Who we are

The Responsible Gambling Council (RGC) is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of problem gambling in Canada and around the world for over 35 years. We believe that gambling should never come at a human cost. By ensuring the right safeguards are in place, we influence positive change and advance responsible gambling standards.

What we believe:

• People have a right to feel safe, to live happily, and to have access to support when they need it.

• Partnerships with the gambling industry can minimize the risks to their customers, their reputations and their business performance.

• Creating safe, sustainable gambling behaviours benefit both players and the industry.

With the launch in 2019 of the new RGC brand, “All in for safer gambling”, we have united all our efforts and actions in a way that reflects our mission, our values and our passion.

ELAINE MCDougall, DIRECTOR, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS
Our core values guide the organization’s decisions and work each and every day. Collectively, these values are RGC’s ‘north star’, keeping us focused on how we conduct ourselves and what we do to accomplish our purpose.

Core Values

HUMANITY
We believe in human dignity and respect. We’re driven to build a positive future for everyone. We apply our knowledge to the creation of conditions that promote positive behavioural change.

COURAGE
We believe it takes courage to make real change in the world. We appreciate the confidence in others, and we are never afraid to offer honest, evidence-informed perspectives, even if they conflict with conventional wisdom.

INTEGRITY
We strive to meet the highest standards of professionalism and impartiality. We hold ourselves responsible for all that we do.

INGENUIY
We are inventive and resourceful, curious, and inquisitive by nature. As the world keeps changing, we are always on the lookout for new ways to turn knowledge into action.
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From the CEO

The past year has been an evolutionary time for the RGC. Even as the gambling industry undergoes extraordinary growth, transformation and disruption, we continue to embrace our commitment to act with humanity and courage.

We have made excellent progress in the first year of our new strategic plan, The Game Changer. With the goal of advancing responsible gambling in the 21st century, our team successfully combined 35 years of experience in research, evaluation and education with the passion to create positive behavioural change.

A cornerstone effort, we launched a new brand to reflect our bold, uncompromising position of upholding responsible gambling standards and information. RGC has always viewed partnerships as foundational to creating measurably greater impacts, and we continued to develop deep, strong and mutual beneficial partnerships with governments, regulators, and operators within Canada and internationally.

A case in point: in partnering with Ontario’s Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, we created quantifiable impacts through innovative responsible gambling programs. Insight-rich data combined with gamification solutions created unprecedented digital education programs such as Check Your Reflex for young adults, and Reaction Lab for adults.

Like the rest of the world, our work has been significantly affected by COVID-19. Throughout the pandemic, there has been a global rise in online gambling, and it was essential that we understood the shift -- and responded to both new and emerging risks. We conducted an online gambling study to provide us with insights on gambling behaviours, financial impacts, mental health and substance use. Our findings resulted in a social media campaign that provided people with practical responsible internet gambling information as well what signs to watch for, in case of a problem.

RGC is encouraged by the momentum that we are seeing in the advancement of responsible gambling for both land-based and online gambling. It is gratifying for us to be part of a movement which is dedicated to creating safer and fair gambling standards, practices and information. After all, RGC is “All In for Safer Gambling”.

SHELLEY WHITE  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

From the Chair

My first year as Chair of the RGCC and RGCO Boards has been personally and professionally rewarding. I have developed tremendous appreciation for the expertise of my fellow board members and of the excellent work done by the staff of the Responsible Gambling Council to prevent and reduce the harm caused by problem gambling.

Our ambitious strategic plan, The Game Changer, aspires to lead vital changes in responsible gambling within Canada and around the world. It is imperative that as Directors we are prepared to play a crucial leadership role to ensure that RGC is ready to respond to the challenges and opportunities associated with the growth of the gambling industry. It is ironic that before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, RGC identified “change” as the hallmark of its work. In the post-COVID world, RGC is well-positioned to accomplish its vision of “a world free of problem gambling.”

It’s been my pleasure to work with such a dedicated group of Directors and an excellent management team. We continue to collaborate with partners across Canada to create a robust responsible gambling culture. To support the expansion of responsible gambling standards of practice internationally, it is especially gratifying to see RGC share its knowledge and expertise with regulators and operators in Asia, Australia, the UK and the US.

RGC’s expansion into global markets requires an awareness of, and sensitivity to, ethno-cultural differences. Our experience operating in a country as diverse as Canada has been a definite asset. However, for me it has been inspiring to see the RGC’s commitment to continue to be culturally competent in order to tailor responsible gambling initiatives that align with the beliefs and values, held by people, in each country that we serve.

