

# **Evaluation of the Maxetag Budget Setting Feature**

## **Final Report**

**Associate Professor Paul Delfabbro**

**School of Psychology**

**University of Adelaide**

**Report prepared for the Responsible Gambling Working Party.**

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

**March 2012**

## Acknowledgments

The trial was conducted by Global Gaming Industries Pty Ltd (GGI).

The generous support provided by the two trial venues is gratefully acknowledged.

The trial evaluation was managed by the Responsible Gambling Working Party (RGWP) through the South Australian Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF).

The trial evaluation was funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

A trial coordination group comprising representatives from GGI, RGWP, DTF, FaHCSIA, and the University of Adelaide (School of Psychology) met monthly to judge operational and trial research decisions against the RGWP's conditions for evaluating trials (refer to Chapter 5 of the RGWPs *Second Progress Report*) and report monthly to the RGWP about progress with the trial and evaluation.

The assistance provided by Dr. Jessica McCormick, School of Psychology, University of Adelaide, with the task-analysis component of this evaluation is also acknowledged.

## Contents

Executive Summary.....	5
1. Introduction.....	13
2. The Maxetag Product and Budget Setting Feature: How it works .....	14
3. Trial Origins, Implementation and Timelines.....	20
3.1 The Responsible Gambling Working Party (RGWP) .....	20
3.2 Trial Variations .....	21
3.2 Trial Schedule and Commencement of the Evaluation.....	23
3.3 Trial Co-ordination Group Deliberations.....	25
4. Data Collection and Methodology .....	26
4.1 The Venues.....	26
4.2 Data collection methods .....	27
5. Results.....	30
5.1 System Findings.....	30
5.3 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample.....	34
5.3 Utilisation of the Budget-Setting Feature .....	36
5.4 .1 Profiling the Budget Setters .....	38
5.4.2 Nature of Budget Setting .....	46
5.5 Stage 1 and 2: Gaming Staff Focus Group Findings .....	49
5.6 Task Analysis and Patron Feedback .....	52
5.6.1 Stage 1: Patron Survey Feedback.....	52
5.6.2 Stage 2: Results of the Task Analysis.....	52
5.7 Contextual Observations.....	59
5.7.1 Venue Participation and Support.....	59
5.7.2 Player Recruitment and Interest.....	60
5.7.3 Language .....	62
5.7.4 Technological Issues.....	63
5.7.5 Data Issues .....	64
5.7.6 Other Trial Strategies .....	64
6. Conclusions .....	66
6.1. Did the Feature Provide Value to Customers?.....	66

6.2 Was the Behavioural Impact of the Trial Consistent with the Working Party's Goal of Customers Gambling Responsibly? .....	67
6.3 Was the Operation of the Pre-commitment and Player Tracking System Cost Effective to the Gaming Venue? .....	67
Appendix A: Venue Staff Interview/ Focus Group .....	69
Appendix B: Survey of Maxetag Users .....	70
Appendix C: Usability Trial Template .....	80

## **Executive Summary**

### **Overview**

- The University of Adelaide was commissioned by the South Australian Department of Treasury and Finance to undertake an evaluation for the Responsible Gambling Working Party (RGWP) of a trial of the Maxetag budget setting feature.
- The evaluation was funded by the Commonwealth Department for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FAHCSIA).
- The evaluation was designed to address 3 principal questions set by the RGWP: (1). Whether there is value for EGM players in the industry proponent's trial; (2) Whether the feature gives rise to behavioural impacts that are consistent with the Working Party's goal of customers gambling responsibly; (3) Whether a full and on-going operation of the feature is cost effective to the gaming venue.

### **The Maxetag Budget-setting Feature**

- The Maxetag budget setting feature, which is provided as an additional feature of the Maxetag loyalty system, was developed and is being promoted by Global Gaming Industries Pty Ltd.
- The feature has so far been successfully installed in 3 South Australian venues, although successful trialling of the feature has occurred in only 2 venues – at one venue since March 2010 and the other venue since February 2011.
- The feature is made available via a separate console on existing gaming machines, through which the Maxetag loyalty system operates. Therefore, it was only available to members of the Maxetag loyalty system.
- Players can set daily budgets (active until 6 a.m. the next day) when they first sit down to play or at anytime while playing a gaming machine.

- The player's budget applies across all machines in the trial venue but not across venues with the Maxetag loyalty system.
- Several different feature setting procedures and promotions have been used during the course of the trial.
- Phase 1 (March to December 2010) involved a natural take-up phase with players needing to notice in-venue posters and then follow step by step procedures detailed on the posters. Budget setting was done through the "Select" button on the console.
- Phase 2 (December 2010-August 2011) involved activation of a yes/no function in which players when tagging on, were presented with a question asking if they wanted to set a budget. They would press a button ('Yes') to set a budget, select their amount and then press 'Yes' again to confirm. During this phase a voiceover explaining the budget setting feature was introduced and revised once, the promotional material was revised, and staff offered more assistance to players.
- If players exceed budgets, they can continue to gamble using their Maxetag and receive incremental breach messages indicating the amount by which they have exceeded their budget
- From the end of June through to August 2011, the trial also implemented a default message system such that if people pressed 'Yes' to set a budget but did not select an amount, a message would be displayed once \$25 had been spent.
- The Maxetag budget-setting feature provides an example of a voluntary pre-commitment scheme.
- Players can also obtain session activity statements from foyer terminals/ kiosks located within the venue and in close proximity to the gaming area.

## Data Sources

- The evaluation used a variety of data sources, including: system data, focus groups, task analysis, and some limited survey data.
- The system data indicated how often people tagged on with their Maxetag and chose to utilise the budget-setting feature; how often they pressed ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ in relation to budget-setting; how much they set as their budget and whether they exceeded their budget.
- The focus group with venue staff examined staff perceptions of the feature, its value to players, issues associated with patron recruitment, and the costs of implementation.
- A final task analysis asked EGM players who were unfamiliar with Maxetag to utilise the feature and provide feedback concerning its usability and potential effectiveness.

## Findings Based on System Data

- No players in Stage 1 (natural take-up) set a budget while 19 players in Stage 2 (yes/no budget setting question and promotional voiceovers) set a budget, of which 10 did so more than once.
- The use of voice-overs (Stage 2) to explain the operation of the feature and a staff person dedicated to promotion of the feature during one month in one venue appeared to have led to the greatest increase in player interaction with it. However, this particular month (April) was also distinctive in that all Maxetag players who were monitored had previously been encountered in the trial and therefore would have been exposed to existing promotional material in the venue.
- The relatively high level of system interaction observed in this month was not, however, maintained over time. The level of system interaction soon decreased in the following months back to a level more consistent with the period prior to April. These findings suggest that promotional material may only be effective for a relatively short

period of time. As the trial progressed, fewer new (or previously unmonitored Maxetag users) were encountered during the trial. Thus, if existing Maxetag users had already made up their minds that the budget-setting feature was not useful for them, it may have been increasingly difficult to engage their attention with new promotions (e.g., the introduction of a default limit or new voice-overs).

- The proportion of Maxetag users who interacted with the technology gradually increased over time at both venues. When phase two of the trial commenced in December 2010 at Venue 1, only 10% of Maxetag users pressed 'No' at least once during the month to indicate that they did not want to set a budget. This figure increased to a high of 52% during April 2011 during a period when a staff member was placed on the gaming floor to encourage player utilisation of the budget-setting feature. By the end of the trial (August 2011), around a quarter of Maxetag users were pressing 'No' at least once during the month. At Venue 2, around a quarter of Maxetag users pressed 'No' to avoid setting a budget in the first month of tracking at this venue (February 2011) and this increased to 30% by the end of the trial (August 2011).
- Despite this increase in activity over time, most players continued to allow the feature to time out when they commenced gambling. At both venues, over 80% of all gambling sessions across the trial involved no interaction with the budget-setting feature. There was, however, some evidence of a gradual decrease in the proportion of initial time-outs as the trial progressed. For example, at both venues at the commencement of behavioural tracking, at least 98% percent of players engaged in gambling sessions where they allowed the feature to time-out. This decreased to 95% at Venue 1 and 92% at Venue 2 by the end of the trial.
- Players differed in how long it took to first use the feature from the time the trial commenced. A small number tried the feature the first time they signed up to Maxetag, whereas others took 6 months to try the feature.
- As indicated by the trends in system data, there was no evidence to suggest that the introduction of the default limit led to any systematic changes in the behaviour of players.



- With reference to Maxetag players who used their tag during stage 2 of the trial, only 1.8% set a budget at least once at the most active venue. Around half of the occasions that a budget was set, it was exceeded.
- Of those who exceeded a budget at either of the venues ( $n = 9$ ), most ( $n = 6$ ) did not use the budget setting feature again. Two players maintained approximately the same budget amount and another player increased the amount.
- Ten players set a budget more than once. Of these, 4 remained quite stable in their budget-setting over time, 4 progressed towards a lower amount and 2 set higher amounts as the trial progressed.
- Feedback from venue staff indicated that some players had tried to obtain foyer terminal session activity statements at the encouragement of staff, but there was no evidence to suggest that these statements were independently sought by individual players.

### **Implementation Issues and Usability**

- The cost of installing both the Maxetag loyalty system and the budget-setting feature for a venue of 35 machines was estimated to be \$65,000-\$75,000 or a cost per EGM of around \$2000.
- Feedback from staff indicated few difficulties in implementation and staff training or with the technology itself. However, a number of technological issues were encountered in enabling the system to interact effectively with the Central Monitoring System (CMS). The amount of time taken for the CMS to register a coin-drop into the machine was initially too slow to allow timely updates of machine activity for the purpose of monitoring and displaying player activity undertaken while using a Maxetag. Even after this functionality was improved, the machine polling undertaken by the CMS was still delayed during the trial so that players would often have to wait

at least 30 seconds or more before the Maxetag console would register a change in the players' balance or the budget display.

- A task analysis of the feature indicated that gamblers generally found the feature easy to use if the functionality had been clearly explained to them, but for a number of novice users the feature timed-out too quickly and did not provide sufficient time for decision-making. Some found themselves having to tag-on again to start the process once again.
- Players also found the display updates resulting from the delayed CMS polling to be too slow and somewhat confusing. For example, there were occasions when over a minute would elapse before the balance on the display would be updated after additional coins had been inserted into the machine.
- Almost all of the task analysis participants felt that a more salient display window would make the feature more effective. A number complained that it would be easy to ignore changes in the console display because the text was relatively small, static and not accompanied by any other stimuli.
- The budget-setting process was not intuitive and potentially confusing because players could set budgets either when they first sat down or after they already had money inserted into the machine. As a result, players were faced with two different methods of setting a budget. Those with money already in the machine would have larger budget amounts based on the budget set as well as the amount already in the machine. Budget displays would also change when money was removed from one machine and players initially moved to another machine. All of these complexities may have dissuaded some patrons from continuing to use the feature, even if they were broadly familiar with how to use it.
- Interestingly, players in the task analysis reported their preference for a feature that allowed them to set budgets during sessions, but it did not appear that such a feature was easy to use in practice (for the reasons specified in the paragraph above). In other words, there may be a divergence between what is perceived by players to be most user-friendly in principle and what works most effectively in practice.

- Some task analysis participants did not believe that the feature would be effective because it allowed people to continue gambling after budgets had been exceeded.
- The principal barrier to patron uptake was that customers did not see the feature as being personally relevant to them because they did not perceive themselves to be problem gamblers. These views were reinforced by venue staff who drew attention to the high levels of publicity given to pre-commitment technology during 2010-2011. Given that much of this public debate related to problem gambling, it was likely that some stigma had come to be associated with pre-commitment features and that the potential value of budget-setting to recreational players had become more difficult to promote.
- The evaluation highlights the challenges associated with patron recruitment, obtaining support from venues and the best promotional strategies that should be used.

## Conclusions

- In general, as a result of the relatively low uptake of the budget-setting feature, insufficient data were available to draw any definitive conclusions concerning the effectiveness of the Maxetag budget-setting feature. However, some indicative conclusions can be drawn based upon the various sources of data that were available
- In relation to the 1st research question (Whether there is value for EGM players in the industry proponent's trial), the answer is –No. Very few Maxetag users choose to take advantage of the budget-setting feature and (with the exception of 1 or 2 players) no players used it consistently or in any sustained way. Even when players did set budgets, around half exceeded these budgets at least once. Players did not report finding the feature to be useful, or relevant, to them. Although players were able to understand the feature after receiving instruction from venue staff, novice players reported finding some elements of the feature quite confusing, limited or not effectively designed.

- Some examples of factors that reduced the ‘value’ of the feature included: the slow machine polling, the limited size of the display, the rapid time-out process, and the fact that players could continue to gamble even after having exceeded their budgets.
- Similar conclusions apply to Question 2; namely: Whether the feature gives rise to behavioural impacts that are consistent with the Working Party’s goal of customers gambling responsibly. The results show that relatively few Maxetag users were willing to interact with the technology, set budgets, or adhere to them consistently. In general, the low level of utilisation was such that it was not possible to determine whether these behavioural impacts were differentially stronger or weaker amongst higher vs. lower risk gamblers.
- In relation to Question 3 (Whether a full and on-going operation of the feature is cost effective to the gaming venue), it was found that the cost of installing and administering the Maxetag budget-setting feature, beginning with the installation of the loyalty system, was relatively low compared to other pre-commitment systems currently promoted in the market. In the trial venues, the Maxetag budget-setting feature was able to take advantage of some hardware and software already available to provide the customer loyalty system. Thus, there were clear cost efficiencies associated with this system for those venues. However, given that the benefits to players appeared to be relatively small, it cannot be concluded that the overall benefit of the feature was greater than its cost

## 1. Introduction

The University of Adelaide was commissioned by the South Australian Department for Treasury and Finance in 2010 to undertake an evaluation of the Maxetag budget setting feature for the Responsible Gambling Working Party. Funded by the Department for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FAHCSIA), the aim of this evaluation was to learn about the effectiveness of player tracking and pre-commitment as a tool for venue customers to assist them in managing their money in relation to gambling and as a tool for harm minimisation. The University was asked to examine the following questions:

1. Is there value for the customer (EGM players) in the industry proponent's trial?
  - a) Did a significant proportion of customers use the features of the trial?
  - b) Did the features of the trial provide on-going value to the customer?
  - c) What value was derived by the customers from the features of the trial?
2. Is the behavioural impact of the trial consistent with the Working Party's goal of customers gambling responsibly?
  - a) Did the trial support the goals of better money management and informed decision making by customers?
  - b) What behaviours did the features of the trial target?
  - c) What were the impacts of the trial on customers gambling behaviour? Are they consistent with the goals?
  - d) Do the impacts vary by risk for gambling problems?
  - e) Is there opportunity to use features of the trial to support gambling rehabilitation services?
3. If the trial is extended to full operation, is on-going operation of the pre-commitment and player tracking system cost effective to the gaming venue?

- a) What are the likely cost and revenue impacts from operating the system to the gaming venue?
- b) What are the likely transition and implementation costs of the system to the gaming venue?
- c) What are the impacts on staff responsibilities, training and skill requirements?

