

Why is the Self-Exclusion program based on “self-help”?

During the formulation process AHA (Vic) sought input from problem gambling counselling service providers (including Gamblers Help) to assist in the construction of a program that would be effective and accessible. Gamblers Help advised the Association that a Self-exclusion program should be based on a model of change to address problematic addictive behaviour. AHA (Vic) was informed that to maximize the effectiveness of the program it should be based on “self”-exclusion rather than a “barring” of patrons model. That is, the commitment to take action on problem gambling should come from the individual when the individual is ready to take action. Consistent with the principles contained in the Model of Change, the system places the emphasis on self-empowerment. The individual commits to abstaining from entering a gaming area. It is not designed to allow the individual to make a decision that a venue will bar them from entry. However, venue staff provide assistance to self-excluded individuals to maintain their adherence to the program.

How do people become Self-Excluded?

For persons who approach a gaming venue seeking to undertake Self-exclusion they are advised by gaming staff to contact AHA (Vic) to make necessary arrangements. This contact can be made via:

- telephone 03 96543491 (24 hour, 7 day message service)
- email r.heveren@ahavic.com.au or t.graham@ahavic.com.au
- website www.ahavic.com.au
- mail PO Box 18067, 45 Collins Street East, Melbourne, Vic, 8003.

It is preferable for entry to the program to be recommended by a problem gambling counsellor on the basis that they are informed of self-empowerment principles consistent with participating in Self-exclusion.

How does the AHA administer the Self-Exclusion process?

Once a person has made the decision that s/he is prepared to undertake Self-exclusion, the Self Exclusion Officer (S-E Officer) at AHA (Vic) provides relevant information about the program, including a sample Deed of Self-exclusion.

There is no requirement for the gaming venue to participate in the preparation of a person’s Deed of Self-exclusion.

During the first contact the S-E Officer will ascertain whether or not the person is receiving counselling. If the person is not receiving counselling the S-E Officer will recommend contact with Gamblers’ Help. Consent documentation is offered to the participant to allow Gamblers Help to initiate counselling services. The S-E Officer will then outline the process to the participant and will arrange a Self-exclusion interview.

Once the participant has made the decision that s/he is prepared to undertake Self-exclusion, the S-E Officer provides relevant information about the program, including a sample Deed of Self-exclusion.

What happens at the Self-Exclusion interview?

The Self-exclusion interview is conducted by the S-E Officers at a time and a location aimed to best suit the prospective participant.

Gaming venues do not participate in or facilitate the process of a person signing a Deed of Self-exclusion as this aspect is managed by S-E Officers.

In the metropolitan area, most interviews are conducted at the AHA (Vic) offices located at Level 1, 1 Little Collins Street, Melbourne. In outer-suburban and regional areas the interview is most often conducted at the local Gamblers' Help office.

For persons residing in regional Victoria, the S-E Officer attends major regional centres on a regular "circuit". These areas include Colac, Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Shepparton, Morwell and Sale. Necessary arrangements are also made by S-E Officers in outer regional areas to conduct the interview and facilitate required documentation.

Participants are advised by the S-E Officer that they can bring other persons along to the interview. On occasions the participant will request that a counsellor attend at the interview and on other instances the person is accompanied by a support person such as a friend or family member.

At the interview the S-E Officer explains the Self-exclusion process to the participant and carefully explains the contents of the Deed. At the end of the interview, if the person seeking Self-exclusion is prepared to proceed, the S-E Officer witnesses the execution of the Deed and photographs of front facial profile and side profile are obtained with the consent of the participant.

What is a Deed of Self-Exclusion?

The Deed is not a contract between parties but rather an individual commitment. By signing the Deed of Self Exclusion the gambler does a number of things:

1. **Undertakes** not to enter the gaming room and not to play gaming machines at the venues that s/he has nominated.
2. **Authorises** the staff at the venue to stop him/her entering the gaming room and if necessary remove him/her from the gaming room. S/he also authorises the taking, dissemination and display of photographs and personal details.
3. **Releases** all other relevant persons from any legal liability in respect of the Self-exclusion, including assault, defamation, duty of care, and undertake not to sue in respect of the self exclusion.
4. **Indemnifies** all other relevant parties in respect of the Self-exclusion.
5. **Acknowledges** that s/he has entered the Deed voluntarily, and that the Deed is enforceable against him/her alone, that there is not legal duty on any other person except him/herself. S/he further acknowledges that s/he understands the contents of the deed.

