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## The pandemic lockdown reduced betting options, but over half of bettors were already gambling online

A new report from Roy Morgan shows half of all adult Australians gambled in some form in an average three-month period over the year to March 2020. Betting — on horse races, trotting, greyhound races and sports — was the third most popular form of gambling, behind buying scratch or lottery tickets and playing poker machines. However of the three, betting has by far the most online participants.

The newly released [Roy Morgan Gambling Report](#) found that more than 9.9 million people (50% of the adult population) gambled in a typical three-month period. For the vast majority, this consisted of buying scratch or lottery tickets, but the money spent this way was a fraction of the money spent on poker machines by a far smaller group.

In all, 8.4 million (42.6% of all adults) bought scratch or lottery tickets, spending \$2.5 billion annually. Fewer than a third as many people played poker machines (2.4 million or 11.9%), but they spent more than three times the amount (\$8.7 billion annually). Betting was the third most popular form of gambling, with 2.1 million participants (10.4%) in an average three months, and an annual spend of \$4.2 billion.

The percentage of people betting has trended downward over the past 15 years but rose slightly in the past two years, driven by sports betting. While lockdowns in all states saw the closure of betting venues, more than half of bettors were already placing bets online. Of those who placed a bet, 54.1% did so in a TAB outlet, while 55.2% did so online (some did both). In contrast, just 0.9% of poker machine players and 24% of scratch and lottery ticket purchasers did so online. The pandemic also brought a halt to live sport, however betting websites have been heavily promoting 'novelty bets' along with a grab-bag of international sports in an effort to generate business.

### Michele Levine, CEO of Roy Morgan, says:

*“Those who are concerned about gambling in Australia will have welcomed the fact that the lockdown removed the option of gambling in venues such as pubs, clubs and casinos. But while less than 1% of poker-machine players participate online, the picture is very different when it comes to placing a bet. Among bettors, more than half have placed a bet online in the past year, and for young bettors the figures are even higher, with 70.9% of 18- to 24-year-old bettors and 72.7% of 25- to 34-year-old bettors having done so.*

*“More than one third (34.4%) of all betting is sports betting, accounting for \$1.4 billion annually. Of course all competitive sport in Australia was halted by the pandemic lockdown, although the NRL is working towards restarting professional rugby league on May 28, with the AFL to follow two weeks later. But betting websites haven't been idle during this time. Die-hard sports bettors have been offered obscure options such as Russian table tennis, and there has been heavy promotion of novelty bets including some very offbeat ones, such as the first word to be mentioned in particular media conference.*

*“We'll be continuing to track gambling in Australia very closely, including monitoring whether gamblers reduce their spending during this period or simply switch to other forms of gambling.”*

To request an interview with Michele Levine or find out more about the Roy Morgan Gambling Report, call (03) 9224 5309 or email [askroymorgan@roymorgan.com](mailto:askroymorgan@roymorgan.com).

### About Roy Morgan and this data

Roy Morgan is the source of the most comprehensive data on Australians' behaviour and attitudes, surveying 1,000 people in depth each week in a continuous cycle that has been running for two decades. The data in the Gambling Report comes from this Single Source survey.