## **2. The Maxetag Product and Budget Setting Feature: How it works**

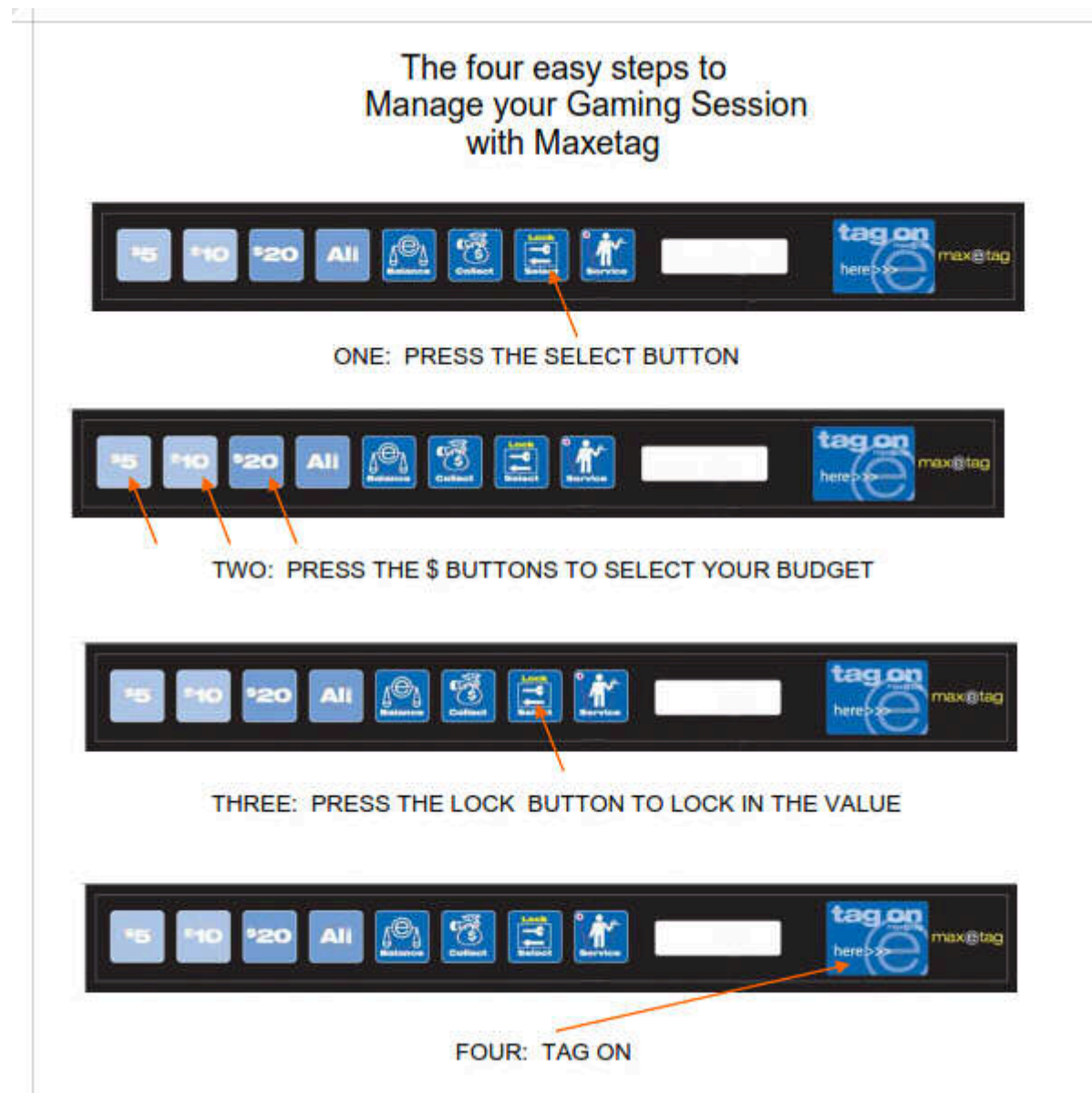
The Maxetag loyalty system is available in about 20 venues in South Australia, with the budget-setting feature installed in three venues for the purposes of the trial. A distinctive element of the Maxetag budget setting feature is that it enables players to set budgets whenever they sit down to play gaming machines. Once set, it remains set for the day of play (until 6 a.m. the following morning). Global Gaming Industries, the designers and promoters of this technology, argue that this affords players greater flexibility in that it enables them to make decisions about their budget, which may change from day to day, at the same time that they are about to gamble. In other pre-commitment schemes, players usually have to set budgets some time in advance, and this creates the possibility that players may set budgets that may not be consistent with how much they want to spend in a particular future session of gambling. By allowing gamblers to determine their budgets more frequently, GGI argue that their product may be more attractive to players and have greater potential of being adopted. Such a feature may also be attractive to venues because it has the potential to reduce the possibility of significant revenue reductions resulting from the imposition of more binding limits/ budgets imposed over longer periods. In GGI's view, an effective feature was one that allowed players to plan their behaviour, but which also minimised the financial impact on venues.

The Maxetag budget-setting feature is available as a module or console just above the display screen on gaming machines. Players are confronted with a number of buttons and a small illuminated liquid crystal display that can present short messages to players. The process for setting a budget changed slightly during the course of the trial.

### *(a) Stage 1 Budget Setting Process*

Stage 1 (March to December 2010) involved natural recruitment. Maxetag players set a budget as a result of seeing in-venue posters and instructions on the side of the

machine. The “select” button on the console was used as the entry point for budget setting.



**Figure 1.** Stage 1 Maxetag budget setting procedure (from original brochure and posters in venue) – March to December 2010

As shown in Figure 1, the following steps were involved. (1) Players tagged on by touching their Maxetag against the tag reader, (2) They pressed the ‘Select’ button, (3) They pressed the \$ value buttons to increment a budget amount, e.g., pressed \$10 and \$20 to set a budget of \$30, (4) They then pressed the ‘Lock’ button to lock in this amount. In 2010 in this original set-up, players were confronted with a message on the display that

read “Press SELECT to set your budget”. If they did not press SELECT within 20 seconds, no budget would apply to that gambling session on that particular machine. Players could, however, tag off on and then commence the process again (i.e., set a budget within 20 seconds on tagging on). They could also tag off and proceed to another machine where they could undertake the same process. In other words, budgets could be set either at the very start of play before any money had been inserted into the gaming machine, after money had been inserted into the first gaming machine played, or on any subsequent gaming machine. This process was described on the original posters placed in venues.

**This Venue Promotes Responsible Gambling**

The Maxetag system now has a provision to assist you with how much you spend in a gaming session. With four easy steps you can get the system to remind you that you made a decision to spend a specific amount when you come to the venue. It doesn't stop you playing just gives you a friendly reminder.

If you log on with your Maxetag you can get a printed report on your gaming session from the foyer terminal as you leave the venue (even if you don't set a limit). This will tell you:

How much you have spent

How much you have set to spend

The credit or debit differences

How long you have been in the venue.

*(b) Stage 2 Budget Setting Process*

Stage 2 (December 2010 onwards) involved activation of a Yes/No function and more active promotion. The Trial Coordination Group (TCG) was interested in understanding player's conscious decision making with regard to budget setting. The Yes/No function was directed at gaining this understanding. In Venue 1 for one month (April 2011), a staff person was dedicated to promoting and assisting players with the feature on the gaming floor. In both venues, a voice over was introduced in February 2011 that reminded Maxetag users to press 'Yes' or 'No' if they wanted to set a budget. The voiceover was revised once during Stage 2 and the wording of the promotional material in-venues was also revised during Stage 2.



When tagging on, Maxetag players receive a message on the console – “ YES – SET A BUDGET- NO FOR NO BUDGET. Players are then given 10 seconds from the time they tag on to press ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ to indicate whether they would like to set a budget. If no response is made within this 10 second period, then the opportunity to set a budget using Maxetag passes for that session of play, although players can still choose to set a budget at a subsequent point. If ‘Yes’ is pressed, players have 15 seconds to press the number buttons to determine their budget and then press ‘Yes’ again to confirm. The revised version of the console and promotional material is displayed in Figures 2 and 3 (a and b).



**Figure 2.** Stage 2 (December 2010 –August 2011) console configuration located just above the EGM display screen

Figure 2 shows the ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ buttons as well as the number buttons that allowed players to increment the budget amount (\$5, \$10, \$20 or ‘All 3 together’). Players could also press the ‘Balance’ button at any time to obtain their budget amount or request staff assistance (the ‘Service’ button). Once the budget was set, it usually took between 30 seconds to a minute for the budget amount to register on the console display. The display console is set to the right of the ‘Service’ button and is approximately 8 cm. in width and displays white text on a pale-blue luminescent background. The budget set by players was described as a ‘Limit’ on the button console, but not in the promotional material. The first

Stage 2 promotional poster displayed in Figure 3a was used from December 2010 to July 2011. It was modified to the version displayed in Figure 3b in July 2011 to remove references to ‘responsible gambling’, a term which may have appeared judgmental to some players. The additional wording “What is your gaming budget today?” was considered more neutral and more consistent with the focus on individual player choice and ownership of any decisions relating to their gambling.



**Figure 3a.** The first Stage 2 poster on side of gaming machines: December 2010



**Figure 3b.** Revised Stage 2 poster on the side of gaming machines introduced in July 2011

In both versions of the feature, the budget would then apply until 6 a.m. the next day. The amount set for the budget varies depending upon when it is set. If a player has no credit registered on a gaming machine and sets a budget, the budget amount is equal to the amount set. For example, if a person presses the \$20 and \$5 buttons to set a budget of \$25, this means that the person can insert no more than \$25 into the machine (while playing with a Maxetag) until 6 a.m. the next day before getting budget exceed messages. If, on the other hand, there is already \$20 worth of credit on the machine, then the budget would be  $\$25 + \$20 = \$45$ .

If the person then happens to win extra money during the course of their session of gambling, these additional winnings can be taken into account, so that if a person were \$20 ahead, this \$20 would have to be spent before the person started to reduce the amount allowed by their budget. For example, if a budget of \$45 were set (as above) and the person then obtained a win of \$20, they would effectively have \$65 available to spend before obtaining any messages. The \$20 worth of winnings would have to be lost first and then the original \$20 already in the machine. Only when the person inserted more than another \$25 into the machine (or another machine with Maxetag activated) would they start to receive budget exceed messages.

The consequences of breaching one's budget is a digitised text message telling the player by how much they have exceeded their budget. The beep is the same as that sent for prize winning and so, draws the player's attention to the message. From that point onwards, patrons can still choose to gamble on gaming machines either without using their Maxetag or with their Maxetag and receive budget exceed messages.

### *c) \$25 Default Budget*

During the last two months of Stage 2 (July-August 2011) a \$25 default budget was applied to players who pressed "Yes" to set a budget but did not proceed to actually set a budget. This meant that anyone who had a net expenditure greater than \$25 when they gambled using their Maxetag would start to receive budget exceed messages.

## **3. Trial Origins, Implementation and Timelines**

### **3.1 The Responsible Gambling Working Party (RGWP)**

The Responsible Gambling Working Party (RGWP) was established in November 2006 to provide advice to the Minister responsible for gambling about strategies that could assist players to keep their commitments in relation to their level of gaming machine play. The RGWP's work has been in relation to three key focus areas: informed decision-making, money management, and player tracking and pre-commitment.

In June 2008 in Chapter 5 of the RGWP's *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 RGWP's role in any proposals it accepted was an evaluation focussed on the research questions identified in the introduction section of this evaluation report. For the RGWP, the purpose of conducting trials 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.

In December 2008 the RGWP accepted a trial proposal from Maxetag Pty Ltd and, in January 2009, Global Gaming Industries Pty Ltd (GGI) advised the RGWP that it had acquired the Maxetag loyalty system. GGI committed to continue with the trial but on a revised timeline due to a transitional phase. A trial co-ordination group was established in

May 2009 to monitor the development of the trial and oversight the evaluation. The Trial Co-ordination Group (TCG) comprised representatives of: Global Gaming Industries Pty Ltd, the Responsible Gambling Working Party, Department of Treasury and Finance (evaluation project and contract manager), and the Commonwealth Department for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (evaluation funding body). On signing a contract to conduct the trial evaluation Adelaide Research and Innovation Pty. Ltd. joined the TCG in February 2010.

### 3.2 Trial Variations

Following GGI's acquisition of the Maxetag system, the trial was scheduled to begin at the end of September 2009 in a two stage approach. Each stage was to be 3 months duration, with Stage 2 informed by the operation of Stage 1, incorporating any refinements indicated by Stage 1. Stage 1 was to involve 2 club venues. A hotel venue was to join the trial in Stage 2. All venues were to be located within the metropolitan area.

Stage 1 was planned to involve the setting of a daily spend budget at the machine each day of play and a prompt strategy whereby, on the patron's swiping their tag on the tag reader, a message would appear asking the player if they wished to set a budget. Players would have 30 seconds to respond or it would be assumed that the answer was "no". Stage 2 was planned to be informed by Stage 1. It was also proposed to activate an additional option of budget setting at a foyer terminal (kiosk), through which a player could set a daily budget which would automatically apply at the machine every time they tagged on, and a global (weekly, monthly) budget. Other functions were proposed for potential development through the foyer terminal in the long term, such as the patron choosing a response option that would apply when they exceed their budget (eg. SMS message to a player or to a third party). It was also anticipated that players would be able to generate a report of their days play from the venue's foyer terminal (e.g., how much players had committed to spend, how much had been spent, the difference between these two figures, how long spent playing at venue).

Many elements of this plan did not proceed as anticipated. Firstly, Stage 1 of the trial began in March 2010 (6 months later than planned) and ran until December 2010 (10 months rather than 3 months). The delay in the start of the trial was due to a decision made by the trial co-ordination group in response to an extended timeframe for the replacement of South Australia's Central Monitoring System (CMS). The replacement had been scheduled for

some time and ultimately coincided with the planned start of the trial. GGI and the TCG were concerned that the process of installing and testing the new CMS could influence the initial functioning and implementation of the Maxetag budget setting feature which would affect player take-up and venue support. The TCG closely monitored the timeline for the CMS installation. The Liquor and Gambling Commissioner approved the replacement CMS in November 2009 at which time the initial 5 venue CMS pilot commenced, extended to a 20 venue pilot in January 2010. The pilot period involved extensive testing of the CMS in a real gaming environment and identification and resolution of issues that arose. While full installation of the CMS commenced in August 2010, after the initial pilot phases, which included installation of the CMS in the first two trial venues, the TCG decided to proceed with starting the trial in March 2010.

Second, the prompt strategy originally planned for Stage 1 (ie. when tagging on, a message would appear asking the player if they wished to set a budget) was not implemented until Stage 2. As described in section 2, the trial began with a player being introduced to the budget setting feature through in-venue posters and instructions on the side of the machine to use the “select” button on the console.

Third, the proposed activation in Stage 2 of budget setting at the foyer kiosk (an automatic daily budget and global budgets) was not implemented during the trial, and the longer term strategy of players choosing a response that would apply when they exceed their budget was not implemented.

Fourth, GGI had anticipated including other venues in the trial, but was met with only limited success. For example, agreement was obtained from a venue that was part of a group loyalty system (group loyalty schemes apply across hotel venues owned by a hotel group), but this venue was not, in the end, included in the trial or evaluation. Despite a number of attempts by GGI, it was not possible for the budget information and monitoring data relating to the budget setting feature to be tracked across the group loyalty venues. For this reason, the final trial and associated evaluation was based on just two venues: the original club venue (Venue 1) and a hotel venue (Venue 2).

### 3.2 Trial Schedule and Commencement of the Evaluation

The evaluation component of the trial commenced in February 2010 with meetings held between the Trial Co-ordination Group and the evaluator. The trial commenced with the budget setting feature implemented in two club venues. However, by May 2010, the Trial Co-ordination Group agreed to withdraw one club from the trial. This followed a venue visit in which it was clear that the venue could not support the trial. The TCG was aware that, since initially agreeing to participate in the trial, the management had changed and the venue had received much media coverage about a financial restructure. The TCG appreciated that the venue's changed circumstances prevented the level of support that the trial required. As a result, only one club remained in the trial throughout the majority of 2010.

#### *Stage 1: Trial Activities*

During Stage 1, the feature was actively promoted in the active club venue (Venue 1) throughout April and May 2010 and system data was logged to keep track of how many people had chosen to select a budget. During this Stage, the principal method for encouraging Maxetag users to try the budget-setting feature was to rely upon posters on the wall of the venue and small cards on the side of the machine (see Figure 1). Staff also drew attention to the feature when opportunities for interactions between staff and Maxetag users arose (e.g., when patrons came to the cashier's window). Posters summarised the information provided in Figure 1 using neutral colours (pale blue) as well as the display console message - 'Press Select to set your budget' - which intentionally avoided words such as 'limit' and 'control'. This was the largest message that could be displayed on the small display window.

At the same time, Global Gaming Industries (GGI) continued ongoing negotiations with a hotel venue (Venue 2) which agreed to take part in the latter half of 2010. This hotel, in effect, replaced the club venue which was withdrawn from the trial in 2010.

#### *Stage 2: Trial Activities*

The first venue (Venue 1) was configured with the new Yes/ No buttons in December 2010 and Venue 2 was configured with the budget-setting feature in January (see Figure 2 for console picture). Logging of player behaviour began at Venue 1 in December 2010 and February 2011 at Venue 2. New posters (Figure 3) were introduced at the same time and these summarised the new budget-setting process.



On the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2011, a standardised voice-over message was introduced to the venues (usually played every hour) to make players aware of the budget setting feature and the Yes/ No options.

“Tag on with Maxetag. When tagging on, remember to press the Yes or No option. When pushing the Yes option, remember to set a value and then press Yes again to confirm. The Yes/ No option allows our venue to support responsible service.”

During April 2011, at Venue 1, the budget-setting feature was actively promoted to Maxetag users by a staff member on the gaming floor. The next phase of changes occurred in June-July 2011, with the implementation of a new voice-over that was designed to explain the consequences of pressing the Yes button. Feedback from Venue 1 indicated that some players may have been reluctant to set a budget after having pressed ‘Yes’ (e.g., some may have feared that they wouldn’t be able to gamble anymore), so it was considered important to let patrons know that the consequences were only a ‘friendly reminder’ from Maxetag. A second innovation during this period was the introduction of a \$25 default ‘limit’ that would apply to Maxetag users who pressed ‘Yes’, but who did not proceed to setting a budget. The default ‘limit’ was based on net expenditure, so that if a player spent \$25 after having not set a budget, a message would appear on the display window (Current Spend is \$X) along with an audible beep. A third innovation during June-July 2011 was a modification to the promotional posters. The terms ‘responsible gambling’ were removed and replaced with a question: What is your gaming budget today? (Figure 3b) along with instructions on how to operate the budget-setting feature.

