

2019-2021

TERM REPORT

BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL
ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

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SECTION A:

ABOUT NCPG



The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) comprises 18 individuals with expertise in psychiatry, psychology, social services, counselling, legal, rehabilitative as well as community services. The Council was first appointed in August 2005 and has completed its Eighth Term (Sep 2019 – Aug 2021).

The Council's main roles are to:

- ▶ Provide advice and feedback to the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) on social concerns related to problems arising from gambling;
- ▶ Execute Casino Exclusions and Visit Limits in accordance with the Casino Control Act and within prevailing policies on casino social safeguards; and
- ▶ Support and implement programmes on:
 - ▶ Public education and outreach on problem gambling prevention and rehabilitation;
 - ▶ Public communications and consultation of stakeholders on gambling-related issues;
 - ▶ Research into problem gambling; and
 - ▶ Information, referral and treatment services for problem gamblers and their families.

The Gambling Safeguards Division in MSF provides Secretariat support to the Council.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Tan Kian Hoon

Chairman, NCPG 8th Term (2019 to 2021)

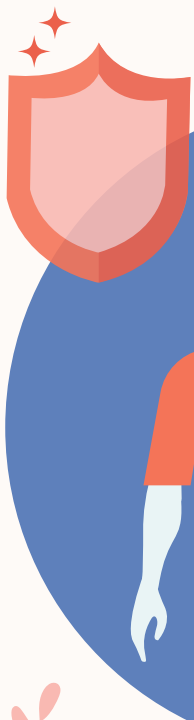
It is my great pleasure to present yet another term report of the NCPG.

This term proved to be a challenging one for the NCPG. With COVID-19 surfacing in Singapore in early 2020 and the circuit breaker kicking in from 7 April to 1 June that year, we had to adapt quickly to be able to continue administering casino exclusion and visit limits. Our team swung into action and transited to hearing cases via a hybrid of remote and in-person means, to ensure that vulnerable persons and their family members continued to be protected by our gambling safeguards.

With the closure of gambling venues and restrictions on social activities, we were also concerned that people would turn to online or illegal gambling. The NCPG galvanised our resources to move outreach efforts online, including the creation of entertaining content to attract and engage seniors and other at-risk groups. Throughout the period, our Helpline and Webchat service remained open for individuals who needed help.

In 2020, we also conducted our Gambling Participation Survey. The survey found a decrease in gambling participation rate (44%) as compared to the previous survey in 2017 (52%). It also found that overall probable pathological and problem gambling rates among Singapore residents remained low at 1.2%, which was similar to 2017's 0.9%.

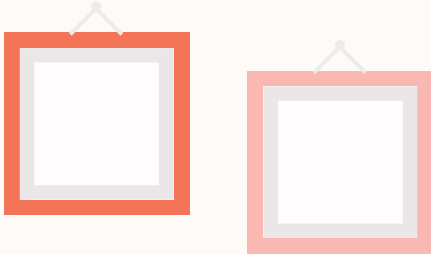
The gambling landscape continues to evolve rapidly. The NCPG will continue to study gambling-related developments globally and advise the Government on measures to strengthen protection of those vulnerable to the harm of gambling. To mitigate the risks of online gambling and gambling risks in electronic games, especially amid the pandemic, the NCPG stepped up public education efforts on the risk of problem gambling. The NCPG will also continue to work with our partners to ensure that help services continue to remain accessible to everyone.

