

Consumer Perspectives on Gambling Harm Minimisation Measures in an Australian Jurisdiction

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Disclaimer

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- The views expressed in the paper are the authors and do not represent the views of the Tasmania Government.
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Public Health and Gambling Policy

- Many governments have adopted a public health framework to guide the development of policy.
- Address gambling-related harms to achieve 'responsible' or 'healthy' gambling.
- Significant inter-dependencies between factors that impact gambling require a broad range of strategies.

EGMs

- EGMs are typically considered a hazardous form due to their **high accessibility** and potential for **continuous play**, although this association is complex.
- Measures include; maximum numbers, number per venue, gambling features, harm minimisation features, etc.

Demand and Supply

- **Supply;** Destination gambling, concentration or dispersal of gambling opportunity (regulated or not)
- **Demand;** advertising, self-exclusion, pop-up messages, restricting access to cash, etc.

Spatial Distributions of Gambling Catchment - Supply

A GIS-based Investigation of Gaming Venue Catchments 587

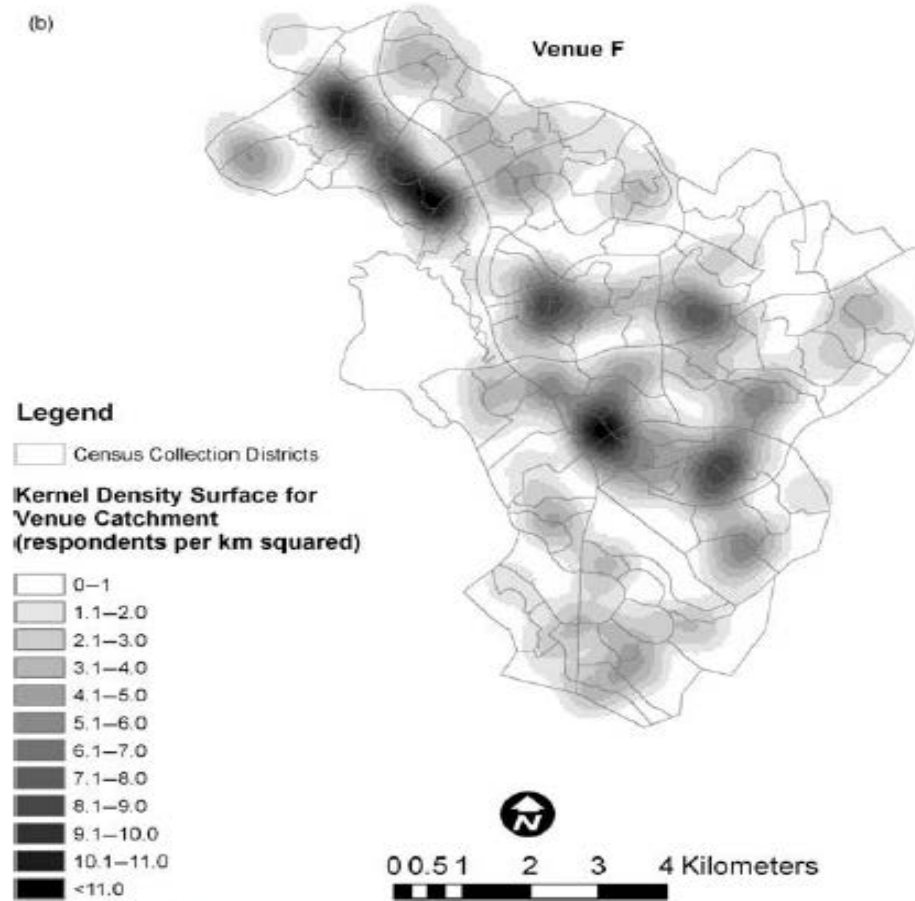


Figure 3. Continued

Spatial Distributions of Gambling Catchment - Supply

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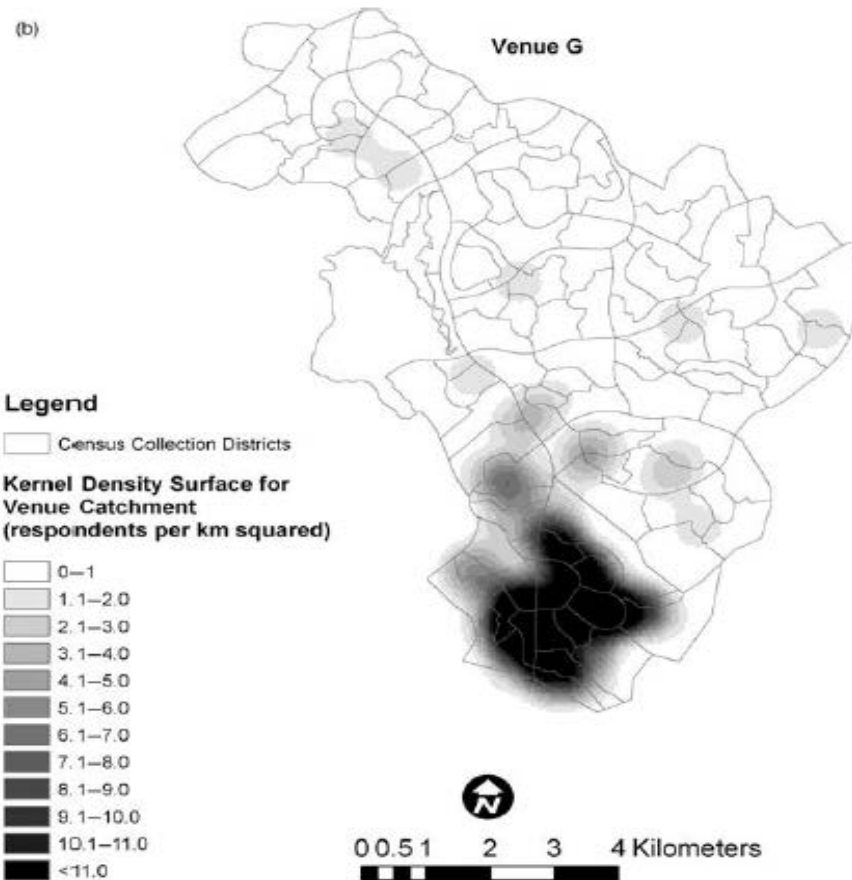


Figure 2 Continued

People per EGM - Supply

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Table 1 Tasmanian LGAs

