

## **INTRODUCTION**

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Welcome to this special edition of the Journal of Gambling Business and Economics.

In Great Britain, it has become a regulatory and commercial imperative, to better understand consumer behaviour in relation to gaming machines and gambling-related harm. Businesses seek to improve their offering of gambling-related products and services in relation to market demand which may include changes to game parameters (e.g., increases in stakes and prizes). The regulator seeks to foster an environment where the gambling industry can flourish, but not at the expense of the well-being of consumers generally, and vulnerable players in particular.

Successive responsible gambling strategies published by the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB), advisors to the regulatory authority the Gambling Commission, have prioritised a need for research into gaming machines and consumer behaviour in Great Britain.

In September 2012, the Responsible Gambling Trust (RGT) committed to meeting this priority and in November 2012 announced that it would commission a research programme into Category B gaming machines - that is those that offer the highest stakes and prizes in Britain which can be found in betting shops, bingo halls, adult gaming centres and casinos - to better understand how people behave when playing these machines and what helps people to stay in control and play responsibly.

The specific aims of the overall research programme are to describe and understand patterns of gaming machine play in various locations; to explain the impact on player behaviour of various factors; and to identify where there is robust evidence that consumers may be experiencing problems.

As a part of this research programme, we commissioned a number of evidence reviews and contextual papers by eminent academics in gambling studies with the purpose of providing a concise and accessible understanding about some of the key questions and issues that arise in the public discourse around commercial gambling generally, and gaming machine behaviour particularly.

As such, we hope that the five papers that follow will be helpful to all those who have an interest in promoting responsible gambling behaviour and minimising gambling-related harm in Great Britain.

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