 (8.8%)
Couple with children	625 (30.8%)	651 (32.6%)
Couple with no children	647 (31.9%)	533 (26.7%)
Group household	173 (8.5%)	152 (7.6%)
Other	66 (3.2%)	65 (3.3%)
<i>Location</i>		
Adelaide	1549 (76.3%)	1545 (77.5%)
Elsewhere	481 (23.7%)	449 (22.5%)
<i>Adults in household</i>		
Alone	440 (21.7%)	452 (22.7%)
1 other person	1133 (55.8%)	1054 (52.9%)
2 other people	278 (13.7%)	288 (14.4%)
3 other people	117 (5.8%)	135 (6.8%)

4 other people	34 (1.7%)	41 (2.1%)
5 or more other people	28 (1.4%)	24 (1.2%)
<hr/>		
<i>Children/adolescents in household</i>		
0	1319 (65.0%)	1228 (61.6%)
1	331 (16.3%)	365 (18.3%)
2	279 (13.7%)	272 (13.6%)
3	65 (3.2%)	94 (4.7%)
4 or more	36 (1.5%)	35 (1.8%)
<hr/>		
<i>Ages of children/adolescents (N = 711 in 2021; N = 766 in 2023)*</i>		
0 to 4 years	267 (37.6%)	254 (33.2%)
5 to 9 years	268 (37.7%)	271 (35.4%)
10 to 14 years	273 (38.4%)	287 (37.5%)
15 to 17 years	188 (26.4%)	232 (30.3%)

Notes: *This question was a ‘select all that apply’ format so the total percentage does not = 100%

Analysis

Descriptive findings are reported through summary statistics, including percentages, means, standard deviations, and medians. Comparisons between 2021 and 2023 waves were conducted either using Mann-Whitney U tests for ordinal variables or chi-square tests for categorical variables. For continuous variables we also checked the results of parameter tests (t-tests) and found identical results as per the Mann-Whitney U tests. Multivariate regressions were also conducted to control for the effects of any covariates. A critical significance value of $p < .05$ was employed throughout all analyses, and significant findings are **bolded** in the results. The results are based on a sample of 4024 participants ($N = 2030$ from the 2021 wave and $N = 1994$ from the 2023 wave). Where an analysis does not use the full sample, for example for questions which used skip logic, the smaller N used in that respective analysis is noted.

Results

Throughout this section, we report on changes in prevalence from 2021 to 2023 on a large number of measures. However, it is important to keep in mind that the comparisons are made between two different non-probability panel samples at each time point. Although we took care to sample from the same panels using an identical methodology, there is always the possibility that observed differences may be due to undesired sampling effects (i.e., changes in panel composition), rather than reflecting a true underlying change in the South Australian population. A second caveat relates to interpreting statistically significant differences. Given the large number of statistical comparisons being made, and given a 5% probability of a false positive for each comparison, we would expect a small number of these results to be due to chance alone. Lastly, the timing of surveys may affect results. The 2021 survey was conducted between early August and September, and the 2023 was in field between late September and early November.

Gambling behaviour and problem gambling

Overall, there was a statistically significant increase in the proportion of sports bettors (36.1% to 41.0%) and other gamblers (65.9% to 69.0%) from 2021 (Table 2). The frequency of sports betting and other gambling also significantly increased from 2021 to 2023. Among the participants who reported gambling or sports betting, the proportion of problem gambling significantly increased (15.6% to 18.1%).

Table 2. Sports betting and gambling status and frequency, and problem gambling

Variable	2021 <i>n</i> (%)	2023 <i>n</i> (%)	Statistic
<i>Sports bettor status</i>			
No	1298 (63.9%)	1176 (59.0%)	$\chi^2 =$ 10.467, $p = .001$
Yes	732 (36.1%)	818 (41.0%)	
<i>Other gambler status</i>			
No	692 (34.1%)	619 (31.0%)	$\chi^2 =$ 4.248, $p = .039$
Yes	1338 (65.9%)	1375 (69.0%)	
<i>Sports betting frequency</i>			
Never	1298 (63.9%)	1176 (59.0%)	$(U =$ 2126789, $p = .001)$
1 to 6 times (once every two months or less)	391 (19.3%)	432 (21.7%)	
7 to 12 times (once a month or less)	116 (5.7%)	128 (6.4%)	
13 to 24 times (once or twice a month)	87 (4.3%)	96 (4.8%)	
25 to 52 times (once or twice a fortnight)	66 (3.3%)	83 (4.2%)	
53+ times (once a week or more)	72 (3.5%)	79 (4.0%)	
<i>Other gambling frequency</i>			
Never	692 (34.1%)	619 (31.0%)	$(U =$ 2098394, $p = .036)$
1 to 6 times (once every two months or less)	631 (31.1%)	621 (31.1%)	
7 to 12 times (once a month or less)	212 (10.4%)	236 (11.8%)	
13 to 24 times (once or twice a month)	143 (7.0%)	157 (7.9%)	
25 to 52 times (once or twice a fortnight)	152 (7.5%)	157 (7.9%)	
53+ times (once a week or more)	200 (9.9%)	204 (10.2%)	

PGSI status – full sample (N = 2030 in 2021; N = 1994 in 2023)

Non-gambler	617 (30.4%)	555 (27.8%)	$\chi^2 =$ 11.108, $p = .025$
Non-problem gambler	825 (40.6%)	772 (38.7%)	
Low-risk gambler	210 (10.3%)	217 (10.9%)	
Moderate-risk gambler	158 (7.8%)	190 (9.5%)	
Problem gambler	220 (10.8%)	260 (13.0%)	
<i>PGSI status – gamblers/bettors only (N = 1413 in 2021; N = 1439 in 2023)</i>			
Non-problem gambler	825 (58.4%)	772 (53.6%)	$\chi^2 =$ 7.913, $p = .048$
Low-risk gambler	210 (14.9%)	217 (15.1%)	
Moderate-risk gambler	158 (11.2%)	190 (13.2%)	
Problem gambler	220 (15.6%)	260 (18.1%)	

Of those who bet on sports, the majority did so using a smartphone, followed by at land-based venues, using a laptop/computer, and via telephone (Table 3). Although the use of smartphones and via telephone increased, and at land-based and using a laptop/computer decreased, none of these differences were statistically significant.

Table 3. Percentage of sports betting by mode

Mode	2021	2023	Statistic
	<i>n</i> = 732 Mean (<i>SD</i>); Median	<i>n</i> = 818 Mean (<i>SD</i>); Median	
Online using a smartphone	55.59 (<i>SD</i> = 41.4); M = 60.0	57.23 (<i>SD</i> = 40.7); M = 60.0	(<i>U</i> = 305771.5, $p = .454$)
At land-based venues	23.13 (<i>SD</i> = 35.8); M = 0.0	21.64 (<i>SD</i> = 34.0); M = 0.0	(<i>U</i> = 299942.5, $p = .945$)
Online using a laptop or desktop computer	18.23 (<i>SD</i> = 30.4); M = 0.0	17.89 (<i>SD</i> = 29.6); M = 0.0	(<i>U</i> = 302451, $p = .693$)
By telephone calls	3.04 (<i>SD</i> = 9.0); M = 0.0	3.23 (<i>SD</i> = 9.5); M = 0.0	(<i>U</i> = 304166, $p = .386$)

Sports betting expenditure in a typical month significantly increased from 2021 to 2023 (Table 4). The proportion of sport bettors spending less than \$50 decreased from 44.0% to 37.6%, and those who spent \$1000 or more almost doubled from 4.2% to 7.5%.

Table 4. Sports betting expenditure (typical month)

Spend category	2021	2023	Statistic
	<i>n</i> = 732 <i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> = 818 <i>n</i> (%)	
Less than \$50	322 (44.0%)	310 (37.6%)	$(U = 323707.5,$ $p = .004)$
Between \$50 and \$99	112 (15.3%)	134 (16.3%)	
Between \$100 and \$199	131 (17.9%)	140 (17.0%)	
Between \$200 and \$999	136 (18.6%)	173 (20.6%)	
\$1000 or more	31 (4.2%)	61 (7.5%)	

In both 2021 and 2023, almost half of the sample did not bet on sports in-play or live (Table 5). The proportions remained relatively stable and no statistically significant differences were observed.

Table 5. Percentage of sports in-play or live betting

Category	2021 <i>n</i> = 732 <i>n</i> (%)	2023 <i>n</i> = 818 <i>n</i> (%)	Statistic
0%	340 (46.4%)	362 (44.3%)	(U = 305163, <i>p</i> = .484)
Between 1% and 49%	196 (26.8%)	233 (28.3%)	
Between 50% and 99%	130 (17.5%)	146 (17.6%)	
100%	66 (9.0%)	77 (9.4%)	

In 2023 there was a slight increase, however non-significant, towards television viewership as fewer participants reported ‘never’ in 2023 than 2021 (U = 2016790.5, *p* = .844) (Table 6). This trend was also apparent for watching sports live at the ground and was statistically significant, highlighting an increase in watching sports live in 2023 (U = 2109776, *p* = .010). Conversely, watching sports via video on a device or computer decreased, however this was not statistically significant (U = 1969069.5, *p* = .103). Approximately half of the sample had never watched sports at a venue in 2023.

Table 6. Mode of watching sports

Mode	Year	Never <i>n</i> (%)	1 to 6 times a year (once every two months or less) <i>n</i> (%)	7 to 12 times (once a month or less) <i>n</i> (%)	13 to 24 times (once or twice a month) <i>n</i> (%)	25 to 52 times (once or twice a fortnight) <i>n</i> (%)	53+ times (once a week or more) <i>n</i> (%)
on television	2021	273 (13.4%)	467 (23.0%)	259 (12.8%)	242 (11.9%)	307 (15.1%)	482 (23.7%)
	2023	239 (12.0%)	487 (24.4%)	257 (12.9%)	247 (12.4%)	328 (16.4%)	436 (21.9%)
live at the ground	2021	1107 (54.5%)	585 (28.8%)	160 (7.9%)	97 (4.8%)	62 (3.1%)	19 (0.9%)
	2023	1021 (51.2%)	579 (29.0%)	172 (8.6%)	136 (6.8%)	66 (3.3%)	20 (1.0%)
via video on a device or computer	2021	1082 (53.3%)	377 (18.6%)	193 (9.5%)	166 (8.2%)	110 (5.4%)	102 (5.0%)
	2023	1108 (55.6%)	363 (18.2%)	182 (9.1%)	152 (7.6%)	117 (5.9%)	72 (3.6%)

at a venue such as a pub or club*	2023	1005 (50.4%)	589 (29.5%)	199 (10.0%)	120 (6.0%)	65 (3.3%)	16 (0.8%)
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Notes: *This question was not asked in the 2021 wave

In 2023 there was an increase in the proportion of participants who watched sports with friends ($U = 2064944.5, p = .244$) and family (children under 18; $U = 2086825.5, p = .052$) (Table 7). Conversely, watching sports with family (adults; $U = 2004927.5, p = .596$) decreased. Although slight differences were observed, none of these were statistically significant.

Table 7. Social context of watching sports

Watched with:	Year	Never <i>n</i> (%)	1 to 6	7 to 12	13 to 24	25 to 52	53+
			times a year (once every two months or less) <i>n</i> (%)	times (once a month or less) <i>n</i> (%)	times (once or twice a month) <i>n</i> (%)	times (once or twice a fortnight) <i>n</i> (%)	times (once a week or more) <i>n</i> (%)
Friends	2021	784 (38.6%)	629 (31.0%)	262 (12.9%)	165 (8.1%)	116 (5.7%)	74 (3.6%)
	2023	729 (36.6%)	636 (31.9%)	254 (12.7%)	201 (10.1%)	123 (6.2%)	51 (2.6%)
Family (children under 18)	2021	1249 (61.5%)	360 (17.7%)	167 (8.2%)	106 (5.2%)	97 (4.8%)	51 (2.5%)
	2023	1174 (58.9%)	361 (18.1%)	163 (8.2%)	136 (6.8%)	102 (5.1%)	58 (2.9%)
Family (adults)	2021	576 (28.4%)	605 (29.8%)	246 (12.1%)	221 (10.9%)	210 (10.3%)	172 (8.5%)
	2023	584 (29.3%)	571 (28.6%)	255 (12.8%)	240 (12.0%)	184 (9.2%)	160 (8.0%)

Cognitions around sports betting

Table 8 reports on 10-items used to assess cognitions and irrational beliefs related to sports betting. Three items had significantly higher levels of agreement in 2023 compared to 2021, namely winning due to experience, narrowly losing demonstrating skills, and ability to estimate odds more accurately than advertised. The perception of winning due to skill and knowledge remained stable. The remaining six beliefs all had higher levels of agreement in 2023, however these changes were not statistically significant.