Guided by our values of humanity, courage, integrity and ingenuity, I am confident that RGC will continue to increase its leadership role in promoting safer gambling.

HAMLIN GRANGE  
BOARD CHAIR
COVID-19: Protecting our employees and stakeholders

In order to minimize and manage the impact of the pandemic on our employees and stakeholders, RGC took immediate action with a series of initiatives:

- **Initiated** a work from home policy and closed our PlaySmart Centres while social distancing measures were in place.
- **Launched** a provincial survey to understand the impacts of COVID-19 on Ontario gamblers.
- **Launched** a COVID-19 Community Response social marketing campaign.
- **Delivered** information and discussion in the industry through two webinars focusing on the impacts of COVID-19 on the gambling industry:
  - Online Gambling in Unprecedented Times: Risks and RG Strategies
  - Returning to Casino/Land-based Gaming: What Operators Need to Know
- **Provided** updates and other helpful messaging on ResponsibleGambling.org to reassure employees and the many people who rely on our information and services

In thanks to Terry Finn, RGC Board Chair from 2007–2019

We are indebted to Terry for his profound commitment and contribution to RGC. In 2004, Terry joined the RGCC and RCGO Boards of Directors and, between 2007–2019, served as Board Chair.

Under Terry’s leadership, the organization has grown to become one of the leading responsible gambling organizations in the world. RGC’s humanitarian mission has been personal for Terry. He has courageously turned his recovery from problem gambling into a passion for the advancement of responsible gambling.

Terry is leaving an incredible legacy in every person that has been and will be touched by RGC.

Thank you, Terry.

“Thank you everyone for the opportunity to have served on the RGC Board. It has been an important part of my recovery, and, along with the support of my family, has allowed me to grow into who I am today.”

TERRY FINN – BOARD CHAIR 2007–2019
RGC Key Achievements 2019–2020

- **The Ontario Gambling Research Society (OGRS),** which comprises leading researchers from across the province.

- **Two revitalized programs:** Community Outreach and Young Adults Program, Check Your Reflex.

- **Seven thousand students reached with 23 performances and an additional 556,000 online with Game Brain.

- **1,600,000 number of people reached online through our community outreach program.**

- **5 number of next generation Playsmart centres opened in Ontario (more are on the way!).**

- **2,000 RG stakeholders receive our industry newsletter each week.**

- **115,293 number of visitors who participated in an educational event and received helpful Playsmart tips.**

- **76,000 number of visits to responsiblegambling.org, plus 137,000 page views.**

- **13,000+ number of people interacted live with our Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Programs.**

- **3,146 number of young adults reached at campus and community events plus an additional 400,000 online.**

- **RG Check Accreditation** Accredited several online sites, and venues in British Columbia, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Singapore.

- **CABP** Developed a focused social marketing campaign to prevent intoxicated gambling among high risk young adults. Supported by funding by the AGCO, Education, Training, and Awareness Fund.

- **In 2020, RGC was added to the United Kingdom Gambling Commission’s list of approved charities to which gambling operators can direct their annual research funding.**
RGC Partnerships:
Realizing the vision sooner.

Partnerships are critical to the realization of our vision. By working with operators, regulators, government, public health and community agencies, we can be sure the right safeguards are in place to minimize harms and ensure that gambling does not come at a human cost.

A shared vision, trust and collaboration made 2019–2020 a year in which we can all take pride in. We thank all of our partners for sharing our commitment to a world free of problem gambling.

A Study in Success: The Stars Group.

“The Stars Group (TSG) has been successfully accredited by the Responsible Gambling Council’s RG Check program since we first submitted the PokerStars platform for accreditation in 2015! The RG Check journey proved to be an outstanding opportunity for TSG to enhance and improve our historically strong commitment to RG and, ultimately, ensure a safe and sustainable gaming environment for all of our customers.

Through the collaborative nature of the process, RG Check provided us with independent insight and feedback, based on the programs seven standards and 48 criteria. We leveraged this insight in our pledge to continuous improvement and learning, to ensure our TSG meets and exceeds the highest level of RG standards in the industry and that we provide the very best risk based, safe play tools for our online gaming products to support each and every customer to play safely and sustainably.”

JEANNE DAVID
FORMER SENIOR MANAGER, RESPONSIBLE GAMING SERVICES, THE STARS GROUP

The gold standard for responsible gambling accreditation.