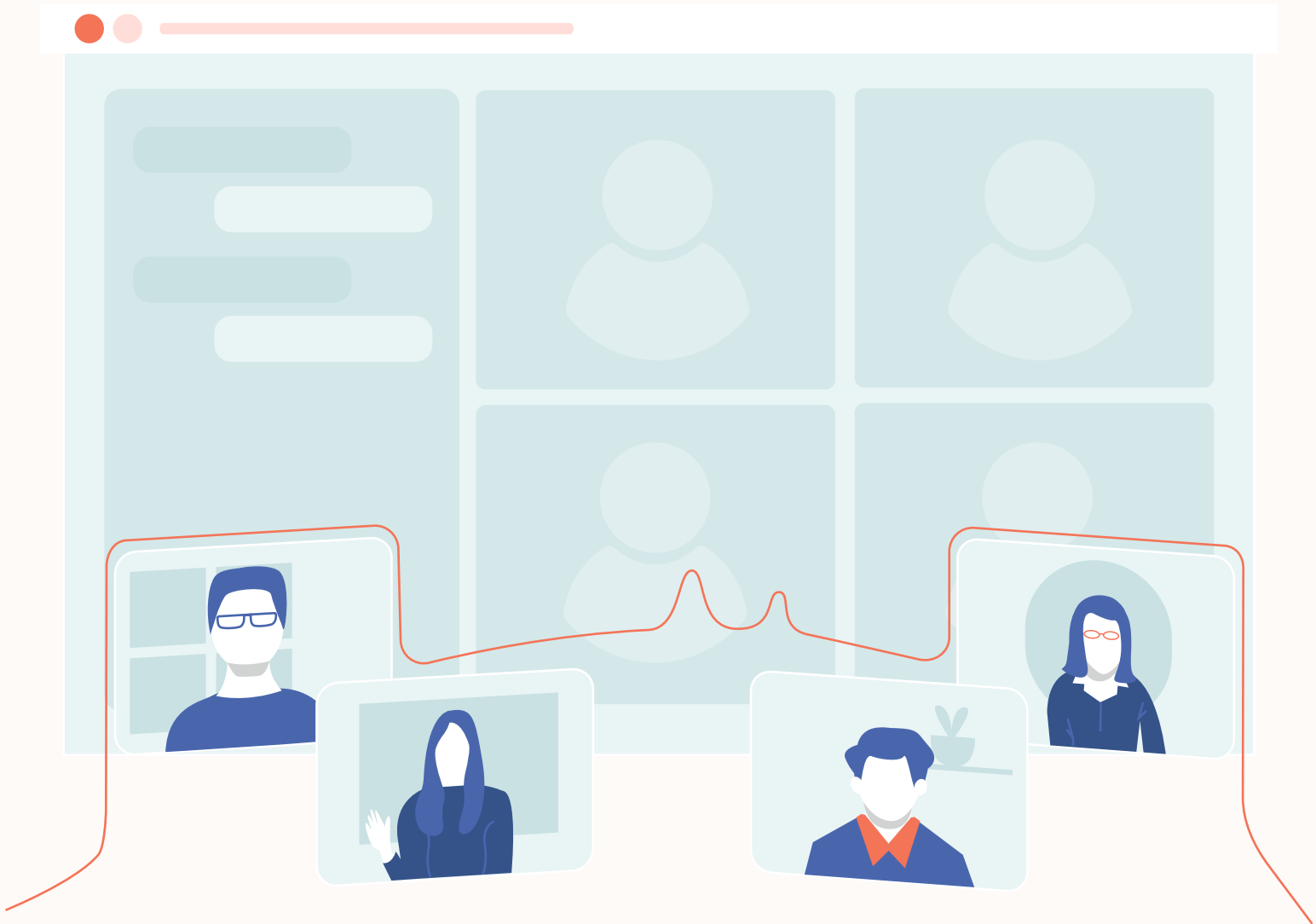


The NCPG will also work closely with the upcoming Gambling Regulatory Authority which will oversee all legal gambling forms in Singapore. We look forward to a more comprehensive gambling legislative framework to protect persons at risk in Singapore.

Last but not least, it is with a heavy heart that I am announcing my retirement from the Council after having served eight terms since its establishment in August 2005. I am fortunate to have seen the NCPG grow from strength to strength, from the early days when we were busy setting up the legislation and structure for the NCPG, to implementing the Third Party Visit Limit in 2013, and later bringing the Fruit Machine Rooms in private clubs and Singapore Pools remote gambling accounts under the exclusions regime.