Does the Deed of Self-Exclusion authorize the venue to take action if a person is detected in the gaming room?

Yes. During the interview the participant is advised that the Deed authorises the venue management to take any reasonable steps to enforce the undertaking not to enter the restricted gaming areas and not to play gaming machines at the nominated venues. The participant is also informed that staff at the venue will assist where possible and if detected in a gaming room s/he will be instructed to depart

the area. By entering a Deed of Self-exclusion, a person does not commit to not entering non-gaming areas of a gaming venue.

What happens when a venue receives information about person entering Self-Exclusion?

Upon receipt by a gaming venue of the photographs and details of a person entering a Deed of Self-exclusion relating to their particular venue, the venue gaming supervisor/manager is required to update venue records and maintain a full listing of persons Self-excluded from that particular venue.

The venue gaming supervisor/manager will ensure that photographs with participants' personal details and exclusion dates are placed on display at the 'back of house' to assist venue staff in monitoring customers to potentially detect those who may be Self-excluded. This information is stored in a private and secure area to which the public does not have access.

A centrally administered Self-exclusion computerized data base is maintained by AHA (Vic). Victorian gaming venues have access to the data base via an individual confidential security username and password. This web-based system allows individual gaming venues to only access information relating to persons who are Self-excluded from their respective venue. Information provided to venues includes names & address, date of birth, colour photographs (front and side profile), and dates deed expiry.

In the event that a gaming venue has a gaming-related customer loyalty program, the venue gaming supervisor/manager will review the listing of Self-excluded patrons to ensure that any such player loyalty database does not include persons participating in Self-exclusion.

How does a person revoke their Deed of Self-exclusion?

In the event that a person approaches a gaming venue requesting to have their Deed of Self-exclusion revoked, gaming venue staff direct the person to contact the AHA (Vic) Self Exclusion officers who process all revocation applications.

To revoke a Deed of Self-exclusion a person must first attend an interview with a problem gambling counsellor and obtain written acknowledgment of revocation counselling. The Self-excluded person must then attend a face-to-face meeting with a S-E Officer to sign the Revocation Deed, and produce a letter from the counsellor stating that s/he has discussed the early revocation of the Self-exclusion and sought guidance (including ramifications) on the revocation/variation of the Deed.

If a person revokes their Deed of Self-exclusion from a particular gaming venue S-E Officers advise the venue and their records are adjusted accordingly.

Can a person vary the terms of their Deed of Self-Exclusion?

The Self-excluded person has the option of varying the terms of the Deed.

In the event that a person approaches a gaming venue requesting to have their Deed of Self-exclusion varied, gaming venue staff direct the person to contact the S-E Officers who process all applications to vary a Deed of Self-exclusion.

If a Self-excluded person desires to vary the Deed by either adding additional gaming venues or reducing the term of Self-exclusion, the person must make arrangements for a meeting with a S-E Officer to facilitate the variation to the Deed by executing a subsequent Deed.

Other options to vary the terms of the Deed are accommodated on a needs basis.

If a person varies the terms of their Deed of Self-exclusion relating to a particular gaming venue, S-E Officers advise the management of the venue and their records are adjusted accordingly.

Are there other Self-Exclusion programs?

Yes. In the event that a customer enquires at a gaming venue about Self-exclusion administered by another organization, venue staff are required to advise the customer to contact the AHA (Vic) Self-exclusion office for information and advice.

Upon request, relevant information will be provided by AHA (Vic) S-E Officers to assist persons seeking Self-exclusion from other providers eg Crown Casino, inter-State arrangements, etc. In the event that multiple gaming venue Self-exclusion programs may exist, relevant information will be provided to persons who chooses to Self-exclude to also Self-exclude from gaming venues that may have a different Self-exclusion program.

How long does a Deed of Self-Exclusion last?

The gaming venue Self-exclusion program is currently offered for a minimum of six months and a maximum of 24 months. There is no automatic revocation of a Deed of Self-exclusion if a person fails to undertake problem gambling counselling.

Do gaming venues need to provide information on Self-Exclusion?

Yes. An information brochure the size of a business card must be displayed in the venue. Preferably this should be located at the cashier's station.

All gaming venues have been sent a stock of 500 cards. Venues are advised to contact AHA should you need additional stock.

What is the role of gaming venue staff for detection of possible breaches of Self-Exclusion?

