



Evaluation of Player Tracking and Pre-commitment Trials

**Proudly supported by the Australian Government
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs**

in partnership with

**the South Australian Government through the Minister for Gambling's
Responsible Gambling Working Party**

About the Global Gaming Industries trial

1. What does pre-commitment mean?

Pre-commitment in relation to electronic gaming machines (EGMs) involves a player making commitments (setting limits) about how much money they will spend and/or the amount of time they will play EGMs in a specified period. Such limits are generally set prior to play, either at the beginning of a session or prior to entering a venue (pre-commitment).

Players can obtain a Player Activity Statement about their gambling activity. A Player Activity Statement generally includes information about: time played, turnover, wins, and expenditure, per session and per month. This information enables a player to track their gambling activity.

2. What does player tracking mean?

Player tracking is about collecting data generated by people playing EGMs. This data is generated by sources such as loyalty program systems and EGMs. For the player tracking and pre-commitment trial, it is about collecting data in relation to the group of patrons who have decided to enable pre-commitment features.

3. Why conduct a player tracking and pre-commitment trial?

The South Australian Government is seeking to create a more supportive environment for EGM players.

The Minister for Gambling established the Responsible Gambling Working Party (Working Party) in November 2006 to consider measures to assist players with pre-commitment. Following extensive consultation, the Working Party identified three focus areas—informed decision-making, money management, and player tracking systems.

The purpose of conducting a trial is to learn about the effectiveness of player tracking and pre-commitment, as a tool for venue customers to better manage their money in relation to gambling, and as a tool for harm minimisation.

4. Who is conducting the trial?

Global Gaming Industries (GGI) Pty Ltd is conducting the trial.

The Working Party has released three progress reports, which are available at <http://www.treasury.sa.gov.au/responsiblegambling>.

In the *Second Progress Report*, an open invitation was issued to industry proponents to submit proposals for trials of player tracking and pre-commitment systems in South Australia. The Rules of Engagement and trial requirements are outlined in the report. The Working Party's role is to conduct evaluations of industry trials (where it has accepted an industry proposal).

The Working Party has supported a proposal received from GGI. GGI is a licensed manufacturer of EGMs and associated equipment, designing, manufacturing and distributing EGMs, along with customised game software, game platform kits, cashless gaming and monitoring systems to local and international gaming operators. GGI operates over 18,500 EGMs in New South Wales.

In January 2009, GGI purchased the Maxetag loyalty system (Maxetag), which is available in 34 venues in Queensland, Northern Territory, and South Australia; South Australia's share is 20 venues. The limit setting feature is provided through the loyalty system.

5. Who is conducting the evaluation?

The trial evaluations are a partnership between the South Australian Government (through the Working Party) and the Australian Government.

The Australian Government has committed \$260,000 to the trial evaluations.

The Working Party's role in industry conducted trials is solely to conduct an evaluation. Its participation by way of an evaluation is not an endorsement of the particular product.

Adelaide Research and Innovation Pty Ltd (University of Adelaide) has been contracted to conduct an evaluation of the GGI trial. Dr Paul Delfabbro is the principal researcher.

The key research questions are:

- Is there value for the customer (EGM players) in the industry proponent's trial?
- Is the behavioural impact of the trial consistent with the Working Party's goal of customers gambling responsibly?
- If the trial is extended to full operation, is on going operation of a pre-commitment and player tracking system cost-effective to the gaming venue?

6. Where is the trial being conducted?

Stage 1 of the trial began on 1 March 2010 in two metropolitan club venues. Stage 2, to be implemented in a metropolitan hotel venue, will be informed by the outcomes of Stage 1. Both stages will run for 3 months. The 3 venues are:

- Stage 1 - Parafield Gardens Community Club & Port Adelaide Football Club
- Stage 2 - Sussex Hotel.

7. Who is enabling pre-commitment features?

The trial is voluntary. Limit setting will be available to all Maxetag patrons in the trial venues. Patrons who decide to set a session spend limit are self-electing to set the limit in response to: information they see posted in the trial venues; and/or a prompt question they are asked at the beginning of their session of play.

Assumptions cannot be made about the gambling risk status of players who have decided to enable pre-commitment features; indeed the setting of limits may be a feature that is accessed equally by recreational gamblers.

8. What types of pre-commitment features can players set?

The limit-setting feature is provided through the Maxetag loyalty system. Maxetag patrons in the trial venues can set a session spend limit only, at the machine, at the beginning of or during a session of play. (However, session reports will identify both spend and how long played.) The limit applies only for that session of play and once set, is fixed for that session.

Material is posted in the trial venues advising of the limit-setting feature. Maxetag patrons also receive a message when they TAG on, asking if they want to set a budget for the session. Instructions then follow as to how to do so. Patrons who have not set a limit at the start of their session can still do so at any point while they are playing.

Players will be able to generate a report of their session of play from a venue foyer terminal. The report will provide details of four items:

- Amount spent;
- Budget set;
- Difference between the preceding amounts; and
- How long spent playing at the venue.

9. What happens if a player reaches a set limit and continues playing?

When a patron exceeds their spend limit, a beep will be heard and a message sent to the TAG reader saying how much they have exceeded their limit. If they continue to play, the message will continue to be sent with the exceeded amount updated each time.

All gaming staff in the trial venues have received training about the limit setting feature. In addition, under South Australia's mandatory responsible gambling Code of Practice, all gaming staff undertake training about responsible gambling, including intervening with patrons.

Voluntary limit-setting (and the ability to track play) is about self management. The trial evaluation will examine what impact voluntary limit-setting has on a player's gambling activity and the effectiveness of players having an option to set limits.