“ I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Council Members for their support and for their commitment to minimising problem gambling, especially those who are also stepping down with me after serving for several terms. Through the years, the NCPG has protected many families from the harms of problem gambling, and I am confident that it will continue to do so. ”





SECTION C:

COUNCIL COMPOSITION

THE COUNCIL



Mr Tan Kian Hoon
Chairman

Managing Director,
Suntec Real Estate
Consultants Pte Ltd



Mr Gerald Balendran Singham
Vice Chairman

Global Vice-Chair & ASEAN
CEO, Dentons Rodyk &
Davidson LLP



Professor David Chan
Member

Professor of Psychology &
Director, Behavioural
Sciences Institute, Singapore
Management University



Mr P Thirunal Karasu
Member

Director, Singcorp
International Pte Ltd



Ms Annie Lee
Member

Executive Secretary,
Association for Professionals
Specialising in Addiction
Counselling (APSAC), Singapore



Professor Brenda Yeoh
Member

Director, Humanities & Social
Science Research & Office of
Deputy President (Research &
Technology), National University of
Singapore



Ms Teo Lin Lee
Member

Director, Meishin
International Pte Ltd



Mr Kua Soon Khe
Member

Chief Executive, Singapore
Buddhist Federation



Mr Ling Kin Huat
Member

Vice President,
Taoist Federation (Singapore)

THE COUNCIL



Dr Cecilia Chu
Member

Clinical Psychologist,
Raffles Counselling Centre,
Raffles Hospital



Mr Nicholas Aaron Khoo
Member

Chief Financial Officer,
WASD Pte Ltd



Prof Seng Boon Kheng
Member

Professor and Head, Social Work
Programme, School of Human
Development and Social Services,
Singapore University of Social Sciences



Dr Tan Hwee Sim
Member

Consultant Psychiatrist,
Raffles Counselling Centre,
Raffles Hospital



Mr Sowaran Singh
Member

Family Mediator
(Family Dispute Resolution),
Family Justice Courts



Mr Abdul Hamid Bin Abdullah
Member

Chairman, Corporate
Governance Committee,
Association of Muslim
Professionals



Mr Lee Choon Yau (Jackie)
Member

Chairman & Group Chief Executive,
clickTRUE Pte Ltd and Founder,
Hardware Zone Pte Ltd



Mr Ng Beng Teck Samuel
Member

Chief Executive,
Montfort Care



Mr Seah Chin Siong
Member

President & CEO,
Singapore Institute of
Management

YOUTH SUB-COMMITTEE



Mr Nicholas Aaron Khoo
Chairman

Chief Financial Officer,
WASD Pte Ltd



Mr David Tay
Member

Assistant Director
(Youth Engagement),
National Youth Council



Mr Marc Ha
Member

Managing Director, APAC
Client Strategy and
Business Development,
Archetype Agency



Mr Nicholas Gabriel Lim
Member

Psychologist and Head of Post
Graduate Programmes,
S R Nathan School of Human
Development, Singapore
University of Social Sciences



Mr Frederick Sui-Tan
Member

Course Manager (Performance
& Entertainment Production),
Institute of Technical
Education

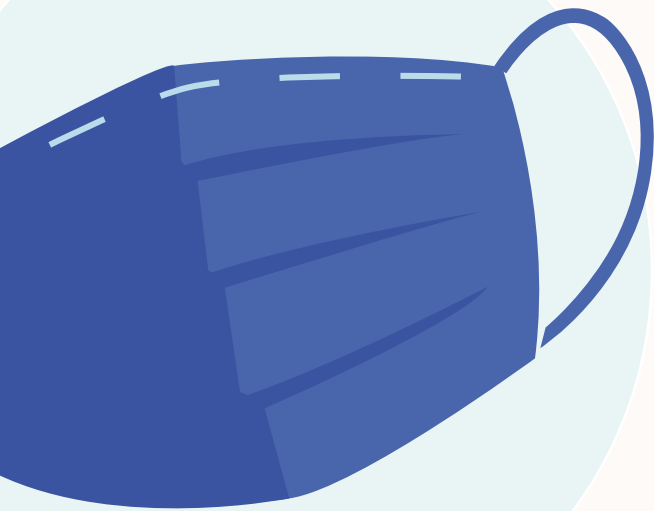


Mr Derrick Koh
Member

Head of Internal
Communications
(East Asia & Japan),
Schneider Electric

SECTION D:

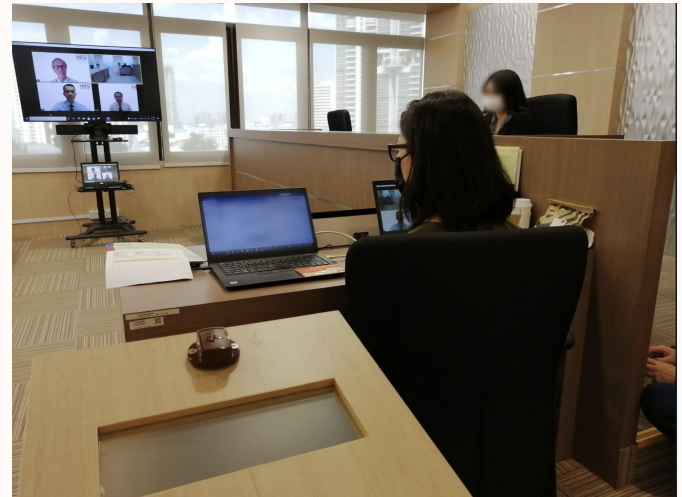
ADAPTING TO COVID-19



The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the pace of technology adoption at the NCPG. This was reflected across different parts of our work.

Prior to the pandemic, we held regular hearing sessions at the NCPG office, where the Committee of Assessors would meet applicants and respondents of Family and Third Party Exclusion or Visit Limit cases in person.

To ensure that safe management measures would not disrupt the NCPG's work in administering the gambling social safeguards, we implemented "virtual hearings" in June 2020, gradually moving to a "hybrid hearing" approach in December 2020 where one committee member would be physically present. The move from a fully virtual to an in-person and virtual hybrid setting provided a better experience for both applicants and respondents during the hearing.



'Hybrid' hearing at NCPG's office

In our public education efforts, we had typically reached out to older Singaporean adults via community roadshows and in-person activities to remind them of the risks of problem gambling. As most events were cancelled, NCPG worked with our partners i.e. Montfort Care and Lex Entertainment, and our ambassadors, Mark Lee and Wang Lei to move our public education efforts online.

We experimented with the use of e-getai sessions, online programmes and video/social media posts on Facebook and the results have been rewarding as we achieved over 2.1 million online views.



Montfort Care and YAH!'s Facebook Live poster

Prior to the pandemic, we worked with the Responsible Gambling Forum (RGF) to conduct an annual Responsible Gambling Awareness Week to raise awareness of problem gambling and NCPG's help resources among gambling operators and their patrons. While we could not conduct roadshows at gambling venues in 2020, the NCPG supported RGF by providing information on help resources in online posters disseminated to gambling operators.



Screenshot of e-getai show



Brochures distributed during Responsible Gambling Awareness Week 2020

We knew that support for problem gamblers and their families was paramount during this period. Hence, we ensured that there was minimal service disruption both during and after the circuit breaker. The NCPG Helpline and Webchat services continued to provide services remotely. Our partner agencies also provided group support and counselling to gamblers and their family members via phone calls or video conferencing.

SECTION E: CASINO AND NON-CASINO SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

In 2020, NCPG brought our services closer to the community. NCPG launched our e-services at the first Integrated Public Service Centre at Our Tampines Hub. Individuals can now apply for the NCPG Self-Exclusions and Voluntary Visit Limit at kiosks available at the Integrated Public Service Centre or obtain referrals and appointments for gambling-related help services, Family Exclusion Order and Family Visit Limit applications.



Digital poster at Integrated Public Service Centre at Our Tampines Hub



Desktop terminals for public usage at Integrated Public Service Centre at Our Tampines Hub

We have also stepped up our digitalisation efforts by implementing digital forms in processes which traditionally required in-person authentication and completion. For example, formalising of Family Exclusion Orders and Family Visit Limit applications were completed through SingPass authenticated digital forms. Application for NCPG Self-Exclusion by foreign workers can also be done via SingPass on NCPG's website.