Table 8. Cognitions and irrational beliefs involved in sports betting

Item	2021 <i>n</i> = 732				2023 <i>n</i> = 818				Statistic
	SD <i>n</i> (%)	D <i>n</i> (%)	A <i>n</i> (%)	SA <i>n</i> (%)	SD <i>n</i> (%)	D <i>n</i> (%)	A <i>n</i> (%)	SA <i>n</i> (%)	
When I win my sports bet, it's due to my experience as a bettor	96 (13.1%)	313 (42.8%)	275 (37.6%)	48 (6.6%)	79 (9.7%)	334 (40.8%)	326 (39.9%)	79 (9.7%)	(<i>U</i> = 322218, <i>p</i> = .005)
Just narrowly losing a bet shows how good my skills as a bettor are	121 (16.5%)	352 (48.1%)	224 (30.6%)	35 (4.8%)	115 (14.1%)	380 (46.5%)	259 (31.7%)	64 (7.8%)	(<i>U</i> = 317060.5, <i>p</i> = .030)
I can often estimate the true odds better than the advertised odds	126 (17.2%)	332 (45.4%)	235 (32.1%)	39 (5.3%)	105 (12.8%)	366 (44.7%)	295 (36.1%)	52 (6.4%)	(<i>U</i> = 320309.5, <i>p</i> = .011)
When I win my sports bet, it's due to my skill and knowledge of sports	91 (12.4%)	228 (31.1%)	354 (48.4%)	59 (8.1%)	69 (8.4%)	276 (33.7%)	403 (49.3%)	70 (8.6%)	(<i>U</i> = 308782.5, <i>p</i> = .246)
Betting on sport is safer as it relies less on luck than other forms of gambling	92 (12.6%)	214 (29.2%)	350 (47.8%)	76 (10.4%)	83 (10.1%)	259 (31.7%)	387 (47.3%)	89 (10.9%)	(<i>U</i> = 303272, <i>p</i> = .634)
The highs are higher and the lows are lower when I bet on my favourite team or player	75 (10.2%)	236 (32.2%)	347 (47.4%)	74 (10.1%)	59 (7.2%)	270 (33%)	395 (48.3%)	94 (11.5%)	(<i>U</i> = 311030, <i>p</i> = .152)
The very moment I place a bet, I feel good	56 (7.7%)	256 (35.0%)	359 (49.0%)	61 (8.3%)	48 (5.9%)	279 (34.1%)	414 (50.6%)	77 (9.4%)	(<i>U</i> = 310176.5, <i>p</i> = .179)
If you have the knowledge and skills, betting on sports is a good way to make extra money	82 (11.2%)	253 (34.6%)	338 (46.2%)	59 (8.1%)	80 (9.8%)	270 (33%)	398 (48.7%)	70 (8.6%)	(<i>U</i> = 309342, <i>p</i> = .220)

My chances of picking a winner on a sports match are better than most people	106 (14.5%)	353 (48.2%)	228 (31.1%)	45 (6.1%)	114 (13.9%)	368 (45%)	258 (31.5%)	78 (9.5%)	$(U=313177, p = .092)$
Bookmakers make mistakes when setting odds, which I can take advantage of	83 (11.3%)	341 (46.6%)	259 (35.4%)	49 (6.7%)	94 (11.5%)	374 (45.7%)	292 (35.7%)	58 (7.1%)	

Notes: SD = Strongly disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly agree

Protective beliefs

Fewer sports bettors in 2023 agreed with stopping if they were not having fun (Table 9). Endorsement for sticking to a budget and not betting if feeling depressed or upset remained relatively stable across both waves. While small differences were observed none were statistically significant.

Table 9. Protective beliefs around sports betting

Item	2021 <i>n</i> = 732				2023 <i>n</i> = 818				Statistic
	SD <i>n</i> (%)	D <i>n</i> (%)	A <i>n</i> (%)	SA <i>n</i> (%)	SD <i>n</i> (%)	D <i>n</i> (%)	A <i>n</i> (%)	SA <i>n</i> (%)	
If I'm not having fun gambling on sports, I stop	19 (2.6%)	81 (11.1%)	437 (59.7%)	195 (26.6%)	26 (3.2%)	110 (13.4%)	477 (58.3%)	205 (25.1%)	$(U = 288789, p = .171)$
I stick to a dedicated budget for sports betting	26 (3.6%)	108 (14.8%)	392 (53.6%)	206 (28.1%)	24 (2.9%)	124 (15.2%)	437 (53.4%)	233 (28.5%)	$(U = 300999, p = .840)$
If I'm feeling depressed or upset, I don't bet on sports	65 (8.9%)	224 (30.6%)	320 (43.7%)	123 (16.8%)	70 (8.6%)	261 (31.9%)	342 (41.8%)	145 (17.7%)	$(U = 299252.5, p = .987)$

Notes: SD = Strongly disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly agree

Opinions about advertising

For eight out of nine items assessing opinions about sports betting advertising (Table 10) levels of agreement had increased in 2023. Specifically, statistically higher levels of agreement were reported in 2023 compared to 2021 for the banning of sports betting advertising during sports games, wanting to see less sports betting advertising at venues, concern about exposure of sports betting advertising to children, the government taking more responsibility to reduce the amount of sports betting advertising, advertising encouraging children to gamble on sports, and advertising encouraging people who enjoy sports to start gambling. The agreement levels for the item ‘sports betting advertising makes it hard for people with problems to resist’ remained stable (87%) across the waves. Although agreement for the last two items (advertising normalising sports betting for kids and advertising increasing gambling problems) also increased in 2023 these differences were not statistically significant.

Table 10. Opinions about sports betting advertising

Item	2021				2023				Statistic
	SD <i>n (%)</i>	D <i>n (%)</i>	A <i>n (%)</i>	SA <i>n (%)</i>	SD <i>n (%)</i>	D <i>n (%)</i>	A <i>n (%)</i>	SA <i>n (%)</i>	
Sports betting advertising during sports games should be banned	90 (4.4%)	651 (32.1%)	735 (36.2%)	554 (27.3%)	70 (3.5%)	527 (26.4%)	812 (40.7%)	585 (29.3%)	(<i>U</i> = 2147725.5, <i>p</i> < .001)
I want to see less sports betting advertising at sporting venues	66 (3.3%)	521 (25.7%)	833 (41.0%)	610 (30.0%)	57 (2.9%)	418 (21.0%)	884 (44.3%)	635 (31.8%)	(<i>U</i> = 2120827, <i>p</i> = .005)
I'm concerned by how much sports betting advertising children are exposed to	70 (3.4%)	372 (18.3%)	830 (40.9%)	758 (37.3%)	62 (3.1%)	309 (15.5%)	793 (39.8%)	830 (41.6%)	(<i>U</i> = 4120220, <i>p</i> = .002)
The government should take measures to reduce the amount of sports betting advertising	56 (2.8%)	405 (20.0%)	843 (41.5%)	726 (35.8%)	54 (2.7%)	297 (14.9%)	902 (45.2%)	741 (37.2%)	(<i>U</i> = 2109548, <i>p</i> = .012)
Betting advertising encourages children to want to gamble on sports	56 (2.8%)	420 (20.7%)	932 (45.9%)	622 (30.6%)	60 (3.0%)	357 (17.9%)	916 (45.9%)	661 (33.1%)	(<i>U</i> = 2095773, <i>p</i> = .036)
Betting advertising encourages people who enjoy sport to start gambling	57 (2.8%)	461 (22.7%)	986 (48.6%)	526 (25.9%)	45 (2.3%)	397 (19.9%)	993 (49.8%)	559 (28.0%)	(<i>U</i> = 2107096, <i>p</i> = .014)

Sports betting advertising makes it hard for people with problems to resist gambling	39 (1.9%)	226 (11.1%)	923 (45.5%)	842 (41.5%)	44 (2.2%)	215 (10.8%)	910 (45.6%)	825 (41.4%)	(<i>U</i> = 2022078, <i>p</i> = .957)
Betting advertising makes kids think that gambling on sport is normal	54 (2.7%)	280 (13.8%)	921 (45.4%)	775 (38.2%)	39 (2.0%)	252 (12.6%)	918 (46.0%)	785 (39.4%)	(<i>U</i> = 2068654.5, <i>p</i> = .186)
Sports betting advertising increases gambling problems in Australia	44 (2.2%)	332 (16.4%)	956 (47.1%)	698 (34.4%)	38 (1.9%)	288 (14.4%)	945 (47.4%)	723 (36.3%)	(<i>U</i> = 2083709, <i>p</i> = .078)

Notes: SD = Strongly disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly agree

Attitudes to sports betting

Statistically higher levels of agreement were reported in 2023 for the attitudes of too much sports betting today, risk of developing problems by casual sports betting, people should not be encouraged to bet, it not being healthy for children to be exposed to parent's sports betting, sports betting having the ability to destroy families, and sports betting needing to be more tightly regulated (Table 11). Statistically higher levels of disagreement were also noted for the attitudes of occasional sports betting being harmless and just another hobby. The attitude of gambling being a part of the Australian culture remained stable across waves (~54%), and agreement of people who bet on sports being at-risk of developing gambling problems increased but not significantly.

Table 11. Attitudes towards sports betting

Item	2021				2023				Statistic
	SD <i>n</i> (%)	D <i>n</i> (%)	A <i>n</i> (%)	SA <i>n</i> (%)	SD <i>n</i> (%)	D <i>n</i> (%)	A <i>n</i> (%)	SA <i>n</i> (%)	
There is too much sports betting today	53 (2.6%)	386 (19.0%)	979 (48.2%)	612 (30.1%)	36 (1.8%)	331 (16.6%)	952 (47.7%)	675 (33.9%)	(<i>U</i> = 2130012, <i>p</i> = .002)
Casual sports betting can lead to problems if you're not careful	36 (1.8%)	247 (12.2%)	1155 (56.9%)	592 (29.2%)	30 (1.5%)	203 (10.2%)	1102 (55.3%)	659 (33.0%)	(<i>U</i> = 2123895.5, <i>p</i> = .002)
People shouldn't be encouraged to bet on sports	34 (1.7%)	384 (18.9%)	1090 (53.7%)	522 (25.7%)	30 (1.5%)	284 (14.2%)	1075 (53.9%)	605 (30.3%)	(<i>U</i> = 2170164, <i>p</i> < .001)

It's not healthy for children to see their parents bet on sports	43 (2.1%)	396 (19.5%)	934 (46.0%)	657 (32.4%)	48 (2.4%)	284 (14.2%)	928 (46.5%)	734 (36.8%)	(U = 2159145, p < .001)
Sports betting can destroy families	32 (1.6%)	183 (9.0%)	977 (48.1%)	838 (41.3%)	29 (1.5%)	158 (7.9%)	905 (45.4%)	902 (45.2%)	(U = 2109766.5, p = .010)
Sports betting needs to be more tightly regulated or restricted	39 (1.9%)	348 (17.1%)	952 (46.9%)	691 (34%)	45 (2.3%)	266 (13.3%)	906 (45.4%)	777 (39.0%)	(U = 2148270, p < .001)
Occasional sports betting is harmless	134 (6.6%)	412 (20.3%)	1286 (63.3%)	198 (9.8%)	140 (7.0%)	516 (25.9%)	1163 (58.3%)	175 (8.8%)	(U = 1905552, p < .001)
Sports betting is just another hobby	309 (15.2%)	853 (42.0%)	749 (36.9%)	119 (5.9%)	337 (16.9%)	867 (43.5%)	685 (34.4%)	105 (5.3%)	(U = 1949150, p = .030)
Gambling on sports is part of the Australian culture - you're never going to change that	205 (10.1%)	729 (35.9%)	929 (45.8%)	167 (8.2%)	220 (11.0%)	692 (34.7%)	901 (45.2%)	181 (9.1%)	(U = 2029009, p = .881)
People who bet on sports are at-risk of developing gambling problems	43 (2.1%)	365 (18.0%)	1160 (57.1%)	462 (22.8%)	33 (1.7%)	323 (16.2%)	1162 (58.3%)	476 (23.9%)	(U = 2077926, p = .099)

Notes: SD = Strongly disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly agree

Community normalisation around sports betting

Perceptions of sports betting being a normal part of life in South Australia, a part of the culture, socially accepted, and lifetime prevalence, all significantly decreased in 2023 (Table 12). The perception of the prevalence of regular sports bettors in South Australia also decreased but not significantly, and the perception of recent sports bettors in South Australia increased but not significantly.