A full summary of the major milestones and events in the trial are summarised in the table below.



**Time-lines**

<b>PRE-TRIAL</b>	
June 2008	RGWP invited proposals from industry for the conduct of player tracking and pre-commitment trials that the RGWP can evaluate
October 2008	Maxetag Pty Ltd provided trial proposal to RGWP
December 2008	RGWP accepted proposal from Maxetag Pty Ltd
January 2009	Global Gaming Industries Pty Ltd advised RGWP it had acquired the Maxetag loyalty system and committed to continue with the trial but on a revised timeline due to a transitional phase
May 2009	First meeting of the trial co-ordination group
November 2009	South Australia's new Central Monitoring System approved for installation; pilot installation begins in 5 venues, including the two trial venues
February 2010	Evaluator appointed and commenced work on the trial
<b>STAGE 1</b>	
March 2010	Stage 1 began. Development of promotional materials, testing of budget feature at two venues; GGI began monitoring take-up
April- May 2010	Budget function promoted at both venues using posters on the wall, on the side of machines as well as some staff interaction with Maxetag users (usually at the cashier's desk)
May-November 2010	Usage of tag tracked at venues; withdrawal of one venue from trial.
November-December 2010	Recruitment of second (replacement) venue.
<b>STAGE 2</b>	
December 2010	Yes/ No option (Stage 2) introduced to Venue 1; testing of feature at Venue 2; logging of player actions began at Venue 1
February 2011-	Logging of player actions began at Venue 2; promotional voice-over began in both venues
June-July 2011-	Introduction of new voice-over to explain the consequences of the 'limit' being exceeded (i.e., the presentation of a reminder message); New posters introduced; Default 'limit' of \$25 introduced. The default 'limit' meant that if someone pressed 'Yes' to set a limit and then did not set a budget, they would receive reminder messages when their expenditure exceeded \$25.
August 2011	Trial ended at 31 <sup>st</sup> August

**3.3 Trial Co-ordination Group Deliberations**

The progress of the trial was monitored and informed by monthly meetings of the Trial Co-ordination Group (TCG). After having confirmed the successful recording of data at the two venues, the TCG met in March 2011 to discuss a number of strategies that might increase take-up and maximise what might be learnt from the trial in its last months of

operation. A number of strategies were agreed to, but only the first three of the following list were eventually implemented during 2011.

- A Review of the in-venue material to remove words that might affect take-up, such as “limit”, “monitor”, and “responsible gambling”;
- Introduce a new voiceover (the first had been introduced in February 2011 and resulted in increased system engagement) to further enhance uptake of the budget-setting feature;
- Introduction of a default budget in June/July which would apply to anyone who pressed ‘Yes’ to set a budget, but who did not proceed to pressing the number buttons;
- Implementation of an alarm/seat belt feature in June/July to remind people to press “Yes” or “No” (the TCG were interested in gaining more understanding about players conscious decision making with regard to budget setting); and
- The TCG to consider in June the introduction of an incentive.

In part, the extent to which the trial was able to adhere to the original plan was influenced by the ability of GGI to undertake the necessary software changes in a timely and cost effective way, as well as the extent to which trial priorities coincided with the business priorities of venues. GGI is a company based in New South Wales so that it was sometimes necessary for staff to travel to South Australia for some of the system changes. In addition, a holder of a gaming machine service license had to be present in each venue when any system changes were undertaken. Both of these factors had timing and cost implications. Furthermore, GGI was also cautious when considering implementation of some increases in system functionality (e.g., allowing players to set budgets at the foyer kiosk) because of concerns about the implications of these changes for player privacy.

## 4. Data Collection and Methodology

### 4.1 The Venues

The trial was based on 2 venues: one club venue with 35 machines and a second hotel venue with 30 machines. The club operated as a community venue and tended to attract a consistent population of patrons drawn from its local catchment area (generally mid to lower

socio-economic areas), whereas the hotel was a smaller boutique hotel located adjacent to a number of higher socio-economic areas of Adelaide that attracted a more geographically dispersed population of patrons.

#### 4.2 Data collection methods

A number of different data collection strategies were employed as part of the evaluation of the Maxetag budget setting feature.

##### *(a) Analysis of System Data*

Each person who signs up to obtain a Maxetag at the participating venues is assigned a unique identifier. Patrons can also provide some brief personal details including their gender, age group and residential postcode. For the budget setting feature, each time a person tags onto a gaming machine at the venues, a record will be made of their actions. In Stage 2 of the trial, different codes were recorded depending upon what a person did: 1 = They pressed 'Yes' to potentially set a budget, 2 They pressed 'No', 3 = They did nothing and let it time out, 4 = They did not set a budget after pressing 'Yes', 5 = They set a budget. Multiple codes were recorded for the same individual within sessions and a person's behaviour was tracked across multiple sessions undertaken on different days at the same venue.

##### *(b) Venue Focus Groups and Consultations*

Focus groups and key informant interviews were undertaken with Venue 1 staff and management in December 2010 following the first period of operation, and in October 2011 after stage 2. This took the form of a structured group discussion anchored around a series of specific questions (Appendix A). The focus group in December involved 8 staff members at Venue 1 as well as the venue manager, whereas October 2011 information was obtained only from the venue management. These questions examined the level of feature uptake, player responses, venue impacts and perceived effectiveness. Staff changes and the very low number of instances of budget-setting at Venue 2 meant that valid data could not be collected from that venue.

##### *(c) Task Analysis and Patron feedback on feature*

A survey was originally designed to assess patron response to the feature. However, due to the very small number of people who used the feature for any length of time, this survey did not prove to be viable. Nevertheless, a small number of patrons completed the

survey and their results can be reported. The survey included questions relating to: (a) People's general gambling habits and experiences, (b) The Problem Gambling Severity Index, (c) Knowledge and awareness of the feature, (d) Experiences using the budget setting feature, and (e) Barriers to usage. A copy of this survey is provided in Appendix B.

To supplement this information, a task analysis was also undertaken at the end of the trial to obtain feedback on the usability of the Stage 2 Yes/No budget setting function. Following approval from the Subcommittee for Human Research in the School of Psychology, an advertisement for participation in a gambling study was promoted electronically through the University of Adelaide student community. Through these contacts, EGM players were obtained from the community and invited to visit one of the venues, sign up for a Maxetag and use it to set a budget on gaming machines. Only people who had gambled on EGMs were allowed to participate to avoid exposing people to gambling for the first time. Players were also shown the kiosk / foyer terminal and told that they should attempt to obtain a session activity statement at the end of the session.

Each participant was given \$10 to gamble and asked to set a budget of \$5. They were free to gamble as they pleased thereafter. Once they had finished gambling, they were invited into another room outside the gaming area to be interviewed about their experiences using the feature. A visit to the gaming floor with the manager of the venue indicated that any attempt to scrutinise player behaviour immediately aroused the suspicions of other patrons. Despite this, it was possible for the researcher to remain with the player to observe how they interacted with the technology when they first sat down to gamble. A copy of the task analysis template is provided in Appendix C. The principal focus of the task analysis was to see how easily and quickly players were able to set a budget; how well they understood the balance and budget figures on the display window; whether they were aware they had exceeded their budget and by how much; and the readability of the session activity statement.

Two different strategies were used. In the first, players received very little briefing apart from being shown the console and being directed towards the poster displays. The second version involved the provision of more detailed instructions, similar to what would be provided by venue staff when they showed players how to use the budget-setting feature. The term 'limit' was used in the task analysis so that the language was consistent with the wording used on the console (i.e., 'No Limit'). Although this appears inconsistent with the terminology

otherwise used in this report ('budget'), this variation was not considered problematic because the focus of the task analysis was on usability rather than player uptake. All players were requested to interact with the budget-setting feature as part of their involvement in the study, so that there was little question of any player being dissuaded from playing because of the use of the term 'limit'.

---

### **Minimal Instructions**

1. Maxetag is explained: "It is a loyalty tag. People get prize draws if their machine is selected while they are playing with their Maxetag. It can also be used to set a daily limit (maximum money lost) until 12 midnight. If you set a limit of \$10, and lose \$10 (after spending down any winnings as well), you start to get warning messages on the little reader next to the machine."
2. The person signs up and receives a Maxetag.
3. They are shown the kiosk and where the tag on spot is located.
4. They are given an opportunity to read the poster on the wall.
5. They visit a machine. They are shown the tag on spot and the money buttons and the Yes and No buttons are pointed out.
6. They are given \$10 to play and told to set a limit of \$5. A \$1 = 1 credit machine like Shogun 1 and 2 will be avoided because these will use up the money too quickly.
7. The researcher remains until the person has started playing and then leaves.
8. Once the person has completed playing, they go to the kiosk to get a print out of their session (allow a minute or so before finishing up playing).
9. They come next door to complete survey and interview.

### **Fully Instructed Version**

1. As above
  2. As above
  3. As above
  4. As above
  5. They visit the machine. The process of tagging on and off is explained. The money buttons and how they work is pointed out. The sequence for setting a budget is explained: tag on, press Yes, then increment the budget (ie press \$10 and \$20 to set a budget of \$30), and then press Yes again
  6. They are told that there is a slight delay in registering the coins (up to 1 minute) when money goes in. The limit set will be shown on each machine. "Your budget is the limit set minus the money lost + already in the machine for playing. So, if you set a limit of \$5, put in \$5, it will say \$0 left to spend. If you only lose \$2 on the 1<sup>st</sup> machine and then tag off and go to another machine with your 3 coins, then it will say \$3 budget when you first tag on."
  7. As above
  8. As above
-

## 5. Results

### 5.1 System Findings

#### *(a) Stage 1: Natural take-up*

Although GGI established a recording process to monitor usage of the budget-setting feature at Venue 1 during stage 1 (from May-November 2010), GGI did not provide any data concerning the actual utilisation rate during this period. Feedback from both GGI and the venue management suggested that no more than 1-3 people ever tried to press the budget-setting buttons and that no patrons did so on more than one occasion. The data were, therefore, so limited that no meaningful analysis could be undertaken. In effect, the results suggested that the natural uptake rate was zero during the first year of the trial, as there was no evidence that any player went beyond an initial investigation of the feature and set a budget.

#### *(b) Stage 2: Yes/No Functionality and Active Promotion*

A significantly larger amount of system data was recorded during the second stage of the trial. The system data took the form of a set of sampled observations obtained when players gambled using Maxetag and interacted with the budget setting feature. Some of these observations represented specific actions undertaken by players (e.g., whether they pressed ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ to set a budget, or what budget they set). Others referred to records of machine events, e.g., how often the players’ credit balance increased when players inserted more money into the machine or when the system registered that the player had exceeded their budget.

A total of 64,157 data observations were recorded at the 2 venues from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010 to the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2011. A summary of the venue source of these observations is provided in Table 1. As indicated, data collection did not begin at Venue 2 (the hotel venue) until February 2011 and a system failure meant that no data could be recorded in March. At the start of stage two of the trial, around 4000 observations were recorded per month at Venue 1 (the club venue with the larger number of active Maxetag users) and this gradually increased to over 6000 as more Maxetag users interacted with the feature. At the other venue

(Venue 2), an average of approximately 2500 observations were recorded per month. The number of data observations differed significantly between players. For some regular players, there were hundreds of recorded observations, whereas fewer than 10 observations were recorded for players who tagged on infrequently.

**Table 1.** Total player observations recorded

	Venue 1	Venue 2	Total
December 2010	4243	-	4243
January 2011	3854	-	3854
February 2011	4154	1869	6023
March 2011	6295	a	6295
April 2011	5637	2299	7936
May 2011	5931	2442	8373
June 2011	5865	2902	8767
July 2011	7077	2786	9863
August 2011	6495	2467	8962
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49551</b>	<b>14606</b>	<b>64157</b>

a. Venue system malfunction led to a loss of data for this month

By identifying duplicate cases in the data-set by IDcode, it was possible to ascertain how many individual players these total observations represented. Table 2 displays the total number of Maxetag users for whom observations were recorded across the 9 months.

Table 2 shows that over 600 individual gamblers were actively using Maxetags by the end of the trial period: over 400 at Venue 1 and just under two hundred at Venue 2. The number of active players gradually increased over time, possibly due to the gradual enrolment of new players on the Maxetag loyalty system. When these data were further analysed to determine the total number of players who had been detected at least once at any time at the two venues, it was found that 879 individuals had gambled using a Maxetag at Venue 1 and 386 at Venue 2 (a total of 1265 individual gamblers).

**Table 2.** Total number of individual Maxetag players active in each month

	Venue 1 (Club)	Venue 2 (Hotel)	Total
December 2010	365	-	365
January 2011	342	-	342
February 2011	355	141	496
March 2011	452	a	452
April 2011	453	171	624
May 2011	423	180	603
June 2011	441	181	622
July 2011	455	191	646
August 2011	432	180	612

a. Venue system malfunction led to a loss of data for this month

It was also possible to ascertain how many new players were detected each month while the evaluation was in progress. As Table 3 shows, there was considerable overlap in the samples obtained in successive months at both venues. By the end of the trial, only a relatively small proportion of the individual players monitored in either venue had not been previously encountered. For example, of the 432 separate individuals observed at Venue 1 in August 2011 (see Table 2), only 42 (or 9.7%) were monitored for the first time in that month. The remainder ( $n = 390$  or 90.3%) had already been monitored in the previous 8 months. Indeed, when one considers the month of April (Table 3), it can be observed that not one new previously unmonitored patron used Maxetag at the same venue. The figures were not quite so extreme at Venue 2, but by the end of the trial in August, only 34 (or 18.9%) of the Maxetag users had not previously been monitored since data recording had commenced in February. A summary of the changing proportion of new and previously monitored patrons (Old) is provided in Figure 4 and 5 for the two venues.

All of these results suggest that the patron base at both venues and, in particular Maxetag users, remain relatively stable over time. If one signs up for a tag that is venue specific, people will tend to return to that same venue to gamble. Meanwhile, the recruitment of new players into the Maxetag loyalty system may be quite gradual from

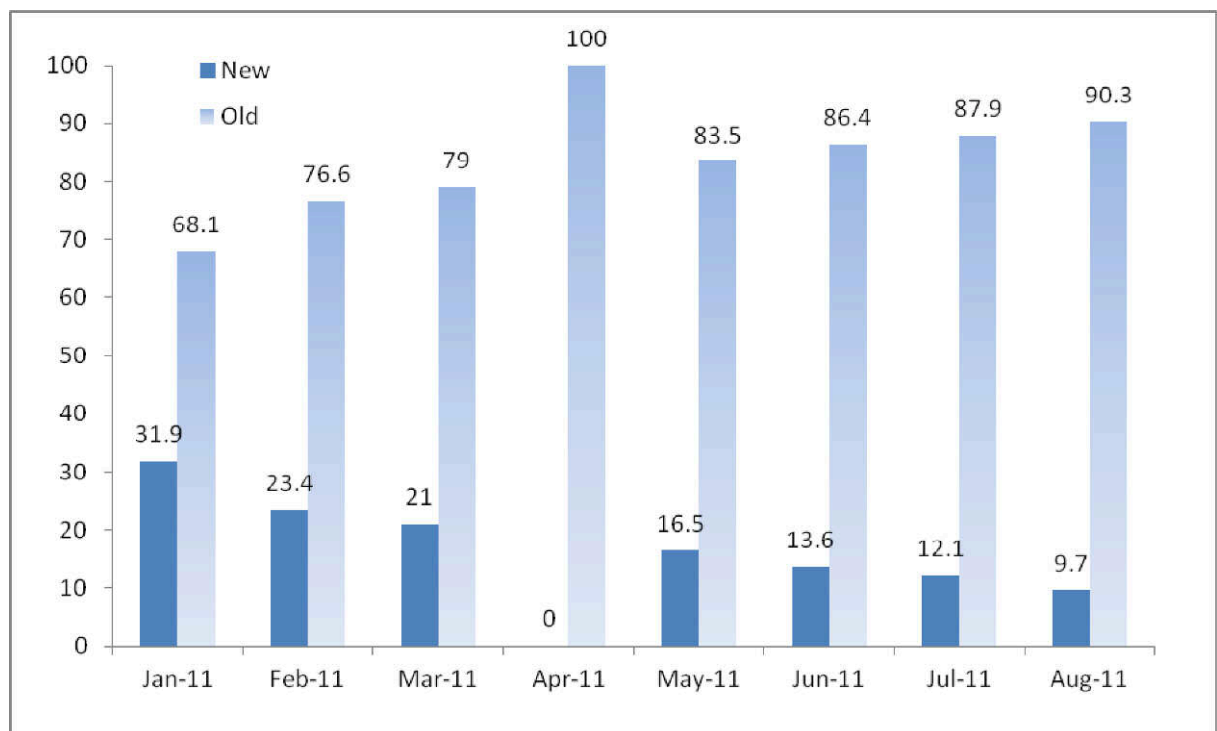


one month to the next. From a trial or marketing perspective, this means that a decreasingly smaller number of new players would be exposed to the new feature and its promotions as the months passed.

