

Automatic Teller Machines in Australian Casinos

INTRODUCTION

Australian casinos operate in total compliance environments, which differ from other, licensed gambling providers who operate under a less stringent regulatory framework. The higher level of regulatory control ensures the honesty and integrity of the casino industry as well as strict compliance with responsible gambling initiatives.

Casinos have implemented a wide range of measures, both mandated and voluntary, to encourage patrons to gamble responsibly. All casinos have programs in place to facilitate referrals to counselling services for those patrons who identify that their gambling behaviour has become a problem. In addition, casinos keep staff on duty at all times who are trained in the responsible service of gaming. Training programs for casino staff include an awareness of patrons who show observable signs that may indicate that they are experiencing difficulties with their gambling and how to refer them to get assistance.

AUSTRALIAN CASINOS ARE DESTINATION GAMING VENUES

Our casinos are destination gaming venues; our customers make a conscious choice to visit a casino. Most casinos are large entertainment complexes offering a wide range of services to domestic and international visitors including hotel accommodation, food and beverage, entertainment, specialty retail, cinema and theatres. In 2006/07 our casinos attracted 48 million visitors, including 2.5 million visitors from overseas, or 45% of all international visitors. There were over 3,350 conventions and conferences held in our casinos in the same year with over 590,000 attendees.

Casino customers rely upon the availability of Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) in order to purchase and enjoy a wide range of gaming and non-gaming entertainment. Our casinos, in turn, rely upon the availability of ATMs to provide a service to those customers who visit our many bars, restaurants, retail and entertainment outlets. Our international and interstate visitors expect that they can have safe and convenient access to cash from ATM's as they don't carry cash while travelling.

RESPONSIBLE MEASURES ARE ALREADY IN PLACE IN

All casinos have ATMs placed in secure and safe areas, outside the licensed gaming footprint, in their facilities. In all jurisdictions the location of ATMs has met the requirement of approval by the consent authority and/or casino regulator.

In some states and territories, a limit is imposed upon the amount that may be withdrawn in a single transaction from an ATM. In most jurisdictions withdrawal limits are a matter decided between the individual and their banking provider. Responsible Gambling messages are displayed on ATMs (either as

attachments to the machine or as part of the screen display) in many properties these messages are available in languages other than English.

OUR POSITION

The Australasian Casino Association supports the responsible use of ATMs in casino properties. The casino industry remains dedicated to the responsible service of gambling and understands that some patrons may experience difficulties related to their gambling behaviours.

The overwhelming majority of casino patrons continue to utilise ATMs in a responsible manner and would be considerably inconvenienced should their access to these facilities face further restriction. No restrictions should be imposed on the broad cross-section of casino customers - both local and international - who may need to access banking facilities for all manner of reasons.

The Association supports the following:

1. ATMs should be located in areas where the public can utilise them in a safe and secure environment. They should be located outside the licensed gaming footprint of a casino in compliance with local state or territory regulations. ATMs should not be located in the immediate area adjacent to an entrance to the gaming area of a casino property. In determining the location and distance from the casino entrance factors such as architectural design, heritage and age of the building should be taken into consideration.
2. ATMs should carry messages reinforcing the benefits of responsible gambling practices and provide information on the applicable referral services available to those who may be experiencing, or who wish to seek assistance with, problematic gambling behaviours.
3. Limiting the dollar amount an individual can withdraw from an account or the frequency with which an individual may access an account should remain a matter of informed choice for the individual and their banking services provider.
4. Where a person may be experiencing difficulties with their gambling behaviours the casino industry, in concert with State and Territory governments, implements procedures whereby assistance and advice is readily available. Such provisions include, but are not limited to, the issue of a voluntary (Self) exclusion order.

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