

Report of the Statutory Review of BetStop – the National Self-Exclusion Register™

Richard Eccles

December 2025



© Commonwealth of Australia 2025

Ownership of intellectual property rights in this publication

Unless otherwise noted, copyright (and any other intellectual property rights, if any) in this publication is owned by the Commonwealth of Australia (referred to below as the Commonwealth).

Disclaimer

The material contained in this publication is made available on the understanding that the Commonwealth is not providing professional advice, and that users exercise their own skill and care with respect to its use, and seek independent advice if necessary.

The Commonwealth makes no representations or warranties as to the contents or accuracy of the information contained in this publication. To the extent permitted by law, the Commonwealth disclaims liability to any person or organisation in respect of anything done, or omitted to be done, in reliance upon information contained in this publication.

Creative Commons licence

With the exception of: (a) the Coat of Arms; and (b) the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts photos and graphics, copyright in this publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Australia Licence.

Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Australia Licence is a standard form licence agreement that allows you to copy, communicate and adapt this publication provided that you attribute the work to the Commonwealth and abide by the other licence terms.

Further information on the licence terms is available from <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>. This publication should be attributed in the following way: © Commonwealth of Australia 2025.

Use of the Coat of Arms

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet sets the terms under which the Coat of Arms is used. Please refer to the Commonwealth Coat of Arms—Information and Guidelines publication available at <http://www.pmc.gov.au>.

Contact us

This publication is available in hard copy, PDF and Word format. All other rights are reserved, including in relation to any departmental logos or trademarks which may exist. For enquiries regarding the licence and any use of this publication, please contact:

Broadcasting and Gambling Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts
GPO Box 594
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia

Email: online.gambling@communications.gov.au

Website: www.infrastructure.gov.au

Letter of transmittal

The Hon Anika Wells MP
Minister for Communications
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au

Dear Minister

I am pleased to present the attached report of the Statutory Review of BetStop – the National Self-Exclusion Register (the NSER) to you. It was an honour to have been invited to undertake this Review.

Over the course of the Review, I met with and received submissions from a diverse range of stakeholders, including harm reduction advocates, counsellors, research organisations, policy experts, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (the ACMA), the Register operator (Dataworks Group) and the wagering industry. Most importantly, I met with multiple people with experience using the NSER, and their perspectives have been central to the shaping of the Review.

At a high level, the Review has found that the NSER is performing an essential and much needed function in protecting those at risk of gambling harm. Users spoke of the immense value that it provides. Its underpinning legislation and rules are sound and largely fit-for-purpose and it is being administered well by the ACMA and the Register operator. While there have been some serious instances of non-compliance by wagering providers, this is expected to continue to improve as industry becomes more attuned to using the NSER.

The Review report outlines several areas where changes could optimise the role of the NSER in addressing gambling harm and associated recommendations. I consider that these recommendations offer a practical and necessary course of action to refine the NSER's operation into the future, to ensure maximum impact for registrants and to ensure that those who stand to benefit from the system are aware of it as an option available to them, to help manage their gambling.

I would like to acknowledge the secretariat team at the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts for their superb support throughout the Review. I also acknowledge the diligence and efforts of the ACMA and the Register operator. Their commitment to making this vital policy have optimal impact is most apparent.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge everyone I met with and all who made submissions. Most particularly, the NSER users who were prepared to share their stories, experience and advice – their input was instrumental in shaping this Review.



Richard Eccles
Lead Reviewer
Statutory Review of BetStop – the National Self-Exclusion Register

18 December 2025

Table of contents

Letter of transmittal	3
Table of contents	4
Executive summary	5
Recommendations	12
Key statistics	14
Introduction	15
Review Terms of Reference.....	15
About the NSER	15
Roles and responsibilities	16
Public consultation	16
Review findings	17
Marketing and promotion	17
Online keno and other online rapid play gambling products.....	20
Verification and data matching	22
Enhanced user experience and safety.....	24
System administration.....	33
Compliance, enforcement and complaints	33
Cost recovery.....	34
Other legislative amendments	36
Appendix A - Review Terms of Reference	37
Appendix B - Stakeholder engagement	38
References	40

Executive summary

Introduction

BetStop – the National Self-Exclusion Register (the NSER) was launched by the Australian Government on 21 August 2023. It allows Australians to self-exclude from all Australian licensed online and phone wagering providers, who primarily offer online sports and race betting services, for a minimum period of 3 months, up to a lifetime.

The *Interactive Gambling Act 2001* (the IGA) requires a review of the NSER after 12 months of operation (the Review). Its purpose is to ensure the NSER is working effectively as a measure to protect Australians from gambling harm, by assessing whether its underpinning legislation and rules are fit for purpose. The Review Terms of Reference are provided at **Appendix A**.

The former Minister for Communications, the Hon Michelle Rowland MP, appointed Mr Richard Eccles to lead the Review in October 2024, with the support of a secretariat team within the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (the department).

As part of the Review, submissions were made by interested parties and meetings were held with a range of organisations and individuals. The Review heard from harm reduction advocates, counsellors, research organisations, policy experts, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (the ACMA), the Register operator (Dataworks Group) and the wagering industry. Most importantly, the Review heard from people with experience using the NSER. Their perspectives have been central to the shaping of this report.

The Review also considered, and reflects, important research undertaken over the Review period. This includes research commissioned by the ACMA to better understand users' experience with the NSER; and research undertaken by the Australian Gambling Research Centre at the Australian Institute of Family Studies regarding public awareness of the NSER in Australia. Both pieces of research were published in November 2025 and support the evidence base upon which several Review recommendations are framed.

Key messages

The NSER is performing an essential and much needed function protecting those at risk of harm from gambling. Between launching in August 2023 and 1 December 2025, 53,308 Australians had registered to self-exclude. As of 1 December 2025, there were 34,266 active registrations.¹

The NSER is a successful policy and is delivering well on its objectives. Its underpinning legislation and rules are sound and largely fit-for-purpose. It is being administered well by both the ACMA and the Register operator. Compliance by the wagering industry is expected to continue to improve, and they have adapted their systems to meet the appropriately high standards required of the NSER. Most importantly, users of the NSER, the registrants themselves, have spoken of the value that it provides. While there is scope for ongoing improvements, it is a fundamental part of their strategies to deal with gambling harm and addiction.

This report outlines several areas where changes could optimise the role the NSER plays in addressing gambling harm. Now that the NSER is well established and its systems and administration mature and demonstrably effective, it is time for a renewed push to encourage more people to register and to refine the NSER's operation to ensure maximum impact for its users.

The identification of areas for potential change, and associated Review recommendations, do not represent a criticism of the original design of the system, nor the efforts of those implementing it. Rather, it reflects areas for evolution and continual improvement, that have been identified through the experience of the first 2 years of operation and the experience of those involved in the NSER, most importantly, the users.

Areas where change can optimise the role that the NSER plays include:

- improving community awareness of the NSER through increased marketing and promotion
- extending the NSER to online keno products and other online rapid play gambling products
- ongoing data matching improvements to reduce the ability of users to circumvent exclusion
- enhancing user experience and safety, including through an increased focus on nominating support personnel on registration; prohibiting marketing to users after exclusion; and improving links to other self-exclusion registers, and
- ongoing monitoring of cost recovery arrangements to ensure that industry are paying their fair share and that cost recovery arrangements are sufficient to support the ACMA to fund the NSER and effectively carry out its statutory functions.

The Review has also identified several areas of change to better support the ACMA with its monitoring and compliance responsibilities.

The Review makes specific recommendations associated with these matters.

What the Review heard

In meetings and submissions, counsellors (gambling harm and financial counsellors) outlined how the NSER has become a central part of their armoury in helping those at risk of, or realising, gambling harm. In and of itself, the NSER is not a complete solution – it has a relatively narrow lens covering online wagering – but nonetheless is vital. It has become one part of a broader range of strategies to assist those at risk.

Users of the NSER have testified that it can truly be a game-changer. The NSER is changing lives, particularly when used in conjunction with other services, including on-going peer-support and when utilising the option to nominate a support person. In a relatively short period, the NSER has embedded itself within the wagering landscape, and its benefits are being realised by many people who have experience with gambling harm. While more can be done to improve identity verification and prevent circumvention, the NSER has had a positive and quick impact.

It is underpinned by very sophisticated systems and state of the art, world-leading, technology, befitting the significant investment made. Through their engagement with the Review consultation process, it was evident that the Register operator has a detailed understanding of the necessary systems and operating platforms to support delivery of the NSER. So too, they have a very strong sense of the needs of those at risk of gambling harm, and the importance of other support strategies to assist.

While ongoing improvements in data-matching will increase the reliability of the NSER, and ongoing collaboration between the Register operator, the ACMA and industry will improve compliance, the fundamental elements of a strong and enduring system are in place.

The wagering industry has adapted their operations and systems and, while there have been several serious breaches by the parts of the industry, it is expected that compliance will continue to improve as industry becomes more attuned to the scheme. It is recognised by parts of this sector that a very high level of compliance is essential if their businesses are to remain socially and politically acceptable and therefore viable. The wagering industry needs to continue to evolve to be aligned with community expectations, particularly in the ways in which it incentivises, and engages with, those at risk of gambling harm.

The way forward

While the first 2 years of the NSER operation can be considered as a success, there is a need to maintain momentum and drive further improvements to support the evolution of the system for the benefit of users.

Marketing and promotion

Take up of the NSER was initially very strong, and the subsequent growth in registrations has been steady. However, there is scope for greater uptake, particularly given the extent of gambling harm in Australia.

To date, the onus for promotion has been on industry, who are legislated to promote the NSER on their websites and apps and in messages to customers that promote, advertise or offer wagering services. The ACMA has also undertaken promotion and outreach activities, however efforts in this area have been restricted by a lack of dedicated funding.

Research has found that among those who placed bets in the past 12 months, only 33.5% were aware of the NSER. Awareness levels amongst the broader community are even lower, with only 26.5% of Australian adults aware of the NSER.² This level of awareness is worryingly low.

Now that the NSER is well established and its systems and administration mature and shown to be effective, it is time for a renewed push in marketing and promotion to encourage more people to register.

In line with this, **a whole-of-community marketing campaign should be introduced**, along with **targeted awareness raising** among those professionals likely to be an early point of contact for those realising harm, including primary health care providers (including Indigenous health services), mental health workers and emergency relief networks. **Cost recovery arrangements should be amended if necessary to allow for the funding of such campaigns** through contributions from the wagering industry.

As part of the National Consumer Protection Framework for online wagering, the government supports a well-established consistent gambling messaging framework – **the NSER and its role in assisting those at risk of gambling harm should be explicitly embedded within consistent gambling messages**.

Regarding industry promotion, the Review heard feedback from multiple stakeholders concerned about the visibility of references to the NSER on wagering websites and apps. **Industry promotion efforts should remain an area for ongoing compliance monitoring by the ACMA**, given this is a key channel to increase awareness amongst target users.

Online Keno and other online rapid play gambling products

In March 2025, the former Minister for Communications asked that the Review Terms of Reference be expanded to explore the feasibility of extending the NSER's coverage to online keno products and services.

The exclusion of lottery and lottery-type products from the IGA was based on these products presenting a low harm profile, by traditionally requiring advance purchase of a 'ticket' for a 'draw' that takes place at regular points each week. However, products such as online keno are now offered as repetitive, rapid play gambling, with high spend limits and high frequency 'draws.' Some online keno offerings allow consumers to spend up to \$1,000 every 3 minutes. The Review also heard of emerging, new gambling products that focus on online, rapid-fire betting on an outcome. By their nature, these products also have potential to cause harm.