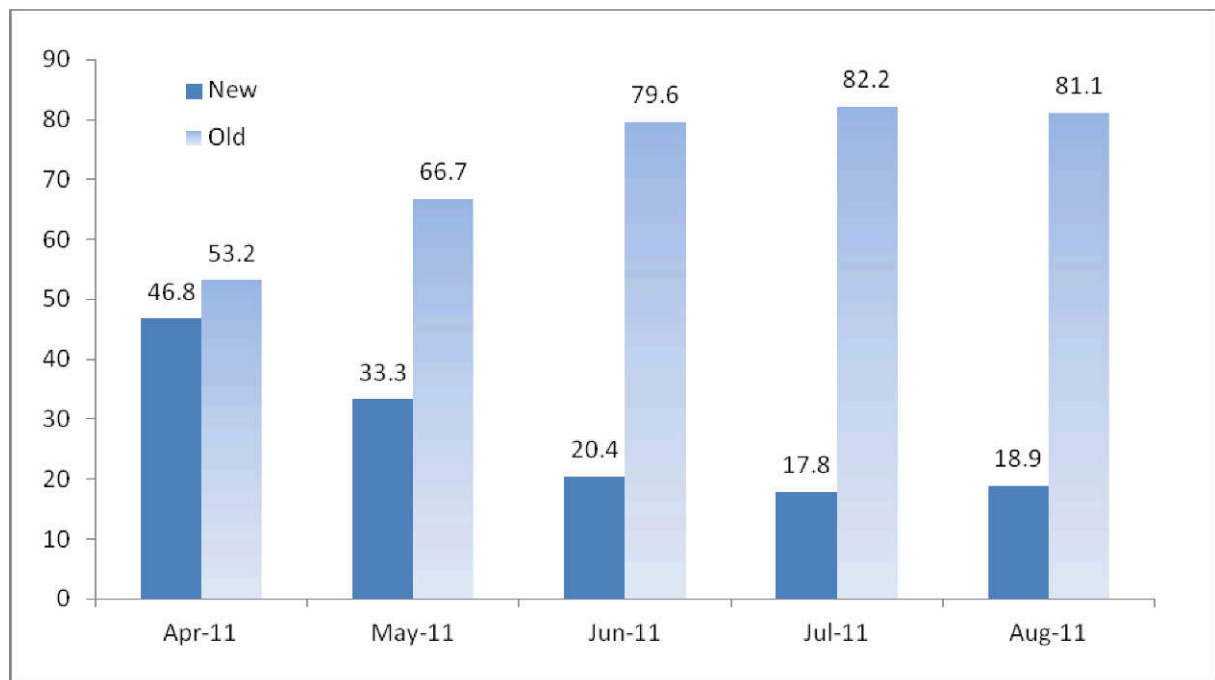
**Table 3.** Total number of new individual players detected each month

	Venue 1 (Club)	Venue 2 (Hotel)	Total
December 2010	365	-	365
January 2011	109	-	109
February 2011	83	141	224
March 2011	95	a	95
April 2011	0	80	80
May 2011	70	60	130
June 2011	60	37	97
July 2011	55	34	89
August 2011	42	34	76

b. Venue system malfunction led to a loss of data for this month



**Figure 4.** Proportion of new and old cases at the Venue 1 (club venue) in 2011



**Figure 5.** Proportion of new and old cases at the Venue 2 (hotel venue) in 2011

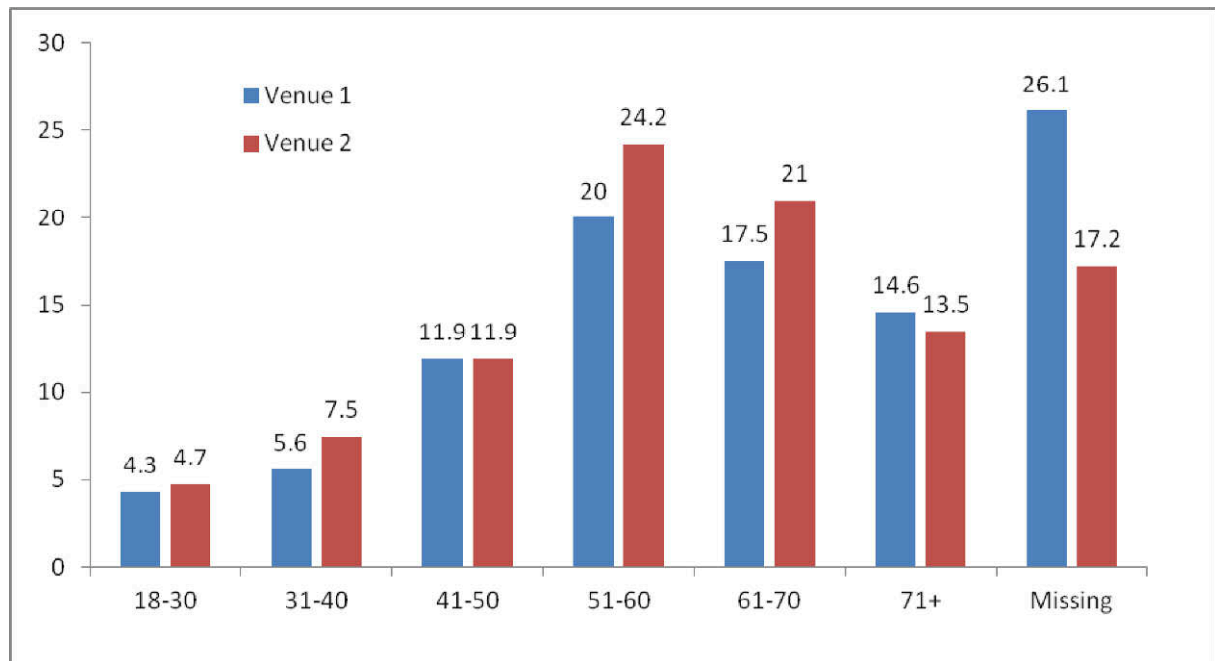
### 5.3 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

On the whole the quality of much of the demographic data was poor because many people were reluctant to provide this information when they completed the sign-up brochure for their Maxetag. Most people were willing to provide their suburb of origin, but many did not provide their date of birth or gender. For this reason, it is important to issue some caution when drawing conclusions about the broad characteristics of the sample. As indicated in Table 4, gender information was only available for a third of the Venue 1 patrons and fewer than 40% of those patrons who gambled at Venue 2. Of those who did provide this information, the vast majority were women, but it is unclear whether this was because a greater proportion of women attend these venues or because women were more likely to provide this demographic information.

**Table 4.** Gender of gamblers/ Maxetag users

		Male N (%)	Female N (%)	No information N (%)
Venue 1	879	44 (5.0)	255 (29.0)	580 (66.0)
Venue 2	386	6 (1.5)	138 (35.8)	242 (62.7)

Age (or date of birth) data was obtained for 75% of Maxetag users at Venue 1 and just under 85% of those at Venue 2. A summary of the percentage breakdown is provided in Figure 6. As indicated in Figure 6, the majority of the Maxetag users were middle-aged or older (over 50% were older than 50 years of age) and less than 10% were aged 18-40 years. The age profile of both venues was remarkably similar.



**Figure 6.** % Age composition of the samples tracked at both venues (%s read across for each venue)

Data were also collected concerning the residential suburb of the patrons. It was found that the majority of patrons lived in areas geographically close to both venues.

### 5.3 Utilisation of the Budget-Setting Feature

#### (a) Stage 1: Natural Uptake

As indicated in Section 5.1, there was no evidence of any use of the budget-setting feature during the first stage of the trial.

#### (b) Stage 2: yes/no function and active promotion

Analysis of system data for Stage 2 of the trial also showed the outcome of each use of a Maxetag at the venues; namely, whether players ignored the budget-setting feature, used it, or actively chose not to use it by pressing ‘no’ within the designated time-frame. Table 5 provides an overall summary of the total number of each type of observation. The results for the two venues were reasonably similar. On around 85% of occasions that people tagged on to play a machine with Maxetag they let the system time-out and no attempt was made to engage with the budget setting feature. Around 11-13% of sessions on a machine were preceded by an active ‘No’ response. Less than 0.1% of sessions at both venues commenced with a budget being set (the 5 code) (only 43 instances across the two venues).

**Table 5.** Use of features (total observations)

Observation type	Description	Venue 1 (Club venue) N (%)	Venue 2 (Hotel venue) N (%)
1	Pressed YES	537 (1.1)	58 (0.4)
2	Pressed NO	5814 (11.7)	1987 (13.6)
3	Timed out	41,174 (83.1)	12,501 (85.6)
4	Yes, but no budget	504 (1.2)	18*
5	Set a budget	35 *	8*
6	Budget increment <sup>a</sup>	929 (1.9)	23*
7	Breach recorded	558 (1.1)	6*
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>49, 551</b>	<b>14,606</b>

\* % Very small (<.1%), a. The term ‘increment’ refers to system records of players increasing their budget amount by pressing the number buttons on the console.

The same table was reproduced using individual player data to determine how many separate players fell into each of the above categories (Table 6). Table 6 provides the monthly results as well as the total for the sample over the period of Stage 2 of the trial for both venues. The data in Table 6 shows how many individual Maxetag users (within a given

month) interacted with the budget-setting feature and the nature of this interaction. The figures in each row indicate how many individuals pressed ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ at least once and how many set a budget. Percentages are expressed as a ratio of the counts for each observational category (e.g., Pressed ‘No’) divided by the number of Maxetag users monitored at the venue in that month. For this reason, the percentages should NOT be summed across the columns because it was theoretically possible for individual players to produce every response listed at least once in a given month. For example, a person could have played 5 times in a given month and done different things on each of these occasions. All figures are presented the same way for consistency, but the most meaningful figures relate to the percentages who pressed ‘No’, ‘Yes’ and who set a budget at least once.

To assist in interpretation, it is instructive to consider the month of March at Venue 1. During this month, 452 separate Maxetag users were monitored at the venue. Of these, 92 (or 20%) pressed ‘No’ at least once (i.e., had the minimum level of interaction), 13 (or 2.9%) pressed ‘Yes’ at least once, but only two (or 0.4%) proceeded to the final stage and set a budget.

The results showed that only 1.8% patrons set a budget at least once at Venue 1 (the venue with the higher level of budget-setting activity). Budget-setting at this venue did not commence at all until March during Stage 2 of the trial and then only 2-6 people were detected having set a budget at least once each month during the remainder of the trial period. In total, 16 people set a budget at Venue 1 and 90 (or around 10%) of the sample pressed ‘Yes’ at least once but did not proceed to the next stage of actually setting a budget. The percentage of Maxetag users pressing ‘No’ at Venue 1 started at around 10% during the early phases of Stage 2 of the trial and gradually increased to a high of over 50% in April 2011, but then declined gradually back to about half this by August 2011. The very high rate of response in April 2011 followed soon after the introduction of voice-overs to the venue and also coincided with a period of active promotion of the feature by the venue staff. It appears that this flurry of interest in April 2011 was, however, not maintained and that active interaction with the feature became less likely once patrons had perhaps recognised that they did not need to press ‘No’ to avoid the budget-setting questions.

**Table 6.** Usage of functionality across time (figures refer to how many individual Maxetag users pressed Yes, No, or allowed the feature to time out each month and overall)

	N	Pressed Yes N (%)	Pressed No N (%)	Timed-out N (%)	Yes, no budget set N (%)	Yes, Set a budget N (%)
<b>Venue 1 (Club)</b>						
December 2010	365	5 (1.4)	38 (10.4)	361 (98.9)	5 (1.4)	0 (0)
January 2011	342	4 (1.2)	42 (12.2)	338 (98.9)	4 (1.2)	0 (0)
February 2011	355	7 (2.0)	61 (17.2)	340 (95.8)	4 (1.1)	0 (0)
March 2011	452	13 (2.9)	92 (20.4)	434 (96.0)	11 (2.4)	2 (0.4)
April 2011	453	59 (13.0)	235 (51.9)	447 (98.7)	54 (11.9)	2 (0.4)
May 2011	423	9 (2.1)	110 (26.0)	405 (95.7)	2 (0.5)	2 (0.4)
June 2011	441	11 (2.5)	127 (28.8)	409 (92.7)	5 (1.1)	4 (0.8)
July 2011	455	7 (1.5)	101 (22.2)	429 (94.3)	5 (1.1)	7 (1.5)
August 2011	432	5 (1.2)	104 (24.1)	412 (95.4)	3 (0.7)	6 (1.4)
<b>OVERALL*</b>	<b>879</b>	<b>90 (10.2)</b>	<b>442 (50.3)</b>	<b>861 (98.0)</b>	<b>78 (8.9)</b>	<b>16 (1.8)</b>
<b>Venue 2 (Hotel)</b>						
February 2011	141	2 (1.4)	36 (25.5)	138 (97.9)	1 (0.7)	0 (0.0)
March 2011	n.a.					
April 2011	171	6 (3.5)	53 (31.0)	164 (95.7)	3 (1.8)	1 (0.6)
May 2011	180	4 (2.2)	49 (27.2)	170 (94.4)	4 (2.2)	1 (0.6)
June 2011	181	3 (1.6)	60 (33.1)	167 (92.3)	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)
July 2011	191	5 (2.6)	55 (28.8)	184 (96.3)	3 (1.6)	3 (1.6)
August 2011	180	4 (3.5)	34 (30.0)	105 (92.3)	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>11 (2.9)</b>	<b>126 (32.7)</b>	<b>311 (80.8)</b>	<b>7 (1.8)</b>	<b>3 (0.8)</b>

\* %s will not sum to 100% because players could do more than one action in the same month. The 'Overall' figure refers to the number for whom the action was applicable at least once during the trial period.

The results for Venue 2 revealed very little interest in budget-setting. Only 11 (or 3%) of the sample pressed 'Yes' at least once and only 3 people set a budget at least once during the period of the trial. The proportion pressing 'No' began at around 25% at the start of the trial period for this venue and gradually increased to 33% over time, but then slightly decreased to 30% by the end of the trial period.

#### 5.4.1 Profiling the Budget Setters

Given that only 16 people set a budget at least once at Venue 1 and only 3 at Venue 2, it was therefore possible to provide detailed summaries of the activity of these people to understand how they interacted with the feature. As indicated in Table 7, of the 19 people who set a budget, 9 (or 47%) did so only once, 3 (or 15.8%) did so more than once in the

same month but did not set a budget in any other month, and 7 set a budget across multiple months.

Much of the budget setting activity occurred towards the end of the trial. For example, of the 34 instances of budget-setting observed at Venue 1, 26 (or 74%) occurred in the June to August 2011 period. Inspection of the detection dates (i.e., the 1<sup>st</sup> date on which that particular Maxetag user was active) shows that 9 out of the 16 people took at least 5-6 months or more to first set a budget. Another 5 people tried the feature once on the same day that their Maxetag became active which may have been the result of venue staff being trained to promote the feature for new users when they completed the initial sign-up brochure. Another 2 patrons tried the feature approximately 1 month after they had signed up. At Venue 2, 2 patrons tried the budget setting feature soon after being detected as Maxetag users, whereas the third did so after a delay of a few weeks.