LGA	SEIFA rank	Persons aged 18+	People per EGM	Total interviews
Brighton	1	9,548	159	400
Break O'Day	3	4,738	105	342
Glenorchy	8	33,302	123	400
Devonport	9	18,213	79	400
Circular head	17	5,777	116	301
Launceston	19	47,680	127	400
Sorell	22	8,944	163	401
Clarence	26	37,945	230	400

Demand

ATM WITHDRAWALS

**LIMITED TO \$400 PER DAY.
NO CASH ADVANCE FROM CREDIT CARDS.
IT'S THE LAW.**

ODDS R

The longer you play,
the more you lose.

Tasmanian Gaming Commission

GamblersHelp 
1800 858 858


Tasmanian
Government

Demand

NO CREDIT ALLOWED


**CREDIT MUST NOT BE
PROVIDED FOR GAMBLING.**

IT'S THE LAW.

ODDS R

The longer you play,
the more you lose.

Tasmanian Gaming Commission

GamblersHelp 

1800 858 858



Tasmanian
Government

Demand

DON'T PAYOUT ON US

**GAMING MACHINE AND KENO
CASH PAYOUTS MUST NOT EXCEED \$1 000.**

IT'S THE LAW.

ODDS R

The longer you play,
the more you lose.

Tasmanian Gaming Commission

GamblersHelp 
1800 858 858


Tasmanian
Government

Controversial Measures

- Pre-commitment
- \$1 bet maximums
- Highly politicised and polarised discourse about gambling regulatory policy, the concept of 'responsible gambling'

WHO VOTED FOR A LICENCE TO PUNT?

If the Federal Government get their way you'll have to apply for a licence just so you can have a \$5 punt.

They want to treat ordinary punters as problem gamblers.

The Federal Government doesn't trust you with your money and the worst part is that the real cost won't be measured in dollars. The real loss is the loss of freedom and privacy, the loss to communities, the loss of support to sporting clubs and community groups. But you didn't vote for it and you don't have to put up with it.