Table 12. Community normalisation relating to sports betting

Item	2021	2023	Statistic
	Mean (<i>SD</i>); Median	Mean (<i>SD</i>); Median	
Is betting on sports a normal part of life in South Australia?	59.83 (<i>SD</i> = 25.0); M = 61.0	53.64 (<i>SD</i> = 25.9); M = 60.0	(<i>U</i> = 1763506.5, <i>p</i> < .001)
Is betting on sports a part of South Australian culture?	57.24 (<i>SD</i> = 26.3); M = 60.0	53.19 (<i>SD</i> = 26.5); M = 59.0	(<i>U</i> = 1858504.5, <i>p</i> < .001)
Is betting on sports socially accepted in South Australia?	69.37 (<i>SD</i> = 22.2); M = 71.0	64.54 (<i>SD</i> = 23.5); M = 69.0	(<i>U</i> = 1786302, <i>p</i> < .001)
Thinking about people in South Australia, what percentage of adults (during the sporting seasons) bet on sports ever (i.e., at any time in their life)?	59.43 (<i>SD</i> = 23.5); M = 61.0	58.10 (<i>SD</i> = 23.2); M = 59.0	(<i>U</i> = 1949934.5, <i>p</i> = .045)
Thinking about people in South Australia, what percentage of adults (during the sporting seasons) bet on sports regularly (e.g., every month)?	46.39 (<i>SD</i> = 22.3); M = 48.0	46.03 (<i>SD</i> = 22.5); M = 47.0	(<i>U</i> = 2004917.5, <i>p</i> = .606)
Thinking about people in South Australia, what percentage of adults (during the sporting seasons) bet on sports recently (i.e., in the last month)?	46.93 (<i>SD</i> = 23.0); M = 49.0	48.07 (<i>SD</i> = 23.6); M = 50.0	(<i>U</i> = 2081401.5, <i>p</i> = .119)

Social normalisation (friends)

Significantly higher levels of agreement were reported in 2023 for aspects of normalisation around friends including friends often going to places where sport betting occurs, discussing sports betting, and being part of a betting syndicate (Table 13). Having friends who bet on sports occasionally also increased but not significantly. Higher levels of disagreement were reported in 2023 for friends being OK with sports betting but this was not statistically significant. Using a new item in the 2023 wave over two-thirds of respondents disagreed with sharing tips and bets with friends.

Table 13. Social normalisation (friends) around sports betting

Item	2021				2023				Statistic
	SD <i>n (%)</i>	D <i>n (%)</i>	A <i>n (%)</i>	SA <i>n (%)</i>	SD <i>n (%)</i>	D <i>n (%)</i>	A <i>n (%)</i>	SA <i>n (%)</i>	
My friends often go to places where people are betting on sports	248 (12.2%)	812 (40.0%)	835 (41.1%)	135 (6.7%)	219 (11%)	693 (34.8%)	924 (46.3%)	158 (7.9%)	(<i>U</i> = 2155663, <i>p</i> < .001)
My friends and I discuss sports betting in-person or in messaging apps	809 (39.9%)	681 (33.5%)	447 (22%)	93 (4.6%)	702 (35.2%)	713 (35.8%)	468 (23.5%)	111 (5.6%)	(<i>U</i> = 2125639, <i>p</i> = .003)
My friends and I are part of a betting syndicate	1080 (53.2%)	666 (32.8%)	216 (10.6%)	68 (3.3%)	1009 (50.6%)	644 (32.3%)	263 (13.2%)	78 (3.9%)	(<i>U</i> = 2098122, <i>p</i> = .026)
Most of my friends have bet on sports occasionally	216 (10.6%)	638 (31.4%)	1004 (49.5%)	172 (8.5%)	214 (10.7%)	611 (30.6%)	982 (49.2%)	187 (9.4%)	(<i>U</i> = 2045117, <i>p</i> = .532)
My friends are OK with sports betting	153 (7.5%)	490 (24.1%)	1195 (58.9%)	192 (9.5%)	141 (7.1%)	538 (27.0%)	1161 (58.2%)	154 (7.7%)	(<i>U</i> = 1962967, <i>p</i> = .061)
My friends and I share tips and bets for sports betting in person or in apps*	-	-	-	-	770 (38.6%)	675 (33.9%)	436 (21.9%)	113 (5.7%)	-

Notes: *This question was not asked in the 2021 wave and does not form part of the normalisation index. SD = Strongly disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly agree

Social normalisation (family)

Significantly higher levels of agreement were reported in 2023 for aspects of family normalisation including family often going to places where sport betting occurs, discussing sports betting, and being part of a betting syndicate (Table 14). Slightly higher levels of disagreement were reported in 2023 compared to 2021 for family being OK with sports betting and having family who bet on sports occasionally, but these were not statistically significant. Using a new item in the 2023 wave, over two-thirds of respondents disagreed with sharing tips and bets with family.

Table 14. Social normalisation (family) around sports betting

Item	2021				2023				Statistic
	SD <i>n (%)</i>	D <i>n (%)</i>	A <i>n (%)</i>	SA <i>n (%)</i>	SD <i>n (%)</i>	D <i>n (%)</i>	A <i>n (%)</i>	SA <i>n (%)</i>	
My family often go to places where people are betting on sports	497 (24.5%)	827 (40.7%)	608 (30.0%)	98 (4.8%)	476 (23.9%)	729 (36.6%)	674 (33.8%)	115 (5.8%)	(<i>U</i> = 2107127.5, <i>p</i> = .017)
My family and I discuss sports betting in-person or in messaging apps	937 (46.2%)	714 (35.2%)	316 (15.6%)	63 (3.1%)	848 (42.5%)	684 (34.3%)	375 (18.8%)	87 (4.4%)	(<i>U</i> = 2134628.5, <i>p</i> = .001)
My family and I are part of a betting syndicate	1203 (59.3%)	611 (30.1%)	164 (8.1%)	52 (2.6%)	1091 (54.7%)	616 (30.9%)	220 (11.0%)	67 (3.4%)	(<i>U</i> = 2136860.5, <i>p</i> < .001)
My family is OK with sports betting	351 (17.3%)	668 (32.9%)	916 (45.1%)	95 (4.7%)	382 (19.2%)	646 (32.4%)	863 (43.3%)	103 (5.2%)	(<i>U</i> = 1988399.5, <i>p</i> = .302)
People in my family have bet on sports occasionally	348 (17.1%)	516 (25.4%)	1049 (51.7%)	117 (5.8%)	360 (18.1%)	484 (24.3%)	1001 (50.2%)	149 (7.5%)	(<i>U</i> = 2039586, <i>p</i> = .644)
My family and I share tips and bets for sports betting in person or in apps*	-	-	-	-	899 (45.1%)	656 (32.9%)	364 (18.3%)	75 (3.8%)	-

Notes: *This question was not asked in the 2021 wave and does not form part of the normalisation index. SD = Strongly disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly agree

Normalisation index

In 2021 the sports betting normalisation index mean was 45.19 (*SD* = 16.61; *M* = 45.26; 95% *CI* [44.51, 45.87]). In 2023 it slightly lowered to 45.11 (*SD* = 17.07; *M* = 44.98; 95% *CI* [44.37,45.86]) and this change was not significant (*U* = 2013847.5, *p* = .785).

Conversations around sports betting

Eight items were used to assess agreement with different aspects of sports betting with children/adolescents (first six items) and adults (last two items) (Table 15). The level of agreement in 2023 significantly increased around keeping sports betting private so children/adolescents do not hear (63.2% to 72.3%). Significantly higher levels of disagreement were reported that it is OK exposing children to sports betting (66.3% to 70.6%). The remaining three items relating to children/adolescents regarding talking about risks, confidence, and understanding betting not being a normal part of sports were not significantly different across waves; however in both 2021 and 2023 agreement was very high for these items (ranging from 82.7% to 92.8%). Disagreement about it being OK to include children/adolescents in your sports betting was also high in both waves (83.3% to 83.7%) and not statistically different.

Regarding the last two items in Table 15 pertaining to adults there were no statistically significant changes; however agreement that talking to a friend/family member who is betting a lot on sports is a good idea increased, and confidence to discuss this decreased.

Table 15. Discussing sports betting with children/adolescents and adults

Item	2021				2023				Statistic
	SD <i>n (%)</i>	D <i>n (%)</i>	A <i>n (%)</i>	SA <i>n (%)</i>	SD <i>n (%)</i>	D <i>n (%)</i>	A <i>n (%)</i>	SA <i>n (%)</i>	
It's important to keep your sports betting conversations private so that children and adolescents don't overhear	130 (6.4%)	617 (30.4%)	906 (44.6%)	377 (18.6%)	95 (4.8%)	457 (22.9%)	971 (48.7%)	471 (23.6%)	(<i>U</i> = 2239116, <i>p</i> < .001)
It's OK if children and adolescents see you betting on sports	436 (21.5%)	910 (44.8%)	614 (30.2%)	70 (3.4%)	512 (25.7%)	895 (44.9%)	504 (25.3%)	83 (4.2%)	(<i>U</i> = 1907758, <i>p</i> < .001)
It's important to talk to children and adolescents about the risks of betting on sports	25 (1.2%)	134 (6.6%)	1148 (56.6%)	723 (35.6%)	28 (1.4%)	116 (5.8%)	1090 (54.7%)	760 (38.1%)	(<i>U</i> = 2078052, <i>p</i> = .096)
I feel confident talking to a child or adolescent about the risks of sports betting	40 (2.0%)	306 (15.1%)	1150 (56.7%)	534 (26.3%)	51 (2.6%)	294 (14.7%)	1087 (54.5%)	562 (28.2%)	(<i>U</i> = 2049695, <i>p</i> = .435)
Children and adolescents need to understand that betting is not a normal part of enjoying sports	32 (1.6%)	181 (8.9%)	1037 (51.1%)	780 (38.4%)	40 (2.0%)	168 (8.4%)	970 (48.6%)	816 (40.9%)	(<i>U</i> = 2069015, <i>p</i> = .175)

It's OK to include children or adolescents in your sports betting	905 (44.6%)	785 (38.7%)	267 (13.2%)	73 (3.6%)	942 (47.2%)	728 (36.5%)	243 (12.2%)	81 (4.1%)	(<i>U</i> = 1975419, <i>p</i> = .153)
If an adult friend or family member is betting a lot on sports, it's a good idea to talk to them about whether their sports betting is a problem for them	51 (2.5%)	305 (15.0%)	1191 (58.7%)	483 (23.8%)	49 (2.5%)	263 (13.2%)	1217 (61.0%)	465 (23.3%)	(<i>U</i> = 2044398, <i>p</i> = .526)
I feel confident talking to a friend or family member about the risks of sports betting	64 (3.2%)	434 (21.4%)	1181 (58.2%)	351 (17.3%)	86 (4.3%)	459 (23.0%)	1086 (54.5%)	363 (18.2%)	(<i>U</i> = 1987025.5, <i>p</i> = .264)

Notes: SD = Strongly disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly agree

Direct conversations around sports betting risks and exposure to safe betting messaging

The frequency of conversations with children about the risk of sports betting significantly increased in 2023, as did the exposure to messaging about keeping children/adolescents safe (Table 16). Regarding adults, the proportion of participants who had never spoken to someone close to them slightly decreased (66.6% to 65.2%); however this difference was not statistically significant. Any exposure to safe sports betting messaging increased in 2023, but not significantly.