The definition of products that fall within the scope of the NSER should be expanded to include online keno and any online rapid play gambling products. In consultations on this matter, it was clear that companies offering this type of product use very similar systems to other online wagering services. Noting that there are not significant system complexities to work through, **the requirement for these products to be covered by the NSER should be put into effect as soon as possible.**

Verification and data matching

The issue of self-excluded individuals being able to access online gambling while on the NSER has been a much-discussed area of challenge over the NSER's first 2 years of operation. The Review heard that self-exclusion can be bypassed in several ways, with a key concern related to failed data matches between the personal details used to register with the NSER, compared to those used to register with a wagering provider.

The issue of circumvention can be used by those looking to discredit the NSER or to diminish its effectiveness. However, the true extent of the issue is not clear, and it is not referenced significantly in complaints data. NSER users articulated their awareness of ways to circumvent exclusion and acknowledged that while improvements can be made, the NSER will never be completely failsafe to deliberate forms of circumvention.

Addressing this issue is a matter of balance. An overriding consideration is that registering with the NSER must be quick and straightforward. Many people are registering at a vulnerable time and seeking quick assistance to deal with an immediate problem. The speed and ease of registration has been highlighted by users as a positive feature of the NSER.

Improved data matching practices can help to minimise circumvention opportunities. Changes have been made over the course of the NSER's operation, and the Register operator and wagering providers continue to work on strengthening data matching.

Ongoing data matching improvements would be enhanced by the establishment of a formal collaborative working group involving the ACMA, the Register operator and select industry experts, to work through these technical matters. A longer-term aim could be to achieve a common set of personal data between NSER registration and that used to open a wagering account, to reduce the potential for circumvention.

Enhanced user experience and safety

There are opportunities to optimise the NSER's impact and utility for users. Suggested changes reflect learnings from the first 2 years of operation – and in doing so reflect the experience of NSER users.

Nominated support personnel

NSER users have highlighted the fundamental value of being able to nominate support persons upon registration – someone who is notified of key events, such as when exclusion is about to end.

The role of nominated support personnel is significant, however only around 1 in 10 active users have nominated a support person. ACMA data shows that current users with a support person are more likely to exclude for their lifetime (70% versus 56%) and that users who have cancelled their registration early were less likely to have a nominated support person.³

More can be done to **prompt registrants to consider nominating support personnel and to highlight the benefits of this approach**. This should be done at registration and in follow up support and communications.

Related to this is the ongoing stigma associated with problematic gambling behaviour and addiction, and a reluctance of potential registrants to be open, even with family and close friends, about the problems they have with gambling. While outside of the scope of the Review, ongoing efforts can be made to destigmatise gambling addiction and gambling harm, for example through advertising campaigns and messaging that communicates matters related to gambling harm through a public health lens.

Access to broader support services

The ease of access to broader support services for NSER users was raised as a key issue by harm reduction advocates and counsellors. Research undertaken by the ACMA also suggests that while nominating a support person is beneficial for some registrants, there is opportunity to offer further support options as part of the NSER, and to use the NSER to connect registrants to broader support options. The ACMA and the Register operator should develop and implement approaches to **increase the range of support options available to NSER registrants**.

Links with other self-exclusion registers

The NSER is not a full and comprehensive answer to help those looking to exclude from all types of gambling – its scope is limited to telephone and online gambling. It does not cover in-person betting.

Many stakeholders expressed that they would like to see the NSER extended to cover all forms of gambling. In most jurisdictions people can exclude from in-venue gambling wherever they gamble, including pubs, clubs, hotels, casinos and TAB agencies. It is an appropriate aspiration to have a one-stop registration process to self-exclude from all forms of gambling. However, the complexity of such an arrangement cannot be underestimated, noting the number and type of venues involved and the varied regulations across states and territories.

In the nearer term, there may be scope for better coordination and compatibility between the NSER and land-based self-exclusion registers. The ACMA and the Register operator should develop and implement approaches to **improve links across gambling self-exclusion registers and give those registering for any register the information needed to ensure their self-exclusion can cover both on-line and in-person forms of gambling**. It would be important that it does not add additional registration steps such that it becomes overly complex, becoming a disincentive to register.

Cancelling exclusion

The Review heard that it is at times too easy for users to cancel their exclusion early via a statutory declaration. Harm reduction advocates have suggested that the cancellation process needs more friction, though a balanced approach is needed to avoid disincentivising registrations. **Consideration should be given to requiring more substantial evidence as part of the NSER cancellation process.**

The legislation currently prohibits a person removing themselves from the NSER within 3 months of registration (the minimum exclusion period). However, the legislation also includes an exemption from this for people who have previously been on the NSER. The Review has found that many people will, over a longer period, have multiple periods on the NSER. A pattern of an individual registering and cancelling exclusion could be a sign that they are experiencing gambling harm. **The mandatory minimum 3-month self-exclusion period should therefore apply to all registrants, regardless of whether they have been on the NSER before.**

Industry marketing

The Review heard of multiple instances of marketing material being provided by wagering providers to individuals once they come off the NSER. **Anyone who has been on the NSER should, by default, be excluded from any marketing material, even once their registration has lapsed.** Individuals who have been on the NSER should have to independently seek out this information and provide consent to recommence receiving marketing material from wagering providers.

The Review also heard of instances of marketing material being provided to individuals while they were on the NSER. In some cases, marketing has been received via push notifications, for example, where a self-excluded individual has not deleted a gambling app from their device. The ACMA will continue to investigate and take enforcement actions on these matters as required.

To address current communication trends and future-proof the legislation, the **definition of marketing material should be updated in the legislation to provide clarity on the treatment of new and emerging technologies**, including mobile device push notifications.

The legislation should also be updated to make it clear that any form of **communication with individuals on the NSER initiated by wagering providers, or by those they have provided data to, is prohibited**, other than in the very limited circumstances necessary to comply with NSER legislation and rules.

Closure of gambling accounts and loss of historical data

Wagering providers are required to permanently close the accounts of NSER registrants and return any balance of funds. The registrant must open a new wagering account if they choose to return to gambling after a period on the NSER. The rationale for this is sound, yet it is having an unintended impact.

For example, it is difficult to determine whether a new account holder has a history of being on the NSER. This information is important, particularly if the recommendation to cease marketing material for past registrants is accepted. Historical betting pattern data can also be lost – this information is important to determine if someone is at risk, or to identify if there are problematic gambling patterns emerging.

Wagering providers should ensure a means by which historical data is retained for those re-engaging after a period of self-exclusion and this data should inform harm minimisation and support strategies.

Opening a new account after a period of exclusion should also require additional steps, including a requirement to set a deposit and betting limit, which can only be changed with additional effort.

Compliance, enforcement and complaints

The wagering industry has taken steps to adapt their operations and systems to comply with the NSER legislation. While there have been instances of non-compliance, it is expected that these will lessen over time as industry becomes more attuned to using the NSER.

Since launching in August 2023 and as of 31 August 2025, the ACMA had received 669 complaints related to the NSER, which is a relatively small percentage of the nearly 48,000 registrants at this time.⁴

When the NSER was established, there were around 130 licensed interactive wagering providers in Australia. This number has now grown to closer to 200 providers.⁵ Many of these providers are at the smaller end of the market, often with less sophisticated processes and systems, resulting in a need for further education about compliance obligations.

Harm reduction advocates have called for greater resourcing for the ACMA to increase compliance and enforcement activities. The Review supports a **new assessment of the cost of the scheme to ensure that the ACMA is appropriately resourced to monitor and enforce industry compliance, with the costs of this to be borne by industry** through existing cost recovery arrangements.

Cost recovery

Cost recovery arrangements are a vital part of the NSER program, whereby funding for the operation of the NSER is derived from those that profit from gambling.

Wagering providers are required to check the NSER to identify whether their current and prospective customers are self-excluded. The relative cost borne by a wagering provider is determined by how often that provider checks the NSER – the greater the number of checks, the higher the fee. Some wagering providers argue that this is a counter-intuitive arrangement. Those that seek to check the NSER frequently pay the most, while those that check the NSER less, pay less. However, it should be noted that those that check the register less also run a higher risk of non-compliance and the incurring of penalties.

Several industry stakeholders have suggested that cost recovery should be based on some measure of market share. This is complicated – it could be based on number of account holders, amounts wagered, turn over or profit, or other measurements. While there is a general sense of market share, it is currently insufficiently granular to use as a basis for cost recovery share.

There was a delay in the issuing of cost-recovery invoices, with the first of these only being issued some 20 months after the NSER commencing. While these first invoices do show some disparity between wagering providers, with some outliers due to high volume of register checking, it is expected that this will correct as wagering providers become more attuned to the best way in which to engage with the NSER.

Cost recovery industry share arrangements should remain under review. If, after the first few years, the relative cost being borne by wagering providers is a significant departure from a general understanding of market share, then other cost recovery formulas should be explored.

Industry is also calling for greater guidance as to what represents appropriate practice regarding the frequency of checking the NSER. There are a variety of business models employed by wagering providers and they know their business best. It would not be appropriate for the ACMA to issue definitive guidance – the onus to comply must remain with wagering providers.

The recommended **formal collaborative working group** involving the ACMA, the Register operator and select industry experts **would be an appropriate forum for information sharing about the NSER and its operation.**

Legislative amendments

The Review has identified several areas where changes can optimise the potential for the ACMA to fulfil its obligations and improve outcomes for users of the NSER. These may require legislative amendments, which should be explored at the next suitable opportunity.

Other observations

Several industry stakeholders raised concerns with the fundamental operating model of the NSER. These stakeholders would prefer a push-style system, where the Register operator notifies all wagering providers each time an individual registers with the NSER, rather than the current pull-style system, which requires wagering providers to send customer data to the Register operator to check the NSER for a matched record.

While acknowledging the technical complexities of the central register model and the cost to wagering providers to comply, the notion of a push-style or distributed register brings with it significant risks. As noted, there are close to 200 licensed wagering providers, varying in size and technical capability. It would not be possible to safeguard the privacy of the NSER data should it be distributed regularly to such a large and diverse range of organisations.

Many industry stakeholders have also asked for increased regulatory guidance around operational aspects of the NSER to support their ability to comply with the legislation. For example, guidance on appropriate timeframes for ceasing marketing to a registered individual; the treatment of inactive accounts; and on what would constitute an acceptable timeframe to exclude an individual who is identified to be on the NSER. The ACMA has issued compliance guidance to industry on its expectations on a range of these matters and the onus to comply must remain with wagering providers. As noted, the recommended **formal collaborative working group** involving the ACMA, the Register operator and select industry experts **will be a useful forum to discuss matters of compliance** as the system continues to evolve.

Summary

The NSER is a successful policy and has been well designed and well implemented. The legislation and rules underpinning it are largely fit-for-purpose. People with experience of using the NSER have identified areas for improvement but overwhelmingly have highlighted its value. These insights have been essential in shaping this report.

No policy should remain static – that is why the legislation requires this Review. Over time, and with ongoing monitoring and updating, the NSER will continue to evolve and increase its coverage both in scope and in number of registrants, increasing its links with other registers and support services, and evolving technically to improve data matching and verification.

Ongoing engagement with users of the NSER, the registrants themselves, will only serve to ensure this improvement is continuous and ongoing.

Recommendations

Feedback provided through the Review consultation process touched on several issues outside of the legislated scope of the Review. This was anticipated, and those consulted and involved in the Review were advised that the Lead Reviewer may make observations and recommendations in these areas. Matters that may fall into this category relate to industry marketing and the closure of gambling accounts (Recommendations 6a to c and 7a and b), covered under Divisions 5 and 6 of the IGA.