In the event that there is a possible breach by a person participating in Self-exclusion, venue management will ensure discreet investigation and action by venue staff. This is done by venue staff checking the person's appearance against photographs of persons Self-excluded at the venue.

Where possible, staff will seek input from other staff (ie. a second opinion) when making the determination of whether a particular person is breaching their Deed of Self-exclusion.

A centrally administered Self-exclusion computerized data base is maintained by AHA (Vic). All Victorian gaming venues have access to the data base via an individual confidential security username and password. This web-based system allows individual gaming venues to access information relating to persons who are Self-excluded from their respective venue. Information provided to venues includes names & address, date of birth, colour photographs, expiry date and actual copy of individuals' Deeds of Self-exclusion. Venue management also has the ability via this

system to view Self-exclusion participants and report breaches to the Self-exclusion administrators at AHA (Vic) either by telephone and/or designated email via the venue's dedicated web-link.

Gaming venue staff shall use best endeavors to maintain a person's privacy and dignity of any Self-excluded person by acting in a manner which does not compromise this objective.

What do venue staff do when they detect a Self-Excluded patron?

Upon the positive detection of a Self-excluded person in the gaming area, discrete intervention will be carried out by venue management or designated staff who will take reasonable steps to remove the person from the gaming area.

By way of example, initial contact with the person breaching their Deed of Self-exclusion can occur via the following methods:

- The person suspected of Self-exclusion breach can be called to the reception desk over the venue's public address system;
- A staff member may discreetly approach the person in the course of "hospitality engagement" (eg provision of food or beverage) and ask their name, and
- Other engagement techniques may involve discrete approaches while the person may move about in the venue.

Management then encourages the person to a discreet area away from other customers and explains to the person that they have previously undertaken not to enter the respective gaming area as part of their Self-exclusion. Venue management may provide information to the person regarding Gamblers Help support services and other assistance as required.

All breaches of Self-exclusion are recorded in the venue's responsible gambling register. A recording of a breach will include, person's name, date and time of breach, action taken and by whom together with a notation that the breach has been reported to AHA.

How do gaming venues prepare an annual review of their Self-Exclusion program?

The AHA (Vic) Self-exclusion Office will co-ordinate the review of the effectiveness of a venue's Self-exclusion office on behalf of individual gaming venues.

The review will assess the effectiveness of the individual venue's Self-exclusion program by:

- Seeking feedback and input from Gambler's Help regarding the operation of the program
- Seeking input from venue staff and customers
- Reconciling venue data against the central administration of the program to ensure accurateness of record keeping (data management)
- Seeking information from persons on the program (this aspect will be conducted by AHA (Vic) Self-exclusion office)
- Assessing the utilization of the web-based data facility administered by AHA (Vic) Self-exclusion office

AHA (Vic) Self-exclusion office will prepare customer surveys and distribute to gaming venues which will allow customers to provide input as to the effectiveness of the program.

Input from Gambler's Help and customers will be included in the preparation of a gaming venue's annual review.

A copy of each venue's review findings will be provided to the VCGR and AHA (Vic) Self-exclusion office by gaming venues.

How do venues manage customer complaints regarding Self-Exclusion?

On behalf of gaming venues, AHA (Vic) Self-exclusion office will administer a process for resolving complaints.

A customer can lodge a complaint regarding Self-exclusion by:

- Contacting the gaming venue supervisor/manager of the gaming venue concerned in person or in writing, and / or
- Visiting in person, writing or by telephoning the Manager of the Self Exclusion Administration Office, PO Box 18067, 45 Collins Street East, Melbourne, 8003 telephone 03 9654 3491.

Gaming venue management will be able to assist individuals in lodging complaints when requested.

Complaints lodged with the gaming venue and/or Self-exclusion office will be investigated within 14 days and the outcome of the investigation will be conveyed to the complainant by gaming venue and/or Self-exclusion Administration Office. Complaints will be assessed with regard to content of the Deed of Self-exclusion.

Complaints will be investigated sensitively and in a confidential and respectful manner.

A register of complaints will be maintained by the Self Exclusion Administration Office and the gaming venue's responsible gaming register in a private and confidential manner.

Gaming venues may seek advice about the handling of complaints from AHA (Vic) Self-Exclusion office.

The complaints process will enable the VCGR to monitor compliance with complaints process as outcomes from investigations will be provided in a venue's annual review of effectiveness.