Visit our campaign website to say No.

LICENCE TO PUNT

3712 345678 95006

YOUR NAME
YOUR ADDRESS
YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS



-UNAUSTRALIAN.COM.AU



Alcohol and Hospitality Industry Group

- “... responsible gambling in a regulated environment is when consumers have informed choices and can exercise a rational choice based on their circumstances” (ALH Group, 2009, p2).

Productivity Commission

- That the **conditions** for **rational choices** are **incomplete ...**
 - players may have **faulty** 'cognitions'
 - find it **hard to stop** playing
 - **fail to appreciate** the risks
 - **judgment impaired** by alcohol
 - or be vulnerable

Productivity Commission, 2010

Evidence for Harm Minimisation

- Blaszczyński (2001, p5): “Although **attractive at face value** (harm minimisation policies), ... there is no agreement on the **basic components** of what should be included in a standard harm minimisation program”.

Evidence for Harm Minimisation

- “... the **most commonly** implemented prevention measures tend to be among the **least effective** options (e.g., awareness/information campaigns, responsible gambling features on EGMs, casino self-exclusion, etc.)”. Williams et al. 2007.

Evidence for Harm Minimisation

- “... when potentially more effective initiatives are implemented, they are **typically done** in such an **inconsequential or perfunctory fashion** as to virtually **ensure lack of impact**” (Williams, West, and Simpson, 2012, p81).

Evidence for Harm Minimisation

- Jackson et al. (2009, p24) review also concluded that:
“many of the harm minimisation measures ... (have been) introduced with **little empirical rationale**, and with little acknowledgement of **existing theoretical or conceptual rationales** from other areas such as alcohol harm minimisation”.

Evidence of Harm Minimisation

- Gainsbury et al. (2014) suggested that some measures were **supported** by the comparative evidence from the **addictive substances/alcohol** literatures:
 - minimum age requirements
 - Licensing
 - mandating responsible gambling strategies
 - and brief interventions for at-risk and problem gamblers

Evidence of Harm Minimisation

- Gainsbury et al. (2014) also reported other measures had **mixed evidence**:
 - Limits on opening hours
 - Gambling venue density
 - Increased taxation

Productivity Commission

- Chair of Productivity Commission (Banks, 2011) suggested gambling faces;
 - The need for strong **evidence-based approach** that are inherent to social policy;
 - Political difficulties that stem from **strong vested interests**

Productivity Commission

- “The Commission’s guiding principle in selecting measures ... was to reduce the social costs of gambling **without** unduly detracting from its recreational value, thereby **enhancing net benefits to the community as a whole**” (p12).

The Issue of Pre-commitment

- A *universal* measure designed to impact on the **highly targeted population** of problem gamblers, and as such it may inappropriately result in a **burden for recreational**, non-problem gamblers by reducing their enjoyment of a legal recreational product.

Measure of Good Harm Minimisation Policy

- The identification of measures that **differentially affect gamblers;**
 - Have limited impact on the enjoyment of recreational gamblers, but
 - Have a significant impact on the expenditure of gamblers experiencing the most harm.

Tasmanian Government

- Current (2011):
 - Exclusion/self-exclusion
 - Advertising restrictions
 - Caps on EGM numbers per venue
 - Restrictions on entry including minors banned from gaming areas
 - Limitations on 24-hour gaming in hotels and clubs
 - Staff training in the responsible conduct of gambling etc.

Tasmanian Government

- Proposed:
 - Ban on inducements
 - Cash not accessible from credit card accounts at casino ATMs
 - Restriction to \$200 accessible from Electronic Funds Transfer Point of Sale (EFTPOS) for gambling
 - Prohibition on cashing winning cheques on the same day they are issued at a gaming venue, etc.

