

# Psychology Colloquium / Advanced Seminar in Psychology

## **Responsible gambling signs for electronic gaming machines: Effectiveness of warning messages on regular gamblers**

**Dr Sally Gainsbury, Centre for  
Gambling Education & Research  
Southern Cross University**

1:30 pm (NSW time), Friday, 11 March 2011

Lecture Hall D350 (Coffs Harbour campus)

Video-linked to Lecture Hall P158 (Lismore campus) and to  
A223 (Tweed Heads Gold Coast Riverside campus)

All welcome

*About the colloquium.* Increasing efforts are being made governments worldwide to implement gambling harm-minimisation measures, with a particular focus on electronic gaming machines (EGMs/“pokies”) due to their association with problem gambling. However, responsible gambling signs are often based on other public health domains (e.g., alcohol and tobacco consumption), or at face value of their effectiveness rather than derived from empirical data. There is little to no evidence supporting the effectiveness of currently mandated static signs on EGMs in shifting gamblers’ perceptions/knowledge of the chances of winning or behaviour. I investigated the impact of mandated static messages as compared to pop-up messages on EGMs (causing a break in play) and the most effective message content. I recruited 124 regular gamblers from gambling venues and had them play computer-simulated EGMs containing a responsible gambling sign that varied by mode of presentation (static vs. pop-up) and message content (informative, self-appraisal, or control/blank). I assessed the impact of the signs on gamblers’ thoughts and behaviour using questionnaires. I found that pop-up messages encouraging self-appraisal were recalled more frequently and accurately and had the greatest impact on thoughts and behaviours. This suggests that pop-up messages encouraging self-awareness are effective in minimising the harm associated with EGMs by encouraging players to play responsibly within their own appropriate limits. This study highlights the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach and includes input from the fields of psychology, public health, tourism, and marketing. The research has implications for stakeholders including governments, policy makers and regulators, gambling operators and gambling venues, researchers and academics, public health, community and treatment organisations, and the community and public.

*About the speaker.* Dr. Gainsbury (nee Monaghan) is a Post Doctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Gambling Education and Research, School of Tourism and Hospitality, Southern Cross University and a Research Affiliate at the University of Sydney, School of Psychology, where she completed her PhD (Clinical Psychology) in 2010. Dr. Gainsbury is a Clinical Psychologist with several years of clinical experience working with a range of populations including adults, older adults, children and adolescents, outpatient, community health, in-patient, mood disorders, substance abuse and problem gambling. She also has over six years research experience in the fields of gambling and addiction. Her research has included studies on responsible gambling strategies, Internet gambling, Internet-based treatment options, the impact of gambling on youth and often involves collaborative work with government regulators, gambling operators and venues and multi-disciplinary, international research teams. She has been the principle investigator on several gambling research grants from non-profit, government and industry organisations. She has authored several reports, 20 papers, 3 book chapters and given over 22 conference presentations, including keynote presentations. Dr. Gainsbury is the Associate Editor of *International Gambling Studies*, a peer-review academic journal. She served as the NSW representative of the National Association for Gambling Studies for four years. Dr. Gainsbury recently spent two and a half years living and working in Montreal, Canada before returning to Sydney in April, 2010.