Table 1: Recommendations

Marketing and promotion

1. It is recommended that:
 - a) A strengthened, ongoing, whole-of-community marketing and promotion strategy and campaign be developed and implemented. The cost of this should be borne by industry and recouped via cost recovery arrangements, which should be amended if necessary to make provision for this.
 - b) References to the NSER be made prominent in the consistent gambling messaging measure of the National Consumer Protection Framework for online wagering. This could include a reference to the NSER on gambling taglines and a QR code for direct access to the NSER.
 - c) A new awareness campaign be developed and implemented, focusing on informing health professionals and those professionals most likely to be an early point of contact for those at risk of gambling harm (including financial counsellors), about the existence and benefits of the NSER. The cost of this should be borne by industry and recouped via cost recovery arrangements.
 - d) The ACMA continues the focus on compliance with the promotion of the NSER by wagering providers, noting that this is a key channel to increase awareness amongst target users.

Online keno and other online rapid play gambling products

2. It is recommended that the definition of products that fall within the scope of the NSER be expanded to include online keno and any other online rapid play gambling products. This should be put into effect as soon as possible.

Verification and data matching

3. It is recommended that a formal collaborative working group be established comprising the ACMA, the Register operator and select industry technical experts, to support continuous improvements in data matching by both the Register operator and industry stakeholders. A longer-term aim could be to achieve a common set of personal data between what is required for quick NSER registration and what is used to open a wagering account, to minimise the potential for circumvention.

Enhanced user experience and safety

4. It is recommended that the ACMA and the Register operator develop and implement approaches to:
 - a) Improve take-up of nominated support persons at registration and in post-registration communication.
 - b) Increase the range of support options available to NSER registrants.
 - c) Improve links across self-exclusion registers and give those registering for any self-exclusion register the information needed to ensure their self-exclusion can cover both online and in-person forms of gambling and wagering.
5. It is recommended that:
 - a) Consideration is given to require more substantive evidence as part of the NSER cancellation process.
 - b) The mandatory minimum 3-month self-exclusion period apply to all registrants, regardless of whether they have been on the NSER before.

-
6. It is recommended that:
- a) Individuals who have been on the NSER should, by default, be excluded from any marketing material, even once their NSER registration has lapsed. It should require an unprompted, explicit agreement, to recommence receiving marketing material.
 - b) The definition of 'marketing material' be updated, to provide clarity on the treatment of new and emerging technologies, including electronic push notifications.
 - c) Any communication from wagering providers to NSER registrants be limited to that necessary to comply with NSER legislative requirements.
-

7. It is recommended that:
- a) When a former registrant opens a new account after a period of self-exclusion, that a means is developed to ensure their historical data is retained to be used as part of ongoing flagging processes used to determine patterns of gambling harm.
 - b) Opening an account after the period of exclusion require additional steps, including a default deposit and betting limit, which can only be changed with additional effort.

Compliance, enforcement and complaints

8. It is recommended that the scope of activity able to be cost-recovered be regularly reviewed, to ensure that the ACMA is resourced to undertake increased compliance, enforcement and awareness raising activities, particularly considering the significant increase in the number of licensed wagering providers in Australia.

Cost recovery

9. It is recommended that cost recovery arrangements remain under review and be examined as part of the 3-year statutory evaluation process. Should, after the first few years, the relative cost being borne by wagering providers represent a significant departure from a general understanding of market-share, then other cost recovery formulas should be explored.

Other legislative amendments

10. It is recommended that at the next opportunity, consideration is given to legislative amendments which will enable the ACMA to optimally administer and regulate the operation of the NSER.
-

Key statistics

GAMBLING BEHAVIOUR IN AUSTRALIA

\$32.2b

Australian losses on legal gambling services in 2023-24

\$8.4b

Australian losses on wagering in 2023-24

\$108.87

Men's average monthly spend on physical and online sports betting in 2022 (up 27% since 2015)



65%

of Australians adults gambled at least once in the last 12 months (up from 57% in 2019)

66% increase

in men participating in physical and online sports betting between 2015 and 2022

16%

of 16 to 17-year-olds participate in gambling, increasing to 46% of 18 to 19-year-olds

GAMBLING-RELATED HARM



Over 70%

of Australian adults who regularly bet on sports or racing are at risk

550,000

high-risk gamblers in Australia in 2024



68% experienced cognitive, behavioural and mental health conditions

66% experienced financial hardship

16% experienced suicidal thoughts

14.6%

of Australian adults at risk in the last 12 months

18-34 years

the age group at highest risk, with 21.6% at high risk and 25.8% at moderate risk

27.1%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at risk

NSER IMPACT AND OPERATION

53,308
total registrants

34,266
current registrants

79%
registrants aged 40 years or younger

38%
registrants self-excluded for life

as at 1 December 2025

4,000+
extended self-exclusion past the initial period

5,800+
reactivated self-exclusion past the initial period

2%
ended their self-exclusion early

IMPACT ON REGISTRANTS

79% experienced improved mental health

77% experienced an overall increase to quality of life

69% experienced better personal relationships with family, friends and partners

AWARENESS

33.5%

of people who placed bets in the last 12 months were aware of the NSER

26.5%

of Australians were aware of the NSER

Younger adults aged between 18 and 35 years were less likely to be aware of the NSER

SUPPORT PERSONS

1 in 10

registrants nominated a support person

70%

felt their support person was helpful to manage their gambling

Registrants with a support person were more likely to self-exclude for life than those without one (70% versus 56%)



*Refer to endnotes for source data.⁶

Introduction

The NSER was launched by the Australian Government on 21 August 2023. It allows Australians to self-exclude from all Australian licensed online and phone wagering providers, who primarily offer online sports and race betting services, for a minimum period of 3 months, up to a lifetime.

The IGA requires this Review after 12 months of operation to ensure the NSER is working effectively as a measure to protect vulnerable Australians from gambling harm, by assessing whether its underpinning legislation and rules are fit for purpose.

The former Minister for Communications, the Hon Michelle Rowland MP, appointed Mr Richard Eccles to lead the Review in October 2024, with the support of a secretariat team within the department.

Review Terms of Reference

Section 61QF of the IGA provides the legislative basis for the Review and defines its scope, nature and duration. In line with these defined parameters, the Review has explored the effectiveness of the NSER's underpinning regulatory framework (Part 7B of the IGA), and whether regulatory arrangements under the *Interactive Gambling (National Self-Exclusion Register) Register Rules 2022* (Register Rules) and the *National Self-exclusion Register (Cost Recovery Levy) Act 2019* are fit for purpose. The Review Terms of Reference are provided in full at **Appendix A**.

Feedback provided through the Review consultation process touched on several issues outside of the legislated scope of the Review. This was anticipated, and those consulted and involved in the Review were advised that the Lead Reviewer may make observations and recommendations in these areas. Matters that may fall into this category relate to industry marketing and the closure of gambling accounts (covered by Division 5 and 6 of the IGA). Findings and recommendations related to these matters may be able to be addressed immediately or may help to inform the 3-year statutory evaluation process due to commence in August 2026. The parameters of the 3-year evaluation are outlined at Section 61QG of the IGA.

In March 2025, the former Minister for Communications, the Hon Michelle Rowland MP, asked that the Review Terms of Reference be expanded to explore the feasibility of extending the NSER to online keno products and operators. This request was based on the former Minister's consideration of a separate *Review into the regulation of online keno and foreign matched lotteries*.

Feedback on a possible extension of the NSER to online keno products and operators was sought from several interested organisations through face-to-face consultations. The Review secretariat also wrote to key stakeholders to advise of the update to the Terms of Reference and to seek views through submissions.

About the NSER

The NSER is a key measure of the National Consumer Protection Framework for online wagering, which has delivered 10 consumer protection measures to reduce online gambling harm by providing consumers with easy-to-use tools and information to change their gambling behaviours.

The NSER provides a service that allows:

- individuals to self-exclude from all Australian licensed online and telephone wagering services
- industry participants to check the self-exclusion status of current or prospective customers
- individuals and industry to contact the Register operator for assistance, enquiries and complaints.

Under the legislation, wagering providers are prohibited from opening a betting account, accepting a bet or sending direct marketing material to an individual who has registered with the NSER. Wagering providers are also required to close existing betting accounts for registered individuals. To enable this, providers can check the NSER to identify customers who have self-excluded. The program covers all online and telephone wagering service providers licensed in Australia, ranging from large corporate entities to small bookmakers.

Roles and responsibilities

The ACMA regulates the interactive (online and phone) gambling industry. The ACMA is responsible for the implementation and regulation of the NSER, including:

- procurement and managing the Register operator contract
- undertaking compliance monitoring, complaint management, investigating entities, and taking enforcement action
- developing and maintaining the Register Rules
- developing and managing cost-recovery arrangements
- engaging with stakeholders, including education and awareness activities about the NSER.

The ACMA appointed Dataworks Group (formerly IXUP Limited) as the Register operator. The Register operator is responsible for building and maintaining the public facing system to allow Australians to self-exclude and manage their exclusion, along with an industry facing system to allow wagering providers to check against the NSER. The Register operator also provides the contact centre to manage NSER enquiries and complaints.

The department has policy responsibility for online gambling as provided for in the IGA, which regulates the types of online gambling services that can be provided to persons located in Australia and contains consumer protections, including the legislative framework for the NSER.

The Department of Social Services has responsibility for improving the economic and social wellbeing of individuals, families and vulnerable members of Australian communities including, together with state and territory governments, implementing the National Consumer Protection Framework for online wagering.

Public consultation

Public consultation is an essential part of the Review and is a legislated requirement under Section 61QF of the IGA. This requirement has ensured that the Review is informed by the full range of stakeholders impacted by the NSER.

Public consultation was guided by the release of a consultation paper on 9 December 2024. The consultation paper set out the Terms of Reference for the Review and included questions that interested parties could use to guide feedback in both written submissions and consultation meetings.

Feedback was sought in the context of ensuring that the Review supports the overarching policy objective of the NSER, that is, that it works effectively as a harm minimisation tool to protect vulnerable Australians from gambling harm. Feedback was sought on:

- the effectiveness of underpinning regulatory arrangements
- identification of changes required to better meet user needs
- and on any unintended consequences or system gaps.

The consultation period closed on 30 April 2025, and 25 written submissions were received. Over the course of the Review, the Lead Reviewer also engaged with 28 stakeholder groups via face to face or online meetings. Stakeholders included harm minimisation and health advocates, policy experts, industry, the ACMA, the Register operator, and federal, state and territory government officials. Roundtable meetings were held to seek feedback from frontline counsellors, and the Lead Reviewer also spoke with multiple people with lived experience of using the NSER.

A summary of stakeholder engagement and list of submissions is provided at **Appendix B**.

Review findings

Marketing and promotion

The Review found that there is limited awareness of the NSER among gamblers, health professionals, community services, and the public. Increased marketing and promotion is needed to improve awareness of the NSER and support increased take up. There is strong support across all stakeholder groups for increased promotional efforts to be undertaken as an immediate priority.

Research undertaken by the Australian Gambling Research Centre at the Australian Institute of Family Studies supports this finding and illustrates that the marketing and promotion of the NSER has not yet created high levels of awareness. Among those who placed bets in the past 12 months, only 33.5% were aware of the NSER. Awareness levels amongst the broader community were even lower, with only 26.5% of Australian adults having an awareness of the NSER.⁷

Research commissioned by the ACMA found that registrants became aware of the NSER through a range of channels. Betting websites and apps were found to be the most prominent channel (17%), followed by news stories (16%), word-of-mouth (16%), online searches (15%), and social media (13%).⁸

Positive feedback was received through the consultation process on the current NSER branding, including that the language used is appropriate and does not stigmatise potential registrants.

Public promotion

More substantial marketing and promotion of the NSER is needed to build awareness, not only amongst people who gamble, but within the general population given the need to educate family and friends of people who gamble, who are often the ones to suggest some form of intervention.

An individual's gambling typically impacts up to 6 affected others for problem gamblers, up to 3 others for moderate risk gamblers, and one other person for low-risk gamblers. This equates to approximately 3 million affected Australians.⁹

Promotion of the NSER has been limited to date. The ACMA was not funded for this function and has absorbed the costs of promotion activities undertaken so far, including an initial promotion campaign which was found to be effective, but limited in scope and duration.

