

National Association for Gambling Studies (NAGS) Officeholders 2016-17



President – Professor Alex Blaszczynski

Alex Blaszczynski currently holds the positions of Professor of Psychology, The University of Sydney; Director, The University of Sydney's Gambling Treatment Clinic; President, National Association for Gambling Studies Inc. from November 2016 and formerly Vice President, National Association for Gambling Studies Inc. (Nov 2014-2016); President, Psychology Council of New South Wales.

For the period 2012 – 2017, Professor Blaszczynski has conducted research funded directly by Australian or international government, or government-related funding agencies, and industry operators. These include Gambling Research Exchange Ontario, ClubsNSW, Dooleys Club Lidcombe, Aristocrat Leisure Industries, Gaming Technologies Association, Gambling Research Australia, Sportsbet, NSW Department of Trade and Investment (NSW Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing), La Loterie Romande (Switzerland), Camelot (United Kingdom), La Française des Jeux (France), Loto-Quebec (Canada), and National Lottery (Belgium), and the National Association for Gambling Studies.

He has received honorariums from Manitoba Gambling Research Program and GambleAware (formerly UK Responsible Gambling Trust) for grant reviews, and royalties from several publishers for books and book chapters. He has also received travel and accommodation expenses from Svenska Spel (Sweden), Casino Austria, Gambling Research Exchange Ontario, USA National Council on Problem Gambling, Le Comité d'organisation Congrès international sur les troubles addictifs, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, North American Association of State and Provincial Lotteries, New Horizons (British Columbia Lottery Corporation), and National Council on Problem Gambling (Singapore) to attend conferences and meetings.

All professional dealings have been conducted with the aim of enhancing responsible gambling and harm minimisation policies and practices, training counsellors in the treatment interventions, and advancing our understanding of the psychology of gambling.



Vice President – Rowan Cameron

Rowan Cameron has been part of the NSW gambling treatment sector since 1999 and was the first gambling counsellor in Australia to be directly employed by industry.

A clinician with tertiary qualifications in counselling and psychotherapy, Rowan developed a state-wide treatment services and training program for NSW hotels as Manager of the GameCare program – an initiative of the Australian Hotels Association (NSW).

In recognition of the potential for gambling venues to play a greater role in response to patron help-seeking, Rowan pioneered multi-venue self-exclusion in more than 2000 hotels across NSW and is a passionate advocate for the value of this tool in assisting problem gamblers.

In 2010, Rowan was employed as the first full time dedicated Manager for ClubSAFE – the responsible gambling management program for the clubs of NSW - bringing more than a decade's experience in management of industry-based treatment services for problem gamblers.

In his time with ClubsNSW, he has been responsible for the development and implementation of a multi-venue self-exclusion scheme across 1400 venues. The system is the result of a million dollar-plus investment and utilises world-leading technology.

Rowan is a passionate advocate for stakeholder collaboration - believing that so much more can be achieved to assist problem gamblers through cooperation by all invested parties across the gambling sector.



Treasurer – Nicola Coalter

Nicola Coalter attended her first NAGS Conference in 2008 and is part of an organisational membership held by Amity Community Services Inc. for over twenty years. She has been NAGS NT representative since 2012.

Nicola is currently employed as the Coordinator of Amity's Gambling Harm Minimisation and Education Program that extends across the 1,352,176 sq. km that is the Northern Territory.

Funding for this program is through the Community Benefit Fund – Grant Amelioration stream - NT Department of Business.

Nicola's role as the coordinator of the Territory wide gambling project encompasses coordination of a diverse array of treatment services, community education and prevention strategies and projects, health promotion, training and partnerships and consultation activities with a range of stakeholders.

Amity's Gambling Program aims to minimise the actual and potential harms associated with gambling, as experienced by individuals, families and the wider community, by employing evidence-based intervention, prevention and protection strategies.