Current Study

- Explore **awareness** of present EGM gambling harm minimisation measures
- Estimate how **often** the new EGM harm minimisation features were used, and
- Examine the **differential impact** on the expenditure and enjoyment for **non-problem** and **at-risk** gamblers

Method

- A **geographically stratified random CATI** survey was conducted in 2011, Tasmania, Australia.
- This periodic impact study is a **legal requirement**, every three years.
- The final sample of **4,303 adults** was comprised of 3,044 adults from the eight target LGAs and 1,259 from other LGAs across Tasmania

Participants

- 828 participants gambled on EGMs in the last year.
- Problem gambling severity was categorised by the Problem Gambling Severity Index:
 - non-problem n=623
 - low-risk n=129
 - moderate-risk n=48
 - and problem n=18
 - n=10 did not report gambling severity

Participants

- Female (55.8%)
- Average age was 43.28 years
- Full-time paid employment (43.2%)
- Median personal annual salary AUD\$25,000 - \$39,000
- Household of a couple with children still at home (24.6%)
- English (92.6%)

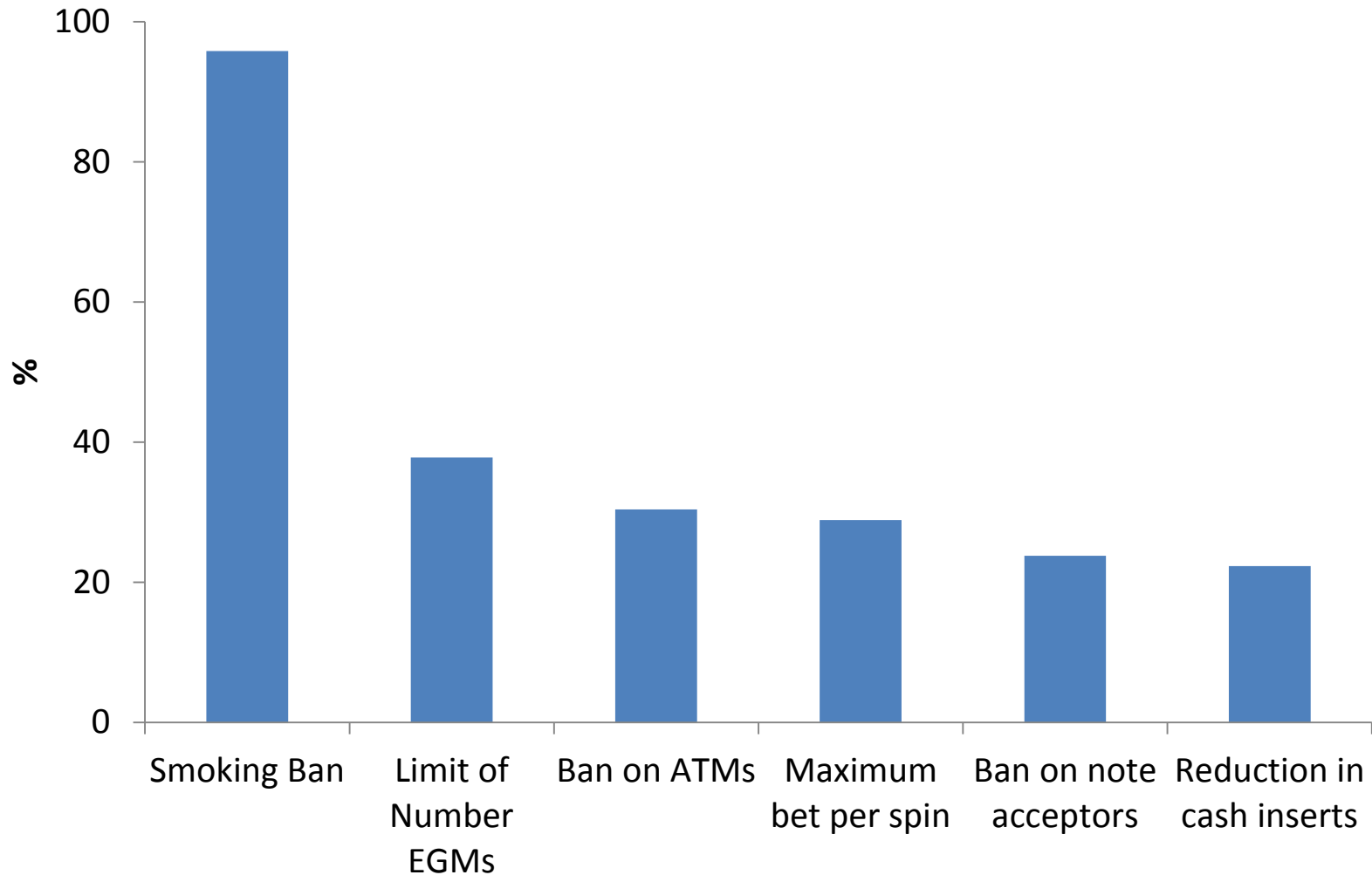
Measures

- *Has the (e.g., the reduction of the maximum bet per spin on new poker machines) increased, not changed, or decreased: a. The amount you SPEND on poker machines; b. Your ENJOYMENT of poker machines?* The response options were: **Increased, No change, Decreased, Don't Know/not sure/not applicable, and Refused.**

Analysis

- Focused on the **twin aims** from the Productivity Commission for good gambling policy;
 - Measures that would **reduce the enjoyment the least** for non-problem gamblers
 - Measures that would **reduce spend the most** for at-risk gamblers.