Table 16. Frequency of conversations around sports betting risk and exposure to messaging around safe betting

Item	2021				2023				Statistic
	Never <i>n (%)</i>	Once or twice <i>n (%)</i>	Sometimes <i>n (%)</i>	Often <i>n (%)</i>	Never <i>n (%)</i>	Once or twice <i>n (%)</i>	Sometimes <i>n (%)</i>	Often <i>n (%)</i>	
Have you spoken to a child or an adolescent about the risks involved in sport betting during the last 12 months?	1622 (79.9%)	251 (12.4%)	117 (5.8%)	40 (2.0%)	1468 (73.6%)	310 (15.5%)	170 (8.5%)	46 (2.3%)	(<i>U</i> = 2153088, <i>p</i> < .001)
In the last 12 months, have you seen any messaging about keeping children or adolescents safe around sports betting?	1624 (80.0%)	225 (11.1%)	139 (6.8%)	42 (2.1%)	1451 (72.8%)	331 (16.6%)	178 (8.9%)	34 (1.7%)	(<i>U</i> = 2162792.5, <i>p</i> < .001)
Have you spoken to someone close to you (e.g., adult friend, family member) about the risks involved in sport betting during the last 12 months?	1352 (66.6%)	466 (23.0%)	169 (8.3%)	43 (2.1%)	1301 (65.2%)	433 (21.7%)	224 (11.2%)	36 (1.8%)	(<i>U</i> = 2064247, <i>p</i> = .191)
In the last 12 months, have you seen any messaging about safe sports betting practices?	883 (43.5%)	503 (24.8%)	418 (20.6%)	226 (11.1%)	769 (38.6%)	565 (28.3%)	486 (24.4%)	174 (8.7%)	(<i>U</i> = 2089234, <i>p</i> = .062)

Caregiver status and associated protective behaviours

In 2023 a slightly higher, but non-significant, proportion of participants had caring responsibilities for their own or someone else's child/adolescent (Table 17) (44.9% vs 47.8%).

Table 17. Caregiver status

Status	2021 <i>n</i> (%)	2023 <i>n</i> (%)	Statistic
No	1119 (55.1%)	1041 (52.2%)	$\chi^2 = 3.441,$ $p = .064$
Yes	911 (44.9%)	953 (47.8%)	

In both waves the most common caregiver role was for parents, followed by grandparents, and then other family members (Table 18).

Table 18. Caregiver role

Role	2021 <i>n</i> (%)	2023 <i>n</i> (%)	Statistic
Parent	427 (46.9%)	452 (47.4%)	$\chi^2 = 9.112,$ $p = .167$
Grandparent	206 (22.6%)	254 (26.7%)	
Other family member	103 (11.3%)	92 (9.7%)	
Family friend	76 (8.3%)	60 (6.3%)	
Babysitter/minder for family/friends	70 (7.7%)	75 (7.9%)	
Other	20 (2.2%)	14 (1.5%)	
Foster parent	9 (1.0%)	6 (0.6%)	

Of the carers, both waves found high agreement for both feeling informed (84.0% to 84.4%) and comfortable (86.7% to 87.5%) talking to children/adolescents in their care about the risks of sports betting (Table 19) and these differences were not statistically significant.

Table 19. Levels of carer confidence to discuss sports betting risks

Item	2021 (<i>n</i> = 911)				2023 (<i>n</i> = 953)				Statistic
	SD <i>n</i> (%)	D <i>n</i> (%)	A <i>n</i> (%)	SA <i>n</i> (%)	SD <i>n</i> (%)	D <i>n</i> (%)	A <i>n</i> (%)	SA <i>n</i> (%)	
I feel informed enough to talk to children or adolescents in my care about the risks of sports betting	24 (2.6%)	121 (13.3%)	505 (55.4%)	261 (28.6%)	25 (2.6%)	124 (13.0%)	521 (54.7%)	283 (29.7%)	(<i>U</i> = 438757, <i>p</i> = .655)
I feel comfortable talking to children or adolescents in my care about the risks of sports betting	27 (3.0%)	94 (10.3%)	503 (55.2%)	287 (31.5%)	24 (2.5%)	95 (10.0%)	528 (55.4%)	306 (32.1%)	(<i>U</i> = 438889, <i>p</i> = .644)

Notes: SD = Strongly disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly agree

Of the carers who were also sports bettors themselves, the implementation of all three protective behaviours listed in Table 20 increased from 2021 to 2023; however these increases were not statistically significant.

Table 20. Protective behaviours implemented by sports betting carers

Item	2021 (n = 381)					2023 (n = 433)					Statistic
	Never n (%)	Rarely n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Usually n (%)	Always n (%)	Never n (%)	Rarely n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Usually n (%)	Always n (%)	
If I make a win betting on sports, I take care not to mention it to them	30 (7.9%)	36 (9.4%)	90 (23.6%)	93 (24.4%)	132 (34.6%)	28 (6.5%)	30 (6.9%)	90 (20.8%)	120 (27.7%)	165 (38.1%)	(U = 88125, p = .079)
If I talk about betting on sports, I take care not to let them overhear	25 (6.6%)	50 (13.1%)	71 (18.6%)	107 (28.1%)	128 (33.6%)	26 (6.0%)	45 (10.4%)	76 (17.6%)	129 (29.8%)	157 (36.3%)	(U = 86477.5, p = .215)
If I bet on sports, I make sure not to do it when they are in the same room	27 (7.1%)	50 (13.1%)	72 (18.9%)	84 (22%)	148 (38.8%)	22 (5.1%)	33 (7.6%)	82 (18.9%)	122 (28.2%)	174 (40.2%)	(U = 87999, p = .085)

Awareness of the ‘Here for the Game’ campaign

In the 2023 wave a new section was created to assess awareness of the ‘Here for the Game’ campaign. Of the entire sample ($N = 1994$), almost a third ($n = 618$; 31.0%) had seen or heard advertising involving fans and SA professional sports clubs encouraging people to be ‘Here for the Game’. All subsequent questions in this section were only asked of the 31.0% who reported seeing the advertising.

Of those who had seen or heard advertising, almost half ($n = 307$; 49.7%) had seen it a few times over the last year. Smaller proportions had seen it just once ($n = 128$; 20.7%) or every one or two months ($n = 101$; 16.3%). Very few reported seeing it every one or two weeks ($n = 50$; 8.1%) or weekly or more often ($n = 32$; 5.2%).

Very few had a very negative ($n = 19$; 3.1%) or negative ($n = 27$; 4.4%) overall impression of the advertising. About a third had neutral impressions ($n = 207$; 33.5%). The majority of participants who had seen the campaign had positive ($n = 275$; 44.5%) or very positive ($n = 90$; 14.6%) overall impressions.

Perceptions of the campaign were favourable with 54.9% to 68.3% agreeing the messages were easy to understand, helpful, attention grabbing, with what is being said in the message, and that the messages speak to people on a personal level (Table 21). Slightly over half (52.1%) also disagreed that the messages go too far.

Table 21. Perceptions of ‘Here for the Game’ campaign

Item	SD <i>n</i> (%)	D <i>n</i> (%)	Neither <i>n</i> (%)	A <i>n</i> (%)	SA <i>n</i> (%)
The messages were easy to understand	19 (3.1%)	26 (4.2%)	152 (24.6%)	301 (48.7%)	120 (19.4%)
The messages are helpful to gamblers	21 (3.4%)	55 (8.9%)	199 (32.2%)	262 (42.4%)	81 (13.1%)
The messages grabbed my attention	21 (3.4%)	54 (8.7%)	204 (33.0%)	247 (40.0%)	92 (14.9%)
I agree with what is being said in the messaging	15 (2.4%)	45 (7.3%)	136 (22.0%)	282 (45.6%)	140 (22.7%)
It should be helpful to people	18 (2.9%)	32 (5.2%)	147 (23.8%)	314 (50.8%)	107 (17.3%)
The messages speak to people on a personal level	19 (3.1%)	53 (8.6%)	186 (30.1%)	282 (45.6%)	78 (12.6%)
The messages go too far	122 (19.7%)	200 (32.4%)	180 (29.1%)	88 (14.2%)	28 (4.5%)

Notes: SD = Strongly disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly agree

After seeing or hearing the campaign the majority of participants said that they did nothing (58.3%) (Table 22). Of those who saw or heard the campaign and did take action, 18.4% reflected on their own gambling, followed by reflecting on someone else’s gambling (16.0%), talking to someone about the campaign (12.3%), and talking to someone about their gambling

(10.0%). Smaller proportions of participants visited the campaign website, talked to someone about their own gambling, and looked for help online.

Table 22. Actions taken after being exposed to the campaign

Actions	Yes <i>n</i> (%)
Reflected on my own gambling	114 (18.4%)
Reflected on someone else’s gambling	99 (16.0%)
Talked to someone about the 'Here for the Game' campaign	76 (12.3%)
Talked to someone about their gambling	62 (10.0%)
Visited the ‘Here for the Game’ website	61 (9.9%)
Talked to someone about my gambling	53 (8.6%)
I looked for help online	26 (4.2%)
I did nothing	360 (58.3%)

Notes: This question was a ‘select all that apply’ format, except for ‘I did nothing’ which was an exclusive answer, so the total percentage does not = 100%

Regarding the memorability of the advertising, 16.3% ($n = 101$) felt it was not memorable at all. A quarter ($n = 158$; 25.6%) thought it was slightly memorable, and over a third reported it being moderately memorable ($n = 215$; 34.8%). 17.8% felt it was very memorable ($n = 110$), and a smaller proportion reported it being extremely memorable ($n = 34$; 5.5%).

The campaign advertising was most commonly seen/heard on TV (63.3%), followed by social media (24.9%), on the internet (19.1%), and on YouTube (18.8%) (Table 23). Fewer participants saw/heard the advertising on the radio, at a sports ground, on a moving billboard, and on a fixed billboard.

Table 23. Where the campaign was seen/heard

Channel	Yes <i>n</i> (%)
On TV	391 (63.3%)
On social media (Facebook, Instagram & Snapchat)	154 (24.9%)
On the internet (webpages, banners)	118 (19.1%)
On YouTube adverts	116 (18.8%)
On the radio	99 (16.0%)
At a sports ground / stadium	81 (13.1%)
On a moving billboard (bike or truck)	53 (8.6%)
On a fixed billboard	33 (5.3%)

Notes: This question was a ‘select all that apply’ format so the total percentage does not = 100%

The most common key message remembered from the advertising was ‘Here for the Game, not the Gambling’ which was recalled by over the half the sample (62.8%) (Table 24). Almost a quarter of participants (24.1%) remember the ‘Here for the atmosphere, not the bonus bets’

messages, and one-fifth or fewer remembered the remaining four messages outlined in Table 24. A small proportion (16.7%) did not recall any messages at all.

Table 24. Key messages remembered from the advertising

Message	Yes <i>n</i> (%)
Here for the Game, not the Gambling	388 (62.8%)
Here for the atmosphere, not the bonus bets	149 (24.1%)
Here for the loyalty, not the odds	127 (20.6%)
Here for my heroes, not for my multi	115 (18.6%)
Here for the memories, not the early bet payout	99 (16.0%)
Here for the fans, not the odds on favourite	88 (14.2%)
None of the above	103 (16.7%)

Notes: This question was a ‘select all that apply’ format, except for ‘None of the above’ which was an exclusive answer, so the total percentage does not = 100%

The sports clubs most remembered from the advertising were the Crows (52.6%), followed by 36ers, Giants, and lastly AUFC (Table 25). Almost one-third of participants (29.1%) did not remember any sports clubs from the advertising.

