**AGR Information Kit**

# History of the Alliance for Gambling Reform

Since the introduction of poker machines, individuals and organisations have been advocating for measures to reduce their harm. Occasionally, advocacy eﬀorts have led to improvements such as the removal of ATMs from gambling venues. However, the power of the gambling industry has been such that operators quickly mitigate against harm minimisation eﬀorts and ﬁnd new ways to exploit their harmful and dangerous products.

Prior to the creation of the Alliance, advocacy eﬀorts were often ad-hoc and uncoordinated. Advocates sometimes supported conﬂicting strategies and had diﬀerent reform asks. The gambling industry beneﬁted from this lack of coordination with a slick and uniﬁed publicity and lobbying machine to ensure that they achieved outcomes which maximized proﬁts whilst doing little to protect Australians from harm.

Following the failure of national reforms proposed by federal independent Andrew Wilkie, a number of gambling reform advocates began conversations with a view to creating a body that could run a successful campaign to counter the power and inﬂuence of the gambling industry and see meaningful reform introduced to protect Australians from poker machine harm. The Alliance grew from these conversations. One of Australia’s foremost communications and marketing experts, the late Neil Lawrence, was a key leader in this area and the ground-breaking documentary that he produced, Ka-Ching, marked a critical turning point in our ability to reframe debate around poker machines to focus on their dangerous, addictive and misleading features.

We are a national alliance but have had a strong presence in Victoria. The Alliance was formed shortly after the successful Enough Pokies (poker machines) campaign from the MAV and Victorian councils in the lead up to the 2014 state election and local government support and engagement is crucial to our operation and the success of our advocacy.

In the time since the Alliance’s inception in 2015, support for the organisation amongst allied organisations and individual supporters has grown. The public narrative regarding harm from gambling products has begun to shift to one that focuses on public health rather than reinforcing stigma to individuals suﬀering gambling harm. The focus of the organisation has shifted from largely poker machines to now include the rapidly growing and easily accessible online gambling and sports gambling products.

Today, the Alliance is made up of a committed Board of nine Directors and a small, passionate team of staff led by our Chief Executive Officer, Martin Thomas. We are a fully remote organisation, with team members working from across Australia - enabling us to remain flexible, responsive, and nationally connected without the need for a physical office.

# About the Alliance for Gambling Reform

Our Purpose**:** To provide national leadership promoting action to prevent and reduce the harm from gambling in Australia.

Our Vision**:** To enjoy a just, healthy, and prosperous Australia, where people can happily socialise together, and flourish without the harm created by gambling. By working together, we can achieve an Australia where there is no longer a need for our organisation.

Our Values**:**

* **Respect:** We recognise the dignity of all people. Our work is grounded in respect towards everyone we work with and come into contact with, even when we disagree.

* **Collaboration:** We will work collaboratively with the broader gambling related sector, stakeholders with an interest and the general community to build partnerships and find common ground to advance our mission.

* **Courage:** We will lead the sector by example and lead the charge for change based on achieving our mission. Our work will be informed by the knowledge and experience of our stakeholders, credible information, research, and where available, scientific evidence.

* **Justice:** We are committed to addressing the causes and consequences of gambling harm. Our work will always remain unbiased and unbeholden to vested interests.

* **Integrity:** We do what we say. We hold ourselves to high standards of accountability and ethical behaviour. We will acknowledge and learn from our mistakes. We will always act ethically and professionally.

* **Authenticity:** We are honest and trustworthy. Our concern for individuals and society is genuine, sustained, and reflected in our words and actions. We acknowledge the importance of people with lived experience of gambling harm in all our work, and we will be accountable to our stakeholders for our actions and outcomes.

**Strategic Plan**

The Alliance is in the process of developing our new Strategic Plan following a Strategic Planning Day held in November 2024. The new Strategic Plan and KPIs will be completed by 30 June 2025. Our new Strategic Objectives are listed below.

**Our Strategic Objectives (2025 – 2028)**

1. Build a groundswell to pressure government to reform land-based and online gambling.
2. Secure sustainable funding for growth to continue the fight against gambling harm.
3. Build a powerful coalition of partnering organisations to amplify our message and counterbalance the power of the gambling sector.