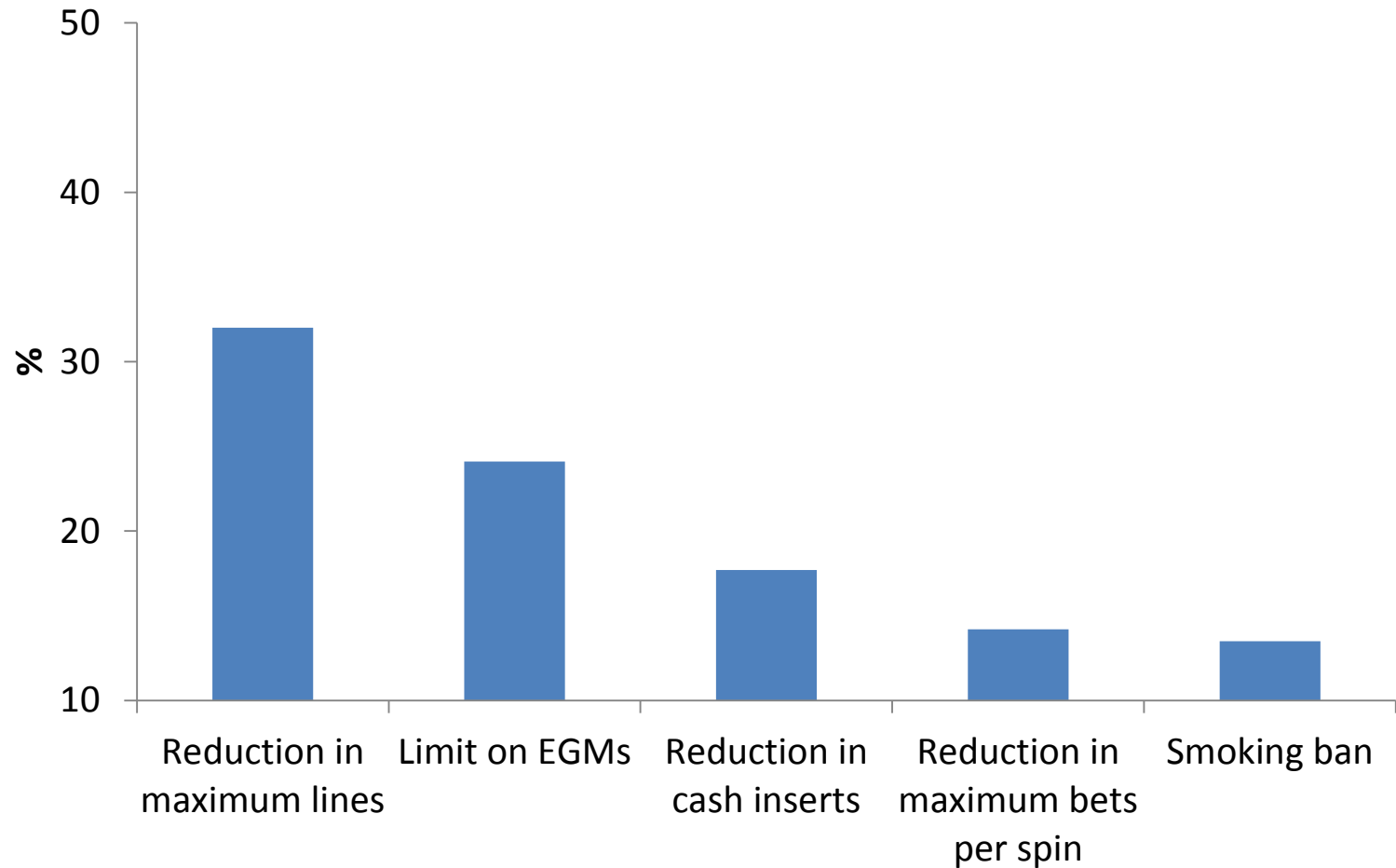
Awareness – All Gamblers



Enjoyment-Current

- **Non-problem gamblers** were significantly **less likely to report a decrease** in enjoyment compared to at-risk gamblers for;
 - bans on ATMs ($p < .01$)
 - smoking bans ($p < .01$)
 - and reduction in maximum bet per spin ($p < .05$)

Reduction in Spend by At-Risk Gamblers



Spend-Current

- **At-risk gamblers** were significantly more likely to **report a decrease in spend** compared to non-problem gamblers for;
 - bans on ATMs ($p < .01$)
 - limits on the number of poker machines ($p < .01$)
 - smoking bans ($p < .05$)
 - reduction in maximum lines ($p < .01$)
 - reduction in maximum bets per spin ($p < .01$)
 - reductions in cash inserts ($p < .01$)

Use of New Harm Minimisation Features

- The majority of both non-problem and at-risk gamblers reported **no or rare use of machines with these new features.**
- **No significant differences in frequency of use** were found between non-problem and at-risk gamblers.

