

MEDIA RELEASE
25 November 2010

New partnership strengthens support for problem gamblers

The NZ Racing Board and the Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand (PGF) today announced a new partnership that will enhance the level of support given to problem gamblers.

Around 4,000 TAB employees nationwide in customer-facing roles already receive training on identifying and supporting problem gamblers to seek help. Under the new partnership with PGF, all TAB employees will receive awareness training before they begin and existing employees will receive regular 'refresher' training so they are armed with the latest techniques for helping problem gamblers.

"The TAB has a responsibility to ensure customers have fun using our services. We have a successful track record of monitoring customer behaviour and intervening where we identify customers who may be putting themselves at risk", says Andrew Brown, CEO of the NZ Racing Board.

"Our existing programmes to promote responsible gambling work very well, but we are constantly looking at ways to do things better. The partnership with PGF will help us extend and strengthen our programmes, and exceed our statutory obligations as a gambling provider," he says.

Graeme Ramsey, Problem Gambling Foundation Chief Executive, says "We have developed a new host responsibility system which raises the bar on problem gambling awareness and support training and sets a new international best practice standard. The training will be partly web-based and will build upon our years of experience across New Zealand.

"The NZ Racing Board is taking host responsibility seriously and these new training arrangements for TAB staff will greatly improve their ability to identify and support problem gamblers right at the shop front."

Since 2002, all TAB employees have been required to attend half day classroom-based training and workshops to equip themselves with the skills and confidence to approach customers who they believe may have difficulties with gambling. They are also trained in referring these customers to a problem gambling support provider.

Under the Racing and Gambling Acts, the NZ Racing Board has a statutory responsibility to take proactive measures to minimise the harm caused by problem gambling. These include: reporting on programmes for minimising problem gambling; providing information and advice on problem gambling; and, providing problem gambling training to all staff who sell betting products to customers.

The NZ Racing Board has taken a number of measures to ensure compliance with regulation and to ensure that the TAB exceeds the required standard in providing support for people with gambling difficulties. In addition to staff training, these include regular monitoring of TAB account activity and managing the 'Set Your Limits' programme which allows betting limits to be placed on customers' TAB accounts.

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