# Board members and Committees

**AGR Board members**

* Sharon Dickson – Board Chair
* Stuart James – Deputy Chair
* Amanda Power – Secretary & Treasurer
* Kathy Richardson
* Catherine Murphy
* Tim Lo Surdo
* Pita Williams
* Jon O’Keeffe

1. **Risk & Audit Committee (RAC)**

* Pita Williams – Chair
* Amanda Power
* Tim Lo Surdo
* Jon O’Keeffe
* Martin Thomas (CEO)

**Purpose:** Provides independent oversight of the Alliance’s material (including financial and non-financial) risks, including reputational and independence, and ensuring that appropriate systems are in place to identify, analyse and manage those risks. Also make recommendations on proposed investments and insurances

1. **Nominations Committee**

* Stuart James – Chair
* Kathy Richardson
* Sharon Dickson
* Catherine Murphy

**Purpose:** Provides assurance that the board has the appropriate composition, size and commitment to discharge its responsibilities and duties, also senior executive selection

1. **Fundraising Committee**

* Kathy Richardson - Chair
* Catherine Murphy
* Amanda Power
* Martin Thomas (CEO)

**Purpose:**  Provide strategic oversight and guidance to staff to direct fundraising activities. Development and review of the Ethical Fundraising policy and integration with Supporting Organisations policy.

**Board meeting schedule**

The Board meet every two months on the fouth Thursday of the month. All meetings are held virtually via Teams. The 2025 schedule of meetings is below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Time** | **Comments** |
| **23 Jan 2025** | **5:30 PM** | **Focus:**   * Review Strategic Plan * Review Risk register * Board Policy review schedule * December Finance Report * CEO 6-month appraisal |
| **27 March 2025** | **5:30 PM** | **Focus:**   * Policy and Positions draft schedule * Review Risk register * Board Appraisals * February Finance Report |
| **22 May 2025** | **5:30 PM** | **Focus:**   * Approve 2024-2025 Budget * Fundraising Strategy Review * Review Risk register * April Finance Report |
| **24 July 2025** | **5:30 PM** | **Focus:**   * CEO 12-month appraisal * Report on 2024-25 Strategic Objectives * Approve June Financial Accounts * Review Risk register |
| **25 Sept 2025** | **5:30 PM** | **Focus:**   * Review Relationship building and scoping for 2025 - 2028 * Approve audited financial statements * Review Risk register * August Finance Report |
| **27 Nov 2025** | **5:30 PM** | **AGM & November Board Meeting:**   * AGM: must be held before 1st Dec * Election of new Board members and office bearers |

**Committee meetings schedule**

**The Risk & Audit Committee (RAC)** meet the week prior to each Board meeting, on the third Thursday of every second month.

The purpose of the RAC is to provide independent oversight of the Alliance’s financial and non-financial risks, including reputational and independence, and ensuring that appropriate systems are in place to identify, analyse and manage those risks. Also make recommendations on proposed investments and insurances.

The RAC will regularly review the following documents prior to them going to the full Board.

* Financial Reports
* Budget
* Audit process
* Risk Register

**The Nominations Committee** provides assurance that the board has the appropriate composition, size and commitment to discharge its responsibilities and duties, also senior executive selection.

Meetings are held as required and is the committee is responsible for monitoring when Board members are due to resign from the Board, recruitment of new Board members, recruitment of the CEO, and the annual review of the CEO.

**The Fundraising Committee** provides strategic oversight and guidance to staff to direct fundraising activities. Development and review of the Ethical Fundraising policy and integration with Supporting Organisations policy.

Meetings are held bimonthly, alternating with the months in which Board meetings occur.

**Funding Sources**

1. **Leadership Councils**​
   * The Leadership Councils are Victorian Local Councils which have joined the Alliance as one of our ‘Leadership Councils’.  These councils are invoiced yearly, and the 'fee' they pay is actually a donation to the Alliance for Gambling Reform.  We currently have 24 Leadership Councils.  In the last financial year (2023-24), the Alliance raised $470,500 through our Leadership Council’s.  ​
2. **Non-Government Grants (Philanthropy organisations)**​
   * The Alliance regularly applies to philanthropy organisations for funding. In the 2023-24 financial year we received $193.700 in grants. ​
3. **Donations**​
   * The Alliance writes regular fundraising appeal letters to our supporters in our database. These letters are sent monthly, and we raised close to $100,000 in the 2023-24 financial year.

A pie chart of donations and donations

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

## Organisational Chart

Our organisational chart is below which sets out the Alliance internal structure by detailed roles and reporting relationships.