The ACMA's NSER promotion campaign

The ACMA's NSER promotion campaign was undertaken in 3 tranches between August 2023 and June 2025. This campaign was self-funded by the ACMA at a total cost of \$452,500.

The campaign was initially targeted to those at risk of, or experiencing, gambling harm. Later tranches focussed on a wider general population audience, with some tailoring to culturally and linguistically diverse and First Nations audiences.

All tranches of the campaign included advertising via digital channels, such as digital display banner ads, promoted Google search results and social media advertising to the targeted demographics.

A limited 'out of home' component was also funded and included coasters and information panels in pub and club venues.

Between May and June 2025, the scope of the campaign was expanded to include advertising in the Uber app, targeting users who may have been travelling to sporting events or betting venues.

Stakeholders have suggested that future promotion efforts should include dedicated advertising during live sports and racing, along with television, online, print and radio promotion.

The costs of increased marketing and promotion should be borne by industry. While it could be argued that promotion is an operational cost of the NSER, marketing and promotion is not explicitly included in current cost recovery arrangements. Marketing is in-scope under the Australian Government Cost Recovery Policy, and this change could be implemented via amendments to the *National Self-Exclusion Register (Cost Recovery Levy) Act 2019* and associated Cost Recovery Implementation Statement, if needed.

Recommendation 1a

It is recommended that a strengthened, ongoing, whole-of-community marketing and promotion strategy and campaign be developed and implemented. The cost of this should be borne by industry and recouped via cost recovery arrangements, which should be amended if necessary to make provision for this.

In addition, as part of the National Consumer Protection Framework for online wagering, the Australian Government supports a well-established consistent gambling messaging framework. Stakeholders have suggested that the NSER be embedded in this framework. This could include a reference to the NSER on gambling taglines and a QR code for direct access to the NSER.

This is also supported by qualitative findings of research commissioned by the ACMA to better understand users' experiences with the NSER, which suggested that a QR code or link to the NSER on print posters would be helpful in enabling people to access the NSER instantly during windows of opportunity.

'My first thought is, how do you sign up? Have a QR code so people can take themselves straight to the website'— Current registrant¹⁰

Recommendation 1b

It is recommended that references to the NSER be made prominent in the consistent gambling messaging measure of the National Consumer Protection Framework for online wagering. This could include a reference to the NSER on gambling taglines and a QR code for direct access to the NSER.

Targeted awareness raising

The Review has found that many frontline support services and health professionals, including general practitioners, are not aware of the NSER. Raising awareness levels amongst these providers will enable them to promote the NSER to clients who may benefit from this service and ensure there is support for customers through the sign-up process.

Understanding the typical first points of contact for people seeking gambling support can assist with where best to target future education and promotion efforts. Australian Gambling Research Centre research found that the main types of help sought by at-risk regular online bettors included:

- calling a helpline (e.g. Gambler's Help, Lifeline; 37.9%)
- browsing a gambling help related website or forum (35.8%)
- seeking help from family, friends or work colleagues (30.5%)
- seeking help from a doctor, psychologist or counsellor (27.4%)
- enrolling in a self-exclusion program (26.3%)

This research also found that the key reason at-risk online bettors sought help for harm related to their gambling was financial problems (60%), which suggests financial counsellors may be a common first point of contact.¹¹

While the ACMA has worked with frontline services and other stakeholders to promote the NSER over its first 2 years of operation, increased engagement efforts in this area will support greater awareness of the NSER. The ACMA should be appropriately resourced to build partnerships with organisations such as Financial Counselling Australia and its state associations, gambling help providers engaged by states and territories, providers of emergency relief, and other associations such as relevant health professional colleges.

There is also an ongoing need for governments and other stakeholders to continue to promote and build awareness of the NSER within the community.

Recommendation 1c

It is recommended that a new awareness campaign be developed and implemented, focusing on informing health professionals and those professionals most likely to be an early point of contact for those at risk of gambling harm (including financial counsellors), about the existence and benefits of the NSER. The cost of this should be borne by industry and recouped via cost recovery arrangements.

Industry promotion

To date, the onus for promoting the NSER has been on industry, who are legislated promote the NSER on their websites and apps and in any messages to customers that promote, advertise or offer wagering services. Wagering providers are also required to inform customers about the NSER when individuals contact them for support with safer gambling practices.

Industry stakeholders broadly consider that the legislation and Register Rules place appropriate obligations on the wagering industry to promote the NSER.

Promotion of the NSER by wagering providers is a key channel to increase awareness amongst target users. Research commissioned by the ACMA found that betting websites and apps were found to be the most prominent channel for registrants becoming aware of the NSER (17%).¹²

The Review heard feedback from multiple stakeholders concerned about the visibility of references to the NSER on wagering websites and apps. A desktop review undertaken during the Review period found that most websites and apps were displaying NSER information as required by the Register Rules, including by displaying a reference to the NSER, a statement about what it is and a hyperlink to the NSER website. However, several of the platforms reviewed failed to include hyperlinks to the NSER website, and multiple others did not meet legislated requirements for NSER information to be prominently displayed, clear and legible and in a font size consistent with other text on the page.¹³

The ACMA has worked with wagering providers to improve industry compliance with promotion obligations and considers that there has been an overall improvement in this area over the course of the NSER's operation. This has included the issuing of a [compliance update](#)¹⁴ in September 2025, to provide industry stakeholders with clear guidance on expectations for compliant promotion.

Recommendation 1d

It is recommended that the ACMA continues the focus on compliance with the promotion of the NSER by wagering providers, noting that this is a key channel to increase awareness amongst target users.

The role of the banking sector

Through the Review process, several stakeholders touched on the role that banks could play in the promotion of the NSER and in reducing gambling harm more broadly, through monitoring of harmful spending and blocking of gambling merchant categories.

Related to this, the *You Win Some, You Lose More* report was handed down as part of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs inquiry into online gambling and

its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm (the inquiry). Recommendation 13 of this report recommended that the Australian Government work with the Australian Banking Association to develop a set of minimum gambling consumer protection standards for implementation by all banks, including a block on gambling merchant categories for self-excluded individuals using the NSER.

Stakeholders noted that there may be opportunity to promote the NSER at the point an individual blocks gambling spending within their banking apps, for example via a breakout box with a link to the NSER. This should be explored further as part of any work by government in response to inquiry Recommendation 13.

Online keno and other online rapid play gambling products

Online keno is an ‘excluded lottery service’ under the IGA. As a result, it is exempted from several consumer protection measures implemented in recent years, including the NSER.

What is online keno?

Online keno is a game of chance, drawn every 3 minutes that offers players the opportunity to win prizes by selecting numbers and matching them with the drawn numbers.

Players select a set of numbers (usually 10-20 numbers) from 1 to 80 and bet that their numbers will match any of the 20 numbers which are randomly selected from a group of 80 numbers.

Traditionally, keno has been available in pubs and clubs and licensed under state and territory gambling regulations. More recently it has been made available online to consumers in some jurisdictions and is now being offered nationally by one provider using a Victorian based license.

The exclusion of lottery and lottery-type products from the IGA was originally based on the predominant feature of these products being the advance purchase of a ‘ticket’ for a ‘draw’ that takes place at regular points each week – as such they were deemed to possess a lower level of risk of causing harm. However, more recently, new products such as online keno have been offered, and marketed aggressively, as repetitive, rapid play gambling, with ‘draws’ occurring every 3 minutes.

The growth of online gambling products, including keno, has been significant and the increased marketing of online keno is concerning. In 2024, Nielsen Ad Intel estimated TV media spend for the Keno category was \$7.4 million (up from \$4.3 million in 2023).¹⁵

In feedback provided to the *Review into the regulation of online keno and foreign matched lotteries*, stakeholders suggested extending the NSER to online keno services and providers. The intention of this would be to address the higher potential for online keno to cause harm, due to its highly accessible nature, frequency of draws and potential for repeated play, win chasing and high spending. Submissions from harm reduction advocates to the Senate Committee inquiry into the *Interactive Gambling Amendment (Credit Card and Other Measures) Act 2023* (which bans the use of credit cards for online wagering) also raised concerns about the high frequency and high spending limit offered by online keno.

Stakeholder feedback

Key stakeholders were informed of this addition to the Review Terms of Reference and were invited to provide comment as part of submissions. All stakeholders engaged in face-to-face consultations between March and June 2025 were also asked for their verbal feedback.

General feedback across all stakeholder groups, including harm reduction advocates, counsellors, academics, state and territory regulators, and industry, suggests there is strong support to extend the NSER to online keno products and providers. Stakeholders consider the harm profile of online keno provides significant parallels with that of online wagering, which is already part of the NSER.

The Review also heard of emerging gambling products in development – with a focus on online, rapid play betting on an outcome – that have a similar potential to cause harm.

Feedback from online keno providers

Online keno is offered by 3 licenced providers in Australia: Lottoland (KenoGo), The Lottery Corporation and Annexio Australia Pty Ltd (LottoGo).

The Lead Reviewer met with Lottoland and The Lottery Corporation to discuss their views on an extension of the NSER to online keno products and services and extended an invitation to meet with Annexio.

Lottoland noted that it has voluntarily implemented use of the NSER as a harm minimisation tool for their customers and support an extension of the NSER to all online keno providers. They noted that operationally, they have found the NSER easy to integrate with and have had very few issues using the system; and working with the Register operator and the ACMA.

The Lottery Corporation indicated that integration with the NSER would be possible, but that there would be some operational and technical complexities to work through in implementing this change. While The Lottery Corporation does not currently use the NSER platform, it noted that they have a wide range of internal player protections in place for customers engaging in online keno.

Implementation

From a legislative perspective, implementing this change would require an amendment to the definition of an 'excluded lottery service' in the IGA. Noting the emergence of other forms of online rapid play gambling, the Review recommends that a revised definition include coverage of all online rapid play gambling products and services, including online keno, in the IGA. In the absence of legislative change, operators could voluntarily elect to implement the use of the NSER (as Lottoland have).

In terms of use of the NSER system, the Register operator and the ACMA have advised that there are no technical restrictions for an extension of the NSER to online keno products and providers. While providers would have to take steps to integrate their systems, it would be straight forward to implement, with providers to be onboarded following the existing process used for wagering providers.

Some stakeholders have suggested that further consideration may be required to determine whether this expansion would automatically apply to all NSER users (including existing users), or whether functionality would need to be built into the system to offer consumers the option to self-exclude from one product, or both. That is, the option to self-exclude from wagering but not online keno (or vice versa). However, this optionality would not be supported by proposed legislative changes to bring online rapid play gambling products, including online keno, under the IGA.

Research undertaken by the ACMA suggests that this may not be a significant issue, with 89% of registrants surveyed reporting that they had not played online keno in the 12 months before signing up to the NSER. 7% of registrants who did play online keno before signing up to the NSER reported that they stopped playing completely while on the NSER.¹⁶

Careful consideration would need to be given to:

- the way this change is communicated to existing self-excluded individuals, noting the need to avoid inadvertently promoting an alternative form of gambling
- manage expectations where an individual has elected to exclude from online wagering but is content to continue playing online keno.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that the definition of products that fall within the scope of the NSER be expanded to include online keno and any online rapid play gambling products. This should be put into effect as soon as possible.

Verification and data matching

The issue of self-excluded individuals being able to access online gambling while on the NSER was raised as a concern by NSER users, harm reduction advocates, state regulators and industry.

This issue has also gained media attention over the course of the NSER's period of operation, most prominently in a September 2024 [ABC article](#),¹⁷ which reported that a self-excluded individual amassed losses of over \$70,000, by registering to gamble using a different first name, email address and phone number.

