

MEDIA STATEMENT

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TO: ALL JOURNALISTS AND EDITORS

GAMBLE RESPONSIBLY DURING THE FESTIVE SEASON

Despite the challenges experienced during 2020 as a result of Covid-19, or perhaps because of those challenges, citizens across the country are looking forward to the festive season. It is a time that is usually filled with social activities, parties, and anything that can provide fun and entertainment. The South African gambling industry is no exception, and it will provide entertainment in the form of gambling, as well as peripheral entertainment, such as cinemas, restaurants and shows at casino establishments. This means that the industry offers exciting activities and opportunities for recreation. However, for those experiencing or recovering from a gambling problem, it is also a season full of dangerous temptation.

The NGB is committed to ensuring that members of the public who participate in any licensed gambling activity are protected; society and the economy are protected against over-stimulation of the latent demand for gambling; and licensing of gambling activities are transparent, fair and equitable. For those that gamble responsibly, it is relaxing and has no impact on their lives. To protect punters against the risk of problem gambling, the NGB constantly engages in awareness-raising to educate the public to make the right choices. The message is simple: gambling is a form of recreation, it is not a form of income generation. Once you find yourself unable to stop playing, or you are spending more than you can afford to lose, then it's time to stop. If you are having difficulty, help is readily at hand, through advice and counselling on a toll-free number through the South African Responsible Gambling Foundation. The number is 0800 006 008. Casinos also provide forms if you wish to self-exclude yourself if you sense that you have a gambling problem.

Our biggest threat, and which will impact punters during the festive season, is illegal gambling. Any form of gambling, that is not offered by a licensed operator, is illegal. A common form of illegal gambling is online gambling, where casino-type games can be accessed at venues styled as internet lounges, or also through smartphones and laptops. No casino-type game is legal unless it is offered within a brick and mortar establishment that is licensed in South Africa. It is difficult to close down illegal operators, so they can easily take your money as you gamble, but when it comes to receiving a winning, it will be blocked by banks, and if found to have been derived from illegal gambling, it will be forfeited to the State. Other forms of illegal gambling would include things like game of dice and FaFi (mo-china) that are played on the streets, taxi ranks, etc, and like all forms of illegal gambling, no punter protection exists. Should a punter be unfairly treated or have winnings withheld by a licensed operator, that operator will be dealt with by the relevant Provincial Licensing Authority (PLA), and could have their licence revoked. However, no such protection exists with illegal gambling operators.

We thus urge the public to gamble wisely and responsibly during this festive season and know when to stop. The holidays are a time for celebrating and relaxing. So, play it safe, and separate yourself from the temptations that could trigger problem gambling. The NGB encourages you to be smart, to gamble responsibly, to seek help if you sense you may have a problem, and to report any form of illegal gambling of which you become aware. You need to avoid illegal gambling operators at all costs, and report such activities to law enforcement or to the NGB. Should you wish to contact the NGB to obtain further information, or to report any suspicious gambling activity, please email info@ngb.org.za.

“ winners know when to stop!”

Issued by the National Gambling Board

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