**Table 7.** Profile of budget-setters ( $n = 16$  at Venue 1 (club),  $n = 3$  at Venue 2 (hotel))

No.	Gender	Age	Date first detected	Date set budget	Times set budget	Days gambled during trial
<b>Venue 1</b>						
P1	Female	30	20/12/2010	18/6/2011	1	5
P2	Unknown	Unknown	14/12/2010	30/6/2011 28/7/2011 11/8/2011	3	20
P3	Unknown	Unknown	14/12/2010	15/4/2011	1	29
P4	Female	26	25/5/2011	25/5/2011 25/7/2011	2	12
P5	Unknown	38	26/3/2011	26/3/2011 27/3/2011 10/6/2011 14/7/2011	4	7
P6	Unknown	Unknown	10/12/2010	14/7/2011 11/8/2011 18/8/2011	3	23

[Table 7 continued]

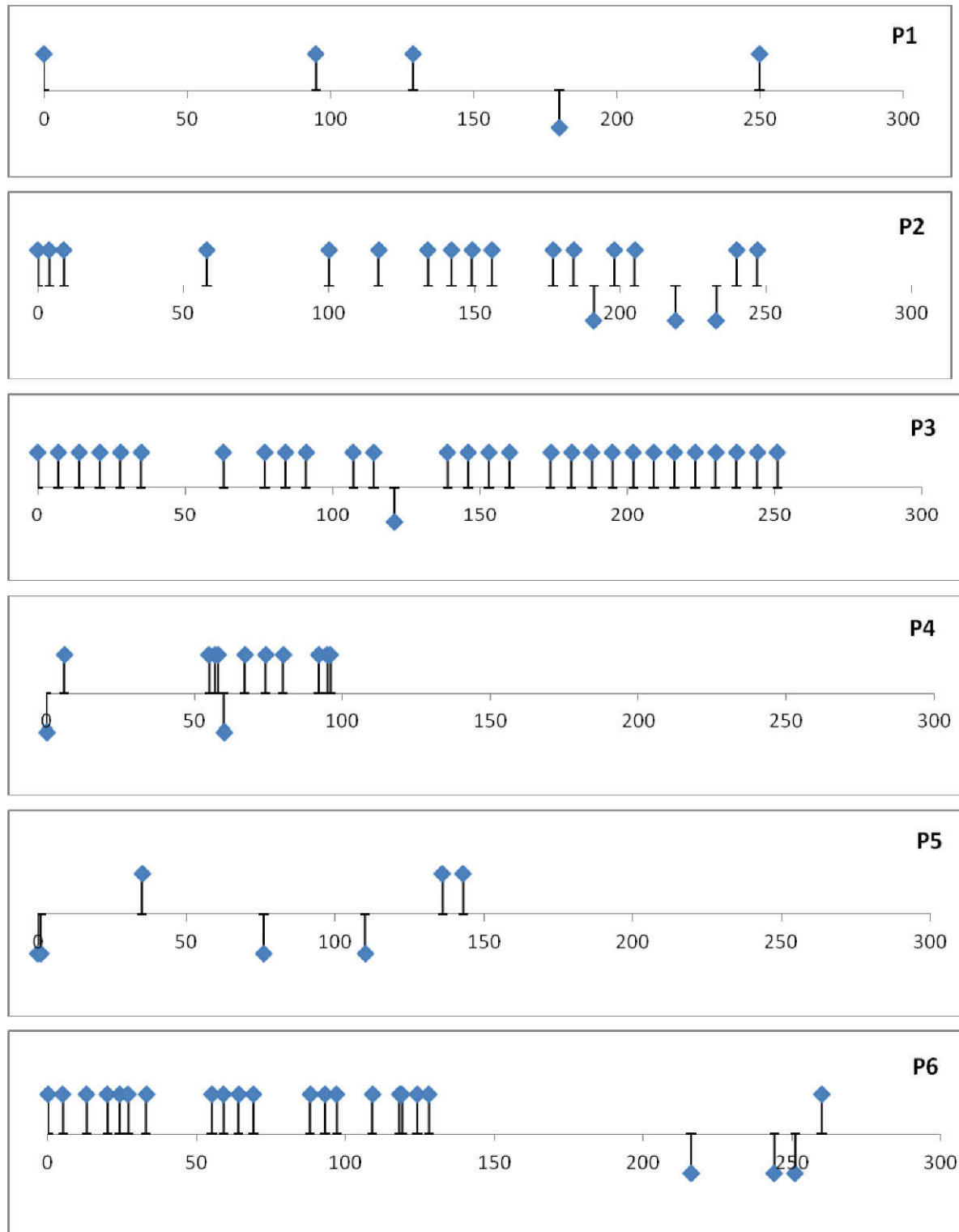
P7	Female	50	28/6/2011	30/6/2011	1	2
P8	Female	56	11/12/2010	4/8/2011	1	22
P9	Unknown	64	31/12/2010	4/5/2011 18/5/2011 27/8/2011	3	15
P10	Unknown	48	4/2/2011	1/3/2011	1	11
P11	Female	Unknown	15/12/2010	18/4/2011 4/7/2011	1	77
P12	Unknown	44	23/7/2011	23/7/2011	1	1
P13	Unknown	38	8/12/2010	15/4/2011	1	72
P14	Unknown	40	30/6/2011	30/6/2011	1	1
P15	Female	57	6/1/2011	1/7/2011 2/7/2011 3/7/2011 6/7/2011 8/7/2011 15/7/2011 22/7/2011 6/8/2011 23/8/2011	9	32
P16	Female	57	24/7/2011	23/8/2011	1	8
<b>Venue 2</b>						
P17	Female	Unknown	1/2/2011	1/2/2011 17/2/2011	2	32
P18	Female	46	1/4/2011	5/4/2011 12/4/2011 19/4/2011 26/4/2011	4	5
P19	Female	Unknown	1/2/2011	10/5/2011 25/5/2011	2	32

To obtain more detailed insights into the pattern of individual gambling and usage of the budget feature, a series of plots was produced (Figure 7). Each plot depicts the behaviour of an individual player. The zero point is the first point of detection during the trial whereas the X-axis shows the numbers of days that elapsed since that time. The up-bars indicate the exact days on which the person gambled with their Maxetag and the down-bars indicate the days on which they used the budget setting feature. Using these diagrams, it is therefore possible to examine how long it took (in days since first being detected) for people to use the



budget-setting feature and the general intensity of gambling before and after the feature was utilised. Two patrons (12 and 15 in Table 7) who only visited the venue once are omitted because of the lack of meaningful data for plotting.

The plots depict the behaviour of different kinds of gamblers. Some players appear to come to the venue at quite regular intervals (P2, P3, P6, P8-10), some are occasional players (P1, P4-5, P7 and P18), and some gambled very frequently either over protracted periods (P11, P13, P15) or for short periods (P16, P17, P19). P17 and P19 appear to be friends because they gambled on exactly the same days. There was little evidence that the budget-setting feature influenced how often people gambled. Patrons also would use the feature on repeated occasions, but also gamble without it on occasions (e.g., P15). Both P11 and P13 used the feature after a very intense period of almost daily gambling, but then reverted back to the same pattern of behaviour. For others, the feature was something they tried when they first signed up to obtain a Maxetag, but which they did not use thereafter (e.g., P17).



**Figure 7.** Event time lines (Days since detection) for individual patrons (0 = First detection, Line-up = Gambled that day but no budget set, Line-Down = Set a budget, P = Player)

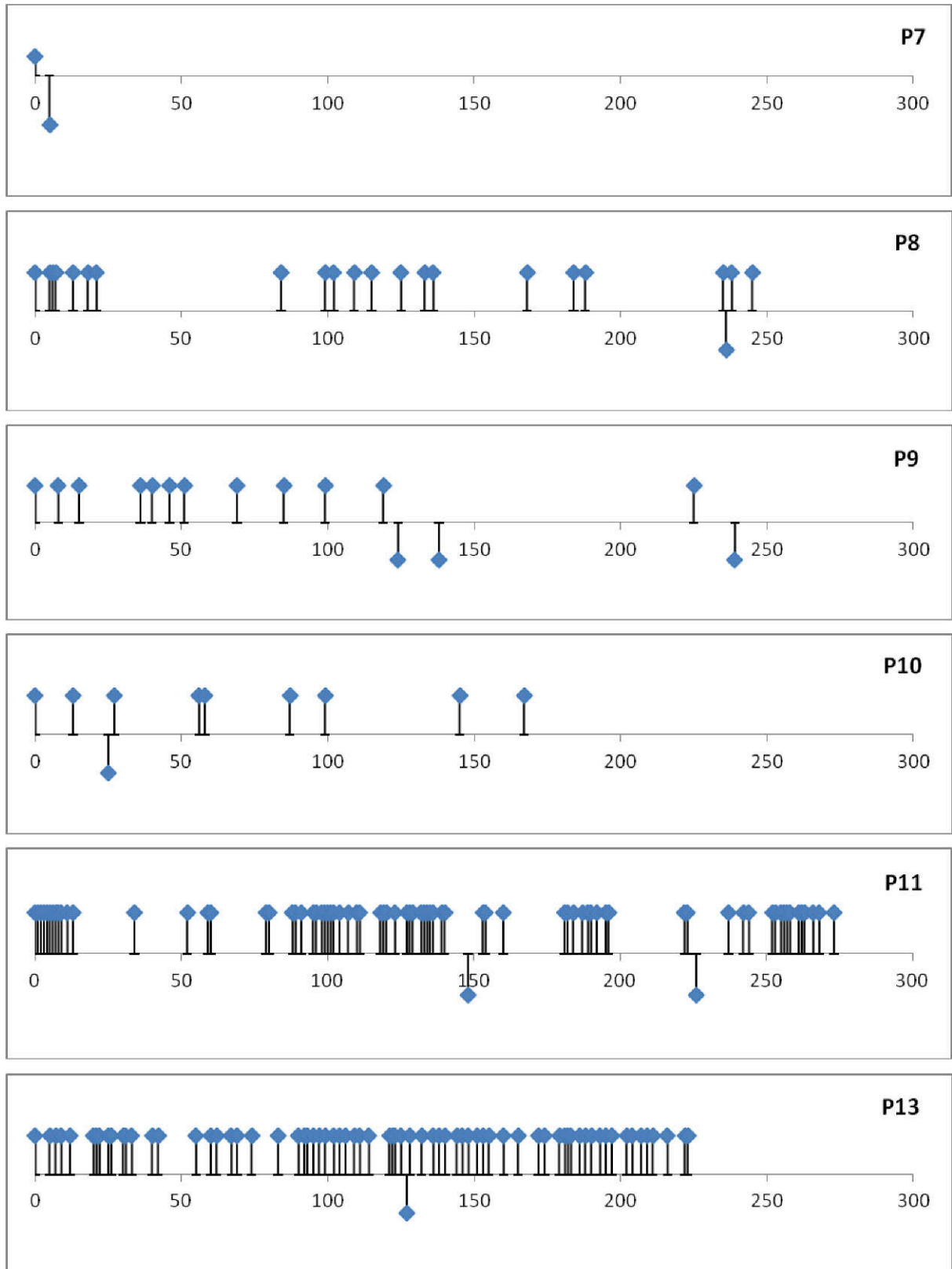


Figure 7 (Continued)

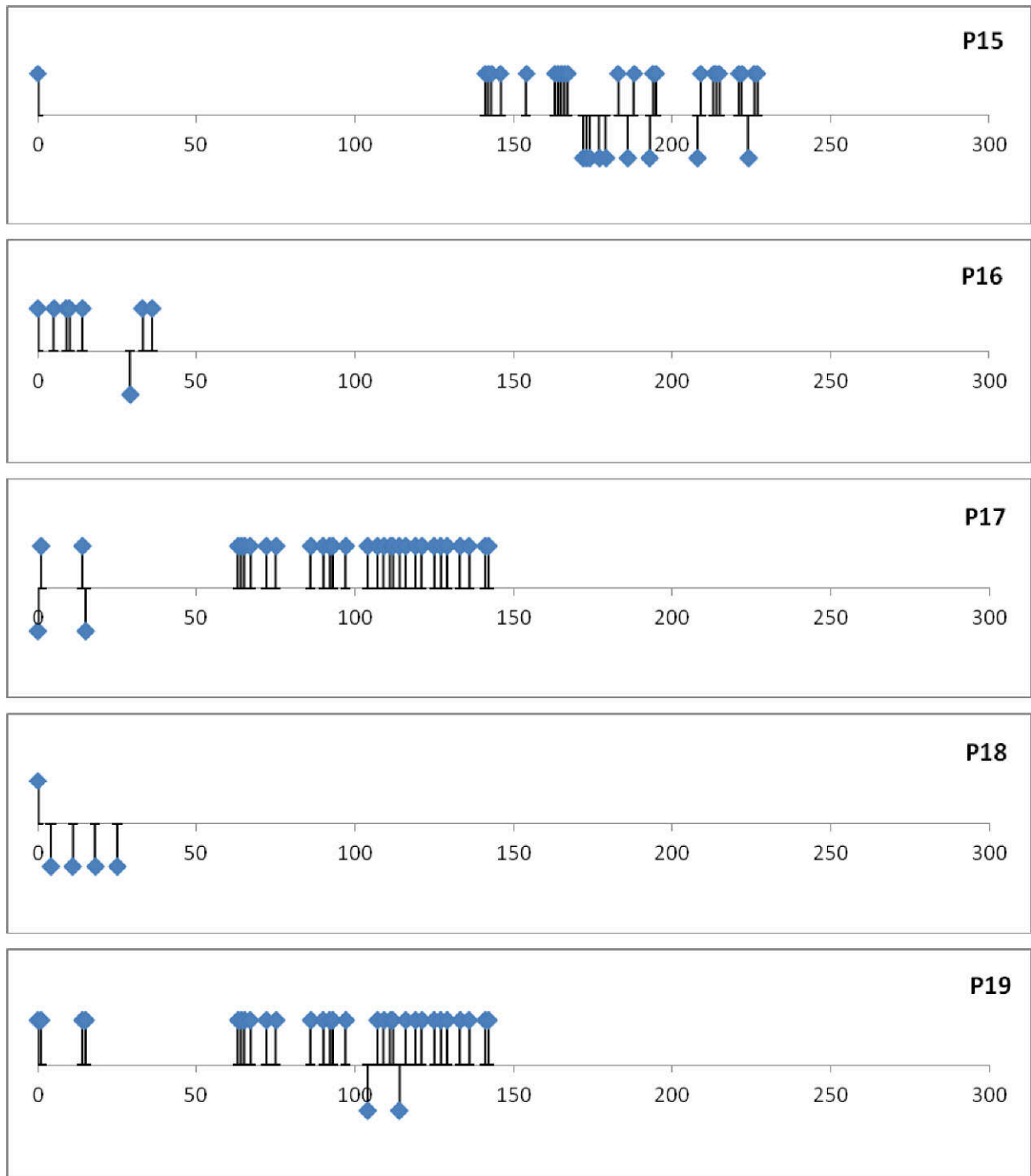


Figure 7 (Continued)

To illustrate in more detail how different players utilised the budget-setting feature, three brief case-examples are provided based on the results summarised in Tables 7 and 8 and Figure 7. Cases P5, P9 and P15 are chosen because these three cases provide contrasting examples of how the budget-setting feature was used.

**Case Example 1: (P5)**

P5 was first detected using a Maxetag at the club venue in late March 2011 and started using the Maxetag budget-setting feature on the same day. This person visited the venue infrequently (only 7 times until the end of August 2011), but set a budget 4 times. This person tended to set small budget amounts (\$10-46), although typically after having already having inserted some money in the machine as indicated by the budget-limits that were not divisible by 5 (the budget increment options available when using the feature) (see Table 8). This person was generally unsuccessful in adhering to his or her budget and exceeded it on 3 out of 4 occasions- on one occasion, by almost \$200.

**Case Example 2: (P9)**

P9 was first detected at the club venue in December 2010, but took over 4 months to first try the budget-setting feature even though the Yes/No option was available throughout this period. From December 2010-August 2011, this player gambled on 15 separate days using a Maxetag. A budget was set early in May, during the middle of May, but not again until the end of August 2011. On each of the 3 occasions, the person set a small budget of \$10 or \$20 and did not exceed these amounts (see Table 8).

The interesting feature of this person's play was that the person gambled regularly throughout early 2011 (see Figure 7), but then gambled very little thereafter which indicates that the use of the budget-setting feature appeared to coincide with a period of significantly reduced gambling activity (frequency of visits). However, it remains unknown whether this player visited other venues later in 2011, whether he or she started gambling more frequently without using a Maxetag, or whether their reduced activity was due to the budget setting feature..

**Case Example 3: (P15)**

P15 was first detected at the club venue in January 2011, but did not use the budget-setting feature until the start of July 2011. This person began a very frequent period of gambling at the start of June (31 day visits to the venue in only 2 months) which continued until the end of August. During July-August 2011, this person set a budget 9 times (on around 1/3 of the days she visited the venue) (see Figure 7). On each occasion, this person set quite consistent amounts (around \$25), but had little success in adhering to these limits. On most occasions, the limit was exceeded by several hundreds of dollars (see Table 8).

### 5.4.2 Nature of Budget Setting

The data system recorded the amount which players set as a budget and also their final balance when they had finished. Table 8 summarises the amounts set by patrons on each occasion.