Table 25. Sports clubs remembered from the advertising

Sports clubs	Yes <i>n</i> (%)
Crows	325 (52.6%)
36ers	150 (24.3%)
Giants	106 (17.2%)
AUFC	86 (13.9%)
None of the above	180 (29.1%)

Notes: This question was a ‘select all that apply’ format, except for ‘None of the above’ which was an exclusive answer, so the total percentage does not = 100%

Nationwide campaigns

In a section of the 2023 survey separate to the dedicated ‘Here for the Game’ questions, a question was asked regarding the frequency of exposure to messaging that discourages sports betting. Over a third of the whole sample reported never ($n = 760$; 38.1%) being exposed, 44.4% sometimes ($n = 886$), 13.0% most of the time ($n = 259$), and 4.5% almost always ($n = 89$).

Participants were also asked about exposure to several campaigns (Table 26). This list contained three real campaigns from the states of Victoria (Love the Game), NSW (Reclaim the Game), and SA (Here for the Game), and five distractor/fake campaigns. Over half the sample (55.2%) did not recall any campaigns on the list. Of those that did, ‘Love the Game’

was recalled by 21.3%, ‘Here for the Game’ by 15.9%, and ‘Reclaim the Game’ by 5.9%. The distractor campaigns were reported as recalled by 6.2% to 16.1% of the whole sample.

Table 26. Recall of seeing material for campaigns

Campaign	<i>Yes</i> <i>n (%)</i>
Love The Game	425 (21.3%)
Here for the Game	317 (15.9%)
Reclaim The Game	117 (5.9%)
Not The Odds	207 (10.4%)
Sports. What I’m Here For	205 (10.3%)
Game On. Bets Off.	322 (16.1%)
Stop Gambling In Sport	169 (8.5%)
Why We Love the Game	123 (6.2%)
None of the above	1100 (55.2%)

Notes: This question was a ‘select all that apply’ format, except for ‘None of the above’ which was an exclusive answer, so the total percentage does not = 100%

Multivariate analysis

Whilst simple comparisons, i.e. time x outcomes are generally preferred in this report, we also considered controlling for other covariates in a multivariate analysis. This is because the composition of the panel may have changed over time in a way that does not reflect underlying changes in the South Australian adult population. For example, our Wave 2 sample included a higher percentage of sports bettors, who are likely to have more positive attitudes about the normalisation of sports betting. If this reflects changes due to sampling, and the true prevalence of sports betting has not increased, then this shared covariance with the outcomes reflects nuisance effects, that may be suppressing actual changes in normalisation and attitudes to sports betting.

We compiled scale sums for the regression analyses as follows:

Negative attitudes towards sports betting: This scale comprised of 10 items (e.g. ‘There is too much sports betting today’ and ‘Sports betting can destroy families’; see Table 11). Two items were positively worded (e.g. ‘Occasional sports betting is harmless’) and these two items were reverse scored. Overall, higher scores on this scale reflect more negative attitudes towards sports betting.

Negative opinions about advertising: The scale comprised of 9 items (e.g. ‘sports betting advertising during sports games should be banned’; see Table 10). Higher scores reflect more negative opinions about sports betting advertising.

Irrational cognitions around sports betting: This scale comprised of 9 items (e.g. ‘Just narrowly losing a bet shows how good my skills as a bettor are’; see Table 8). Higher scores reflect more irrational cognitions about sports betting.

Table 27 summarises regression models predicting normalisation, attitudes to sports betting, opinions about advertising, and cognitions around sports betting. For the key time effect (wave 1 = 0, wave 2 = 1), both unstandardised and standardised coefficients are shown. The unstandardised coefficient reflects changes on the original scale (e.g. a drop of 1.116 on the normalisation scale), whilst the standardised coefficients are useful as a comparative indicator of effect size. For example, the standardised change over time (-.034) is relatively small compared to the effect of sports bettor status (+.262).

As shown below, when controlling for covariates, all changes over time were significant but relatively small in magnitude. Normalisation dropped slightly, attitudes to sports betting and sports advertising were more negative, but cognitions around sports betting were slightly healthier.

Table 27. Effect of time on normalisation and attitudinal variables, controlling for covariates

	Normalisation (β)	Negative attitudes to sports betting (β)	Negative opinions about advertising (β)	Irrational cognitions around sports betting (β) ($n = 1550$)
Time (2023 vs 2021) – Unstandardised β	- 1.116 *	0.699 *	0.554 *	0.781 *
Time (2023 vs 2021) – Standardised β	- .034 *	.077 *	.048 *	.067 *
<i>Covariates</i>				
PGSI group	.155 *	.091 *	.063 *	.230 *
Sports bettor status	.262 *	- .130 *	- .108 *	-
Other gambler status	.220 *	.016	.016	.106 *
Sports betting freq.	.096 *	- .075 *	- .059 *	.149 *
Other gambling freq.	.018	- .066 *	- .055 *	- .060 *
Sports watching - TV	.061 *	.036 *	.030	.040
Sports watching – Live	.086 *	- .022	- .004	.081 *
Sports watching - Device	.076 *	- .004	.002	.166 *
Age	- .133 *	.124 *	.144 *	- .056 *
Gender	.050 *	- .009	- .008	- .090 *
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	.081 *	.027	.024	.105 *
Education	- .088 *	.060 *	.100 *	.064 *
Employment	- .070 *	.104 *	.085 *	- .078 *
Income	.020	- .020	.011	- .060 *
Country of birth	.003	.000	- .008	- .014
Marital	.028	.067 *	.073 *	.029
Household	- .018	.044 *	.017	- .008
Location	.017	- .066 *	- .051 *	- .043
<i>Adj. R square (%)</i>	37.3 *	14.3 *	10.9 *	29.1 *

Notes: * $p < .05$

Table 28 summarises an analysis of data from wave 2 only ($N = 1994$). It relates to a comparison between the 15.9% ($n = 317$) who responded ‘yes’ to remembering material for “Here for the Game” whilst also presented with the other campaign names / distractors. This indicator variable “exposure” (0 for no, 1 for yes) captures this information and this analysis aimed to examine the effect of campaign exposure on changes in any of the outcomes of interest. We control for gambling, sports watching and demographic covariates when making this comparison. Both standardised and unstandardised coefficients are provided for the key exposure effect, whilst for brevity, we report only standardised coefficients for the covariates.

We detected no significant effect of exposure for normalisation, attitudes to sports betting, or cognitions around sports betting. Opinions about sports betting advertising were more negative in the exposed group, but the effect size was small.

Table 28. Effect of exposure to campaign ($N = 1994$)

	Normalisation (β)	Negative attitudes to sports betting (β)	Negative opinions about advertising (β)	Irrational cognitions around sports betting (β) ($n = 818$)
Exposure (Remembered vs Not)- Unstandardised	0.663	0.209	0.730 *	0.630
Exposure (Remembered vs Not) – Standardised	.014	.017	.047 *	.045
<i>Covariates</i>				
PGSI group	.173 *	.075 *	.051	.179 *
Sports bettor status	.298 *	- .159 *	- .146 *	-
Other gambler status	.223 *	.008	.005	.091 *
Sports betting freq.	.076 *	- .098 *	- .063 *	.142 *
Other gambling freq.	.025	- .074 *	- .073 *	- .040
Sports watching - TV	.084 *	.070 *	.059 *	.040
Sports watching – Live	.066 *	- .056 *	- .033	.095 *
Sports watching - Device	.071 *	.004	- .018	.185 *
Age	- .129 *	.090 *	.119 *	- .050
Gender	.068 *	- .003	.001	- .056

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	.075 *	.028	.021	.108 *
Education	-.080 *	.059 *	.084 *	.014
Employment	-.047 *	.113 *	.109 *	-.069
Income	.032	.014	.067 *	-.016
Country of birth	-.002	.004	.007	-.022
Marital	.011	.074 *	.072 *	-.002
Household	-.025	.029 *	-.016	-.026
Location	.025	-.085 *	-.047 *	-.049
<i>Adj. R square (%)</i>	38.7 *	15.5 *	12.6 *	26.7 *

Notes: * $p < .05$

Using only wave 2 data, when specifically examining males 35 years or younger on the key outcomes, younger men were significantly more likely to report higher levels of normalisation, sports betting frequency, PGSI group, and significantly less negative attitudes towards sports betting (Table 29).

Table 29. Effect of younger male status

	Group (Male \leq 35 years)		<i>Adj R²(%)</i>
	Unstandardised β	Standardised β	
Normalisation	11.655 *	.210 *	4.30 *
Sports betting freq.	1.047 *	.237 *	5.60 *
PGSI group	0.544 *	.099 *	0.90 *
Negative attitudes to sports betting	-1.780 *	-.123 *	1.50 *

About thirty percent (29.5%) of young men recalled the HFTG campaign material, compared to 14.2% of the rest of the sample. This difference was statistically significant ($p < .01$).

When considering only 18-year-olds ($n = 24$ and 28 in waves 1 and 2 respectively) no significant differences were observed for the same four outcomes in Table 29.

Discussion

This report builds upon an initial study conducted in 2021 and has aimed to track any changes in sports betting attitudes and behaviours in South Australia. Our primary objectives were twofold: firstly, to conduct a comparative analysis between the data collected in 2021 and the current 2023 findings, and secondly, to evaluate community recall and sentiment towards the ‘Here for the Game’ campaign, a public health initiative aimed at countering the normalisation of sports betting.

The context in which this study is situated is both complex and dynamic. Over recent years, the landscape of sports betting in South Australia, just like the rest of Australia, has undergone significant changes. The prevalence of sports betting has seen a notable increase, and the methods through which individuals engage in this activity have evolved, primarily due to technological advancements and aggressive marketing strategies. These changes have raised substantial public health concerns, particularly around the normalisation of sports betting and its potential for excessive consumption to cause harm.

Our review of the literature identified characteristics of sports bettors, the impact of technology and access, the pervasive nature of marketing and advertising, as well as the social and cultural factors that contribute to the normalisation of sports betting. It highlighted a worrying trend where sports betting is not only becoming more prevalent but also increasingly integrated into the fabric of social and cultural norms, particularly among younger demographics. Because sports viewing is so strongly entrenched in Australian culture, a unique feature of sports betting – as opposed to other forms of gambling – is for this tight coupling to lead to it swiftly becoming a normative behaviour that is intrinsic to watching sports.

The literature also pointed to the growing concern about the impact of sports betting on public health, especially considering the increasing evidence of its association with harm. This concern was amplified by the recognition that public health intervention campaigns, while potentially effective, face significant challenges. These included the high costs involved, the need for prolonged and wide-reaching exposure, and the difficulty of competing with the well-funded and pervasive marketing efforts of the betting industry.

Against this backdrop, our study sought to understand how these broader trends and dynamics are reflected in the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of South Australians. By comparing data from 2021 and 2023, we aimed to examine whether there were shifts in public perception and behaviour concerning sports betting. Furthermore, assessing the community's recall and sentiment towards the ‘Here for the Game’ campaign was essential in determining the effectiveness of such public health initiatives in counteracting the normalisation of sports betting.

In the following sections, we will summarise and discuss these findings, drawing out insights into the changing landscape of sports betting in South Australia, the effectiveness of the ‘Here for the Game’ campaign, and the implications for future public health strategies.

Betting behaviour, problems and cognitions

The key results on sports betting behaviour, gambling problems and cognitions in South Australia, comparing data from 2021 and 2023, show several notable trends.

Increase in sports betting and gambling prevalence

There was a significant increase in the proportion of sports bettors (from 36.1% to 41.0%) and other gamblers (from 65.9% to 69.0%). No inference should be made about the South Australian community regarding changes in gambling participation, as gamblers are known to be over-represented in online panels, which was partially addressed by our soft-quota for non-gamblers. Thus, there was a proportionately greater increase in sports betting, compared to other forms of gambling in the sample. This suggests a growing engagement in sports betting in the South Australian population, which should be confirmed by a population-representative sample.

Increased frequency and expenditure

Not only did the proportion of individuals participating in sports betting increase, but there was also a significant rise in the frequency of betting and the amount of money spent. Specifically, the proportion of sports bettors spending \$1000 or more in a typical month nearly doubled (from 4.2% to 7.5%). However, it must be noted that our sample comprised a higher proportion of sports bettors. As this was not a population representative study, rather than reflecting a genuine increase in sports betting, it may well represent a changing composition of the panels over time.

