

## **Setting the Record Straight on Electronic Gaming Machines**

The Gaming Technologies Association (GTA) represents gaming machine technology suppliers by providing policy leadership and industry advocacy. Following recent claims made about illegal tampering with Electronic Gaming Machines (EGM) the GTA responds below to these inaccurate claims. This fact sheet does not address issues related to the management of machines within venues, focusing on the GTA's area of expertise – EGM technology.

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**Claim:** There is no difference between an Electronic Gaming Machine (EGM) and a Fully Automated Electronic Table Game (ETG) as they both have a “random number generator”.

**Fact:** An EGM is in fact quite different to an ETG, because an EGM is designed to be played by one player and an ETG is designed to replicate a casino table game and be played by multiple players. ETGs are required to operate with the same game rules and pay-scales as traditional table games. This means that the Return to Player will be the same for either a Roulette ETG or a traditional Roulette table game.<sup>1</sup>

**Claim:** Venue employees can clear the RAM (Random Access Memory) in an EGM, which reduces the chance of a player receiving a pay-out because it clears the set theoretical return to player machine percentage.

**Fact:** Clearing the RAM on an EGM has no effect on the player's chances of winning. Each individual spin produces a unique outcome, one spin is not dependent on another spin. If the RAM on an EGM is cleared then the player's chance of winning in their next game is the same as if the RAM had not been cleared.

**Claim:** Gaming machine algorithms differ over the life of the machine.

**Fact:** The odds of winning are the same every time the player hits the ‘bet’ button.

**RTP Claim 1:** The “return to player” displayed on the machine may be different to the actual “return to player” due to machine tampering.

**RTP Claim 2:** Return to Player can be raised or lowered on a machine based on what day of the week it is in order to maximise gambling expenditure. The number of lines permitted to be played can be changed during the course of the week for the same purpose.

**Fact:** Machine tampering is illegal and allegations of such behavior should be reported to the relevant authorities. The GTA condemns such behavior in the strongest terms. The Return to Player (RTP) is set by the manufacturer. It can only be changed in a venue in accordance with jurisdiction regulations and in line with game approvals, by a licensed gaming machine technician. The RTP always matches what is displayed on the Player Information Display screen.

The RTP rate is closely regulated in every jurisdiction in Australia. The minimum RTP is set by each state or territory government and varies between 85 and 90 per cent depending on the location. In Victoria, all Electronic Gaming Machines must return between 85 and 99 per cent (87 and 99 per cent for casinos) to the player. This does not mean that a player in Victoria will receive 85 per cent of the money they gamble back. Instead over the machine's operational life, 85 per cent of the money spent will be returned to various players. The national average return to player is 91%.

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<sup>1</sup> In Australian Casinos the Return to Player is set at 97.3% for ‘European’ single zero Roulette.

**Claim:** Venue operators remove betting options on EGMs so that the player can only play games at higher rates.

**Fact:** It is illegal to alter gaming machines in this manner unless permitted by jurisdiction regulations and in line with game approvals, by a licensed gaming machine technician. It is technically impossible for it to occur in new generation machines now being rolled out, which feature touch screen pads.

In the event that such alteration did occur to an older machine, it would be immediately evident to a player as the effect would be for a button to appear inoperable.

**Claim:** Buttons can be shaved down on certain EGMs to allow for “continuous gambling”.

**Fact:** Gaming machines in Australia and New Zealand are the slowest in the world; they are designed and regulated to limit play speed. Players typically play every 6 seconds or so, taking into account breaks in play such as free spins and other game features. Once the reels commence spinning, they *cannot be interrupted*, unless this is approved by the jurisdiction regulator.

**Claim:** Amounts of previous jackpots can be cleared off a machine in order to prevent future gamers from knowing what other gamers have won.

**Fact:** The outcome of one game has no bearing on the outcome of any other. At the centre of every poker machine is a random number generator that ensures each and every result is entirely independent. This is a fundamental principle that underpins the integrity of game play and is something regulators scrutinise very closely.

**Claim:** The gambling industry “knows” that EGMs are addictive.

**Fact:** Gaming machines are designed to be entertaining. There is a wealth of publicly available information which outlines and explains the harms of problem gambling. It is important to note that problem gambling prevalence rates in Australia are on a downward trend. The gaming industry, government and the community have been working together for years to create and maintain a properly regulated and responsible industry to ensure that those who choose to participate in gaming, can do so appropriately. Integrity, fairness, probity and harm minimisation relating to poker machines are paramount objectives of Australian gaming machine legislation, regulation and standards.