Feedback provided through consultations and from the ACMA indicates that individuals may bypass their exclusion through several mechanisms, including through:

- Data matching issues: a data match does not occur due to differing identity registration information between the NSER and a wagering provider, allowing individuals to continue to gamble. This can be unintentional, however there have been reported cases of individuals intentionally changing personal details such as an email address, phone number, or name, to avoid an identity match being detected.
- Using a third-party identity: a gambling account is created in another person's name, such as a parent or spouse.
- Account sharing: using a third party account, such as a friend or family member, or asking for bets to be placed by a third party on the self-excluded individuals behalf.

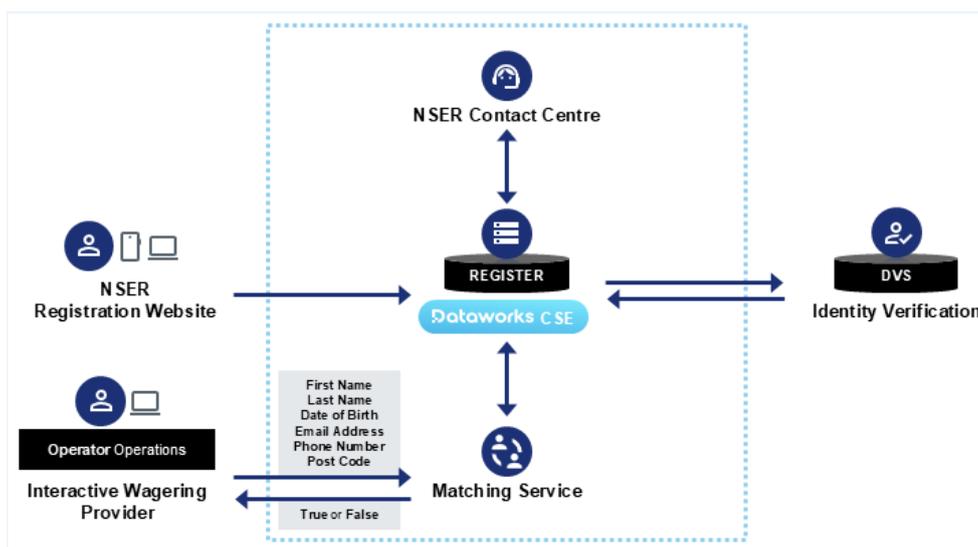
Several industry stakeholders also provided anecdotes of deliberate system misuse for financial gain. In these cases, an individual may intentionally register with incorrect details to avoid triggering a data match. The individual would then place bets, effectively attempting to create a 'free shot' at wagering without consequences. If those bets are successful, they seek to collect winnings; if unsuccessful, they attempt to void the outcome by pointing to their exclusion.

Despite the prominence the issue of circumvention has been given, the ACMA, Register operator and industry stakeholders consider circumvention numbers to be low. Actual numbers are unclear. The ACMA noted that complaints about deliberate circumvention are declining and currently at about 20-30 complaints per month.¹⁸

While ongoing monitoring and improvements in the data matching process are needed to address this issue, there was general acknowledgement among stakeholders, including users of the system, that the NSER will never be able to stop a determined self-excluded individual from gambling in some format.

How data matching and verification works

Figure 1: The NSER matching service



The NSER works by matching the information of registered individuals with the customer data held by wagering providers. If the two sets of information match, the wagering provider is informed of the match and is required to stop permitting the individual to use their wagering service.

The NSER’s matching process requires alignment across multiple data points. Detailed technical guidance outlining these requirements is available to all wagering providers via their NSER account. However, issues arise when a customer’s personal information held by a wagering provider does not align with the details provided when registering with the NSER (and vice versa), which can prevent a match being identified.

The NSER technical guidance available to wagering providers notes that a customer’s legal full first and last name should be passed through the register.

Table 2: Registration processes – the NSER versus online wagering

Service	Registration process
NSER	<p>Registration with the NSER has been designed to be quick and straightforward.</p> <p>To register, a new user must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their email address – a verification email is sent • Their phone number – verified through an One-Time Passcode • Their name, date of birth and address – verified through the Government’s Document Verification Service (DVS) using a driver licence, passport, etc. <p>Under the legislation, NSER registrants can only change their name via the Register operator’s contact centre, and this is required to be verified with ID. Phone numbers and email addresses are also verified if a user updates these in the system.</p>
Online wagering	<p>Identity verification obligations for online wagering providers fall under the <i>Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act 2006</i>, regulated by AUSTRAC.</p> <p>For individual customers, the minimum customer identification information required includes the individual’s full name as well as either their residential address or date of birth.</p> <p>Industry stakeholders noted that many have adopted ‘safe harbor’ identity verification which verifies the customer’s full name or preferred name, and either their date of birth or residential address.</p> <p>To comply with the legislation, providers must also use reliable and independent data sources to verify a customer’s identity. While DVS verification is an option, it is not a requirement. Information can also be verified against bank and credit agency databases.</p>

Improving data matching and quality

Both industry stakeholders and the Register operator noted that they have taken steps to improve data matching over the period of the NSER’s operation, including through fuzzy matching technology. Fuzzy matching is a technique used to identify and link data that may not be an exact match, but is likely to represent the same person. For example, an entry might read ‘John Smith’ while another records the same individual as ‘Jon Smith.’ Traditional matching methods would treat these as two distinct entries. However, fuzzy matching techniques can recognise these approximate matches despite the different spelling.

There are a variety of ways fuzzy matching could be used to enhance data matches between the NSER and wagering providers. For example, the Register operator could use fuzzy matching to try to detect where a wagering provider has used a differently spelled first name for a customer (such as John and Jon). Wagering providers could use fuzzy matching to check their internal records to help identify duplicate accounts, which can help to detect instances where an individual may be attempting to circumvent their exclusion. It is important that wagering providers not use fuzzy matching when verifying their customers, noting that if an individual’s full legal name is not used and technical guidance not followed when checking the NSER, this can lead to failed data match with the NSER.

The quality of data held in both the NSER and wagering providers databases was also raised as an issue by stakeholders. Stale customer information can be a factor in failed matches, so it is important that effort is made by all parties (Register operator, wagering providers and NSER users) to keep and maintain accurate personal information. Several wagering providers noted that they have taken steps to ensure currency of data within their systems. Some stakeholders suggested that the ACMA should introduce a requirement for registered individuals to periodically confirm or update their details within the NSER to prevent data inaccuracies from accumulating over time.

Continued strengthening of the NSER's centralised matching protocols, including through the use of fuzzy matching, is an effective way to reduce circumvention.

To completely address data matching issues, it has been suggested that identity verification requirements under the *Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act 2006* should be aligned with the requirements for registering with the NSER.

An overriding consideration in implementing any change is that registering with the NSER must be quick and straightforward. Many people are registering at a vulnerable point in their lives and seeking quick assistance to deal with an immediate problem. The speed and ease of registration has been highlighted by users as a positive feature of the NSER.

Industry stakeholders expressed support for the establishment of a collaborative working group comprising the ACMA, the Register operator and industry, to support collective efforts to improve data matching. This forum would also provide a structured channel for engagement across broader policy, regulatory and technical matters. Improved collaboration could assist with ensuring that emerging issues are identified and addressed quickly, and to support the system to evolve in line with best practice and user needs.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that a formal collaborative working group be established comprising the ACMA, the Register operator and select industry technical experts, to support continuous improvements in data matching by both the Register operator and industry stakeholders. A longer-term aim could be to achieve a common set of personal data between what is required for quick NSER registration and what is used to open a wagering account, to minimise the potential for circumvention.

Enhanced user experience and safety

Nominated support persons

An individual can add up to 5 support persons to their registration at any time, to support them through their self-exclusion. A support person is notified of key events, including:

- if the individual tries to cancel their self-exclusion early
- if the individual extends their self-exclusion
- when the individual's self-exclusion is about to end
- if the individual decides to remove them as a support person.

By providing support persons with this information, they can consider if intervention may be needed, for example in the form of an informed conversation, encouragement, or support with their self-exclusion.

Feedback to the Review touched on the importance of support from family and friends in overcoming gambling harms. NSER users highlighted the fundamental value of nominating a support person. This is supported by ACMA data, which shows that current users with a support person are more likely to exclude for their lifetime (70%), compared with those without a support person (56%) and that users who have cancelled their registration early were less likely to have a nominated support person.¹⁹ ACMA research has also found that the majority (70%) of those who had nominated a support person felt doing so was helpful to managing their gambling.²⁰

While there has been strong positive feedback around the option to nominate support persons at registration, only around 1 in 10 active users have elected to do so.²¹

Research commissioned by the ACMA found that most registrants were aware that they could nominate a support person (62%). Among those aware they could nominate a support person but chose not to, the main reasons were that:

- they considered it a private issue to deal with themselves (45%)
- they didn't want to (34%)
- they felt embarrassed to ask someone (30%).²²

The ACMA's research found that it could be challenging for participants to raise their gambling with a potential support person due to concerns about shame or judgment; and not wanting to cause a potential support person to feel worried or concerned.

Harm reduction advocates noted they would like to see more people nominating support persons when registering with the NSER and have suggested that the registration process could be adjusted to better encourage the addition of a support person, where one has not been listed. This should be done at the point of registration and in follow up support and communications. For example, inclusion of a prompt in the registration process such as: 'Listing a support person is encouraged to help support your self-exclusion. Are you sure you want to proceed without listing a support person?'

'I felt the role of having a sponsor attached to your record could have been a bit more straight forward and explained better on the website' – Alliance for Gambling Reform, Voices of Lived Experience²³

Greater awareness of the NSER in the general population may also support an increase in take up of nominated support persons. For example, where a friend or family member becomes aware of the NSER and is the one to suggest and support an individual's registration (refer to related **Recommendation 1a**).

Recommendation 4a

It is recommended that the ACMA and the Register operator develop and implement approaches to improve take-up of nominated support persons at registration and in post-registration communication.

Access to broader support services

The ease of access to broader support services for NSER users was raised as a key issue by harm reduction advocates and counsellors. The results of research commissioned by the ACMA also suggests that while nominating a support person is beneficial for some registrants, there is opportunity to offer further support options as part of the NSER and to use the NSER to connect registrants to this support.

Research commissioned by the ACMA found that 53% of registrants were using other support options while on the NSER, most commonly from:

- family, friends or work colleagues (21%)
- gambling help websites (16%)
- support from a psychologist (14%) or
- support from a counsellor (13%).²⁴

The Register operator maintains a contact centre 9am to 9pm Monday to Friday to manage enquiries and complaints. Register operator staff have received comprehensive training developed by a gambling harm expert, to help them identify where further intervention or support is required for an individual.

For phone calls, the ACMA has established processes with each state and territory to facilitate soft referrals to the 1800 helpline. This involves an agent seeking the caller's consent to transfer the call to the helpline. In such cases, the agent stays on the call, introduces the consumer to the agent at the 1800 helpline, and then

exits the call when necessary. While these referrals are routinely offered, take-up is very low (in the order of an average of 1 caller per month). If this offer is not accepted, the agent will provide the caller with the details for the 1800 helpline. In refusing a referral, anecdotally, the Register operator is told that the caller already knows about the service, or that it is not a convenient time. The ACMA has noted it will continue to look for opportunities to improve this outcome and facilitate more real time transfers to support services.

Email correspondence is provided to registrants at key events – such as in response to an application to cancel. This correspondence routinely includes information about support services including the 1800 helpline and Gambling Help Online.

Stakeholders have noted that the information shared with users during the NSER registration process could be enhanced to improve harm reduction outcomes. For example, information about other support services available to those experiencing gambling harm, such as financial counselling, could be better communicated at the point of registration.