RG Check has defined integrity standards of responsible gambling for nearly a decade. Looking ahead, this respected accreditation is set to make a positive contribution to the expansion of the online gambling industry. The insights and feedback garnered by the RG Check process empower gambling operators to create productive, healthy employee cultures while contributing focus to player health issues.

In a thorough and comprehensive process, current practices are measured and assessed against research-based and industry-relevant standards and criteria.

Accredited sites in 2019–2020 include several online sites, and venues in British Columbia, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Singapore.

As relevant as RG Check is today, accreditation will play an even more vital role in the years ahead as sports, lottery and casino gambling continue to grow and consumers have increasingly more options.

TRACY PARKER, DIRECTOR, STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION
CABP: Insight empowering action.

A recognized global leader, the RGC Centre for the Advancement of Best Practices (CABP) is focused on minimizing the risks and harms of problem gambling through research, evaluation, program and training development, and the identification and adoption of best practices. We strive for excellence in everything we do, strengthening our position as an RG innovator that provides exceptional and impactful services.

Collaborating with gambling operators, public health units, regulators, and other leading researchers across Canada, CABP delivered a number of unique initiatives over the past year:

- Conducted research identifying best practices to help land-based and online operators worldwide deliver safe and responsible gambling programs.
- Led a comprehensive sports betting research project to inform the growing global market.
- Developed new RG training programs and resources that support employees of land-based gambling and provincial horse racing operations as they promote informed decision-making among players.
- Developed a focused social marketing initiative to prevent intoxicated gambling among high-risk young adults. Supported by funding from the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, Education, Training, and Awareness Fund.
- Contributed to the launch the Ontario Gambling Research Society (OGRS), which comprises leading researchers from across the province. Goals include advancing gambling research as a science, knowledge translation, collaboration, and training.

Evidence informed practice powers the way forward.

JANINE ROBINSON – DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF BEST PRACTICES AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, RG+
Delivering evidence-based research to the world.

Innovation and rigour define CABP’s research capabilities, generating evidence-based insights that make purposeful contributions to the industry. Respected members of the team continue to lead the way through presentations and other knowledge exchange initiatives across Canada and around the world.

Janine Robinson – Director, Centre for the Advancement of Best Practices and Managing Director, RG+

- *A Needs Assessment of Responsible Gambling Manager Education* (17th International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking)
- *Cross Jurisdictional RG Benchmarking* (with Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation; International Think Tank on Gambling Research, Policy and Practice)
- *Continuing our Responsibility in an Era of Mistrust* (2019 Clubs NSW Annual Conference; Clubs ACT)
- *Driving Culture Change through Responsible Gambling Training* (New Horizons 2020)

Dr. Sasha Stark – Senior Researcher

- *Understanding and reducing harms among Young Adults in Ontario* (7th Annual Momentum Research Realized Conference)
- *Sharpening Our Approach to Youth Gambling Prevention* (17th International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking)
- *Knowledge Translation Strategy for Coming of Age Youth in Greater Sudbury* (New Critical Directions in Gambling Studies Conference)
- *Developing and Testing Messaging about Cannabis and Gambling for Young People* (20th Annual National Center for Responsible Gaming Conference on Gambling and Addiction)
- *Risk Mitigation Strategies for Lottery* (Discovery, 2019)

Dr. Alex Price – Senior Researcher

- *Public Health Implications of Online Sports Betting in Canada* (Public Health Policy Rounds, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto)
- *Member of the Advisory Committee for the National Low Risk Gambling Guidelines*
- *Charting a Path to Gambling Harm Prevention: A Public Health Approach* white paper for the International Think Tank on Gambling Research, Policy and Practice, developed in collaboration with provincial and international researchers

Click-through to read CABP’s 2019 presentations.
RGC’s Commitment to Communities

Thanks to our partnership and the financial commitment of Ontario’s Lottery and Gaming Corporation, we are proud to have supported thousands of Ontarians and their families in 2019–2020.

PlaySmart Centres: Support where players need it most.

RGC operates all of OLG’s PlaySmartCentres in casinos and Charitable Bingo & Gaming Centres (cGaming) across Ontario. Our mission is to help players make informed decisions about their gambling, so they can keep their play fun. And for those who need support, our trained staff are there to guide them through their options.