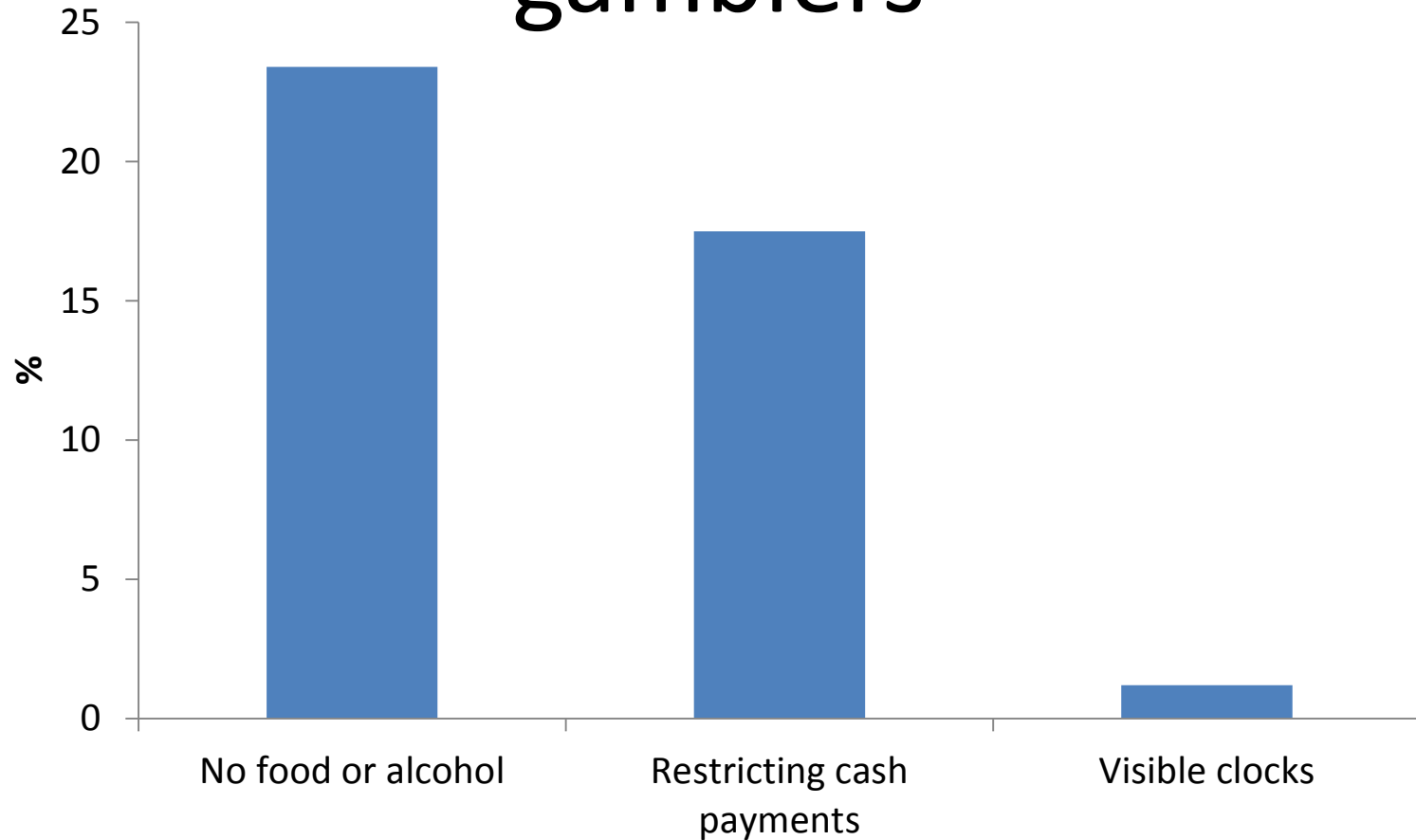
Enjoyment –Not Aware

- **Non-problem gamblers** were significantly **less likely** to report a **decrease in enjoyment** compared to at-risk gamblers for reducing cash into note acceptors ($p < .05$).

Spend-Not Aware

- **At-risk gamblers** were significantly **more