



How gambling is being normalised for women

What the research shows

This study explored how women aged 18–40 in Australia experience gambling and what contributes to it becoming normal in their everyday lives.

This study highlights how gambling is normalised in ways that may increase women's risk of gambling harm.

Key findings



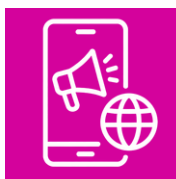
It is difficult to avoid exposure

Women described gambling advertising as widespread across media, sport, and everyday spaces, making it hard to escape.



Marketing designed to appeal to women

Women described gambling environments and promotions as increasingly aligned with women's interests and identities. Framed around fashion, socialising, and lifestyle experiences, these approaches made gambling feel relevant, appealing, and socially appropriate for women.



Technology has changed how women engage

Online platforms and mobile technologies have significantly changed the way people access gambling. For some women, this removes the stigma previously associated with attending gambling venues and allows gambling to be integrated into everyday routines.



Changing social norms play a role

Women described gambling as becoming more acceptable over time. Activities that were once seen as male-dominated are now framed as part of women's lives. This shift reflects broader changes in gender roles, but also the ways in which industries have adapted their strategies to target new audiences.



“It’s an acceptable pastime... it’s about independence... there’s not as much scrutiny on women... so they’re able to have active social lives... and gamble more than before.”

– 35 year old woman



Key Insight

Gambling is not simply an individual choice.

It is shaped by environments, systems and commercial strategies that make it feel normal, routine and accepted in women's lives.

What women said should change

Women identified key strategies to reduce the normalisation of gambling:

1

Restrict gambling marketing, especially where it is highly visible

2

Provide clear, honest information about risks

3

Address availability and accessibility of gambling products

4

Create alternative social spaces that do not involve gambling

These strategies reflect a shift away from individual responsibility toward broader public health action.



BASED ON: McCarthy, S., Thomas, S., Marko, S., Pitt, H., Randle, M. and Cowlshaw S (2022) Women's perceptions of strategies to address the normalisation of gambling and gambling-related harm. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 46(6), 821-828.