Rise in problem gambling

There was a significant increase in problem gambling among sports bettors and gamblers in the sample, rising from 15.6% in 2021 to 18.1% in 2023. As already emphasised, this was a non-representative sample that included a higher proportion of gamblers and sports bettors than the general population. Nevertheless, given we employed identical sampling methods as in 2021, and this represents a larger proportional increase compared to the gambling participation it does suggest that the incidence of gambling-related problems might be escalating. Further population-representative studies are required to monitor these changes.

Preferred platforms for betting

The majority of sports betting was done using smartphones, followed by land-based venues, laptops/computers, and telephones. While there was a slight increase in smartphone and telephone betting and a decrease in laptop/computer and land-based betting, these changes were not statistically significant. This lack of change is likely due to the fact that smartphones and associated gambling apps are now a mature technology that has achieved high market saturation.

Stable in-play or live betting

Nearly half of the sample who bet on sports did not engage in in-play or live sports betting in both 2021 and 2023, with no significant changes observed in this behaviour over time.

Changes in sports viewing habits

There was a slight but non-significant increase in television sports viewership and a significant increase in watching sports live at the ground in 2023 compared to 2021. Conversely, watching sports via video on a device or computer decreased, though not significantly. This increased in-venue viewing likely reflects the continued renormalisation of public gathering since COVID.

Social context of watching sports

The proportion of participants who watched sports with friends and family (children under 18) remained stable in 2023, as did watching sports with adult family members.

Cognitions and irrational beliefs

Concerningly, there was a significant increase in agreement with certain irrational beliefs related to sports betting in 2023, such as winning due to experience, narrowly losing bets demonstrating one's skills, and belief in the ability to estimate odds more accurately than advertised. This effect was also seen in multivariate analyses, where we controlled for changes in panel composition. However, the perception of winning due to skill and knowledge remained stable. We speculate that these changes may reflect increased experience and engagement with sports betting among those who bet over the last two years.

Conclusions

Taken together, these findings highlight a concerning apparent trend of increased engagement and expenditure in sports betting, along with a rise in problem gambling and in certain irrational beliefs, at least in online panel participants. These changes in baseline prevalence in online panels must be treated with caution, since they are not derived from a population-representative sample. Nevertheless, recruitment methods were identical at both time points, and several key effects were confirmed with multivariate analyses that controlled for changing panel composition. However, attitudes towards sports betting and sports betting advertising appear to have become slightly more negative.

Normalisation of sports betting

The normalisation index, as developed in the 2021 study and reported here, is a measure used to quantify the level of normalisation of sports betting within the community. The index comprises several components that reflect community, family, and friends' attitudes towards

sports betting. We report below the key results related to the normalisation index and its associated components.

Overall normalisation index

The mean score for the sports betting normalisation index in 2021 was 45.2, which slightly decreased to 45.1 in 2023. This minor change was not statistically significant and given the high degree of precision of the measure, indicates that the overall level of normalisation of sports betting in the community remained stable over the two-year period. However, when we controlled for changes in panel composition, most notably an increase in sports bettors, we observed a statistically significant decrease in the normalisation index of 1.12 points. This indicates that when we hold key gambling participation and demographic variables constant, the true level of sports betting normalisation in the community has decreased.

Community norms

There was a significant decrease in 2023 in the perception of sports betting being a normal part of life in South Australia, a part of the culture, and socially accepted. Specifically, perceptions decreased that sports betting was a normal part of life (mean rating 53.6 vs 59.8 in 2021), part of the culture (53.2 vs 57.2), and socially accepted (64.5 vs 69.4). The perceived prevalence of sports betting in South Australia remained about the same.

Social normalisation (friends)

In 2023, significantly higher levels of agreement were reported for aspects of normalisation around friends, including friends often going to places where sports betting occurs, discussing sports betting, and being part of a betting syndicate. Over two-thirds of respondents disagreed with sharing tips and bets with friends, which was a new item added in the 2023 wave.

Social normalisation (family)

Similar to the findings with friends, there were significantly higher levels of agreement in 2023 for aspects of family normalisation, including family often going to places where sports betting occurs and discussing sports betting. The changes regarding family being OK with sports betting and having family who bet on sports occasionally were lower but not statistically significant. Over two-thirds disagreed with sharing tips and bets with family, according to the new item introduced in the 2023 wave.

Conclusions

The 'simple comparisons' (i.e., mean comparison) results suggested that, while there were some changes in the components of the normalisation index related to family and friends' attitudes towards sports betting, the overall normalisation of sports betting in South Australia did not significantly change from 2021 to 2023. However, the data also indicated a complex

change where personal experience of sports betting may be increasing in respondents' immediate social circles, whilst simultaneously perceptions of general societal and community acceptability decrease. This may reflect the increasing proportion of the 2023 sample who were sports bettors themselves. This interpretation was supported by the multivariate analysis. When we hold demographic and gambling variables constant, there was a significant, albeit relatively small, decrease in sports betting normalisation. In our view, while sports betting in the South Australian population has likely increased somewhat in the last two years, it is unlikely to have increased to the degree observed in the survey panels. This implies that the significant difference observed in the multivariate analysis was a better reflection of the South Australian population than the simple sample comparison. Accordingly, we conclude that the data suggested that sports betting normalisation in South Australia has decreased.

Other attitudes and behaviours

Advertising

There was a notable increase in the level of agreement in 2023 compared to 2021 regarding the need to ban sports betting advertising during games, reduce advertising at venues, and address the exposure of children to such advertising. A stable level of agreement was observed across waves for certain other attitudes about risks of sports betting advertising: that makes it hard for people with gambling problems to resist, that advertising normalises sports betting for kids and increases gambling problems.

Attitudes to sports betting

Significantly higher levels of agreement were noted in 2023 for the belief that there is too much sports betting, casual betting can lead to problems, people should not be encouraged to bet, it is unhealthy for children to see parents bet, sports betting can destroy families, and that sports betting needs tighter regulation. There were also significantly higher levels of disagreement in 2023 for the beliefs that occasional sports betting is harmless and that it's just another hobby.

The belief that gambling on sports is part of the Australian culture remained stable across waves, with around 54% agreement, and the perception that people who bet on sports are at risk of developing gambling problems also did not change significantly.

The multivariate analysis yielded results consistent with the simple comparisons: attitudes to sports betting in South Australia are becoming more negative.

Exposing children to betting

There was a significant increase in the number of participants who believed in keeping sports betting discussions private from children, with agreement on this matter rising from 63.2% to 72.3%. This reflects a growing concern about the exposure of children to gambling conversations and an increased effort to shield them from such discussions. There was also a significant increase in the disagreement that it's okay to expose children to sports betting,

with the rate going up from 66.3% to 70.6%. This suggested a heightened awareness of the potential negative impacts of gambling on youth and a community stance against the normalisation of sports betting among children. The sample strongly disagreed with the idea of including children in betting activities, with disagreement remaining high (from 83.3% to 83.7%) and showing no significant change over time.

Conversations about risk

While there were no significant changes across waves in how often participants talked about the risks of sports betting with children, the agreement on the importance of such discussions was very high, ranging from 82.7% to 92.8%. This indicated a strong and persistent consensus on the necessity of educating children on the dangers associated with betting. The frequency of conversations with children about the risk of sports betting significantly increased in 2023, as did the exposure to messaging about keeping children/adolescents safe.

When it came to adults, while there were no statistically significant changes, there was a notable trend of increased agreement that talking to a friend or family member who bets a lot is a good idea. Conversely, there was a decrease in confidence to have such discussions. This could imply that while the intent to engage in conversations about problematic gambling is there, many may feel less well-equipped to handle these sensitive discussions effectively.

Conclusions

These findings show an increased public concern about sports betting advertising and its potential impacts, especially on children, and a growing sentiment that sports betting may need more stringent regulation. There is also a notable shift towards recognising the risks associated with even casual betting. These changes are particularly striking given the increased rate of sport betting participation and spending in the current sample.

Awareness of, and responses to, “Here for the Game”

Awareness

In the 2023 survey, almost a third of the participants (31.0%) reported being aware of the "Here for the Game" campaign. This level of awareness indicates a substantial reach within the community, engaging a significant portion of the population with its messages.

In discussing the awareness of the "Here for the Game" campaign relative to other campaigns and baseline benchmarks, the data reveals interesting patterns. A significant portion of the sample, over half (55.2%), did not recall material from any of the campaigns, including both real and fictitious ones. "Love the Game," a real campaign from Victoria, was recalled by 21.3% of participants, which was the highest recall rate among the campaigns. South Australia's "Here for the Game" was recalled by 15.9%, and New South Wales' "Reclaim the Game" had the lowest recall at 5.9%. The distractor or fictitious campaigns saw a recall rate ranging from 6.2% to 16.1%, indicating that a non-negligible percentage of respondents reported familiarity with campaigns that did not actually exist.

These statistics suggested that, while self-nominated awareness of the "Here for the Game" was apparently high, recall of this material among the public was not as strong as some other real campaigns and was lower than one of the non-existent campaigns. Thus, the nominal awareness rate of 31.0% should probably be discounted, with the figure of 15.9% being more realistic, and given the relatively high recall rate rates of spurious campaigns, the true figure is likely somewhat lower.

Young men

It is well understood that young men tend to be most attracted to sports, most attracted to gambling in general, and sports betting in particular. These effects were also seen in the present survey. Accordingly, it was encouraging to observe that young men recalled the campaign materials at about twice the rate of others. We interpret this as a relatively clear indicator that the campaign is appropriately directed to that segment of the community most engaged with sports, and towards those who are most likely to benefit. Although young men tend to view sports betting as more normalised than others, this should not be interpreted as meaning that the campaign was ineffectual, but rather that the campaign is attempting to counteract other strong factors influencing their attitudes (e.g. exposure to gambling advertising, personal gambling and gambling in one's social networks).

Perceptions

The campaign was generally well-received, with a majority of those aware of the campaign finding the messages clear and helpful. Specifically, between 54.9% and 68.3% of respondents agreed that the campaign's messages were easy to understand and resonated on a personal level. This suggests that the campaign's messaging was effective in conveying its intentions and engaging its audience.

Actions and memorability

Despite the campaign's clear messaging, the actions taken by those exposed to it were varied. A majority, 58.3%, reported taking no action after seeing or hearing the campaign, which may reflect a degree of complacency or satisfaction with their current gambling behaviours. As for memorability, over a third considered the advertising moderately memorable, which could indicate the potential for lasting impact, although a small percentage (16.3%) did not find it memorable at all.

Comparisons between those who did and did not remember the material

A total of 317 participants in the second wave recalled "Here for the Game" material in the presence of distractors. Unfortunately, exposure was not significantly related to changes in normalisation, attitudes to sports betting, or irrational cognitions around sports betting. However, we did detect a small change in the campaign material being related to more negative opinions about advertising.

Conclusions

Overall, the "Here for the Game" campaign appears to have established a notable presence in the community. However, recognition of campaign material was not as strong as some other campaigns, and there was a relatively high response rate to distractors. This suggested that the scope and reach of the campaign may not be reaching a large enough segment of the South Australian population. Perhaps partly due to the relatively small number of participants who recalled the material, which reduced statistical power, we were unable to detect effects of exposure on most key outcomes. However, we did detect a small change in the campaign material being related to more negative opinions about advertising. Finally, the translation of awareness into action seems to be an area with room for improvement, as indicated by the proportion of individuals who did not engage further with the campaign's messages or take proactive steps in response to the advertising.

Limitations

The sample was not a random cross-section of the population but was drawn from panels where gamblers are likely to be more prevalent. However, this approach ensured the inclusion of a participant base relevant to the study's focus on gambling-related behaviours. The panels, despite their non-representative nature, included a broad section of the South Australian community as indicated by their demographic composition, which was consistent across time. This diversity supports a broader interpretation of the results, reflecting South Australians from a wide range of backgrounds.

Instead of a longitudinal approach, which tracks the same individuals over time, this study was based on two separate panel studies conducted at different times. While this design does not measure changes within individuals, it allowed for the analysis of shifts in attitudes and behaviours across the community between the two time points. The study's design emphasised interpreting differences between the two time points, rather than providing absolute prevalence scores. Thus, while we would urge caution in interpreting raw prevalence figures as representative of the South Australian population, our approach was well-suited to identifying trends and changes in attitudes and behaviours related to sports betting.