likely** to report a **decrease in spend** compared to non-problem gamblers for;
 - reducing the number of lines ($p < .01$)
 - reducing bet per spin ($p < .05$)
 - and reducing cash into note acceptors ($p < .01$)

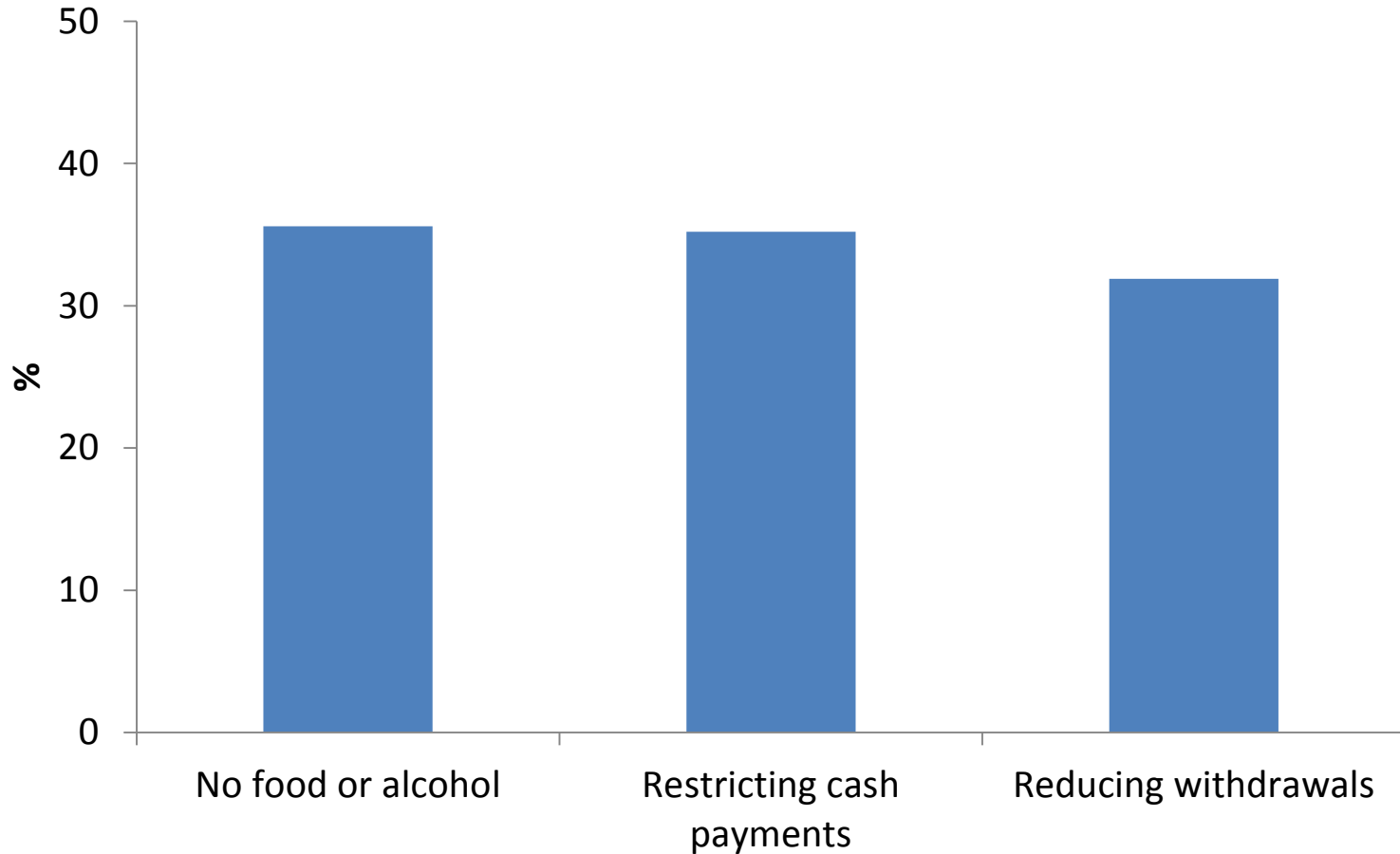
Proposed – Decreases in Enjoyment by non-problem gamblers