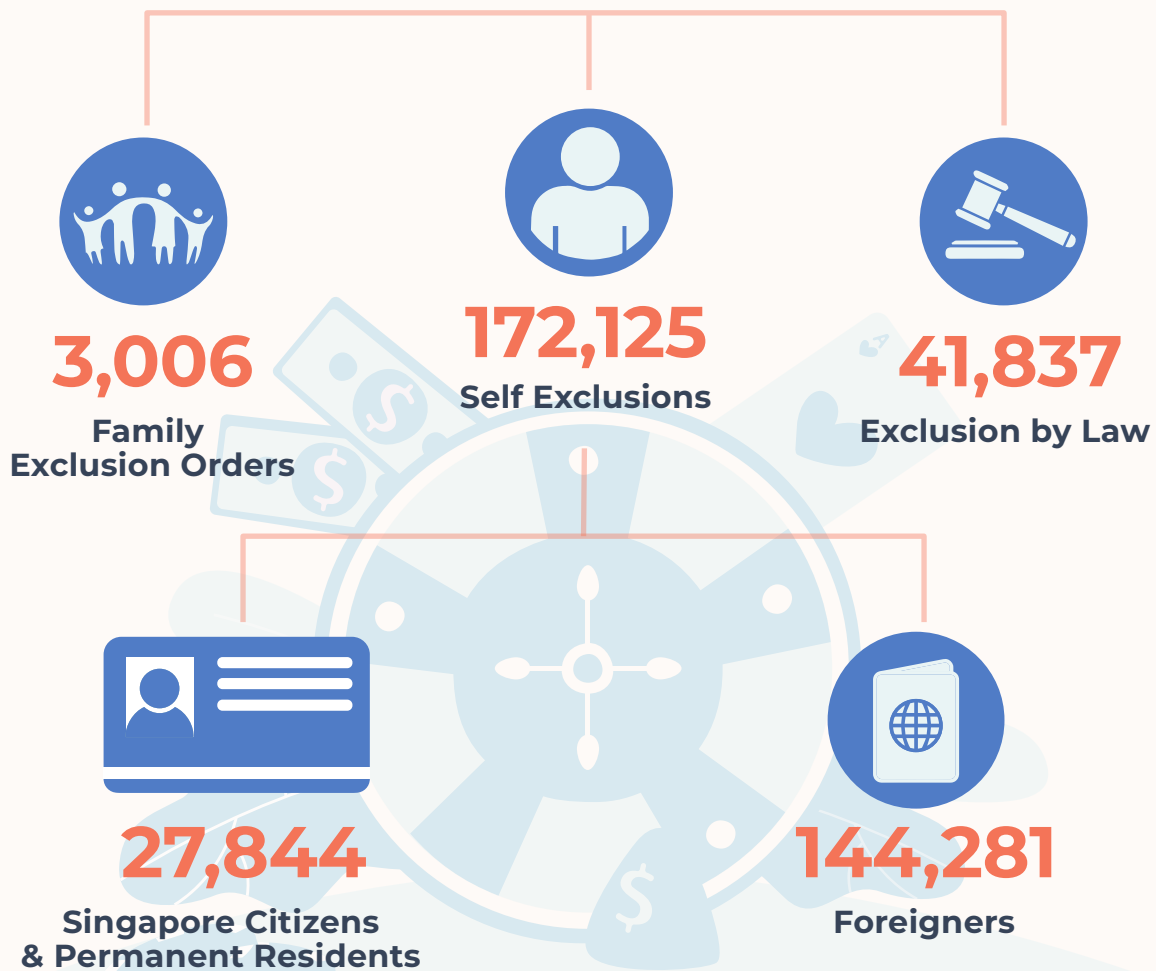
Active Casino Exclusions

as at 30 June 2021



216,968

Active Casino Exclusions



As at 30 June 2021, 216,968 casino exclusions were in force. Of these, individuals who applied for self-exclusions voluntarily made up the largest group. Following this, 19.3% consisted of individuals who were excluded by law, undischarged bankrupts, HDB flat tenants paying subsidised rents with rental arrears of 6 months or more, or those receiving financial or legal aid assistance from the Government.