The principal drawback over a multiple time non-longitudinal design is that the panel sample data may change in composition in a way that does not reflect true changes in the South Australian population over time. However, it is worth noting that longitudinal designs have their own corresponding problems related to attrition, which also changes the composition of the data at later time points. We measured a broad range of relevant demographic, sports watching, and gambling covariates, and employed a covariate-control regression approach, which partially addressed this limitation.

The findings were based on self-reported data, which can be subject to biases such as social desirability or recall inaccuracies. This issue was clearly apparent in the discrepancy between the different approaches used to assess awareness of "Here for the Game", as well as spurious recall of fictional campaigns. However, self-report is a standard method for gathering data on personal behaviours and attitudes in large-scale surveys. For subjective attitudes and perceptions, there are few (if any) alternative methodologies.

Conclusions

Both waves of this monitoring program were designed with the intention of tracking changes in sports betting normalisation over time, with reference to current campaigns underway by the South Australian Government. However, interventions to “shift the needle” on popular culture and behaviour are intrinsically challenging. This was especially the case with respect to sports betting, since advertising designed to promote and normalise sports betting was occurring concurrently with the public health messaging.

We found an increase in the proportion of sports bettors and the frequency of sports betting activities, suggesting a possible trend towards more engagement in sports betting within the community. Further, there appeared to be a significant increase in the prevalence of problem gambling, suggesting that the rise in betting activities may be contributing to greater gambling-related harm. These results should be treated as highly tentative, as they may reflect changes in panel composition, and need to be checked with population-representative studies.

We observed strong community sentiment against sports betting advertising, particularly regarding the influence of such advertising on children, with many supporting the idea of stricter regulations. While normalisation shows a complex pattern with regard to differing components (community, friends, family, social), the overall level of normalisation index has decreased, when holding other covariates (most notably gambling related variables) constant. In keeping with this observation, the multivariate analysis showed more negative attitudes to sports betting over time, and more negative opinions about advertising. Unfortunately, there appeared to be slightly more irrational cognitions about sports betting.

The "Here for the Game" campaign reached a significant portion of the community, with positive perceptions of its messaging. However, when keeping in mind the base-rate recall of the distractor campaigns, the true level of recall may be as low as 5%. It may be that the campaign needs to be resourced to a greater degree, in order for the impact on the broader population of South Australia to be fully felt.

The community exhibited strong protective attitudes, especially towards children, with a significant proportion of respondents believing in keeping sports betting discussions private and not exposing children to gambling activities. There was a strong awareness of the need to communicate the risks of sports betting to children, with a high level of agreement on the need for these conversations to educate and protect younger individuals from gambling-related harm.

These findings reflect a complex and evolving picture of attitudes to sports betting and normalisation in South Australia. Our panel samples demonstrated growing participation and gambling problems, but when this is held constant, there were more negative attitudes to gambling being a natural part of sport. Our study also revealed an increased awareness of the potential harms of sport betting and a community inclination towards protective measures and regulation.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire



Survey of Attitudes about Sports Betting in South Australia

Project Overview

Welcome to the **2023 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SPORTS BETTING ATTITUDES SURVEY**. The South Australian Government has funded this study to help researchers, policy makers, and other key stakeholders gain a better understanding of attitudes towards sports betting.

Participation Procedure

You have been selected to participate in an anonymous online survey that asks about your beliefs and attitudes toward sports betting, as well as any sports betting you may have participated in during the past 12 months. Completion of the survey will take around 20 minutes. Qualtrics has been paid by CQUniversity to undertake the online component of the study, including recruitment of participants.

Benefits and Risks

It is expected that this project may benefit the Government and community's understanding of sports betting in South Australia. You may benefit from completing this survey through a system of accruing points that can be exchanged for various forms of reward and compensation. It is important that you respond to the questions with honesty so that the results can reliably inform Government policy.

There is no anticipated risk to you greater than that of inconvenience for the time taken to complete the online survey. We do not anticipate that participation in this research will cause you any undue discomfort beyond that experienced in normal day to day living. However, if you are concerned, please consider viewing the support available at www.lifeline.org.au or contacting your General Practitioner or if gambling is a problem for you or others, please call the **Gambling Helpline on 1800 858 858** or go to www.gamblinghelponline.com.au.

Confidentiality / Anonymity

The survey will not collect any identifying information; your responses will be anonymous. The data will be securely stored in accordance with CQUniversity Code of Conduct for Research indefinitely.

Outcome

The results of this research will be disseminated in the form of reports, journal articles and conference presentations.

Consent

Your consent to participate in this project will be obtained through your agreement to the Electronic Consent below. However, any completed surveys will be included in this research. If you wish to withdraw after submitting the survey, the information you have already provided cannot be deleted. This is because we will not be collecting any identifiable information from you and therefore, will not be able to identify your information.

Right to Withdraw

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time **prior to completing the survey / submitting your responses**, simply by closing the survey window on your web browser.

Feedback

A short summary of the project's findings in plain English will be available in 12 months. To request a copy, please email the researcher listed below.

Questions/ Further Information

If you have any questions about this project, please contact the Chief Investigator Professor Matthew Browne via m.browne@cqu.edu.au. Please contact Central Queensland University's Division of Research (Tel: 07 4923 2603; E-mail: ethics@cqu.edu.au) should there be any concerns about the nature and/or conduct of this research project. This project has been

approved by the CQUniversity Human Research Ethics Committee, approval number 24511

CONSENT

Clicking on the “next” button below indicates that:

- You have read the above information.
- You voluntarily agree to participate; and
- You give your consent for the data you provide in the following survey to be used for the research purpose described above.

Screening (these headings not shown to participants)

AgeInYears (these question IDs, and screening logic below, not shown to participants)

What is your age?

(Please enter a number below) _____

Skip To: End of Block If Condition: What is your age?(Please en... Is Less Than 18. Skip to: End of Block.

State

In which state or territory do you mainly live?

(Please select one)

- New South Wales
- Victoria
- South Australia
- Queensland
- Tasmania
- Western Australia
- Northern Territory
- Australian Capital Territory

Skip To: End of Block If In which state or territory do you mainly live? (Please select one) != South Australia

Location

Where in South Australia do you live?

- Adelaide
- Elsewhere

Gambling behaviour

B_Q1

During the last 12 months, about how often did you **bet on sporting events/matches**? Includes any sports betting done online, by telephone and at land-based venues – using money (i.e., not just for fun - using points).

- Never
- 1 to 6 times (once every two months or less)
- 7 to 12 times (once a month or less)
- 13 to 24 times (once or twice a month)
- 25 to 52 times (once or twice a fortnight)
- 53+ times (once a week or more)

B_Q5

During the last 12 months, on average how often did you bet on **any other forms of gambling (excluding sports)**, such as pokies, horse/greyhound racing, scratchies, lottery/lotto/pools tickets, bingo, keno, casino games, card games, esports, non-sporting events such as elections.

- Never
- 1 to 6 times (once every two months or less)
- 7 to 12 times (once a month or less)
- 13 to 24 times (once or twice a month)
- 25 to 52 times (once or twice a fortnight)
- 53+ times (once a week or more)

This section asks about **betting on sporting events** for money or cryptocurrency in the **last 12 months**.

Please note that here, and throughout this survey, **sports betting refers only to betting on sporting events and does not include betting on esports, or horse/ greyhound races**.

B_Q2

In the past 12 months, about what percentage of your expenditure on sports betting was done using the following ...

(Please enter percentages and make sure they add up to 100%)

Online using a smartphone : _____

Online using a laptop or desktop computer : _____

By telephone calls : _____

At land-based venues : _____

Total : _____

B_Q3

Thinking about the last 12 months, about how much money did you spend on sports betting in a typical month? _____

(Note, if you only bet during the sporting season, include a typical month during that time).

B_Q4

In the last 12 months, about what percentage of your sports betting was in-play or live betting? (Bets placed once the match has started)

(Please enter a percentage below) _____

Cognitions

The following statements relate to your thoughts & behaviours in relation to betting on sports

Own_SB_att1

Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
When I win my sports bet, it's due to my skill and knowledge of sports				
When I win my sports bet, it's due to my experience as a bettor				
Just narrowly losing a bet shows how good my skills as a bettor are				
Betting on sport is safer as it relies less on luck than other forms of gambling				
The highs are higher and the lows are lower when I bet on my favourite team or player				
The very moment I place a bet, I feel good				

Own_SB_att2

Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I can often estimate the true odds better than the advertised odds				
If you have the knowledge and skills, betting on sports is a good way to make extra money				
My chances of picking a winner on a sports match are better than most people				
Bookmakers make mistakes when setting odds, which I can take advantage of				
If I'm not having fun gambling on sports, I stop				
I stick to a dedicated budget for sports betting				
If I'm feeling depressed or upset, I don't bet on sports				

Opinions – advertising

The next few questions ask you about advertising for sports betting. This includes advertising or promotions for sports bets, for sports betting companies, and promotion of odds. This also includes advertising in all types of media.

Promotion_att

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Sports betting advertising during sports games should be banned				
I want to see less sports betting advertising at sporting venues				
I'm concerned by how much sports betting advertising children are exposed to				
Sports betting advertising makes it hard for people with problems to resist gambling				
The government should take measures to reduce the amount of sports betting advertising				
Betting advertising makes kids think that gambling on sport is normal				
Betting advertising encourages children to want to gamble on sports				
Betting advertising encourages people who enjoy sport to start gambling				
Sports betting advertising increases gambling problems in Australia				

Which of the following campaigns have you seen material for? (Select all that apply)

- Love The Game
- Why We Love the Game
- Not The Odds
- Here for the Game
- Reclaim The Game
- Sports. What I'm Here For
- Stop Gambling In Sport

- Game On. Bets Off.
- None of the above

In the last 12 months, how often when you watch sports, have you seen messaging that discourages sports betting?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- Almost always

Attitudes

Our next questions ask about **attitudes** towards sports betting. Remember sports betting does **not** include betting on esports, or horse/greyhound races.

SB_att1

Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
There is too much sports betting today				
Casual sports betting can lead to problems if you're not careful				
Gambling on sports is part of the Australian culture - you're never going to change that				
Occasional sports betting is harmless				
Sports betting is just another hobby				

SB_att2

Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
People who bet on sports are at-risk of developing gambling problems				
People shouldn't be encouraged to bet on sports				
It's not healthy for children to see their parents bet on sports				
Sports betting can destroy families				
Sports betting needs to be more tightly regulated or restricted				

Behaviour – watching

The following questions ask about how often you watch sports and who you watch sports with.

D_Q1

During the last 12 months, how often did you watch sports ...

	Never	1 to 6 times a year (once every two months or less)	7 to 12 times (once a month or less)	13 to 24 times (once or twice a month)	25 to 52 times (once or twice a fortnight)	53+ times (once a week or more)
on television						
live at the ground						
via video on a device or computer						
at a venue such as a pub or club						

D_Q2

During the last 12 months, how often did you watch sports with ...

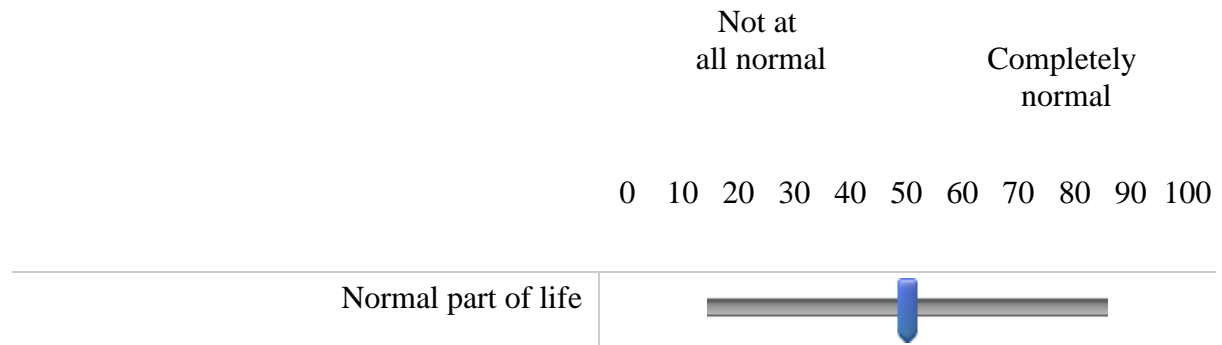
	Never/Not relevant	1 to 6 times a year (once every two months or less)	7 to 12 times (one a month or less)	13 to 24 times (once or twice a month)	25 to 52 times (once or twice a fortnight)	53+ times (once a week or more)
Friends						
Family (children under 18)						
Family (adults)						

Normalisation

The following questions are about **sports betting for people living in South Australia**.
Responses are on a sliding scale - please **move the slider** to your preferred position.