This year’s highlights:

• Five new next generation PlaySmart Centres were opened at Great Blue Heron Casino, Gateway Casinos Chatham, Elements Casino Flamboro, Elements Casino Grand River and Gateway Casinos Sarnia – with more centres on the way.

• Redesigned PlaySmart Centres for cGaming locations and opened three new PlaySmart Centres at Rama Gaming House Toronto East, Delta Bingo & Gaming Downsview, and Classic Bingo III Tecumseh.

• New educational event, Get Your Game On, introduced at casinos and cGaming venues challenging players’ knowledge of their favourite games.

• Enhanced PlaySmart Centre tools to support players taking breaks when they gamble.

• Augmented the mandatory staff training program with a new course that teaches skills to identify risk factors and defuse situations to prevent further escalation.

• Launched a new train-the-trainer program for table games to a core group of PlaySmart Centre staff.

• Training of casino and cGaming staff on problem gambling prevention, based on RGC’s Centre for Advancement and Best Practices, was delivered by PlaySmart Centre representatives.

We never stand still.
Our goal is to find new and better ways to support players at the PlaySmart Centres.

LORELLE MULLER-LUMSDEN
DIRECTOR, PLAYSMART CENTRES

232,229 visitors accessed
PlaySmart Centre services in 2019–2020

115,293 visitors participated
in an educational event and received helpful PlaySmart tips

102,106 visitors benefited
from information about positive play habits

5,943 visitors received
immediate assistance and support from on-site staff

Connected with 8,887 venue staff
to increase awareness of PlaySmart resources and to effectively respond to player questions and concerns.
RGC Programs: Responding to the needs of all Ontarians.

Each year, thanks to the financial support of Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, RGC prevention programs reach thousands of people through face-to-face events, including high school performances, programs at colleges and universities, and community programs. Millions more are reached through social and web-based channels.

To meet the needs of all Ontarians, we have continually expanded the complexity and reach of our prevention message. In 2019-2020, our strategy was updated based on an extensive review of existing programs, changes in the gambling industry and Ontarians' prevention education needs.

- Problem Gambling Prevention Week (PGPW) evolved into a Community Outreach program to connect with the diverse needs of the population, all year long.
- A new program targeting young adults, “Check Your (Re)flex”, was created. Check Your (Re)Flex is a digital experience tour that travelled across the province to educate 18-24 year olds on the risks of gambling and how to protect oneself.
- Game Brain, our youth program, was enhanced to include a new strategy that informed parents and guardians on this high risk group.

Community Outreach

Last year saw us enhance our approach to engaging with gamblers and their loved ones. As more Ontarians gamble online and sports bet, we broadened our reach with a shift in program delivery from land-based venues (casinos and bingos) to community-gathering spaces and events.

- Over 3,000 participants engaged in a mobile digital experience and received takeaway information as part of the Plan Before you Play theme.
- 23.5 million Impressions generated through a dynamic, geo-targeted digital and social media campaign.
- Adapted program for Chinese-Ontarians launched during Lunar New Year, a typically popular time of year for gambling.
More than 47,000 students have now participated in GAME BRAiN since its launch in 2014.

GAME BRAiN, an interactive engagement event at high schools, helped educate 15-18 year olds on gaming and gambling and their associated risks. Participating high school students learn about the signs of a gambling problem, avoiding the risks and where to get help if needed.

In 2019-2020, the program received top marks in numerous areas:

- Over 7,000 students reached through 23 school/community events in Ontario, including events held within three First Nation communities in North West Ontario.
- Media reach hit an all-time high of 21 million impressions.
- Social media included twice-weekly posts and a video Instagram contest in English and French, reaching 131,101 students with 62,721 views.
- Messaging was extended to parents, who were shown how to start a conversation about the risk of gambling with their teens.

93.8% students said that GAME BRAiN was informative with 94.2% students agreeing that the event was also a good way to increase awareness of problem gambling.

...young people are more vulnerable to the emotional rush, like using gambling to feel good, or to cope with depression or nervousness. So we need to be aware of this and use this information to inform our programs, like Check Your (Re)flex.

DANI AYEE, CYR AMBASSADOR INTERVIEW ON CBC RADIO-Canada
Know the Score 2
The Know the Score 2/misez juste 2 Program is a problem gambling prevention program directed exclusively to college and university students.

In 2019-2020, the program continued to expand, offering students relevant and actionable information on the potential harms of gambling:
• Delivery at eight campuses in PEI, Newfoundland and Labrador, and New Brunswick.
• Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 99.3% of students agreeing that information provided was important.