**Table 8.** Profile of budget-setters ( $n = 16$  at Venue 1 (club),  $n = 3$  at Venue 2 (hotel))

No.	Date set budget	Amount Set \$	Budget exceeded?	Amount exceeded \$
<b>Venue 1</b>				
P1	18/6/2011	20	Yes	110
P2	30/6/2011	26	No	-
	28/7/2011	25	No	-
	11/8/2011	26	Yes	27
P3	15/4/2011	20	No	-
P4	25/5/2011	581	No	-
	25/7/2011	20	No	-
P5	26/3/2011	22	No	-
	27/3/2011	10	Yes	20
	10/6/2011	12	Yes	192
	14/7/2011	46	Yes	75
P6	14/7/2011	25	No	-
	11/8/2011	25	No	-
	18/8/2011	25	Yes	25
P7	30/6/2011	30	No	-
P8	4/8/2011	43	No	-
P9	4/5/2011	10	No	-
	18/5/2011	10	No	-
	27/8/2011	20	No	-
P10	1/3/2011	20	Yes	57
P11	18/4/2011	65	No	-
	4/7/2011	20	No	-
P12	23/7/2011	25	Yes	19
P13	15/4/2011	24	No	-
P14	30/6/2011	25	No	-

[Table 8 continued]

P15	1/7/2011	25	Yes	489
	2/7/2011	27	No	-
	3/7/2011	25	Yes	10
	6/7/2011	25	No	-
	8/7/2011	31	Yes	176
	15/7/2011	29	Yes	279
	22/7/2011	29	Yes	151
	6/8/2011	28	Yes	84
	23/8/2011	25	No	-
P16	23/8/2011	11	No	-
<b>Venue 2</b>				
P17	1/2/2011	5	Yes	1
	17/2/2011	5	No	-
P18	5/4/2011	8	No	-
	12/4/2011	12	No	-
	19/4/2011	15	No	-
	26/4/2011	5	No	-
P19	10/5/2011	100	No	-
	25/5/2011	5	Yes	3

In general, when people set budgets using the Maxetag console, the amounts are usually divisible by \$5 because the button choices are restricted to \$5, \$10 or \$20. When set, this amount indicates how much people can put into the machine and spend thereafter before receiving exceed budget messages. However, as indicated earlier in this report (Section 2), the effective amount that will be available as a budget will also include any money already listed as credit on the gaming machine. Thus, if a person has already inserted \$5 into the machine before setting a budget of \$25, their effective budget will be \$30. The complexity of this situation is illustrated in Table 9, which provides some examples of how the budget and credit balance would appear to different players based on how they chose to establish their budget amount.

In Scenario 1, no credit is on the meter when the player sits down to set a budget. The person then sets a budget of \$25 (what they intend to spend for the rest of the day) and then inserts \$10 into the machine. The person's remaining budget now becomes \$15 because \$10 has already been committed into the machine and the credit balance is \$10. If this person then loses \$2, the credit balance drops to \$8, but their budget is still the same. However, when this

person moves to a second machine and first tags on, the money previously committed at machine 1, but cashed out, is recognised. The budget value is therefore restored to its original value of \$25 minus the \$2 that was lost (i.e., \$23). In Scenario 2, the situation is more complicated. If \$10 is already on the credit meter when the budget of \$25 is set then a balance of \$20 will be displayed when another \$10 is inserted into the machine (as in Scenario 1). The budget displayed will be \$25. Once again, the balance will decrease by \$2 if this amount is lost. However, if the player moves to a second machine and then tags on, their budget will become \$33 based on: (The original \$10 available at the outset + the budget allowance of \$25) - \$2 that was lost.

The aim of the budget feature was to provide for daily budget setting, on the basis that people's budget circumstances vary from day to day. However, scenario 2 shows that budget setting done after play has begun can result in the player spending more than the daily budget they have set.

**Table 9.** Illustrations of the budget-setting process and visual display changes associated with different budget-setting scenarios

	Displayed Figures
<b>Scenario 1</b>	
Start balance	\$0
Sit down - set budget at machine	Budget = \$25
Insert \$10 into the machine	Budget = \$15, Balance = \$10
Lose \$2	Budget = \$15, Balance = \$8
Move to 2 <sup>nd</sup> machine	Budget = \$23, Balance = \$8
<b>Scenario 2</b>	
Start Balance	\$10
Want to now set budget of \$25	Budget = \$25
Insert \$10 into machine to increase balance to \$20	Budget = \$25, Balance = \$20
Lose \$2	Budget = \$25, Balance = \$18
Move to 2 <sup>nd</sup> machine	Budget = \$33, Balance = \$18



A problem with the GGI budget-setting data provided for the evaluation is that did not differentiate between the amount set via the button presses on the console and the amount finally listed as the budget amount. All budget values logged into the data-files were constant values (e.g., \$50, \$50, \$50) rather than gradually incremented values (e.g., \$5, \$10, \$15, \$25 as the person pressed buttons to obtain a budget of \$25). The likely reason for this is that the polling process across the machines would have been too slow to pick up these increments because the entire budget-setting process would have occurred in under 30 seconds. Thus, the evaluation is based on values which either do, or do not, include previous credit amounts. This is immediately evident in Table 8. Some values are clearly multiples of \$5 and could have been obtained just by pressing the console buttons, but there are also other values (e.g., \$26, \$43) which would indicate a combination of existing credit values with budget-set amounts.

The consequences of this combination of amounts is that it becomes more complex to determine whether, and by how much, a person has exceeded his or her budget. For example, if a person had \$8 on a machine and then set a budget of \$25, their effective balance would be \$33. A final negative credit balance of \$50 would mean that the person exceeded his or her effective budget by \$50, but conceptually he or she really exceeded their set budget by \$58 because an extra \$8 had to be spent down before this person started spending the \$25 to reduce the available budget to \$0.

As indicated in Table 8, of those who exceeded a budget at either of the venues ( $n = 9$ ), most ( $n = 6$ ) did not use the budget-setting feature again. Two players maintained approximately the same budget amount and another player increased the amount. Ten players set a budget more than once. Of these, 4 remained quite stable in their budget-setting over time, 4 progressed towards a lower amount and 2 set higher amounts as the trial progressed. On some occasions, budgets were exceeded by quite substantial amounts (hundreds of dollars).

## 5.5 Stage 1 and 2: Gaming Staff Focus Group Findings

In December 2010, a group of gaming staff at Venue 1 were invited to respond to a series of questions relating to their knowledge and experiences of the Maxetag budget feature

during early 2010 (Stage 1). The general impression was that very few people had any interest in the feature. As they pointed out:

“I think I have had one person just asking what it is. And they say- it’s too hard. They just want to come in and have a quick bet. They don’t want to muck around with technology. They just want to play.”

“I don’t think they [patrons] would be aware of it. It’s not really popular, that budget feature.”

“We had a few people who used it. But then they just stopped. I said to one: “You’re not using it anymore?” She said: “Nah, I can’t be bothered.”

Staff felt that patrons did not believe that the feature was relevant to them personally and that it was perceived as something that was directed towards problem gamblers. People were seen as “defensive”. They did not like the “stereotype...that the media always portrays the problem gamblers as bad people” and did not want to be stigmatised by being associated with this label.

There was also little evidence of patron awareness or usage of the kiosks / foyer terminals from which people could obtain information about their sessional expenditure.

The positive feature of the trial was that there was little evidence that the feature had contributed to extra work for the venue and the technology was seen by staff to be both reliable and easy to use. Staff did not have any difficulty learning how the feature worked and required minimal training.

“It was pretty straightforward. There were flyers that we had that were put around, explaining it all to them. Those who were here- we had Maxetag come in and explain it all to them, the process, and everybody had a go at it. And it was pushed quite heavily for the first month or so.”

When asked what might be done to make more people try the feature, it was generally felt that not a lot could be done except to modify the technology so that people had to make a decision.

“We did a huge amount of it [promotion] at the start. And in the end, people just started to get upset with us. So, we’ve got it going over the loudspeaker. And girls when they’re signing up new people will show them that feature.”

“I think that the new opt out feature may make people more aware of it. At the moment it’s just there and it’s set your limit. You don’t and within 20 seconds, it just goes into play mode. So with the opt in or opt out, it will make people more aware. Initially it will become just a reflex to just say no straight away, but they’ve made a conscious decision to do that.”

A similar process of consultation was undertaken at the end of the trial to determine whether any additional factors had come to light during the course of Stage 2 of the trial. In particular, it was of interest to understand why so many players at Venue 1 had interacted so often with the feature during the month of April 2011. It was found that a more intensive process of promotion had been undertaken during that month. A staff member had been placed on the floor with the specific task to encourage patrons to try out the features and also visit the foyer kiosk to obtain their session activity statement. Once this staff member had been removed at the end of April, patron interaction with the feature returned to the typical rate. Patrons typically did not try the feature or use it for very long because they “already had a sense of what they wanted to spend” or “did not see it as a tool to help with their entertainment”. It was felt that much of the publicity about pre-commitment had led to the perception that these features are for problem rather than for gamblers in general, so patrons did not want to attract the stigma of feeling, or being perceived as, problem gamblers or “pokie junkies”, the pejorative term sometimes used in the media. Players therefore did not consider the feature “to have any value for them”.

The simplicity and reliability of the technology was again confirmed by staff. In relation to the promotion of the feature, it was felt that not much else could be done, although it would have been useful if the system had the ability to identify patrons who pressed ‘Yes’, but who did not proceed to setting a budget. If some signal could have alerted staff in the venue, then they could have come to the machine to provide assistance. Those who did press ‘Yes’, but did not proceed any further typically acted this way because the initial button press had been more about curiosity than a serious attempt to set a budget. Some patrons also were unsure about the way to set a budget and just assumed that pressing ‘Yes’ was sufficient.

Overall, there was little evidence to suggest that the feature had any significant impact on staff time, patron interest in gambling or venue revenue (see Section 6.3).

## 5.6 Task Analysis and Patron Feedback

### 5.6.1 Stage 1: Patron Survey Feedback

Only 5 patrons completed the full patron survey during the duration of the trial (3 females and 2 males) so only summary findings are reported. Patrons were of different ages (range 35-65 years). All played poker machines at last 2-3 times per month and all had gambled at Venue 1 between 2-10 years. All reported gambling around 30-90 minutes each visit and all reported spending between \$20-50 on those occasions. None of them scored above 0 on the PGSI which may indicate some reticence to reveal details about the state of their gambling or that no problem gamblers volunteered to be surveyed. Only 1 of the 5 indicated that they had tried the budget setting feature, but this person appeared to have done this under the instruction of staff rather than independently. This person typically gave scores of 3 out of 5 ('Neutral' response category) in relation to whether it was possible to find information about the feature in venue and whether the message was clearly displayed and easy to read. She agreed that the feature was easy to use and understand, liked the convenience of being able to set a budget in advance or on the day, but did not consider the feature relevant personally. None of the 5 considered the feature useful or important to them personally and supported a voluntary scheme in which players set their own budgets.

### 5.6.2 Stage 2: Results of the Task Analysis

The task analysis was done in relation to the yes/no function of Stage 2 of the trial. It involved 9 EGM players who were recruited from the general community. As indicated in Table 10, the sample comprised 3 men and 6 women of different ages and also with varying levels of experience playing gaming machines. All had played for at least two years and all but one had never used the Maxetag loyalty system before.

**Table 10.** Summary characteristics of task analysis participants

	Gender	Age Group	Frequency of EGM play	Years of EGM experience	Usual session duration
1	F	25-34	2-3/ month	9	3 hours
2	F	25-34	Up to monthly	3	31-60 mins
3	F	55-64	Up to monthly	15	15-30 mins
4	F	18-24	Up to monthly	2	< 15 mins
5	F	55-64	Up to monthly	10	31-60 mins
6	M	18-24	Weekly+	3	< 15 mins
7	F	55-64	Up to monthly	10	1-2 hours
8	M	55-64	2-3/ month	11	1-2 hours
9	M	55-64	2/3/month	16	15-30 mins

The first set of data collected from these participants was the researchers' direct observations of each of the stages of operation from tagging on to viewing their budget once it had been set. It was immediately evident that, without fuller instructions, none of the participants were entirely sure what to do based solely on the poster information, so it was decided to proceed with the fuller instructional set (refer to section 4.2), as if the feature was being introduced to patrons by venue staff (as had occurred earlier during the trial). Some of the issues that were initially unclear, but eventually addressed were:

- That people had had to learn to press the number buttons (e.g., \$5 twice to obtain \$10 as a budget).

- That there was a delay in how long it took for the balance to be updated on the console display.
- The budget referred to the amount that could be inserted into the machine and spent. Thus, if a person set a budget of \$20 and inserted \$10 into the machine, the balance would be \$10 and the budget would reduce to \$10. In effect, the system would treat the money inserted into the machine as ‘committed’ even though it had not, as yet, been spent. Players were generally able to grasp this concept, but if they then lost \$2 on the first machine and then transferred to another machine then, before any money was inserted, their budget would be \$18 (the original amount less the \$2 already spent).

In Table 11 below, a cross (X) is indicated if the person reported a problem with this phase of the operational procedure and an ‘OK’ indicates that there was no problem. It should be noted that these data refer to people’s initial use of the feature rather than their subsequent (and usually successful) use.

As indicated in Table 11, all but two had no problems tagging on (two were not quite sure to how the touch pad worked). Budget increments (eg. press \$10 and \$20 to set a budget of \$30) were usually successfully completed by most. People also understood that one could press the Balance button to view their budget amount. By far the most problematic element of the operation was the ‘Yes’ button. Although participants knew that they had to press ‘Yes’, many found that the system timed out too quickly between the time they tagged on and had to press the ‘Yes’ button and ALSO between the time taken to press ‘YES’ and then increment the budget using the number buttons. Several had to tag on and recommence the whole process. These findings may provide additional insights into why the trial detected many YES responses that were not followed by a budget. Any significant hesitation or indecision would not give people enough time to proceed to the next stage. This suggests that the operation could be enhanced by extending the system time-outs a bit longer.

**Table 11.** Outcome of initial task analysis

	Tagging on	Pressing YES	Increment Budget*	Press Yes again	View Balance
1	X	OK	X	X	X
2	X	X	OK	X	OK
3	OK	X	OK	X	X
4	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK
5	OK	X	OK	X	OK
6	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK
7	OK	X	X	X	OK
8	OK	X	OK	X	OK
9	X	X	X	X	X

\* For example: Press \$10 and \$20 to set a budget of \$30

Participants were also asked 3 open-ended questions about their perceptions of the budget (did they understand what it meant), whether they noticed the exceed budget message when they spent more than their budget and their impressions of the session activity statement. Almost all participants understood what the budget meant, but noticed that there was a delay in how long it took to update. One indicated that it was only clear after it had been explained and another commented that it did not coincide with the amounts displayed on the main EGM screen. The exceed budget message was not generally noticed while people were playing, although it is possible that some participants may not have followed the exact instructions and set a budget that was not reached during the session. The session activity statement and kiosk were generally considered easy to use, although many participants indicated that they would not have known about it unless they had been told.

A series of statements relating to the accessibility and ‘ease of use’ of the feature were asked using 5 point rating scales where 1 = Strongly agree, 3 = Neutral, and 5 = Strongly disagree. Table 12 summarises the mean ratings out of 5 and the number of participants

agreeing with each statement (a rating of 1 or 2). The data clearly show quite positive feedback concerning the quality of the hardware including the buttons and console, but less positive views about the visibility of the display and the ability to view one's balance during game-play itself. The session activity statement and kiosk was generally well received by players.

**Table 12.** Endorsement of statements by 9 participants.

	Mean rating out of 5	Agree with statement
<b>ACCESSIBILITY AND VISIBILITY</b>		
Information about the budget function is easy to obtain in the venue.	2.56	5 / 9
The function is very easy to learn how to operate from the brochure.	2.67	6 / 9
The buttons are clearly presented on the console.	2.22	7 / 9
<b>DISPLAY</b>		
The text is clearly displayed and easy to read	3.22	3 / 9
<b>FUNCTIONALITY</b>		
I found it hard to understand how the function worked.	3.44	3 / 9
The button selections were easy to follow and logical.	3.11	4 / 9
The limit exceed warning easy to see.	3.89	1 / 9
I was aware when I had spent up to my limit.	3.63	2 / 9
It was easy to tell how much over my limit I had gone.	3.67	2 / 9
<b>SESSION ACTIVITY STATEMENT</b>		
The activity statement was easy to access.	2.22	7 / 9
The activity statement was easy to understand	2.56	5 / 9
The activity statement would be useful for players	2.67	6 / 9



Other open-ended questions related to the potential benefits of the feature, whether people would use it personally and how it could be improved to provide greater ‘value’ to players. On the whole, few benefits were listed. Three respondents indicated that it had no value, whereas 2 indicated that it “may help problem gamblers to get back to reality” and “keep from overspending”. Only two indicated that it might be personally relevant to help them avoid “getting carried away” or “to keep them from over-spending”. Some respondents did not think that it would be effective or resented having constraints being placed on their behaviour:

“Definitely not. A waste of time. I don’t need a machine controlling what I can or cannot do!”

“No waste of space, unless it shuts the machine down. It continues to let you gamble.”

“No, not gambling regularly to have a problem.”