Enjoyment- Proposed Measures

- **Non-problem gamblers** were **significantly less likely** to report a **decrease** in enjoyment compared to at-risk gamblers for;
 - reducing withdrawals ($p < .05$)
 - restricting cash payments ($p < .05$)
 - adequate lighting ($p < .05$)
 - no food or alcohol ($p < .01$)
 - visible clocks ($p < .05$)

Proposed – Decrease Spend by At-Risk Gamblers



Spend-Proposed Measures

- **At-risk gamblers** were significantly **more likely** to report a **decrease in spend** compared to non-problem gamblers for;
 - socially responsible advertising ($p < .01$)
 - limits on vouchers ($p < .05$)
 - player activity statements ($p < .01$)
 - reducing withdrawals ($p < .01$)
 - restricting cash payments ($p < .01$)
 - and no food or alcohol ($p < .01$)

General Findings

- The majority of gamblers were **unaware of the changes** to harm minimisation measures
- 95% of gamblers were aware of the **ban on smoking** in a venue.
- Majority of all gamblers **preferred not to use** the new harm min features

Dual Focus

- Statistical significant findings appeared to be related to **decreases by at-risk gamblers**
- **Current Measures** resulting in the desired differential effect for non-problem and at-risk gamblers;
 - bans on ATMs (enjoyment) and reduction in maximum lines (spend)
 - limits on the number of EGMs
 - Reduction on bets per spin

Dual Focus

- Statistical significant findings appeared to be related to **decreases by at-risk gamblers**
- **Proposed Measures** resulting in the desired differential effect for non-problem and at-risk gamblers;
 - Visible clocks
 - socially responsible advertising
 - limits on vouchers
 - player activity statements
 - reducing withdrawals

Problematic Measures

- Two of the most powerful measures, ostensibly targeted for at-risk gamblers (i.e., **no food/alcohol, restricting cash payments**), are more problematic as introducing them would reduce enjoyment for non-problem gamblers.

Limitations

- No evaluation of pre-commitment or \$1 bets.
- Relatively few problem gamblers.
- Attitudes not behaviours.
- Many of the analyses contained few participants and/or volatile estimates.
- Proposed measures would reduce **anticipated spend** and enjoyment **more than** the reduction of **actual spend** and enjoyment.

Conclusions

- EGM **harm minimisation measures** are likely to **impact** to a greater degree on **at-risk gamblers** than non-problem gamblers.
- Further, as these were **universal measures**, their over-all positive evaluation **bodes well for other**, perhaps more powerful, harm minimisation measures (e.g., such as pre-commitment and \$1 dollar bet limits).

Thank You

Any Questions?