Active Casino Visit Limits

as at 30 June 2021



9,130

Active Casino Visit Limits



2,809

Voluntary Visit Limits



6,291

Third Party Orders



30

Family Visit Limits



4,881

Third Party Visit Limits



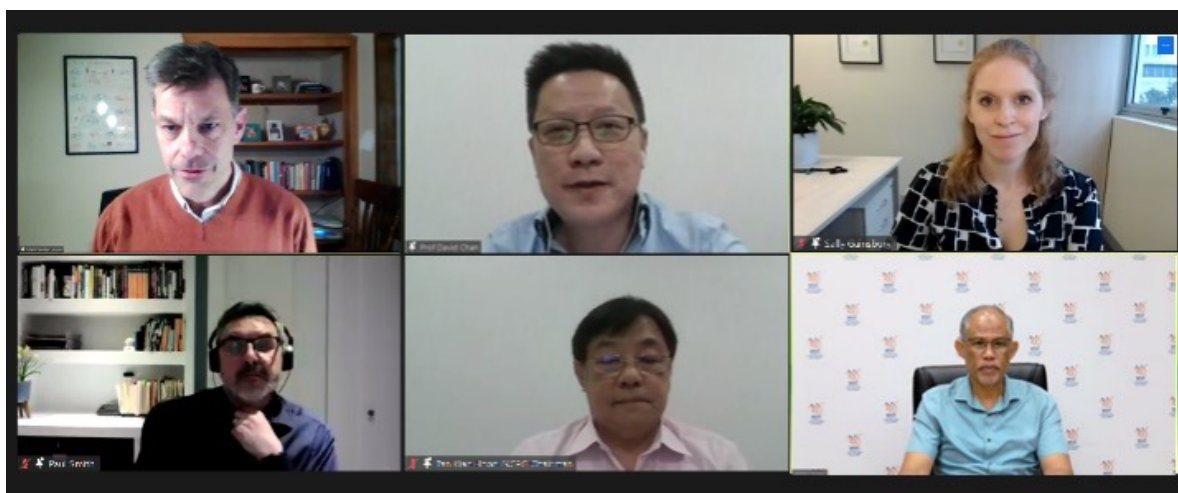
1,410

Third Party Exclusion Orders

The Third-Party Visit Limit (TPVL) regime was introduced in 2013. Persons found to have poor financial and credit records could be imposed with a visit limit by NCPG.

SECTION F: RESEARCH

International Advisory Panel



Top row: Mr Mark Vander Linden, Professor David Chan, Professor Sally Gainsbury
Bottom row: Mr Paul Smith, Mr Tan Kian Hoon,
Minister for Social and Family Development Mr Masagos Zulkifli

The International Advisory Panel (IAP) brings together international experts from various gambling-related specialisations to advise NCPG on issues related to problem gambling. The 2019 – 2021 term was chaired by Professor David Chan and comprised the following members:

Mr Mark Vander Linden,

Director of Research & Responsible Gambling of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission

Mr Paul Smith

Founder of Sustainable-GAMING, a responsible gambling programme consultancy

Associate Professor Sally Gainsbury

Director of the Gambling Treatment & Research Clinic and Founder & Leader of the Brain & Mind Centre at The University of Sydney

The IAP convened virtually between 16 and 19 March 2021 to meet with the NCPG, and to conduct an online seminar with 120 representatives from gambling operators, the social service sector and regulatory agencies. This year's theme was "Charting the Way to Safer Play".

The panel delivered presentations covering public education, responsible gambling, and ways to address problem gambling. The audience also learnt about the latest trends and potential concerns surrounding emerging products, such as virtual reality gambling and digital payments for gambling. We also learnt about new tools to help gamblers adopt positive and responsible gambling behaviours.