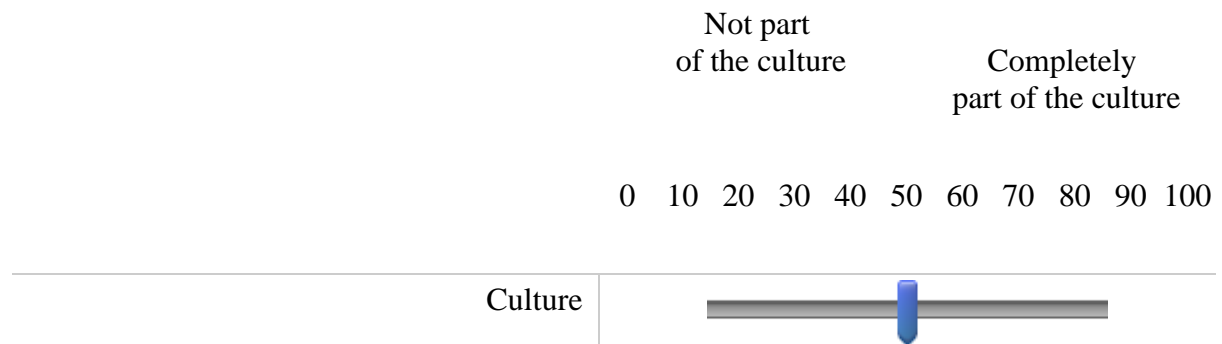
F_Q2

Is betting on sports a **normal** part of life in South Australia?



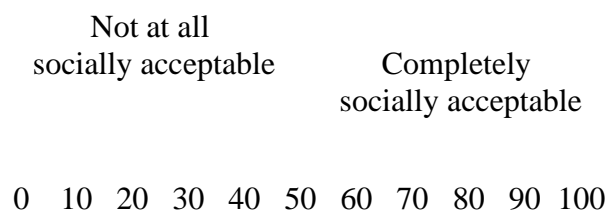
F_Q3

Is betting on sports a part of South Australian **culture**?



F_Q4

Is betting on sports **socially accepted** in South Australia?



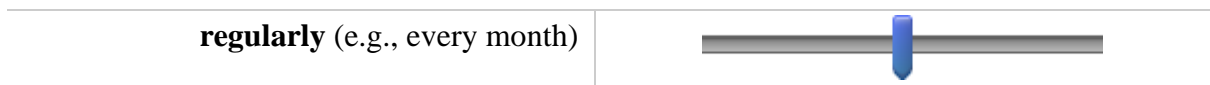


F_Q5

Thinking about people in South Australia, what **percentage** of adults (during the sporting seasons) bet on sports *regularly* (e.g., every month)?

%

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



F_Q6

Thinking about people in South Australia, what **percentage** of adults (during the sporting seasons) bet on sports *recently* (i.e., in the last month)?

%

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



F_Q7

Thinking about people in South Australia, what **percentage** of adults (during the sporting seasons) bet on sports ever (i.e., at any time in their life)?

%

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



Family and friends

The following section presents statements about family/friends and sports betting. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with these statements.

TPB_friends

How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
Please note that these questions are about your friends.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My friends are OK with sports betting				
Most of my friends have bet on sports occasionally				
My friends often go to places where people are betting on sports				
My friends and I discuss sports betting in-person or in messaging apps				
My friends and I share tips and bets for sports betting in person or in apps				
My friends and I are part of a betting syndicate				

TPB_family

How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
Please note that these questions are about your family.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My family is OK with sports betting				
People in my family have bet on sports occasionally				
My family often go to places where people are betting on sports				
My family and I discuss sports betting in-person or in messaging apps				
My family and I share tips and bets for sports betting in person or in apps				
My family and I are part of a betting syndicate				

Protective strategies

The following statements relate to your attitudes to sports betting and children/young people and friends.

SB_famfriends

Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<p>If an adult friend or family member is betting a lot on sports, it's a good idea to talk to them about whether their sports betting is a problem for them</p> <p>I feel confident talking to a friend or family member about the risks of sports betting</p>				

H_Q8

Have you spoken to someone close to you (e.g., adult friend, family member) about the risks involved in sport betting **during the last 12 months?**

- Never
- Once or twice
- Sometimes
- Often

H_Q10

In the last 12 months, have you seen any messaging about safe sports betting practices?

- Never
- Once or twice
- Sometimes
- Often

SB_kids

Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
It's important to talk to children and adolescents about the risks of betting on sports				
I feel confident talking to a child or adolescent about the risks of sports betting				
Children and adolescents need to understand that betting is not a normal part of enjoying sports				
It's important to keep your sports betting conversations private so that children and adolescents don't overhear				
It's OK if children and adolescents see you betting on sports				
It's OK to include children or adolescents in your sports betting				

H_Q9

Have you spoken to a child or an adolescent about the risks involved in sport betting **during the last 12 months.**

- Never
- Once or twice
- Sometimes
- Often

H_Q11

In the last 12 months, have you seen any messaging about keeping children or adolescents safe around sports betting?

- Never
- Once or twice
- Sometimes
- Often

H_Q13

In the past 12 months, have you cared for your own or someone else's child/children or adolescents? This can include anything from full-time parenting to casual child-minding.

- No
- Yes

Skip To: End of Block If In the past 12 months, have you cared for your own or someone else's child/children or adolescent... = No

H_Q14

In your role of full-time or occasional caregiver to any children or adolescents aged 17 or less, are you mainly a ...

- Parent
- Grandparent
- Foster parent
- Babysitter/minder for family/friends
- Other family member
- Family friend
- Other, please specify _____

H_Q15

Regarding children or adolescents in my care ...

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
If I make a win betting on sports, I take care not to mention it to them					
If I talk about betting on sports, I take care not to let them overhear					
If I bet on sports, I make sure not to do it when they are in the same room					

H_Q16

Regarding children or adolescents in your care, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel informed enough to talk to children or adolescents in my care about the risks of sports betting				
I feel comfortable talking to children or adolescents in my care about the risks of sports betting				

PGSI

Please answer the following questions about your gambling in general, not just your sports betting. Remember that this survey is anonymous.

PGSI

In the last 12 months, how often:

	Never	Sometimes	Most of the time	Almost always
Have you needed to gamble with larger amounts of money to get the same feeling of excitement?				
Have people criticised your betting or told you that you had a gambling problem, regardless of whether or not you thought it was true?				
Have you felt that you might have a problem with gambling?				
When you gambled, did you go back another day to try to win back the money you lost?				
Has gambling caused you any health problems, including stress or anxiety?				
Have you felt guilty about the way you gamble or what happens when you gamble?				
Has your gambling caused any financial problems for you or your household?				
Have you bet more than you could really afford to lose?				
Have you borrowed money or sold anything to get money to gamble?				

If gambling is a problem for you or others, please call the Gambling Helpline on 1800 858 858 or go to www.gamblinghelponline.org.au for free, confidential advice, available 24/7. If this questionnaire has raised any other issues for you, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Awareness of Here for the Game campaign

1. Have you seen or heard advertising involving fans and SA professional sports clubs encouraging people to be ‘Here for the Game’?

- Yes
- No

DISPLAY THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN THIS BLOCK IF ABOVE QUESTION = YES

2. In the last 12 months, how often have you seen ‘Here for the Game’ material? (Select the closest option)

- Just once
- A few times over the last year
- Every one or two months
- Every one or two weeks
- Weekly or more often

2a. What did you think of the messages in “Here for the Game”?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The messages were easy to understand					
The messages are helpful to gamblers					
The messages grabbed my attention					
I agree with what is being said in the messaging					
It should be helpful to people					
The messages speak to people on a personal level					
The messages go too far					

3. What did you do after seeing or hearing 'Here for the Game' advertising? (Select all that apply)

- Visited the 'Here for the Game' website
- Reflected on my own gambling
- Reflected on someone else's gambling
- Talked to someone about the 'Here for the Game' campaign
- Talked to someone about my gambling
- Talked to someone about their gambling
- I looked for help online
- I did nothing

4. How memorable was the advertisement?

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Very
- Extremely

5. Where did see or hear 'Here for the Game' advertising? (Select all that apply)

- On TV
- On the radio
- On social media (Facebook, Instagram & Snapchat)
- On the internet (webpages, banners)
- On YouTube adverts
- On a moving billboard (bike or truck)
- At a sports ground / stadium
- On a fixed billboard

6. Which of the following key messages do you remember from the advertisement(s)? (Select all that apply)

- Here for the Game, not the Gambling
- Here for the atmosphere, not the bonus bets
- Here for my heroes, not for my multi
- Here for the loyalty, not the odds
- Here for the memories, not the early bet payout
- Here for the fans, not the odds on favourite
- None of the above

7. What is your overall impression of the Here for the Game advertising?

- Very negative
- Negative
- Neutral
- Positive
- Very positive

8. Which SA professional sports clubs have you seen in the advertising? (Select all that apply)

- AUFC
- 36ers
- Giants
- Crows
- None of the above

Demographics

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ

These are our last few questions of the survey.

I_Q1

Are you ...

- A man
- A woman
- Another gender (please specify if you would like to) _____
- Prefer not to say

I_Q2

INCLUDING YOURSELF, how many persons **aged 18 years or older (adults)** usually lived in your household **during the last 12 months?** _____

(Please note, the minimum answer accepted here is 1, because the answer must include yourself.)

I_Q3

How many persons aged **less than 18 years (children/adolescents)** usually lived in your household **during the last 12 months?** _____

Display This Question:

If If How many persons aged less than 18 years (children/adolescents) usually lived in your household d...
Text Response Is Greater Than or Equal to 1

Kids_age

You said that you have children or adolescents under the age of 18 in the house. Are any of them in the following age brackets?

	No	Yes
0 to 4 years old		
5 to 9 years old		
10 to 14 years old		
15 to 17 years old		

I_Q4

Which of the following best describes your marital status **during the last 12 months?**
(Please select one response)

- Single/never married
- Living with partner/de facto relationship
- Married
- Divorced or separated
- Widowed

I_Q5

Which of the following best describes your household **during the last 12 months?** (Please select one response)

- Single person
- One parent family with children
- Couple with children
- Couple with no children
- Group household
- Other (please specify) _____

I_Q6

What is your highest educational qualification? (Please select one response)

- No schooling
- Did not complete primary school
- Completed primary school
- Year 10 or equivalent
- Year 12 or equivalent
- A trade, technical certificate or diploma
- A university or college degree
- Postgraduate qualification

I_Q7

Which of the following best describes what you did **during the last 12 months?**

- Worked full-time
- Worked part-time or casual
- Self-employed
- Unemployed and looking for work
- Full-time student
- Full-time home duties
- Retired
- Sick or disability pension
- Other (please specify) _____

I_Q8

To the nearest thousand dollars (in Australian dollars), what do you estimate your total **household** income **before taxes** was **during the last 12 months?**

- \$0 to \$9,999
- \$10,000 to \$24,999
- \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 to \$199,999
- \$200,000 to \$249,999
- \$250,000 to \$299,999
- \$300,000 or more

I_Q9

In which country were you born?

- Australia
- Other (please specify) _____

I_Q10

What is the main language that you speak at home? (Please select one response)

- English
- A language other than English (please specify) _____

I_Q11

For statistical purposes, are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

- No
- Yes, Aboriginal
- Yes, Torres Strait Islander
- Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Thank you for taking part in this research!

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