Additional NSER support options suggested by registrants who participated in research commissioned by the ACMA included:

- Referrals to other gambling support services, such as Gambler’s Anonymous, gambler’s helplines, counselling services, and other online resources.
- More prominent and detailed information about strategies for managing gambling on the NSER website.
- Referrals to other gambling self-exclusion services (refer ‘Links with other exclusion registers’ below).
- Opt-in milestone emails or texts, for example, to congratulate an individual on a milestone length of time on the NSER.
- Opt-in support calls to help keep registrants on track to moderate their gambling and to receive information about additional support services. This suggestion was highlighted by those who did not feel comfortable or able to talk to others in their life about their gambling.
- Opt-in online group chats for peer-support with those with similar experiences of gambling harms, if appropriately moderated by a qualified gambling support worker.²⁵

Recommendation 4b

It is recommended that the ACMA and the Register operator develop and implement approaches to increase the range of support options available to NSER registrants.

Links with other self-exclusion registers

Many stakeholders expressed that they would like to see the NSER extended to cover all forms of gambling, including land-based and retail gambling. These stakeholders acknowledged that there would be considerable complexity to achieving this, however, consider it to be a worthwhile long-term aspiration.

This aligns with the findings of research commissioned by the ACMA, which found that 18% of participants would like to see the scope of the NSER expanded to include in-person venues, all forms of online lottery and offshore and illegal online gambling. Participants were often gambling in a variety of ways and felt that an expanded NSER would provide a convenient method of facilitating broader self-exclusion (a ‘one stop shop’). If this was not possible, participants felt the next-best option would be to refer NSER users to services that allow registrants to self-exclude other forms of gambling.²⁶

In the nearer term, several stakeholders noted that there may be scope for better coordination and compatibility between the NSER and land-based self-exclusion registers. Stakeholders have suggested that:

- This could be implemented through a single registration form, inclusive of additional fields that seek an individual’s consent for their details to be placed on other self-exclusion registers.
- There may be scope to alert NSER registrants to other self-exclusion registers, including land-based registers, via a breakout box with links to these registers as part of the NSER registration process.

- e.g. 'Registering with BetStop will ensure you are excluded from online gambling with Australian licensed online and telephone wagering providers. To exclude from land-based gambling venues, please visit <links>.'

Recommendation 4c

It is recommended that the ACMA and the Register operator develop and implement approaches to improve links across self-exclusion registers and give those registering for any self-exclusion register the information needed to ensure their self-exclusion can cover both online and in-person forms of gambling and wagering.

Cancelling exclusion

When registering with the NSER, users have the option to self-exclude for a minimum of 3 months, up to a lifetime. Users also have the option to extend their self-exclusion period at any time online through their NSER account. As of 1 December 2025, 18% of registrants had elected to exclude for 3 months, 42% had selected an exclusion period between 3 months and 5 years, 1% had elected to exclude for over 5 years and 38% had elected for a lifetime ban.²⁷

Under the legislation, registrants can apply to cancel their self-exclusion early, after completing at least 3 months on the NSER (the minimum exclusion period). Individuals who have previously been on the NSER are exempt from this requirement and can cancel their exclusion at any time. They must first discuss their decision to cancel with a counsellor, psychologist or a general practitioner, and then complete a statutory declaration to indicate that they have fulfilled this requirement. If the registered individual has a nominated support person, they must also be notified of the application to cancel. If the application to cancel is not withdrawn, the Register operator must remove the individual after a 7-day cooling off period.

ACMA data shows that around 2% of users have cancelled their self-exclusion early.²⁸ The Register operator noted that this rate of cancellation is higher than expected and the longer the exclusion period, the more likely someone is to cancel. Those with a nominated support person are less likely to cancel.

The ACMA has indicated that based on their experience engaging with consumers the requirement to speak to a health professional, complete a statutory declaration and serve a cooling off period, provides some friction in helping people consider whether cancellation is the right decision to make.

However, several harm reduction advocates noted their concern that it is too easy for people to opt out of self-exclusion by cancelling registration via a statutory declaration, particularly since the introduction of myGov digital statutory declarations in 2024.

Stakeholders have suggested that the cancellation process needs more friction, such as more substantial evidence to confirm that the registrant has seen a gambling counsellor or general practitioner to discuss their decision. However, this needs to be balanced between not disincentivising sign-up and ensuring that it's not overly burdensome for the Register operator to verify the cancellation information provided.

Recommendation 5a

It is recommended that consideration be given to require more substantive evidence as part of the NSER cancellation process.

As noted, individuals who have previously been on the NSER are exempt from the requirement for a mandatory 3-month exclusion period and can cancel their exclusion at any time.

It is increasingly apparent that some people will, over a longer period, have multiple periods on the NSER. A pattern of an individual registering and cancelling exclusion could be a sign that they are experiencing gambling harm. The ACMA has noted that there is evidence of significant consumer harm occurring because of people coming on and off the register after the initial 3-month period.

As such, the Review recommends that the mandatory minimum 3-month self-exclusion period should apply to all registrants, regardless of them having been on the NSER before. Subject to changes to the legislation, this could be achieved through routine system changes.

Recommendation 5b

It is recommended that the mandatory minimum 3-month self-exclusion period apply to all registrants, regardless of whether they have been on the NSER before.

Some stakeholders have also suggested that the NSER should only be used to support permanent lifetime exclusion from online wagering – that is, removing the option to exclude for a particular period, and removing the option to cancel exclusion. This was primarily raised by industry stakeholders in the context of the higher-than-expected volume of users opting to take up temporary exclusions, which can result in increased administrative burden.

While permanent self-exclusion is a feature of other registers in Australia and internationally, the high take-up of shorter-term exclusion options demonstrates that there is demand for this level of support, which may be enough to give some registrants the space they need to get back on track after experiencing harm from gambling. Offering only lifetime exclusion may serve as a disincentive for some to register.

Industry marketing

Under the legislation, wagering providers are prohibited from marketing to individuals who are registered with the NSER. This includes any contact via electronic messages (SMS, email etc), telemarketing, and the provision of any direct marketing material that:

- offers to provide wagering services
- advertises or promotes wagering services
- advertises or promotes a provider, or prospective provider, of wagering services.

It is also an offence for wagering providers to disclose information about a registered individual to other parties for marketing purposes.

The Review heard feedback from several stakeholders, including harm reduction advocates, people with lived experience, and the ACMA, regarding marketing material being provided by wagering providers to individuals once they come off the NSER. For example, the ACMA noted one wagering provider that emailed around 170 customers with gambling promotions shortly after they had ended their self-exclusion.

While the legislation does not prevent this from happening, targeting marketing to a person who may be particularly vulnerable goes against the policy objectives of the program.

Many industry stakeholders noted that they do not actively target marketing to people whose exclusion has ended. However, unless someone has opted out of direct marketing when they open a new gambling account, they will receive marketing material.

There is scope for increased effort by industry to suppress marketing to individuals whose exclusion has ended. The Review recommends implementation of a new obligation that a wagering provider can only recommence marketing to a former customer if that individual actively approaches a provider and provides consent to receive marketing after that person comes off the NSER. Consent to marketing provided pre-self-exclusion should not be able to be relied upon by wagering providers.

Recommendation 6a

It is recommended that individuals who have been on the NSER should, by default, be excluded from any marketing material, even once their NSER registration has lapsed. It should require an unprompted, explicit agreement, to recommence receiving marketing material.

Definition of marketing material

The Review heard feedback from many stakeholders regarding instances of marketing material being provided to individuals while they were self-excluded. For example, one harm reduction advocate noted that clients have reported receiving birthday offers, where their birthday fell within their self-exclusion period.

Research undertaken by the ACMA found that while most participants felt the NSER had been effective in doing what it was intended to right away, some reported a lag in effectiveness particularly in blocking direct marketing. This aligns with complaint data from the ACMA, which shows that of complaints received to 31 August 2025, 9.8% were related to self-excluded individuals receiving marketing.²⁹

The ACMA has investigated, provided warnings and taken enforcement action against wagering providers who have been found to have sent marketing messages to self-excluded individuals. As investigation reports are published, their findings can be considered by wagering providers. It is important that wagering providers continue to review and improve systems and processes to avoid non-compliance and protect consumers.

Registrants have also reported receiving push notifications while self-excluded, for example, if they have not deleted gambling apps from their devices. The legislation would benefit from clarification that push notifications are a form of regulated electronic messaging and should not be issued to self-excluded individuals.

The current definition of marketing material may not be fit for purpose to cover emerging and future technologies. To address current communication trends, and future-proof for other communication means currently unknown, the definition should be clarified, so that it is abundantly clear that any message that is initiated at the control of wagering providers is captured, including mobile device push notifications.

Recommendation 6b

It is recommended that the definition of 'marketing material' be updated, to provide clarity on the treatment of new and emerging technologies, including electronic push notifications.

While the legislation prohibits wagering providers from providing marketing material to registered individuals, it does not prohibit wagering providers from communicating for other purposes. In some circumstances, wagering providers must contact registered individuals, for example, to notify current and prospective customers:

- that they have been informed that they are a registered individual
- that they are prevented from providing licensed interactive wagering services to them
- that their account (if they are an existing customer) will be closed, and
- to provide them with information about relevant available support services.

Under the National Consumer Protection Framework for online wagering, wagering providers must also provide their customers with activity statements if there has been any activity on their account in the preceding month.

The Review has heard examples of wagering providers sending information to self-excluded customers beyond the purposes outlined above, for example, information regarding changes to the terms of use of their wagering app. While one could argue the extent to which this constitutes marketing material, it has been reported that this type of correspondence can cause great distress and act as a trigger for someone at risk of gambling harm.

Recommendation 6c

It is recommended that any communication from wagering providers to NSER registrants be limited to that necessary to comply with NSER legislative requirements.

Third party marketing

The Review heard from several individuals that have been contacted by third party and offshore gambling providers while on the NSER.

‘I have come to find the loopholes are massive in the BetStop processes. For it to be a true self-exclusion register, it needs to include the ability to stop contact from call centres parading as “marketing” companies but are soliciting people to gamble...’ – Alliance for Gambling Reform, Voices of Lived Experience³⁰

Harm reduction advocates have called for changes to prevent third-party marketing companies being able to contact people while they are on the NSER, by making it an offense to contact these consumers regarding marketing or promotions for, or about, gambling providers or gambling products.

Affiliates are not directly covered by the legislation and there is no general prohibition on third parties sending regulated electronic messages to registered individuals. Rather, the marketing obligations are on wagering providers to not send, or *cause* to be sent, a regulated electronic message to a registered individual.

Harm reduction advocates would like to see a system put in place for consumers to easily report contact from both third parties and wagering providers, noting that many marketers hide information that would lead them to be easily identified. They are also concerned that people’s personal details may be sold, shared or transferred to other companies, in particular, marketing companies who may not be subject to the same rules as Australian wagering providers. While outside the scope of this Review, it is important to highlight that these advocates are calling for strengthened regulations to restrict the sharing, transfer or sale of data from wagering providers to any other companies, regardless of the type of company.

Wagering providers are ultimately responsible for compliance with the IGA, including where a third party undertakes marketing activities on their behalf. The ACMA has provided a [compliance update](#) with advice to wagering providers to review their arrangements with affiliates, to ensure they are appropriate and that they comply with the legislation.

Closure of gambling accounts and loss of historical data

The legislation requires wagering providers to permanently close the wagering account of a person that registers with the NSER and to pay out any credit left in the account. If that person ceases to be on the NSER, their wagering account cannot be reopened, reactivated or reinstated. Instead, a wagering provider needs to open a new account for that person if they choose to return to gambling. The legislation does not require the provider to delete information about the individual, only to close the account.

The Review heard concerns from both industry and harm reduction advocates around the legislated requirement to close wagering accounts. Industry stakeholders note that this has been a greater issue than expected due to high uptake of 3-month exclusions, with many people returning to gambling afterwards.

