



# Online gambling in New Zealand:

## Results from the 2018 Health and Lifestyles Survey

With the advance of mobile and digital technology, we can gamble almost anywhere. The percentage of New Zealanders gambling online is increasing. This report presents results from the 2018 Health and Lifestyles Survey (HLS). It focuses on the profile of online gamblers and the types of online gambling in which they participated. We compared findings against the previous surveys' findings where possible. Online gamblers are those who gambled over the internet on New Zealand hosted websites and apps (domestic), or on overseas hosted websites, in the last 12 months.

### Key Points

- Over 520,000 (13%) New Zealand adults (aged 15-years and over) took part in online gambling in 2018.
- 1 in 5 (20%) gamblers<sup>1</sup> gambled online in the previous 12 months.
- The most common form of online gambling was buying a Lotto New Zealand product.
- Online gamblers were over twice as likely to be at-risk of some level of gambling related harm compared to gamblers who did not gamble online.



In 2018

**1 in 10**

**New Zealand adults gambled online  
in the past 12 months**

<sup>1</sup> Gambler is defined as a respondent who was involved in at least one gambling activity in the past 12 months. Gambling activities range from those taking place in gambling venues, such as pokies in pubs and clubs, to buying Lotto NZ tickets (in a store or online), playing Bingo in a church hall, or buying a ticket for a fund-raising lottery, to informal betting with friends on the Melbourne Cup. It also included all gambling on websites or via apps.

## Profile of online gamblers

In 2018, a typical person who participated in at least one online gambling activity in the last 12 months was more likely to be male, aged between 18 and 54-years-old, and an at-risk gambler (PGSI; Ferris & Wynne, 2001).

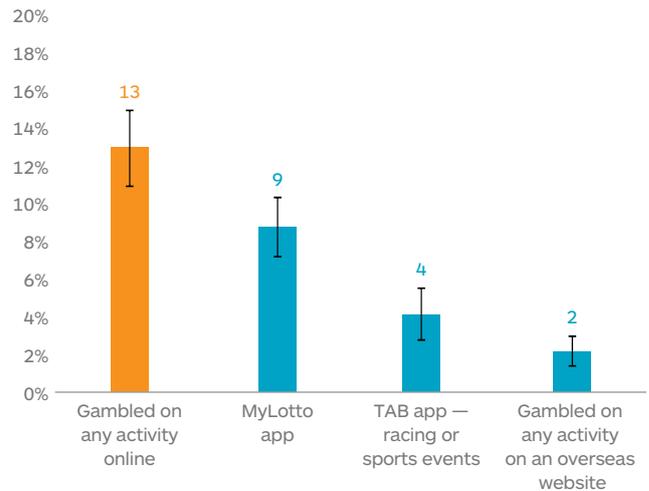
- After controlling for demographics (such as gender and ethnicity), online gamblers were over twice as likely to be at-risk gamblers compared to gamblers who did not gamble online.
- Men tended to participate more in online gambling than women (17% versus 10%).
- Older people (55-years-old and over) gambled less online compared to those aged 18 to 54-years-old (7% versus 17%). It is not possible to report on those who were underage (under 18-years-old) due to small sample size.
- Domestic online gambling was most popular, with gambling on Lotto, Powerball or Strike draws and the TAB most frequently reported by online gamblers. Domestic online gambling is gambling done on New Zealand hosted websites and apps, such as MyLotto.

We found no difference between the proportions of online and in-person gamblers by neighbourhood deprivation level or ethnicity. Due to small sample size Asian respondents are not reported on separately.

### Domestic websites most popular for online gambling

- 13% of New Zealand adults gambled online, that is an estimated 520,000 New Zealanders. Only 2% of New Zealand adults reported gambling on an overseas website.
- The single most common form of online gambling was purchasing tickets via the MyLotto app for Lotto, Lotto Powerball or Strike (9%). This is followed by betting online with the New Zealand TAB<sup>2</sup> (4%) (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Where we are gambling online, 2018



Base = all respondents (n= 2,725)

### Lotto New Zealand products online

- The 2018 HLS data showed that 16% of Lotto New Zealand gamblers were using the online MyLotto app to gamble.