The project works with diverse groups; Indigenous people in urban and remote places who engage in regulated (e.g. EGMs) and unregulated (e.g. card games) gambling activities, professionals working in other health, social, financial and legal services where gambling may not be the presenting concern but is of concern for their clients, International students through our public health 'toilet door' campaign at the university and industry for health promotion material, helpline numbers, information about the odds and strategies for people to stay in control displayed throughout venues.

Nicola is a registered psychologist currently working through a Master in Public Health and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Before joining Amity in 2008, Nicola worked with an employee assistance counselling program provider.

Nicola also has over 15 years' management experience in the hospitality and gambling industry in a range of venues in Adelaide and Darwin.

Secretary – Marisa Fogarty



Dr. Marisa Fogarty is a Research Fellow at the ANU Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR). She holds a PhD in Anthropology, a Masters of Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development and Bachelor of Arts (Psychology and Anthropology). Marisa specialises in qualitative research methods, with a particular research focus on gambling policy, social and Indigenous issues, social service delivery and program development.

Marisa's PhD research extensively explored the impacts of gambling in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. This research won the 'National Student Award' at the National Association for Gambling Studies conference in 2007.

Australian Capital Territory Representative – Fiona Loaney



Fiona Loaney is the Manager of the ACT Gambling Counselling and Support Service (AGCSS), managed by Relationships Australia Canberra & Region. She has worked for the organisation since 2010 in a variety of roles. Fiona has extensive experience working across sectors, with experience in marketing, contract management, program management, stakeholder engagement and business development roles within the not-for-profit, private and public sectors. Fiona holds a Master of Business and Technology and a Bachelor of Business – Marketing major.

Fiona has a keen interest in gambling research and looking at how research findings can be applied to the service delivery of the AGCSS. She works closely with the ANU Centre for Gambling Research and the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission to supporting ongoing research.

The AGCSS adheres to a public health framework of service delivery with a focus towards harm minimization practices. The focus is to educate and to reduce the stigma associated with experiencing gambling related harm in order for people to seek out the help they need, and to minimise the adverse effects of the gambling harm on their lives.

As Manager of the AGCSS, Fiona is responsible for the provision of gambling support services in the ACT, funded by the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission. This service encompasses the first point of contact for callers in the ACT region through the 1800 gambling telephone helpline, face to face and telephone gambling and financial counselling and case coordination. Other key components of the AGCSS include working closely with industry and community, training and education, stakeholder engagement, promotion and marketing collateral, and implementing strategies targeted at raising awareness about gambling related harm to encourage early intervention.



New South Wales Representative – Mandy Tervit-Veasey

Mandy Tervit-Veasey has been Tabcorp’s Responsible Gambling and Compliance Manager for eight years. Mandy holds a Bachelor of Science-Psychology and is a Certified Compliance Professional with the Australasian Compliance Institute.

Mandy has accountability for Tabcorp’s Responsible Gambling (RG) Program which covers Wagering, Keno and Tabcorp Gaming Solutions (TGS). This includes multiple self-exclusion programs; obligations contained in several RG Codes (including the annual review of those Codes for the gambling regulators) and training of retail staff; call centre staff; Keno and TAB Brand ambassadors and education initiatives.

In addition, Mandy represents Tabcorp on several RG initiatives such as Responsible Gambling Working parties. Mandy is a representative on the Problem Gambling Assistance Fund Committee ACT; in addition to being Tabcorp’s Gambling Contact Officer in the ACT; representing Tabcorp in Gambling Harm Awareness Week ACT; is an observer at the Responsible Gambling Advisory Committee (RGAC) Queensland, is a representative on the Venue Support Program Reference Group and the Responsible Gambling Awareness Week Steering Committee in Victoria.



Queensland Representative – Glenda Manne

Glenda Manne is an experienced business professional with over twenty years’ experience in marketing, business development and CSR in a variety of global and local, blue- chip FMCG companies within the food, personal health, pharmaceutical, beverage, and textile industries.

Glenda is currently the Group Social Responsibility Manager for Tatts Group, working across the business units of Wagering, Lotteries and Gaming Solutions providing Responsible Gambling programs to players, retailers and staff and delivering corporate-wide CSR programs for staff and community.