Key concerns relate to the loss of historical data about the individual that could prevent future harm red flags being detected when a person recommences wagering, such as a history of bet types and deposit types. Closing accounts may also make it more difficult for wagering providers to identify problem gamblers, flag suspicious activity, and uphold requirements under the *Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act 2006*.

Several larger wagering providers noted that they have implemented systems, including single customer view technology, to link wagering accounts (including historical and closed accounts), with a unified customer view and single customer identity. However, other wagering providers do not have systems in place that support merging or linking customer accounts and history. Some do this manually, for others, systems do not allow profiles to be merged or support duplicate accounts, which may prevent an individual from re-engaging with that wagering provider after a period of self-exclusion.

Harm reduction advocates provided feedback to the Review that individuals who self-exclude should have their accounts de-activated but not deleted by wagering providers. They consider it is essential that wagering

providers can identify customers who have returned from a period of self-exclusion and differentiate these individuals from customers opening new accounts for the first time. Consumers may also expect that a wagering provider has access to their gambling history prior to self-exclusion and be able to assess their risk levels based on their history prior to self-exclusion.

Counter to this position, the ACMA consider that the requirement to close gambling accounts provides a critical consumer safeguard, as it means a person must make an active choice to open a new account, rather than immediately access an old account, if they choose to recommence gambling at the end of their self-exclusion period. The ACMA noted cases where former customers have ceased to be excluded and have been able to recommence gambling with ease by using an old account, resulting in harm.

It is noted that there is no requirement for customer information to be permanently deleted once an account is closed. So too, there is no reason why a wagering provider should not be able to link the old and new accounts to ensure that they have a full picture of the customers gambling behaviour.

Recommendation 7

It is recommended that:

- a) When a former registrant opens a new account after a period of self-exclusion, that a means is developed to ensure their historical data is retained to be used as part of ongoing flagging processes used to determine patterns of gambling harm.
- b) Opening an account after the period of exclusion require additional steps, including a default deposit and betting limit, which can only be changed with additional effort.

Expiry of registration

Under the legislation, the Register operator must remove an individual from the NSER once their nominated exclusion period has ended. The Register operator is also required to notify the individual that their exclusion is due to expire at least 14 days beforehand. If the individual has a nominated support person, they must also be notified 14 days in advance of expiry.

To meet this obligation, the Register operator notifies registrants via email 2 weeks ahead of their registration expiring. This correspondence includes encouragement and guidance to extend the individuals exclusion period, along with links to a range of broader support services. A second email is also provided after registration has lapsed, encouraging the individual to re-register and connect with broader support services if needed.

The ACMA has reported that some users are choosing to extend their exclusion or re-register. Over 4,000 registrants have extended their exclusion period, with a third extending to lifetime exclusion. Over 5,800 users have reactivated their exclusion after completing their initial exclusion.³¹

While this is a feature of the legislation intended to encourage a longer period of exclusion if needed, the Review heard feedback from some stakeholders that individuals should not be notified when their self-exclusion period has lapsed. These stakeholders consider that this information should be accessible for individuals if they wish to find it, but they should not receive any notifications or prompts which may inadvertently encourage them to return to gambling.

The Review considered whether any changes were required in this area to improve consumer safety outcomes. Noting the high numbers of people opting to extend their exclusion following communications about their exclusion period coming to an end, no change is recommended at this time. However, this should remain an area for continued monitoring and discussion.

Third-party registrations and referrals

The legislation does not provide for third-party registrations or referrals to the NSER, for example, by family members, friends, clubs, wagering providers or state and territory regulators. This is consistent with the policy intention of self-exclusion.

The Register operator noted that they have encountered issues with third parties registering individuals without consent. This can take significant time to investigate and resolve. The ACMA consider that the legislation could provide clearer power to the Register operator to manage third-party registrations.

A number of stakeholders have also indicated support for third-party referrals and consider that the functionality of the NSER should be expanded to enable wagering providers to refer specific, consenting customers at risk of gambling harm to the NSER.

There would be a range of matters to work through between the ACMA and industry stakeholders if this were to be considered as a future system feature, including around personal privacy, methods of customer consent and record-keeping requirements.

The Review considers it to be too early in the NSER's evolution to consider such a wholesale change to the policy objective of self-exclusion. However, this should remain area for continued monitoring and discussion.

Data sharing

The legislation outlines confidentiality provisions, including the treatment of personal information included in an application to the NSER and held within an entry in the NSER. This is defined in the legislation as 'protected information' and includes information about whether an individual is, or was, a registered individual, or a nominated support person of a registered individual and any other information included in an individual's application to the NSER.

Provisions around the sharing of protected information are strict and the ACMA and the Register operator have put in place extensive arrangements to ensure that consumer information is protected. These provisions are in place to ensure that participant data is kept secure and confidential and that it is only shared with authorised parties, when necessary.

Under the IGA's protected information provisions, wagering providers are prevented from sharing information about registered individuals with each other.

Several industry stakeholders noted that they would like to share data with other operators to assist in minimising gambling harms for vulnerable individuals. These providers would like the ability to alert other wagering providers about someone trying to deliberately circumvent their exclusion. Industry stakeholders have suggested this information could be shared directly between wagering providers or could be provided to the Register operator or the ACMA to alert wagering providers.

Harm reduction advocates have also expressed support for enhanced system functionality around the sharing of information between operators in a secure way, to improve harm reduction outcomes. They note that individuals who gamble in a risky manner and experience gambling harm are likely to be gambling across multiple sites. They consider that the ability to communicate risky behaviour would assist wagering providers to identify customers who may be experiencing harm and offer appropriate interventions and support. These stakeholders consider that providing a more holistic view of customers may be a mechanism for improved industry-wide protection of customers.

This should remain area for continued monitoring and discussion, noting there would be considerable privacy implications to work through if any change were to be made in this area.

System administration

User registration

Registering with the NSER has been designed to be quick and simple, so that it may be readily accessed by people the moment they make the decision to self-exclude. Registrations can be completed online or over the phone, and consumers wishing to self-exclude only need access to their mobile phone, email address and an approved identity document (Medicare card, an Australian driver's licence or an Australian passport). ACMA data shows that since the NSER's commencement, over half of registrations have been completed in under 5 minutes and around 95% of users are registering online without assistance.³²

Feedback provided to the Review from users, frontline counsellors and harm reduction advocates has been overwhelmingly positive in terms of the ease of registration and use of the system, with several counsellors noting that they have had success in guiding clients to register over the phone, one noting that the whole process took less than 10 minutes.

Industry interface

Industry stakeholders noted that operationally they have found the NSER easy to integrate and have encountered limited technical issues. Feedback from industry on interactions with, and support from, the Register operator has also been overwhelmingly positive. Feedback from the Register operator also indicated that the Register Rules were effective in supporting their administration of the system.

Industry stakeholders also noted that the NSER system is working smoothly from a technical perspective, with no issues identified with peak loads or data retrieval, aspects of the system that were raised as concerns in the establishment phase of the program. The average response time for a check about a single customer is 2.5 milliseconds.³³

Compliance, enforcement and complaints

Compliance and enforcement

Over its first 2 years of operation, compliance with the legislation and Register Rules has been relatively strong, with most wagering providers ensuring their systems and procedures support compliance. While breaches have occurred, over time it is expected that these will diminish, particularly as the ACMA's investigation reports are published and their findings can be considered by wagering providers.

Some harm reduction advocates expressed to the Review that they have not been satisfied that enforcement action has been sufficiently robust, or publicly known, to act as an effective incentive for wagering providers to stop exploitative behaviour. However, the outcomes of a range of complex ACMA investigations and enforcement actions were announced after the Review consultation process, so this concern may have eased.

The ACMA commenced 21 investigations into compliance with the NSER legislation to 31 August 2025, 12 of which were completed by 31 August 2025.³⁴ Where non-compliance has been identified, enforcement action has been taken commensurate with the scope of non-compliance, including the extent of consumer harm and the enforcement measures available at the time investigations are completed. The results of these investigations are being publicly announced as enforcement action is settled.

When the NSER was established, there were around 130 licensed interactive wagering service providers in Australia. This number has grown to close to 200 providers.³⁵ Many of these providers are at the smaller end of the market, often with less sophisticated processes and systems, resulting in a need for further education about compliance obligations. It is important that all wagering providers continue to review and improve systems and processes to avoid non-compliance and protect consumers.

Harm reduction advocates have called for greater resourcing for the ACMA to increase compliance and enforcement activities, including the appropriate use of civil penalty and offence provisions, which are important to achieving policy objectives around harm prevention and minimisation.

The Review supports a reassessment of the resourcing needs for the ACMA to ensure it can monitor and enforce industry compliance. Any change in cost should be reflected in cost recovery arrangements.

Recommendation 8

It is recommended that the scope of activity able to be cost-recovered be regularly reviewed, to ensure that the ACMA is resourced to undertake increased compliance, enforcement and awareness raising activities, particularly considering the significant increase in the number of licensed wagering providers in Australia.

Complaints

Under the legislation, the Register operator deals with complaints about the administration and operation of the NSER and must refer complaints related to breaches of the legislation to the ACMA.

Since launching in August 2023 and as of 31 August 2025, the ACMA had received 669 complaints related to the NSER. This figure includes some duplicate complaints, for example, where an individual makes multiple complaints about the same matter. Most complaints received by the ACMA have been about:

- self-excluded individuals being able to bet with a wagering provider (53%)
- wagering providers not closing accounts (19.6%)
- self-excluded individuals being able to open accounts (17.6%), and
- self-excluded individuals receiving marketing (9.8%).³⁶

Consultations did not uncover any significant issues with the complaints handling process by the Register operator or the ACMA. Some stakeholders noted concern around the perceived low number of complaints being investigated by the ACMA. As noted, following the Review consultation period, the ACMA announced enforcement actions against multiple wagering providers, following on from complex investigations. This has helped to demonstrate that complaints are being taken seriously, and that the legislation is being enforced.

The Northern Territory Government noted it has received complaints about the NSER and referred those complaints to the ACMA. Several other state government regulators noted that they have mostly received positive anecdotal feedback about the NSER and have not had many, if any complaints come through.

Some stakeholders noted that the current complaints management procedure could be strengthened by advising relevant wagering providers or state regulators of complaint outcomes, or where a complaint has been closed with no further action. They consider this would assist in addressing complaints raised by individuals directly with a wagering provider or state regulator. However, this form of information sharing would have implications for consumer privacy and would require amendments to the legislation.

Cost recovery

The Review has considered the operation of the *National Self-Exclusion Register (Cost Recovery Levy) Act 2019* and the appropriateness of the model for the recovery of costs from the industry as defined in the *National Self-Exclusion Register (Cost Recovery Levy) Determination 2022* (the Determination).

The Determination details the model for recovering costs from industry. Costs are recovered in the form of an annual levy based on the proportionate use of the service by a wagering provider across the previous year. Put simply, the relative cost born by a provider is determined by how often that provider checks the NSER – the greater the number of checks, the higher the fee. Cost recovery arrangements are consistent with the government's cost recovery policy, which outlines that where appropriate, non-government recipients of specific government activities should be charged some or all of the costs of those activities.

The [Cost Recovery Implementation Statement 2024-25](#)³⁷ (CRIS) calculates that the NSER will cost \$46.42 million over 4 years from 2023-24 to 2026-27. There were over 21.9 billion checks of the NSER by industry to 31 December 2024. The top 10 wagering providers were responsible for around 95% of these checks and have paid 95% of the 2023-24 levy.

Feedback on the model

The ACMA consulted with industry on the development of the cost recovery model and on final cost recovery arrangements outlined in the CRIS in early 2025. Stakeholder consultation will continue annually to ensure cost recovery arrangements are appropriate.

Several industry stakeholders provided feedback to the Review around a preference for an updated cost recovery model that allocates costs based on market share, in place of the current fee per check model. These stakeholders consider that the current model creates a disincentive for wagering providers to undertake frequent or proactive checks and consider that a model where fees are based on market share, rather than usage, would remove this barrier and better align with consumer protection objectives.