Lotto New Zealand reports that about 20% of their total sales are from online sales. There are 800,000 registered accounts on MyLotto. Almost one-third of the accounts are used for monthly gambling and about three quarters are gambling at least once a year. Of the registered accounts, 179,000 are age verified,<sup>3</sup> so are able to gamble on Instant Kiwi (Lotto NZ, 2019).

Lotto NZ launched Instant Play in November 2017 (Lotto NZ, 2018), so it had only been available for a short time when the 2018 HLS was in field (May to October 2018). Instant Play is a continuous form of gambling. That is, any winnings can immediately be 'reinvested' in further gambling; all other products available on the MyLotto app are non-continuous<sup>4</sup>. Instant Play was the online version of Instant Kiwi (scratchies) and was re-branded Instant Kiwi online during 2019.

Therefore the proportion of respondents gambling online on Instant Play or Instant Kiwi in the 2018 HLS was very low.

- 1% reported playing either Instant Play (0.5%) or Instant Kiwi (0.6%) online.
- Over 1 in 10 (12%) of MyLotto online gamblers had bought Instant Play or Instant Kiwi online.

2 The New Zealand TAB provides betting on sports events in New Zealand and overseas, and horse and greyhound racing in New Zealand and Australia.

3 The account owner is 18 years or older.

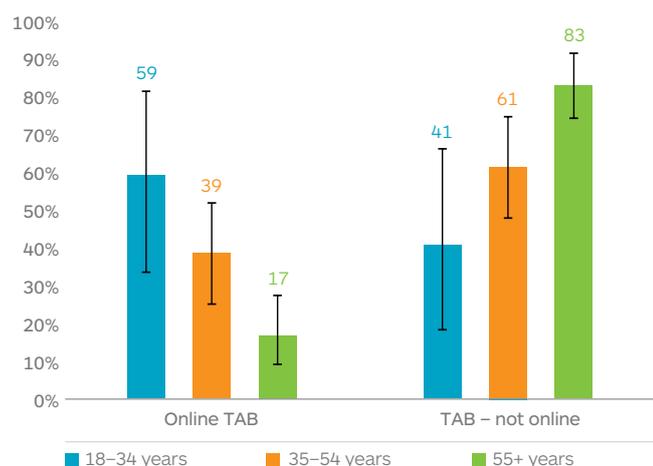
4 Continuous gambling is associated with higher risk of problem gambling.

## New Zealand TAB app popular with TAB gamblers

New Zealand TAB gamblers have taken to online options with over one third (37%) of them gambling online via the TAB app or on the TAB website. People who gambled online on the TAB tended to be younger (Figure 2).

- 45% of TAB online participants played at least monthly.

Figure 2 New Zealand TAB gamblers by age and place of gambling, 2018

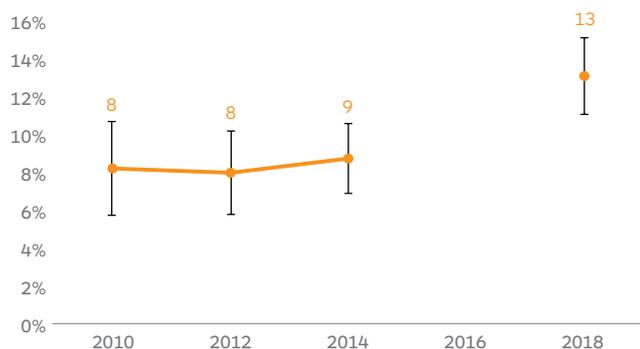


Base = NZ TAB gamblers (n= 285)

## Online gambling is increasing

Online gambling rates have significantly increased between 2014 and 2018<sup>5</sup> (Figure 3).