Gambling Participation Survey

Since 2005, the NCPG has conducted the **Gambling Participation Survey (GPS)** once every 3 years. The objectives of the study are to assess the extent and pattern of gambling among adult Singapore residents, and to ascertain the prevalence of problem gambling and the profile of problem gamblers. The 2020 GPS is the sixth in the series and the findings were released in July 2021.

44% of Singapore residents aged 18 and above participated in at least one form of gambling activity in the 2020 survey, compared to 52% in 2017. This decrease was observed across most demographic groups and gambling products such as 4D, TOTO and Social Gambling. Since the inception of the survey in 2005, gambling participation rates have averaged around the 50% mark.

The median monthly betting amount decreased from \$30 in the 2017 survey to \$15 in the 2020 survey. The majority (89%) bet \$100 or less per month.

The probable pathological and problem gambling (PPPG) rates among Singapore residents have also remained stable at 1.2%. The difference between the PPPG rate of 0.9% in 2017 was not statistically significant.

Tackling problem gambling remains a priority for NCPG. Similar to past surveys, the 2020 survey found that median betting amount per month for probable pathological and problem gamblers (\$100) was higher than that for all gamblers (\$15). Frequent gamblers were more likely than non-frequent gamblers to have poor self-control in gambling. Gamblers with poor self-control were more likely to experience negative outcomes such as family quarrels, emotional problems, and difficulties in paying bills and living expenses due to gambling.



SECTION G: PUBLIC EDUCATION

The NCPG continues to educate the public of the risks of various gambling products and the harms of gambling beyond one’s means. We encourage individuals to exercise responsibility in managing their finances and look out for signs of problem gambling among their loved ones.

To educate youth on the risks of online gambling and gambling-like elements in online games, we launched youth-targeted media campaigns via popular music streaming channels and bus stop ads near army camps.



Ad banners via online music streaming platforms on the risks of skin betting and loot boxes in eGaming

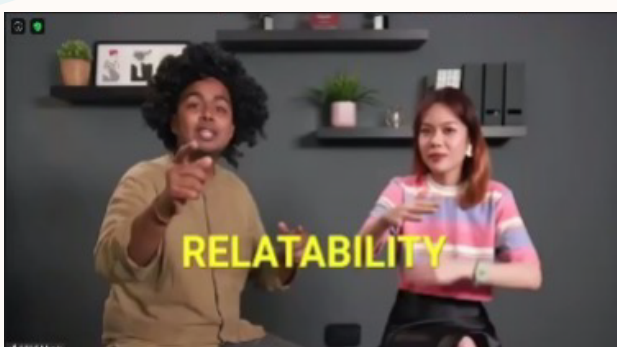
Bus stop ads near army camps reaching out to youths on risks related to online soccer betting during the English Premier League 2019/20 season



Promotional poster of the SGAG x NCPG Funny Business programme

To encourage youths to participate in spreading the message to fellow youths, NCPG collaborated with popular online content publisher, SGAG to organise a series of social media creation webinars and a video production competition entitled “Funny Business” between 1 October and 31 December 2020.

Throughout the programme, tertiary students were taught production tips and the signs of problem gambling that one may exhibit when they become engrossed with spending on online games. The programme reached out to more than 100 workshop participants and achieved a total online reach of 2.6 million.



Collage of OurGrandfatherStory's “Can Ask Meh” video series

In addition, we partnered popular YouTuber, Our Grandfather Story for their popular “Can Ask Meh” series. Titled “Taking Back The Life I Gambled Away” and “I’m Done Being A God Of Gambler”, the videos showcased the recovery stories of ordinary Singaporeans from various walks of life, gives those struggling with gambling addiction hope and encourages them to seek help. The heartfelt video garnered over 1.4 million views online.



Snippet of Getai artiste, Wang Lei, on NCPG's CNY 2021 video “It's A New Year! Why Are You Still Gambling?” or “新的一年, 还在赌吗?”

For Chinese New Year 2021, NCPG produced a new video titled “It's A New Year! Why Are You Still Gambling?” and released it online and on national TV in February 2021. The video aimed to remind the audience that Chinese New Year is a good time to discard old habits such as gambling, start anew and spend time with family. The video campaign garnered a total of 5.4 million views across various media channels.