Glenda has a Bachelor Degree in Commerce and is an observer at Queensland’s Responsible Gambling Advisory Committee and a member of Victoria’s Responsible Gambling Awareness Week Steering Committee.



South Australian Representative – Sue Bertossa

Sue Bertossa is a Research Fellow at Flinders Human Behaviour and Health Research Unit, Flinders University, and is a Manager of the Flinders Aboriginal Gambling Service. She holds Master qualifications in Mental Health Science and Social Work, and is a Flinders Accredited Trainer for the Living Well, Keeping Strong and Chronic Condition programs. She is currently working towards a PhD examining the experiences of Vietnamese-Australians and gambling.

She is a mental health practitioner and has specialised in working with cultural minority groups in the fields of mental health and addiction. She has significant experience with adapting and trialling Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to suit the needs of cultural groups, conducting extensive programs with Aboriginal communities in Adelaide and rural South Australia. She was chiefly responsible for the development of a gambling treatment program for Vietnamese-Australians, and provides professional development and supervision for clinicians working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities to address alcohol, substance use, problem gambling and mental health problems.



Tasmanian Representative – Mara Lovrin

Mara Lovrin is currently employed as a Counsellor and Community Educator in the Gamblers Help Services and Family Relationship Program for Anglicare Tasmania and has held this position since 2011.

The position of Gamblers Help Counsellor incorporates a large community education/development component that covers the southern region of Tasmania from Bicheno in the North to Dover in the south – an area of over 255kms.

Gamblers Help Services in Tasmania are funded through the Community Support Levy allocated by the Department of Health and Human Services. Mara attended her first NAGS conference in 2011 in Launceston Tasmania and joined the National Committee in 2014.

Anglicare Tasmania (Inc) in partnership with Relationships Australia are the two organisations in Tasmania that provide problem gambling counselling and support, community education and community development response.

As an organisation, Anglicare currently provides services to resolve problem gambling at an individual level, including self and significant others by assisting people experiencing financial, social or other harms through their own or another's gambling. This includes providing easily accessible face to face counselling, financial counselling and facilitated group sessions.

A number of Gamblers Help Support Groups are currently being run successfully across the State. These groups include; swimming groups, walking groups and supportive Gamblers Help Discussion Group. Supportive programs also include a brokerage payment scheme, Client Self Exclusions Scheme, Venue Visits and Community Education Programs that work intensively with rural and remote areas. Community Education programs provide Gamblers Help information and activities to the most 'at risk' groups and communities.

Mara has a psychology major (BA) and has worked in various counselling positions including: mental health, Disabilities, Children's and Families and Men's Counselling for over fourteen years.

Mara also holds qualifications and has extensive training in Narrative Therapy (Dulwich) and Mindfulness Practice (Hammond Institute).

Prior to embarking on a career in counselling Mara worked for many years in the education sector including: Early Childhood, Primary Teaching and Adult Learners, particularly adults from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (CALD).



Victorian Representative – Stephanie Merkouris

Stephanie Merkouris is currently employed as an Associate Research Fellow, in the School of Psychology, at Deakin University and is also completing her PhD at Monash University. Stephanie Merkouris has not had any financial professional dealings with the gambling industry.

Stephanie has undertaken financial professional work from State Government departments and research bodies within Australia and Canada.

All professional dealings have been conducted with the aim of enhancing our understanding and effectiveness of treatment interventions, community understanding of gambling-related harm and comorbidities associated with problem gambling.



Western Australian Representative – Latha Raman

Latha Raman is a Team Leader with Gambling Help WA at Centrecare with experience in medical and psychiatric social work.

In this capacity Latha organises training, psycho-education and therapeutic workshops and is committed to the development and use of evidence-based practice in counselling and social-work through effective leadership, problem solving, and group facilitation skills, well supported by rich international experience.

As Team Leader with Centrecare Latha also co-ordinates and facilitates team meetings, supports staff, assists in writing funding applications and reports and represents Centrecare as required.

Latha also provides clinical supervision for staff and students on placement.

Northern Territory Representative – Anna McGill