

# Media Release

**The Hon Melissa Horne MP**  
Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation  
Minister for Ports and Freight  
Minister for Local Government  
Minister for Suburban Development



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## INNOVATIVE PILOT TACKLING GAMBLING HARM IN BALLARAT

The Andrews Labor Government is ensuring Ballarat locals experiencing the devastating impacts of gambling harm can get tailored treatment and support services with an innovative new program being piloted in the region.

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation Melissa Horne, Member for Buninyong Michaela Settle and Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison launched the pilot, which equips allied health professions with a new way of screening patients to determine the best treatments to get them back on track.

It will increase access to, and training for, practitioners who operate within the mental health, alcohol and other drugs sectors and are treating people vulnerable to gambling harm.

Following feedback from Gambler's Help service funded through the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, the program has been developed to improve pathways for people seeking treatment for co-existing conditions, such as a mental health issue in addition to gambling harm.

It starts with a simple question by a health practitioner to their client about whether they gamble and progresses through the appropriate pathway for each person from there.

The pilot program will increase awareness of gambling harm among healthcare professions and remove barriers faced by people seeking help – such as stigma.

The trial uses the latest evidence to improve outcomes for the Ballarat community, with the lessons to inform future programs across the state.

The training will be led by clinical consultant Dr Jane Oakes and the Foundation's Principal Clinical Advisor, Tony Clarkson and provided to practitioners at Ballarat Community Health, Child and Family Services and the Salvation Army Health Services.

For more information on the Foundation's Gambler's Help services, visit [www.gamblershelp.com.au](http://www.gamblershelp.com.au).

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation Melissa Horne**

*"Everyone experiences gambling harm differently, and tailored treatment options are so important for long-term recovery – which is exactly what this tool provides."*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Buninyong Michaela Settle**

*"Gambling harm is a complex issue, which is made even more so when it co-exists with other conditions. This pilot will make it easier for locals in this situation to access all the services they need."*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison**

*"This pilot is ensuring locals can get the help they need by increasing awareness among allied health professionals and removing stigma as a barrier to seeking support."*

**Media contact:** Casey Lodge 0410 964 928 [casey.lodge@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:casey.lodge@minstaff.vic.gov.au)