This is complicated – it could be based on number of account holders, amounts wagered, turn over or profit, or other measurements. While there is a general sense of market share, it is currently insufficiently granular to use as a basis for cost recovery share. The Review has determined that recovering costs based on a provider’s portion of overall requests to the Register operator remains the most appropriate and efficient manner for the recovery costs associated with the program.

Invoicing delay

There was a delay in the ACMA’s issuing of initial cost recovery invoices to industry. The final CRIS was published in March 2025 and the ACMA issued invoices for recovery of the 2023-24 levy in May 2025. This was a result of delays to the commencement of the NSER, due to the voluntary administration of the initial Register operator, Big Village, and securing Dataworks Group to take over the program. The delay resulted in a need to update and consult on both the Determination and the CRIS, ahead of invoices being issued.

Several industry stakeholders expressed frustration with the delay in cost recovery invoicing in their feedback to the Review. They consider that the delay has made it difficult to undertake financial and business planning, as well as to ascertain how costs have been shared by industry, and whether the level of NSER checks undertaken by each provider is consistent with industry standards. It is expected that the issuing of future invoices will be timelier, which will help wagering providers to make informed planning decisions.

While the first cost recovery invoices show some disparity between charges to wagering providers, with some outliers due to a high volume of register checking, it is expected that this will continue to correct as wagering providers become more attuned to the best way in which to engage with the NSER.

The delay in the issuing of invoices has reduced the meaningful feedback stakeholders have been able to provide to the Review. It is suggested that cost recovery arrangements remain open to consideration as part of the 3-year statutory evaluation process due to commence in 2026. By this time, industry stakeholders will have had the opportunity to assess cost recovery implications and engage constructively on any future refinements to the model.

Recommendation 9

It is recommended that cost recovery arrangements remain under review and be examined as part of the 3-year statutory evaluation process. Should, after the first few years, the relative cost being borne by wagering providers represent a significant departure from a general understanding of market-share, then other cost recovery formulas should be explored.

Other legislative amendments

The Review has identified several areas where changes can optimise the potential for the ACMA to fulfil its obligations and improve outcomes for users of the NSER. These may require legislative amendments which should be explored at the next suitable opportunity.

Such areas for consideration include:

- requirements for record-keeping by wagering providers, to ensure the ACMA can access information required to monitor compliance with the NSER
- the appropriateness of the current penalty regime to appropriately disincentivise non-compliance, and
- providing the ACMA with the ability to share data with law enforcement and emergency services where there are dangers to the health and safety of individuals.

Recommendation 10

It is recommended that at the next opportunity, consideration is given to legislative amendments which will enable the ACMA to optimally administer and regulate the operation of the NSER.

Appendix A - Review Terms of Reference

The [Interactive Gambling Act 2001](#) (the IGA) requires a review of BetStop – the National Self-Exclusion Register (the Review) after 12 months of operation to ensure it is working effectively as a measure to protect Australians from gambling harm.

Section 61QF of the IGA provides the legislative basis for the Review and defines its scope, nature and duration. In line with these parameters, the Review will consider:

- The effectiveness of Part 7B of the IGA (excluding Divisions 4, 5, and 6), which sets out the regulatory framework for BetStop.
- The effectiveness of the *Interactive Gambling (National Self-Exclusion Register) Register Rules 2022*, which governs BetStop operator Dataworks management of BetStop and sets out a range of matters including the process for varying a registration, managing complaints, and compels wagering providers to promote BetStop to customers.
- The operation of the *National Self-Exclusion Register (Cost Recovery Levy) Act 2019* and the appropriateness of the model for the recovery of costs from the industry as defined in the *National Self-Exclusion Register (Cost Recovery Levy) Determination 2022*.
- Whether the regulatory arrangements under the above instruments are fit for purpose.

Section 61QF of Interactive Gambling Act 2001

(1) After the end of the 12-month period beginning at the start of the proclaimed start day, the Minister must cause to be conducted a review of the operation of:

- (a) this Part (other than Divisions 4, 5 and 6); and
- (b) the remaining provisions of this Act, so far as they relate to this Part (other than Divisions 4, 5 and 6); and
- (c) the Register rules; and
- (d) the *National Self-exclusion Register (Cost Recovery Levy) Act 2019*.

Public consultation

(2) A review under subsection (1) must make provision for public consultation.

Report

(3) A report of the review must:

- (a) be given to the Minister within 18 months after the end of the 12-month period mentioned in subsection (1); and
- (b) be published on the Department's website as soon as practicable after the report is given to the Minister.

(4) The Minister must cause copies of a report under subsection (3) to be tabled in each House of the Parliament within 15 sitting days of that House after the Minister receives the report.

Online keno products and services

In March 2025, the former Minister for Communications, the Hon Michelle Rowland MP, asked that the Review Terms of Reference be expanded to explore the feasibility of extending the NSER to online keno products and operators.

Appendix B - Stakeholder engagement

Face to face and online meetings

Individuals

- The Lead Reviewer met with, or spoke with, people who have experienced gambling harm and/or addiction, who have practical experience in using the NSER.

Harm reduction/health advocates

- Australian Medical Association
- Alliance for Gambling Reform
- Gambling Harm Lived Experience Experts
- Relationships Australia
- GambleAware
- Voices of Lived Experience

Industry

- Betr
- Lottoland
- Palmerbet
- Responsible Wagering Australia
- Tabcorp
- The Lottery Corporation
- Sportsbet

Register operator

- Dataworks Group (formerly IXUP Ltd)

Australian Government

- Australian Communications and Media Authority
- Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian Gambling Research Centre
- Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC)
- Department of Finance
- Department of Social Services

State and territory governments

- State Officials' Working Group Meeting on Online Wagering and Harm Minimisation (all jurisdictions)
- Northern Territory Racing and Wagering Commission
- Licensing NT
- Liquor and Gaming NSW
- NSW Government Office of Responsible Gambling
- NSW Government Office of Racing

- South Australian Government Consumer and Business Services
- Victorian Government Department of Justice and Community Safety
- Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission

Submissions

On 9 December 2024, a consultation paper was publicly released inviting feedback to inform the Review. In total there were 25 written submissions received. Submissions will be published on the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts website, excluding submissions from individuals and private submissions.

1. Individual (private submission)
2. Individual (private submission)
3. The Lottery Office
4. The University of Sydney - Gambling Treatment and Research Centre
5. Licensed interactive wagering provider (private submission)
6. Licensed interactive wagering provider (private submission)
7. Industry representative group (private submission)
8. Individual (private submission)
9. Website/app blocking provider (private submission)
10. Financial Counselling Peak Associations
11. Consultancy firm (private submission)
12. Relationships Australia
13. Licensed interactive wagering provider (private submission)
14. Australian Medical Association
15. Greyhounds Australasia
16. Sportsbet
17. Racing Australia
18. Licensed interactive wagering provider (private submission)
19. Responsible Wagering Australia
20. NT Racing and Wagering Commission
21. Australian Communications and Media Authority
22. Alliance for Gambling Reform and Wesley Mission
23. Licensed interactive wagering provider (private submission)
24. WA Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
25. Licensed online keno provider (private submission)

References

- ¹ ACMA data, unpublished, 2025.
- ² K Sakata, M Budinski, G Tillman, P Boshier and N Greer, [Understanding public awareness of BetStop in Australia](#), Australian Gambling Research Centre, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian Government, 2025.
- ³ ACMA data, unpublished, 2025.
- ⁴ ACMA data, unpublished, 2025.
- ⁵ Northern Territory Government Department of Tourism and Hospitality (DTH), [Sports bookmakers, betting exchange operators and totalisators](#), DTH website, 2025, accessed 7 November 2025.
- ⁶ Infographic data sources:
- ACMA data, unpublished, 2025.
 - G Tillman, R Irving, S Wickramasinghe, T Pappu, M Budinski, N Greer, B Whitlock and K Sakata, [National Gambling Prevalence Study Pilot 2024: Key findings](#), Australian Gambling Research Centre, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian Government, 2025.
 - G Tillman, K Sakata, N Greer, D Myles, M Budinski, S Wickramasinghe and R Irving 2025, [Regular online bettors in Australia, 2023: National Gambling Trends Study](#), Australian Gambling Research Centre, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian Government, 2025.
 - M Saunders and M Harrington, [Teenage gambling in Australia: Rates of expenditure and participation among 12-19-year-olds](#), The Australia Institute, 2025.
 - ORIMA, [National Self-exclusion Register research: Comprehensive Report](#), ORIMA, 2025.
 - Queensland Government Statistician's Office, [Australian Gambling Statistics, 40th edition, 1998–99 to 2023–24](#), Queensland Treasury, Queensland Government, 2025.
 - R Wilkins, F Botha, I Laß and K Peyton, [The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey: Selected Findings from Waves 1 to 22](#), Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, The University of Melbourne, 2024.
 - Sakata et al., *Understanding public awareness of BetStop in Australia*.
- ⁷ Sakata et al., *Understanding public awareness of BetStop in Australia*.
- ⁸ ORIMA, *National Self-exclusion Register research: Comprehensive Report*.
- ⁹ BC Goodwin, M Browne, M Rockloff and J Rose, 'A typical problem gambler affects six others', *International Gambling Study*, 2017, 17(2):276–289, doi:10.1080/14459795.2017.1331252.
- ¹⁰ ORIMA, *National Self-exclusion Register research: Comprehensive Report*.
- ¹¹ Tillman et al., *Regular online bettors in Australia, 2023: National Gambling Trends Study*.
- ¹² ORIMA, *National Self-exclusion Register research: Comprehensive Report*.
- ¹³ Sakata et al., *Understanding public awareness of BetStop in Australia*.
- ¹⁴ Australian Communications and Media Authority, [BetStop – the National Self-Exclusion Register – compliance update September 2025](#), ACMA website, 2025, accessed 28 November 2025.
- ¹⁵ Nielsen Ad Intel, unpublished, 2024.
- ¹⁶ ORIMA, *National Self-exclusion Register research: Comprehensive Report*.
- ¹⁷ S Cannane, [How BetStop, the Albanese government's self-exclusion scheme for wagering, failed an addicted gambler](#), ABC News, 24 September 2024, accessed 28 November 2025.
- ¹⁸ ACMA data, unpublished, 2025.
- ¹⁹ ACMA data, unpublished, 2025.
- ²⁰ ORIMA, *National Self-exclusion Register research: Comprehensive Report*.
- ²¹ ACMA data, unpublished, 2025.
- ²² ORIMA, *National Self-exclusion Register research: Comprehensive Report*.
- ²³ Alliance for Gambling Reform and Wesley Mission, *Statutory Review of BetStop – Submission*, May 2025.
- ²⁴ ORIMA, *National Self-exclusion Register research: Comprehensive Report*.
- ²⁵ ORIMA, *National Self-exclusion Register research: Comprehensive Report*.
- ²⁶ ORIMA, *National Self-exclusion Register research: Comprehensive Report*.
- ²⁷ ACMA data, unpublished, 2025.
- ²⁸ ACMA data, unpublished, 2025.
- ²⁹ ACMA data, unpublished, 2025.
- ³⁰ Alliance for Gambling Reform and Wesley Mission, *Statutory Review of BetStop – Submission*, May 2025.
- ³¹ ACMA data, unpublished, 2025.
- ³² ACMA data, unpublished, 2025.
- ³³ ACMA data, unpublished, 2025.

³⁴ ACMA data, unpublished, 2025.

³⁵ Northern Territory Government DTH, *Sports bookmakers, betting exchange operators and totalisators*.

³⁶ ACMA data, unpublished, 2025.

³⁷ ACMA, Cost recovery implementation statement: National Self-Exclusion Register – Cost Recovery Levy 2024–25, 2025.

