



**Responsible Gambling Working Party**  
**Player Tracking and Pre-commitment Trial**

**About the trial**

**1. What does pre-commitment mean?**

Pre-commitment in relation to electronic gaming machines (EGM) involves a player making commitments (setting limits) about the amount of time they will play EGMs and/or how much money they will spend 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).

Time limits can be set in relation to any number of the following—session, day, week, month, non-play days or periods, while expenditure limits can be set for session, day, week and month.

Players can receive statements about their gambling activity (player activity statement) which includes but is not limited to: venues at which they played, what days and for how long they played at each session, how much money was spent during a specified period (eg. a 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 gaming machines. This data is generated by sources such as loyalty program systems and the machines. 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 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?**

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

In the second 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 second report.

The Working Party's role in the trials it supports is solely to conduct an evaluation.

The Working Party has supported a proposal received from Worldsmart Technology Pty Ltd (Worldsmart), a South Australian based company that operates the largest smartcard loyalty system in Australasia. The system in South Australia is known as the J-Card. It is a wide-area network loyalty program used in hotels and clubs, with 64 J-card venues in South Australia. The limit setting feature that has been added to the J-card is being promoted by Worldsmart in venues as "PlaySmart".

#### **5. Where is the trial being conducted?**

The trial began in August 2008 in 4 metropolitan venues, with 3 regional venues scheduled to begin at the end of January 2009. The 7 venues are:

- Albion Hotel (Kilburn)
- Colonnades Tavern (Noarlunga Centre)
- Woodcroft Tavern
- Midway Tavern (Elizabeth Downs)
- Roxby Tavern (Roxby Downs)
- Sundowner Hotel (Whyalla)
- Marina Hotel (Port Lincoln)

#### **6. Who is enabling pre-commitment features?**

The trial is voluntary. All players who have decided to enable pre-commitment features are self electing to set limits on their play in response to information they see posted in the trial venues.

Assumptions cannot be made about the problem 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 primarily by recreational gamblers.

#### **7. What types of pre-commitment features can players set?**

The types of pre-commitment features or limits that players can choose to set are—

- Reminder prompts when limit reached and exceeded
- Cool off period (after setting a limit, the patron cannot increase the limit (eg. \$20 to \$50) for 24 hours; a cool off period does not apply if the patron wants to decrease a limit)
- Cycle expenditure (expenditure set for nominated period—weekly, fortnightly, monthly)
- Daily expenditure
- "PlaySmart" balance (running balance shows on the machine reader)
- Cycle playing time (eg. 10 hours weekly)
- Break in play

- Daily playing time (eg. 2 hours)
- Personalised limit (eg. no play on a specified day such as pension day; no play before 8.00am or after 3.00pm due to, for example, needing to collect children from school).

#### **8. What happens if a player reaches a set limit and continues playing?**

Upon a player exceeding any limit they have set, the machine will make a low-key beeping noise and send a message to the machine's card reader saying that a limit has been exceeded. That message will be displayed on the reader for the player to see.

The player can continue to play if they want. The message is a reminder of their limit setting.

A message will also be sent to the cashier. The cashier is required to go to the specific machine to turn off the message and, inevitably, will speak to the player.

All gaming staff in the 64 J-card venues have received training about the PlaySmart initiative, with those in the trial venues having more intensive training. 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.