Making a difference:
Connecting players and the industry with the information they need.

ResponsibleGambling.org: A refreshed and consolidated website
We work with all sides of the industry and together we create change. Our new website reflects this commitment to partnership and safer gambling. RG professionals and players can both access a wide range of relevant gambling topics at ResponsibleGambling.org.
• Gambling facts and who is at risk
• How to get help and how to start a conversation with a loved one
• Talking to your teenager about gambling
• Self-exclusion program information
• RG Plus Services and case studies for operators and regulators, including RG Check Accreditation
• Tools to help manage gambling
• Testimonials from people affected by gambling
Experience the new site for yourself at ResponsibleGambling.org.

Newscan: The latest RG news, research and evidence delivered weekly
This weekly newsletter, delivered to 2,000 industry stakeholders from around the world, is a valuable resource for all responsible gambling professionals, researchers and experts, plus community and public health organizations. Newscan gives you the latest from the world of RG so you can make informed decisions with even more confidence.
Subscribe at ResponsibleGambling.org/newscan.

Our Social Channels
Follow us for the very latest RG insights and other industry news.
For the Public
Follow us for low-risk gambling strategies, where to access help for a gambling problem, how to spot the signs of a problem, and more.
For the Industry
Follow us for the latest industry news, research, webinars, conferences and information.

Since its launch, almost 450,000 STUDENTS in Canada and the U.S. have participated in Know the Score 2.
In practice, the name Responsible Gambling Council (RGC) is used as an umbrella term for all activities. The Responsible Gambling Council of Canada (RGCC) is the legal entity for research and evaluation activities in all jurisdictions, as well as for the delivery of programs and services outside of Ontario. It is incorporated under the Canada Corporations Act and has charitable status from the Canada Revenue Agency.

The Responsible Gambling Council (Ontario) is the legal entity that delivers programs and services in Ontario funded through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and that operates the annual Discovery Conference. RGC(O) also independently operates PlaySmart Centres in Ontario, with funding from the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG). It is incorporated under the Ontario Corporations Act and has charitable status from the Canada Revenue Agency.

The Responsible Gambling Council-Prevention (RGCP) is the legal entity that delivers the RG Check Accreditation Program. It is incorporated under the Canada Corporations Act.

Each organization is accountable to a separate Board of Directors.

Financial Summary

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Board of Directors

RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING COUNCIL (ONTARIO) (RGCo)

RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING COUNCIL OF CANADA (RGCC) – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Hamlin Grange
BOARD CHAIR, RGCC AND RGCo

Terry Finn
IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR, RGCC AND RGCo

Yvon Lemire
CHAIR, CEO COMPENSATION COMMITTEE, BOARD MEMBER, RGCC AND RGCo

Jim Engel
CHAIR, STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS COMMITTEE, BOARD MEMBER, RGCC

Shaila Mehta
CHAIR, AUDIT COMMITTEE, BOARD MEMBER, RGCC

Patricia Cook
VICE CHAIR, GOVERNANCE & NOMINATING COMMITTEE, BOARD MEMBER, RGCC

Carolyn Marcotte
BOARD MEMBER, RGCC AND RGCo

Kevin Conlon
BOARD MEMBER, RGCC AND RGCo

Joseph Coltson
BOARD MEMBER, RGCC

Bev Mehmel
BOARD MEMBER, RGCC

Wan-Peng Sun
BOARD MEMBER, RGCC AND RGCo

Shelley White
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING COUNCIL - PREVENTION (RGCP)

Paula Festas
BOARD CHAIR

Tim Hurson
PAST CHAIR

Terry Finn
CHAIR, RGCP AUDIT COMMITTEE

Susan Olynik, Chair
GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Tracy Parker
DIRECTOR, STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION

Senior Management

SHELLEY WHITE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

PAULA ANTONIAZZI
OUTGOING DIRECTOR, PLAYSMART CENTRES

SUE BIRGE
OUTGOING DIRECTOR, STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION

TREVOR ELLIS
DIRECTOR, CORPORATE SERVICES

ELAINE MCDUGALL
DIRECTOR, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

LORELLE MULLER-LUMSDEN
DIRECTOR, PLAYSMART CENTRES

TRACY PARKER
DIRECTOR, STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION

JANINE ROBINSON
DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF BEST PRACTICES
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