When asked how the feature might be improved, several suggestions were provided. These related to:

- Better promotion of the feature in the venue.
- Clearer and more salient messages on the EGM screen: “Should flash on the screen that the budget is reached”, “Better on screen going across so I notice it”, “Would be good if the budget stayed on the screen.”
- Meaningful consequences: “The machine should cut off once the limit has been exceeded”, “Have proper limit because you can keep playing.”

Some final questions asked respondents about their broader attitudes towards budget setting features / functions (Table 13). An interesting observation was that players were generally more in support of a feature that allowed them to set a budget each session (consistent with GGI’s approach) than one that set budgets in advance, though this position contrasts significantly with actual take-up. Few would feel embarrassed in using it and they reported being more likely to encourage others to use it than not use it.

**Table 13.** General attitudes towards budget setting

	Mean rating out of 5	Agree with statement
I would prefer to set a limit a few days in advance	3.67	2 / 9
I would like the convenience of being able to set a budget each session	2.56	6 / 9
I liked feeling in control of how much I could spend	2.44	5 / 9
I would feel embarrassed about using the budget setting function because of what others might think	3.44	3 / 9
I would discourage others from using the budget function	3.67	1 / 9
I would encourage other friends/ players to try the budget function	2.33	5 / 9

In summary, the task analysis revealed that more detailed information concerning the budget-setting steps would need to be provided or that players should be introduced to the feature by venue staff. This was generally the process that was followed at Venue 1 and, to a lesser extent, by the staff at Venue 2. A brochure that helps players understand the logic of the balance and budget display would be a useful feature in any wider implementation. It would also be useful to confirm that players know what the exceed budget messages mean and to be given some reminder that the display takes some time (sometimes over 30 seconds) to update once events have occurred on the machine. It was also clear that the time-out allowances relating to the use of the YES button would need to be extended so that novice users have enough time to press YES to begin with and also set a budget thereafter. Overall, the analysis very much supported the importance of clear information and venue staff support in making people aware of the new feature.

## 5.7 Contextual Observations

### 5.7.1 Venue Participation and Support

A significant challenge in this trial was obtaining a sufficient number of venues who were willing to have the budget-setting feature activated. This was due to several reasons. First, unlike in some previous trials conducted in Australia, GGI did not have a direct relationship with South Australia's Maxetag venues outside of providing a loyalty system. For example, GGI did not own or have any affiliation with any of the venues. This meant that GGI could not require venues to participate in the trial and instead had to market the budget-setting feature to venues and negotiate venue participation. GGI is also an interstate based organisation which meant that some time was required for the company to develop an understanding of the South Australian environment and to develop a relationship with Maxetag venues. These logistical factors mean that system changes could not be readily undertaken as soon as they were required. Instead, changes had to be made in designated blocks and subject to the availability of specialist staff who had to travel across to South Australia. At each visit, GGI had to be accompanied by an approved holder of a gaming machine service licence and to pay a repeated fee for this service.

Second, given that pre-commitment technology has the intended purpose of assisting players to keep to their gambling budgets and trials to date have shown an overall reduced expenditure in players, there were also financial reasons why some venues may have been reluctant to participate. During 2010-2011, many venues were experiencing revenue downturns following the impact of the Global Financial Crisis. For example, EGM revenue growth had not matched previous years during this period and venues (including the one that was eventually withdrawn from the trial in 2010) were likely to have been experiencing other financial pressures that would have further raised concerns about the impact of pre-commitment features.

A third potential factor that may have influenced the participation rate of venues was the high level of publicity and national debate concerning pre-commitment that occurred during the trial period. Although the Productivity Commission's gambling report was not

released until June 2010, it had been preceded by a draft which showed that a primary recommendation was for all venues to provide pre-commitment. Any early concerns arising from the Commission's findings would have been further compounded when the national pre-commitment policy became increasingly debated and profiled in the media in relation to the Wilkie-Gillard agreement from September 2010. Throughout this period, there were frequent media representations from industry concerning the likely substantial revenue losses which were likely to arise from the implementation of a mandatory pre-commitment scheme.

Finally, as noted in section 3, there were also technological reasons why some venues could not participate in the trial. One venue in particular was prevented from participating in the trial, despite its willingness, due to it being part of a group loyalty system. System issues about budget transferability across the group loyalty venues and system reporting across venues could not be addressed by GGI and so participation could not be achieved.

### 5.7.2 Player Recruitment and Interest

In contrast to some previous studies conducted both nationally and internationally, this trial did not use any form of monetary incentive at any stage of the trial to encourage Maxetag users to use the budget-setting feature. Nor did the trial use a panel design in which previously identified Maxetag users were asked to interact with the technology and report on their experiences. Instead, the trial used a combination of natural uptake (Stage 1, May-November 2010) and staff-assisted recruitment in the gaming area (Stage 2, December 2010-August 2011). As indicated in this report, the natural uptake stage was unsuccessful. Few, if any, Maxetag users utilised the budget-setting feature during Stage 1 and relatively few did so during Stage 2, and often only as a result of the encouragement of venue staff. These results suggest that:

- Recruitment solely through posters in the venue (Stage 1) is not sufficient. People may not notice these posters and understand what they are about, or consider them relevant;
- Staff involvement and encouragement is essential to create interest and involvement from patrons (Stage 2);
- Voice-overs (Stage 2) may also be effective, although in this trial it was difficult to differentiate the effect of this strategy over other factors, including venue staff

activity or a gradual growth in familiarity and awareness. For example, the highest increase in interaction with the budget-setting feature occurred in April 2011 at one venue at a time when all the Maxetag users present at the venue had already visited the venue before and been exposed to the promotions. This month also followed the introduction of the first voice-over.

- The effectiveness of promotions is short-lived. Some Maxetag users were willing to try the technology, often at the encouragement of staff, but these players did not use the feature again. Despite this, it appeared that it was possible to achieve a gradual increase in awareness of the budget-setting feature as indicated by the increase in the number of Maxetag users pressing ‘No’ or setting a budget. A particular challenge in this trial was that the most active venue was a club with a more stable membership. Once many of the existing Maxetag users had decided that the feature was not useful for them, it was therefore difficult to find new patrons to whom the feature might be promoted. Such a situation may not necessarily apply in larger, more centrally located hotels with a wider and less stable customer base.

Another important factor that may have influenced player recruitment included the usability of the technology. Although the process appeared relatively straightforward once it had been explained to patrons by staff, the task analysis revealed that some Maxetag users may have found the process more difficult without staff assistance. In Stage 1, the process was not intuitive in that there were no clear buttons dedicated to the function so that players had to be very reliant on the information displayed on posters. In Stage 2, the process was more intuitive in that there were dedicated buttons relating to decision-making, although it was found that the system timed out quite quickly after players tagged on and after they had pressed ‘Yes’ to set a budget. Some players may have, therefore, been deterred from using the feature if their first attempt was unsuccessful. Evidence from the logging of system responses clearly showed that there were a number of people who pressed ‘Yes’, but who did not proceed to setting a budget. Although feedback from venue staff indicated that this may have been due to concern about the possible consequences of proceeding, it is likely that the timing-out of the budget-setting feature may have also been important, particularly for novice users.

Finally, as indicated in Section 5.7.1, it is likely that the same media coverage that dissuaded venues from participating in the trial may have also influenced the level of player

participation. At no stage was the Maxetag budget-setting feature promoted as a tool to assist problem gamblers. Instead, the general aim was to provide existing loyalty tag users with a facility which they could use to manage their ‘budgets’. Thus, despite the TCG and GGI’s attempts to use neutral wording, the budget-setting feature appears to have been viewed as a facility for problem gamblers by some Maxetag users.

### 5.7.3 Language

Although also related to the topic of recruitment just discussed, the trial also provided an opportunity to consider appropriate language that should be used by industry and researchers to promote pre-commitment systems. Given that players do not want to be labelled problem gamblers if they choose to set budgets, or want a system imposed on them, it is important that certain language be avoided or used with caution. Some examples included: ‘control’, ‘limits’ or ‘responsible gambling’

It was concluded that the term ‘budget’ be used where possible because it has a more neutral connotation than the word ‘limit’, although this word still remained on the Maxetag console in 2011. The Trial Co-ordination Group also believed that it was important to use such phrases as ‘Your budget’ so as to personalise the message. In this way, players would see the pre-commitment feature as being something being made available for their benefit rather than a form of venue control over their behaviour. The term ‘responsible gambling’ was also used with care in that it was important to avoid the implication that patrons were not responsible with their gambling and that the principal purpose of the new feature was to promote responsible gambling at a venue level. For example, in one of the voice-over messages used, patrons were reminded that Venue 1 supported responsible gambling, rather than believing that its patrons should behave this way. The original posters used in early 2011 were also modified to remove references to the term ‘responsible gambling’.

It was not possible to determine from the available data what effect language had on the behaviour of Maxetag users because the behaviour and reactions of these patrons were likely to have been influenced by a variety of factors. However, the modifications to language undertaken during the trial appeared entirely appropriate given that some patrons were rejecting the budget-setting feature because they perceived it as only being relevant to problem gambling.

#### 5.7.4 Technological Issues

Although venues did not find the technology to be overly onerous to understand, there were a number of technological barriers that had to be overcome to install the new feature on the existing Maxetag loyalty system. New hardware (the console with the buttons) had to be installed on each machine and new software had to be introduced. In the initial stages, Global Gaming Industries experienced difficulties with the Central Monitoring System (CMS). This one way monitoring system samples information from machines to ensure that they are operating correctly and in line with State legislation, and to download revenue data for tax purposes. However, as GGI found, the sampling rate was not initially fast enough to allow the system to respond to player actions within a few seconds.

In addition, as shown in the task analysis, the delay made it difficult for players to understand the current status of their budget both at the start of gambling sessions and during play. For example, if a player set a budget, some time (up to a minute) would need to elapse before this value was registered on the display. Similarly, whenever more money was inserted into the machine, the player would not be able to obtain a budget balance value by pressing the 'Balance' button unless he or she waited for some time. On some occasions, the person could play for a minute and spend several dollars before being able to find out how much budget was remaining. All of these complexities were then compounded if the person moved to a second machine because the budget amount would then reset itself to the original set value minus any money lost on the previous machine. If budget-setting on the previous machine had also been preceded by an existing credit balance, then this amount would also appear on the next machine. Thus, while the software was performing logically and appropriately according to GGI's specifications, it is not surprising to find that the operation of the budget-setting feature was quite confusing for some players.

Another technological barrier (already mentioned) was that the involvement of a potential fourth venue was prevented by a group (networked) loyalty system that operated across multiple venues. When GGI attempted to install the pre-commitment features, there were challenges: (a) associated with ensuring that Maxetags used at one venue would be recognised at other venues in the group, and (b) ensuring that the new features did not compromise the functioning of the existing group loyalty system.

### 5.7.5 Data Issues

The capacity to collect high quality data was considerably limited. Some of these limitations are as follows:

- There was no dedicated data-base developed in conjunction with the trial to allow full patron details to be cross-referenced against system data. Although each venue had mailing lists for their Maxetag users, many of these patrons were not active or current players. This meant that it was difficult to conduct a detailed survey of Maxetag users at the venues and obtain information about the status of their gambling (e.g., problem gambler vs. recreational gambler status).
- Relatively little demographic information was collected concerning patrons and these data were often incomplete. For example, many people were not willing to state their gender or age when they signed up for a Maxetag.
- The budget increment data did not include what proportion of each player's budget included credit already on the machine.
- For technical reasons, it was not possible to capture the amounts spent during sessions or to obtain pre- and post-trial expenditure for individual players. Such data would have allowed some analysis of whether the availability and / or use of the budget-setting feature influenced player expenditure.

In future trials, the most effective data collection strategy would be to establish a dedicated data-base prior to the commencement of the trial. More detailed and consistent demographic information would be collected at the outset and data would be compiled in a more condensed form to capture all relevant activities during each session of gambling. For example, for each player ID, one would obtain details of what budget was set, the exact duration of sessions on each machine, net expenditure, time and money gambled after the budget had been reached. Such material would be cross-referenced by demographic characteristics and other survey data. Player IDs would also be used to conduct longitudinal analyses to examine trends in expenditure patterns and how these vary depending upon how the pre-commitment system is being utilised.

### 5.7.6 Other Trial Strategies

As indicated earlier in the report (Section 2), not all of the strategies that GGI planned for the trial or that were discussed by the TCG were successfully implemented. For example,



one suggestion was to introduce a warning or ‘seat-belt’ alarm during Stage 2 that would activate whenever players tagged on. This sound would only terminate when players make an active response (‘Yes’ or ‘No’). In the end this strategy was not implemented by GGI because sufficient time and resources were not available for this to be successfully implemented prior to the completion of the trial. GGI expressed reservations about using direct incentives, e.g., extra ticket draws at the venue for Maxetag users who set budgets. GGI argued that such rewards were unlikely to have significantly influenced behaviour because the rewards were quite minimal.

Another strategy GGI originally proposed for implementation in Stage 2 was to create multiple ways in which to set budgets, e.g., by the foyer terminal/ kiosk. However, this strategy was not implemented because of technical challenges and the time and resources available to GGI to modify the terminal software<sup>1</sup>. As it turns out, the very low level of terminal use and the low level of budget-setting observed meant that this strategy would have probably made very little difference to the results observed in this trial.

Some of strategies could potentially be investigated in future trials. For example, it would be possible to investigate the value of small incentives on the usage and adoption of pre-commitment features. Not all trials would be able to impose ‘seat-belt’ alarms because some systems require budgets to be set in advance rather than at the machines, but such a strategy could potentially be employed in future trials involving a Maxetag-style system where players have to set budgets each day. It would also be possible to examine whether providing multiple methods for budget-setting (e.g., kiosk, cashier’s desk, Internet) increases the number of people who sign up to pre-commitment systems and how they interact with it. Finally, in future trials it would be useful to consider the value of providing default ‘limits’ on player expenditure for those people who do not choose to set a budget of their own choosing. In this trial, the duration of the trial as well as the small number of budget-setters meant that it was not possible to obtain any reliable data concerning the effectiveness of this strategy, but this could certainly be investigated in future trials with larger sample sizes.

---

<sup>1</sup> GGI estimated that during the three years of the trial, which was well beyond the 6-8 months originally envisaged, the cost of Senior GGI management’s direct involvement in the trial (eg. travelling to South Australia for initial system implementation and support, and participation in the Trial Coordination Group) was \$140,000 based on an apportionment of salary across the number of days committed. GGI point out, however, that the level of staff commitment required for South Australia was considerably higher than in other States because of difficulties with the CMS protocols and other logistical issues associated with having to travel across and obtain third part service support to conduct system updates.

## 6. Conclusions

The purpose of this evaluation was to examine three broad areas relating to the implementation of the Maxetag budget-setting feature: (1) Did it provide value for EGM players (e.g., did a significant proportion of the customers use the features and did they find them useful?) (2) Did the trial give rise to behavioural impacts consistent with the Working Party's goal of customers gambling responsibly?; and (3) Would the feature be cost effective to venues if the trial were extended to full operation? The following sections provide a brief summary of conclusions related to these three trial aims.

### 6.1. Did the Feature Provide Value to Customers?

Overall, it was difficult to conclude that the budget-setting feature was of value to customers in this trial. This conclusion is based on a number of factors and different sources of data. First, as shown by the analysis of objective behavioural data, very few Maxetag users chose to set a budget. Only 1.8% ever did so at one venue and only 0.8% at the other. Only around half of those who set a budget did so more than once, so there was very little evidence that the feature provided 'ongoing value' to customers in general. As shown in Table 7 and 8, only one patron used the feature in any sustained manner.

Second, there was qualitative evidence from both patrons at the venues as well as EGM players recruited as part of the task analysis to suggest that the budget-setting feature was not considered relevant or useful. Although some of this reluctance resulted from a misperception of the feature as a tool designed only to assist problem gamblers, it was nonetheless evident that players (even very regular ones) did not perceive a personal need to set budgets when they gambled. Participants in the task analysis also indicated that there were elements of the design that would serve to reduce the effectiveness of the feature. The display console was too small; there were no real penalties if a person chose to continue gambling after budgets had been exceeded; and, some respondents indicated that the feature and its functions were not sufficiently salient on the screen to attract the attention of players.

Third, as was discussed in several parts of this report, there were aspects of the design of the budget-setting feature that may have dissuaded new people from using it, or given rise to confusion once it was activated. These included the delayed display updates resulting from the slow EGM polling, the rapid time-outs during the budget-setting process, and the mental arithmetic that had to be undertaken to interpret the budget value once it had been established

and when players moved to different machines. Thus, while a number of players found the feature relatively easy to use once they had been shown how to use it, the design and operation was not as intuitive and easy as it initially appeared.