To address lottery gambling and football betting addiction during football seasons such as English Premier League, NCPG partnered local comedian and actor Mark Lee to share his problem gambling experience through an emotive video story that achieved 5.6 million online views between November 2019 and February 2021. The video aimed to encourage the public to be more self-aware of one's gambling habits and the importance of personal financial management.



Snippet of comedian and actor, Mark Lee, sharing his gambling addiction and recovery journey

Additionally, with the UEFA Euro Championship 2020 being postponed to 2021 due to the pandemic, there might have been some pent-up demand for sports betting activities. To address this, NCPG launched a football-themed campaign with the concept “Small Bet. Big Loss.” to remind the public that one should never underestimate the effects of problem gambling.

NCPG public education helped Singaporeans understand the pitfalls of problem gambling. Two in three individuals have heard of the NCPG and more people have indicated that they are aware of our Helpline and Webchat. We have also observed that more individuals have taken positive action, such as sharing NCPG's advertisements with their loved ones and persuading their loved ones to stop gambling or seek help.



Key visuals of the UEFA Euro Championship media campaign

SECTION H: HELP SERVICES

Upskilling help agencies through remote training

To support our community help agencies and ensure that they are well-equipped to render group support services to clients, NCPG partnered the National Addictions Management Service (NAMS) and Silver Ribbon (Singapore) to provide online training to enhance the group work and crisis management skills for some of these community agencies.



NCPG Help Services and Partners

National Addictions Management Service (NAMS)

Institute of Mental Health
Buangkok Green Medical Park
10 Buangkok View
Singapore 539747
NAMS Clinic – Level 1, Blk 9
Tel: 6389 2000
All Addictions Helpline
at 6-RECOVER: 6-7326837
Website: www.nams.sg

The Resilienz Clinic

10 Sinaran Drive
Novena Medical Centre, #10-30
Singapore 307506
Tel: 6397 7300
Website: www.resilienz.com.sg
Email: enquiry@resilienz.com.sg

SECTION I: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The National Council on Problem Gambling would like to thank the following partners for their support and assistance.

Ascending Hope
Community Services

Adullam Life Counselling

Arise2Care Community Services

Association of Muslim Professionals

Blessed Grace Social Services

Canon Singapore Pte Ltd

Casino Regulatory Authority

Changi General Hospital

Credit Counselling Singapore

Fei Yue Community Services

Housing & Development Board

Institute of Mental Health

Institute of Technical Education

Lakeside Family Services

Lex Entertainment Pte Ltd

MediaCorp Pte Ltd

Media Literacy Council

Migrant Workers' Centre

Ministry of Defence

Ministry of Home Affairs

Ministry of Law

Ministry of Manpower

Ministry of Social and
Family Development

Mr Mark Lee and Family

Mr Wang Lei and Family

Mr Joshua Tan

Ms Kimberly Wang

Montfort Care

National Addictions
Management Service

National Crime Prevention Council

One Hope Centre

Responsible Gambling Forum

SGAG Media Pte Ltd

Singapore Cybersports and
Online Gaming Association

Singapore Federation of Chinese
Clan Associations

Singapore Police Force

Singapore Police Force Casino
Crime Investigation Branch

The Resilienz Clinic

The Silver Lining

Thye Hua Kwan Centre for Family
Harmony @ Circuit

Tote Board Singapore

TOUCH Cyber Wellness

WE CARE Community Services



NATIONAL COUNCIL
ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

Contact us

NCPG Secretariat

c/o Ministry of Social and Family Development

510 Thomson Road #05-01 SLF Building, Singapore 298135

Tel.: 6354 8154 • Fax: 6258 3161

Email: admin@ncpg.org.sg

National Problem Gambling Helpline: 1800-6-668-668 (Operating hours: 8AM - 11PM daily)

Webchat Service: www.ncpg.org.sg

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NCPG.Singapore

Instagram: www.instagram.com/ncpg.singapore