

## Media release

SYDNEY, 10 May 2019

### The Biggest Losers: Australia's Love-Hate Affair with Gambling

#### **Australians suffer the largest gambling losses in the world and superannuation funds are investing your money to profit from it.**

Research undertaken by Australian Ethical Investment reveals that some of Australia's largest superannuation funds by assets under management are investing hard working Australian's retirement money into the gambling industry.

Australians are the biggest gamblers in the world per capita and suffer the biggest losses<sup>1</sup>, yet many Australians may not know that their superannuation money could be helping fuel this problem through investment in the gambling sector.

Australia is the leader by a large margin when it comes to the average gambler's loss. Each year, Australians lose \$23 billion of which \$14 billion goes through the pokies.<sup>2</sup>

The negative impacts of gambling extend far beyond financial loss and have been linked to various other issues including impaired family relationships, mental illness and domestic violence. Additionally, children who are exposed to gambling are likely to become gamblers themselves which makes it a self-perpetuating problem.<sup>3</sup>

To raise awareness of this important issue, Australian Ethical has launched a public information initiative which seeks to cast a spotlight on the damaging effects of a range of issues including gambling. The campaign highlights the negative effects of gambling on society and how Australians can combat this by ensuring their superannuation money is invested and used as a force for good societal outcomes.

"Superannuation contributions are mandatory, but every Australian has the choice to decide where this money is invested," said Dr Stuart Palmer, Head of Ethics Research at Australian Ethical.

"Gambling is a big social issue, and Australian Ethical strongly questions why the savings of hard-working Australians are being funnelled into industries such as gambling that are responsible for the erosion of savings and general welfare."

Research conducted by the Responsible Investment Association of Australia shows 86 per cent of Millennials, and 73 per cent of Baby Boomers want their money in funds which invest in responsible

---

<sup>1</sup> [H2 Gambling Capital](#), February 2018

<sup>2</sup> [H2 Gambling Capital](#), February 2018

<sup>3</sup> [Australian Institute for Family Studies](#), November 2014

companies. Nearly 90 per cent of investors believe fund managers should actively “police” companies they invest in to ensure they are acting responsibly.<sup>4</sup>

According to Dr Palmer, transparency or lack of it is a key issue for Australians looking to find out where their super money is being invested.

“At Australian Ethical, our Ethical Charter restricts investment in goods or services which cause unnecessary harm to people – such as pokies. Or in companies that entice people into financial over-commitment.

“However, not all super funds take the same stance and it is very difficult for people to find out where and how their super money is being invested.”

For Australians interested in understanding where their superannuation money is going, Australian Ethical is encouraging them to check the following with their super fund:

- What sectors/companies does my fund invest in and where won't it invest? And why?
- What's the impact of these investments, for example, on the environment and on society?
- How is my super fund using my money to make a positive difference to business behaviour?

Australian Ethical's campaign, aimed at encouraging all Australians to better understand the impact of their super, can be viewed [here](#).

— Ends —

To request a time to speak with Australian Ethical, or for written comment, please contact:

Camilla Herring  
Australian Ethical  
T 02 8276 6209  
M 0432 988 980  
E [cherring@australianethical.com.au](mailto:cherring@australianethical.com.au)

Danielle Veivers  
Honner  
T (02) 8248-3742  
M 0438 774 364  
E [danielle@honner.com.au](mailto:danielle@honner.com.au)

## About Australian Ethical Investment

Australian Ethical is Australia's leading ethical wealth manager. Since 1986, Australian Ethical has provided investors with wealth management products that align with their values and deliver strong returns. Investments are guided by the Australian Ethical Charter which both shapes its ethical approach and underpins the Company's culture and vision.

---

<sup>4</sup> [The Responsible Investment Association of Australasia](#) June 2018

Australian Ethical has \$3 billion in funds under management across superannuation and managed funds.<sup>5</sup> Visit: [www.australianethical.com.au](http://www.australianethical.com.au)

---

<sup>5</sup> As at 22 February 2019 <https://www.australianethical.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/AEF-Half-Year-Results-to-31-December-2018.pdf>