## **6.2 Was the Behavioural Impact of the Trial Consistent with the Working Party's Goal of Customers Gambling Responsibly?**

This question is difficult to answer because the term 'responsible gambling' could be interpreted in a variety of ways and the range of data available was not sufficient to allow any investigation of several elements of this question. For example, there was no capacity (given the nature of the data and small sample size) to determine whether the impacts of the trial varied across people with varying levels of 'risk for gambling problems', or whether the feature could be used to support rehabilitation services. In principle, it could be argued that the feature functioned effectively and therefore was certainly capable of assisting customers in making more informed decisions about their gambling, but it is unclear whether the trial supported the goal of 'better money management'. Apart from the fact that very few people set budgets and therefore were in a position to benefit from the feature, many people (around half) did not adhere to the budgets that were set. A number spent several hundreds of dollars more than their budget. Even when people adhered to their budgets, they did not then necessarily use the budget-setting feature repeatedly to assist their gambling.

## **6.3 Was the Operation of the Pre-commitment and Player Tracking System Cost Effective to the Gaming Venue?**

There was no evidence to suggest the installation and operation of the budget-setting feature imposed any significant burdens on venues. Nor was there any evidence that revenue was affected by the operation of the trial. The principal costs imposed on venues appeared to relate to staff training and consultation, although much of this was either short-term or of a very brief duration. For example, at both venues, training occurred initially during Stage 1 when the feature was first installed, and when it was updated to include the new Yes/ No buttons at the start of Stage 2 (around 1-2 hours or less). Staff also received intermittent briefing to remind them of the existence of the feature and how it operated and also concerning their responsibility to support the trial. Venue managers also had to interact with venue staff and co-ordinate the training on these few occasions. Venue 1 also dedicated the time of one staff member for a whole month during April 2011. However, despite these

commitments it was the view of management that the trial had not imposed any significant financial burdens on the venue and that the feature was, in this sense, cost effective.

GGI indicated that the base installation cost of setting up Maxetag and the budget-setting feature at a venue with 35 machines was \$65,000. This included the establishment of a data-base; hardware; installation of the foyer terminal; the loyalty system; automatic promotions; ticket printers; the Point of Sale Interface that allowed loyalty points to be tracked across the system; and, the time for GGI staff to undertake the installation. Other costs at both venues included monthly licensing and support fees, cabling contractors and the services of a Gaming Machine Service License holder to conduct updates to the system. GGI point out, however, that the level of staff commitment required for South Australia was considerably higher than in other States because of difficulties with the CMS protocols and other logistical issues associated with having to travel across and obtain third part service support to conduct system updates.

If one allows up to \$10,000 to cover the minor subcontracting costs not included in the base amount of \$65,000 then the total cost of setting up the Maxetag system with the budget-setting feature is around \$75,000 per venue or just over \$2000 per EGM.

## Appendix A: Venue Staff Interview/ Focus Group

### Installation and establishment of Budget Setting Feature

- a. How easy was it to set-up the budget-setting feature in the venue?
- b. What sort of staff training was required to understand how it worked? Was this training sufficient for what you needed to know?
- c. How many staff were involved and did the introduction of the feature interfere with the venue's activities in any way?

### Overall Assessment

- d. What is your overall view of the Maxetag feature?
- e. What do you see as its main benefits or limitations?
- f. Do patrons who have tried it, found it useful?

### Player Reactions

- g. Are players generally aware of the new feature? Do they know how to use it?
- h. How have players in general reacted when made aware of the feature?
- i. How easy or difficult was it to get people to try the feature?
- j. What people were most or least like to try it?
- k. What sort of gamblers would find it most useful? Do you think it could help problem gamblers?
- l. How did people respond once they'd tried it for some time?
- m. Are you aware of any players who have used it quite frequently?
- n. Did you see anyone reach their limits? How did they respond?
- o. Do you think that players found it fairly easy to use?
- p. Do players take the trouble to obtain player activity statements from the kiosk? Do they appear to find them useful and understand the information provided?

### Technical Issues

- q. Have there been any technical problems with the feature since it was introduced?

### Venue Impact

- r. Has the introduction of the feature or its ongoing use created very much work for venue staff? If so, how much work has it caused?

### Future Use

- s. Are there any ways in which the new feature might be more effectively promoted?
- t. Are there any improvements you would make to it?
- u. Do you think that people would get used to it over time?

## Appendix B: Survey of Maxetag Users

### Individual Details

As part of our research, it is important for us to know how well our sample of participants compares with the population in the general community (e.g., as based on the ABS Census). For this reason, could you please answer a few background or demographic questions.

Q1

	Male	Female
Are you?		

**Q2:** Into what age group do you fall?

	Age Category (Tick one)
18-24	
25-34	
35-44	
45-54	
55-64	
65-74	
75 and older	

**Q3.** Ethnicity

	Yes	No
Do you identify yourself as having a Aboriginal or Torres-strait Islander ethnicity or background?		

**Q4.** In what country were you born?

	Please tick one
Australia/ NZ	
UK	
North America	
Europe (not UK)	
Asia	
Other (please specify	

Q5. In what local government area do you live?

**Q6.** Are you currently?

	Please tick one
In full-time paid employment	
Part-time / Casual paid employment	
Retired	
Looking for work	
Studying/ Student	
Other (please specify)	

We would now like to ask you a few questions about gambling? We are interested in hearing from people who've had different amounts of experience playing the pokies and other forms of gambling.

**Q7.** In the table below, please indicate how often you have gambled on poker machines **IN THE LAST 12 months?**

	1 Never	2 1-2 times per year	3 3 times/ year up to monthly	4 2-3 times per month	5 Weekly or more often
Poker-machines					

**Q8.** In approximately what year did you first play a poker machine?

**Q9.** Approximately how long have you played pokies at the [Venue 1]? Years

**Q10.** Approximately how many different machines would you play each visit?

**Q11.** How long would you usually spend playing pokies each day you visit?

	Please tick one
< 15 minutes	
15-30 minutes	
31-60 minutes	
1-2 hours	
2-3 hours	
More than 3 hours	

**Q12.** After taking into account the amount you took along and won and lost- how much would you say you spend on a typical visit?

	Please tick one
< \$10	
\$11-20	
\$21-50	
\$51-100	
\$100-200	
\$201+	

**Q13.** In the **LAST 12 MONTHS** how often have you?

	Never	Sometimes	Most of the time	Almost always
Bet more than you could really afford to lose				
Needed to gamble with larger amounts of money to get the same feeling of excitement				
Gone back another day to try and win back the money you lost				
Borrowed money or sold anything to get money to gamble				
Felt that you might have a problem with gambling				
Felt that gambling has caused you health problems, including stress and anxiety				
People criticised your betting or told you that you have a gambling problem, whether or not you thought it was true				
Felt your gambling has caused financial problems for you or your household				
Felt guilty about the way you gamble or what happens when you gamble				

We would now like to ask you a few questions about your experiences using a **Maxetag**.

**Q14.** How long have you used a Maxetag to gain loyalty points?

	Please tick one
< 3 months	
3 up to 6 months	
6 up to 12 months	
1-2 years	
More than 2 years	

**Q15** At approximately how many venues do you currently use your Maxetag?

**Q16 Awareness**

	Yes	No
Are you aware of the “budget setting” function that can be accessed using your Maxetag tag?		
	<b>Go to Q17</b>	<b>Go to Q30</b>



**Q17** How did you **FIRST** become aware of the availability of the budget setting function?

	Please tick one
Saw a poster in the venue	
Read a brochure	
Saw the sign on the machine	
I have to press YES or NO each time I play a machine	
Staff member told me about it	
Other players told me about it	
Heard the message over the speakers	
Other.....	

**Q18** Use of the budget function

	Yes	No
Have you ever set a budget using your Maxetag tag?		
	<b>Go to Q19</b>	<b>Go to Q26</b>

**Q19** How would you characterise your first attempt to use the budget function?

	Please tick one
I worked it out without any information	
I worked it out myself after reading an information brochure or poster and it was quite easy	
I worked it out myself after reading an information brochure or poster but it took some time to work out	
A staff member showed me how to do it	
Another player showed me	
Other.....	

**Q20** How would you characterise your use of the budget function **AFTER** you'd first tried it?

	Please tick one
I used it consistently every time I gambled	
I used it every day, but not on all machines	
I only used it on some days	
I used it a bit at the start, but then used it less and less often	
I used it only once and decided it wasn't for me	
Other.....	

**Q21** When you used the budget setting function, did you **USUALLY** do this after you had started playing the pokies, or only after you had been playing for some time?

	Tick One
Usually once I'd been gambling for some time	
Before I first started gambling on a given day	

Q22 For each of the following questions, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>ACCESSIBILITY AND VISIBILITY</b>					
Information about the budget function is easy to obtain in the venue.					
The function is very easy to learn how to operate from the brochure.					
The buttons are clearly presented on the console.					
<b>MESSAGE</b>					
The message is clearly displayed and easy to read					
The message made sense to me when I first read it					
I did not see the message as judgmental					
The message did not put me off using the budget function.					
<b>FUNCTIONALITY</b>					
I found it hard to understand how the function worked.					
The button selections were easy to follow and logical.					
The limit exceed warning sound was easy to hear.					
I was aware when I had spent up to my budget					
It was easy to tell how much over my budget I had gone.					
<b>ATTITUDE TOWARDS BUDGET SETTING FUNCTION</b>					
I would prefer to set a budget a few days in advance.					
I liked the convenience of being able to set a					

budget each session.					
I liked feeling in control of how much I could spend					
I felt embarrassed about using the budget function because of what others might think.					
I felt embarrassed when the machine indicated that I'd exceeded my budget.					
I would discourage others from using the budget function.					
I would encourage other friends/ players to try to budget function.					
<b>CONTROL</b>					
The budget function made it easier for me to stop gambling when I wanted to.					
I felt that I had more control over how much money I was spending.					
The budget function made gambling on the pokies less enjoyable					
The budget function made gambling on the pokies MORE enjoyable.					
I did not like being reminded to stop gambling.					
I was less likely to chase losses because of the budget setting function.					
I liked the spend reminders that were sent when I went over my budget and kept playing.					
I felt less inclined to take out more money to gamble because of the budget setting function.					
I felt more content to go home because I knew when I had reached my budget for the day.					
I don't think it had any effect at all on my ability					

to control how much I spent.					
------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--

**Q23 Budget Setting**

What amount did you usually set as your budget?	\$ ....
What is the lowest and highest amount you set?	Lowest ..... Highest .....

**Q24** Approximately, how often did you find yourself exceeding your daily budget when you used the budget setting function?

	Tick one
Never	
Rarely (less than 25% of the time)	
Occasionally (25% up to 50% of the time)	
Frequently (50% or more of the time)	
Almost always	

**Q25** Exceed Amount

By how much did you usually exceed your budget?	\$ ....
---	---------

**Q26** Were you aware that you can obtain a player activity session from a kiosk in the venue that tells you how much you have won or lost?

1. Yes
2. No

**Q27** Did you ever use the kiosk to obtain a player activity print out?

1. Yes
2. No [Go to Q30]

**Q 28** If 'Yes', did you find it:

	Yes	No
Easy to obtain		
Easy to understand		
Useful as a way to understand how much you had been spending		

**Q29a** If you WERE AWARE of the new budget setting function on Maxetag, why did you **NOT use** it to set a budget? To what extent were the following factors important?

	Not important at all	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Of highest importance
It did not seem relevant to me: only problem gamblers					
It looked too complicated to me.					
I didn't know how to use it.					
I didn't see any need for it.					
I couldn't be bothered.					
I was worried about my privacy.					
I would feel embarrassed in front of other players.					
I would feel embarrassed in front of the club staff.					
I didn't think it would help how much I spend.					
Other.....					

**Q29b** If you knew more about the feature, do you think you would use it? YES / NO

**If No, why not:**

	Not important at all	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Of highest importance
It would not seem relevant to me: only problem gamblers					
I didn't know how to use it.					
I couldn't be bothered.					
I would be worried about my privacy.					
I would feel embarrassed in front of other players.					
I would feel embarrassed in front of the club staff.					
I don't think it would					

change how much I spend.					
Other.....					

If **YES**:

	Not important at all	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Of highest importance
It would help me stick to a budget					
It would help me keep track of my gambling					
It would make gambling on the pokies more enjoyable					

**Q30** What is your current attitude towards your own gambling?

	Tick one
I do not intend to change the amount I am currently gambling in the next 6 months	
I intend to reduce the amount I am currently gambling in the next 6 months	
I am trying to reduce the amount I am currently gambling.	
I have been successful in reducing the amount I gambled and want to keep doing this.	

**Q31** Do you think the use of cards or tags should be voluntary or compulsory for ALL players?

	Tick one
Voluntary (People can still use cash as well)	
Compulsory (machines only operate with a card or tag)	

**Q32** To what degree, do you believe that players should be required to set limits on their pokies play?

	Tick one
Should be compulsory for players to set limits/ budgets	
Should be optional for players to set limits	
Don't have a view either way	

**Q33** Should the limits set be determined by the Government or each individual player?

	Tick one
The Government	
Each individual player	

**Q34** For pokies play generally, which is or WOULD be most useful to you personally as a player?

	Tick as many as apply
Time limit on play (e.g., maximum hours per day)	
Taking a short break after so many minutes	
Spending limit	
None are useful or important	

**Q35** Which is most useful for pokies play?

	Tick one
Monthly limit <sup>2</sup>	
Fortnightly limit	
Weekly limit	
Daily limit	

---

<sup>2</sup> The term 'limit' is used more broadly in the pre-commitment literature, but the term 'budget' was used wherever possible in the Maxetag trial.

## Appendix C: Usability Trial Template

Q1

	Male	Female
Are you?		

**Q2:** Into what age group do you fall?

	Age Category (Tick one)
18-24	
25-34	
35-44	
45-54	
55-64	
65-74	
75 and older	

**Q3.** Ethnicity

	Yes	No
Do you identify yourself as having a Aboriginal or Torres-strait Islander ethnicity or background?		

*We would now like to ask you a few questions about gambling? We are interested in hearing from people who've had different amounts of experience playing the pokies and other forms of gambling.*

**Q4.** In the table below, please indicate how often you have gambled on poker machines?

	1 Never	2 1-2 times per year	3 3 times/ year up to monthly	4 2-3 times per month	5 Weekly or more often
Poker-machines					



**Q5.** In approximately what year did you first play a poker machine?

**Q6.** Approximately how long have you played pokies at this venue?

**Q7.** Approximately how many different machines would you play each visit?

**Q8.** How long would you usually spend playing pokies each day you visit?

	Please tick one
< 15 minutes	
15-30 minutes	
31-60 minutes	
1-2 hours	
2-3 hours	
More than 3 hours	

**Q9** Are you currently a Maxetag user? YES / NO

**Q10** Are you aware of the budget setting function that you use with Maxetag? YES / NO

**IF YES**

**Q11** How did you become aware of it? [Tick as many as you like]

Saw it on the machine	
Staff told me about it	
Another patron told me about it	
Saw a poster/ read a brochure	
Heard the voice-over	
Other [specify]	

### Functionality Testing

	Completed	Comments on Sequence Element
Tagging on		

Press YES		
Set Limit Increment		
Press YES again		
View Balance		
View exceed messages		

**Prompt Questions:**

Did you understand what the balance and limit meant?

---



---



---

Did the exceed limit message make sense?

---



---



---

Would you know from where and how to get an Activity Statement? Were you able to understand it?

---



---



---

**POST-DEMONSTRATION QUESTIONS**

For each of the following questions, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>ACCESSIBILITY AND VISIBILITY</b>					
Information about the budget function is easy to obtain in the venue.					
The function is very easy to learn how to operate from the brochure.					
The buttons are clearly presented on the console.					
<b>DISPLAY</b>					
The text is clearly displayed and easy to read					
<b>FUNCTIONALITY</b>					
I found it hard to understand how the function worked.					
The button selections were easy to follow and logical.					
The limit exceed warning easy to see.					
I was aware when I had					

spent up to my limit.					
It was easy to tell how much over my limit I had gone.					
<b>ACTIVITY STATEMENT</b>					
The activity statement was easy to access.					
The activity statement was easy to understand					
The activity statement would be useful for players					

#### VIEWS ON BUDGET SETTING FUNCTION

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>ATTITUDE TOWARDS BUDGET SETTING FUNCTION</b>					
I would prefer to set a limit a few days in advance.					
I would like the convenience of being able to set a budget each session.					
I liked feeling in control of how much I could spend					
I felt embarrassed when the machine indicated that I'd exceeded my limit.					
I would discourage others from using the budget function.					

I would encourage other friends/ players to try to budget function.					
---	--	--	--	--	--

### General Question

Overall, what benefits would this budget setting feature have for players?

---



---



---

Would you use it personally? Why and why not.

---



---



---

How do you think they could improve the feature or encourage people to try it out?

---



---



---

Thank YOU for your contribution to this evaluation