Figure 3 New Zealand online gambling rates by year, 2010 to 2018



Note 2016 data is not available

Online gambling rates are likely to continue to increase with young people being exposed to online gambling via in-game gambling (HPA, n.d.) and New Zealand companies providing a greater range of online gambling options.

## No change in the proportion of New Zealanders gambling online overseas

The proportion of New Zealanders gambling on overseas websites has remained stable at around 2% since 2010 when it was first asked about (Health Promotion Agency/ Te Hiringa Hauora, 2019).

- Those who gambled online overseas were 80% more likely to be at-risk gamblers compared to other gamblers; after adjusting for gender, age and ethnicity.
- Men were over 3 times more likely to gamble online overseas than women; after adjustment for age (3% versus 1%).
- Māori were more likely to gamble online overseas than non-Māori (6% versus 2%). Other ethnicities did not differ significantly.

Overseas websites provide many types of gambling, for example pokies, poker, other casino type games such as blackjack or roulette, betting on overseas sports events, horse and dog racing, and overseas lotteries.

## References

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<sup>5</sup> 2016 HLS questionnaire did not include questions about MyLotto gambling participation, therefore the online gambling rate is not reported.

Health Promotion Agency/Te Hīringa Hauora (n.d.).  
The blurry line between gaming and online gambling.  
<https://www.choicenotchance.org.nz/understand-gambling/gaming-vs-gambling>

## Citation

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## Methodology

The HLS is a nationwide in-home face-to-face survey conducted every two years, starting in 2008. The study is used to monitor short, medium and long-term societal changes in attitudes, knowledge and behaviours, and track changes in views about the social desirability and acceptability of various measures of tobacco control, minimising gambling harm, nutrition and physical activity, alcohol, sun safety, immunisation and mental health.

The 2018 HLS was carried out between 2 May and 10 October 2018. It consisted of a sample of 2,725 New Zealand adults aged 15-years and over. The sample had an unweighted response rate of 75%. It consisted of 563 Māori, 470 Pasifika peoples, 245 Asian, and 1,447 people of European/Other ethnicity based on the prioritised ethnic groups. That is, each respondent is allocated to a single ethnic group, in the prioritised order of Māori, Pasifika peoples, Asian, and European/Other. The data have been adjusted (weighted) to ensure they are representative of the New Zealand population.

An 'online gambler' is a survey participant who played at least one gambling activity on the internet to win money (including overseas-based online gambling activities) in the last 12 months. An online gambler could have played a game on the internet, gambled online through an overseas TAB or bookie, gambled on websites hosted in New Zealand, or gambled via apps on a smart phone.

The neighbourhood socio-economic deprivation (NZDep2013) was created using nine variables from the 2013 Census of Population and Dwellings with a decile value calculated for each meshblock (Atkinson, Salmond, & Crampton, 2014). These variables include: receiving a means-tested benefit, low household income, and no access to a car. It has been linked to the 2018 HLS data as a measure of neighbourhood socio-economic deprivation and as a proxy for individual socio-economic position. For the analyses reported here, these deciles have been grouped into low (deciles 1 to 3), medium (deciles 4 to 7), and high (deciles 8 to 10) deprivation groups.

The Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI; Ferris & Wynne, 2001) is a 9-item scale used to assess people's experiences of gambling-related harm in the last 12 months. An example item is: "Thinking about the last 12 months, how often have you bet more than you could really afford to lose?" Participants rated themselves on a 4-point scale from 0 (never) to 3 (almost always). Possible scores range from 0 to 27 with higher scores being indicative of a higher level of gambling related harm. For comparison purposes, the PGSI scores were grouped into non-problem gamblers (score 0); and at-risk gamblers (scores 1 – 27).

Only significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) between groups were reported. Other results from the gambling section of the HLS are available at [kupe.hpa.org.nz](http://kupe.hpa.org.nz). For a full description of the 2018 HLS survey methodology, questionnaire and further HLS publications, please visit [hpa.org.nz](http://hpa.org.nz).

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