



National Gambling Board
South Africa

a member of the dtic group

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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NATIONAL GAMBLING BOARD WARNS AGAINST GAMBLING TO MAKE ENDS MEET IN ‘JANUWORRY’

Pretoria, 15 January 2025. The start of the new year is a time of hope and anticipation for many, however for others January can bring huge financial troubles if overspending has taken place during the festive season. The National Gambling Board (NGB) warns consumers against the temptation of perceived quick and easy windfalls through gambling.

Accounting Authority of the NGB, Ms. Caroline Kongwa says: “Gambling should never be defined as a source of income, or to make ends meet. This mindset is fraught with danger, as gambling is never a ‘sure thing’ but rather a risk taken with money that consumers can often ill afford to lose.”

January is often a difficult month, dubbed colloquially in South Africa as ‘Januworry’. Most citizens would have received their December pay cheque early in the month and indiscriminate spending during the holidays soon uses up funds that would otherwise have been sufficient to service the needs of a household until the next pay cheque.

The unrealistic appeal of quick money through gambling for those in dire financial straits can lead to a worsening situation. Often consumers will go into further debt by borrowing money to feed a gambling habit, with the aim of making their money grow. “It is important that South Africans realise that gambling is a leisure pursuit similar to going to the movies or dining out. Healthy financial management is key and money for gambling as a form of entertainment should only be set aside from a household budget once all bills, financial commitments and basic needs have been met,” Ms. Kongwa adds.

A red flag should immediately go up in a household if winnings from an unreliable and unpredictable source, such as gambling, is needed to survive from pay cheque to pay cheque.

Another underlying danger of supplementing income through gambling is the risk of developing a gambling addiction or compulsion. When gambling behaviour spins out of control, the habit can start affecting the financial and mental wellbeing of the gambler and his/her family. The only recourse is for the person to admit to their problem and seek help. Unfortunately, the social stigma of addiction as well as shame and embarrassment on the part of the gambler often stops them from accessing treatment.

Other red flags for problem gambling behaviour include:

- Becoming hooked on the adrenalin rush of risk taking, fuelling a compulsion to gamble more frequently and with higher amounts of money.
- Chasing losses by gambling until all funds are depleted.
- Begging, borrowing or stealing money to gamble or pay off gambling related debts.
- Using gambling to escape reality and life's problems.
- Thinking about gambling incessantly, accompanied by an inability to focus on other aspects of life such as personal wellbeing, the wellbeing of family and friends, work or studies.
- Lying about gambling losses and exaggerating gambling winnings.

The NGB urges gamblers or their loved ones to reach out to the South African Responsible Gambling Foundation (SARGF) for help with gambling addiction. Free counselling and treatment for compulsive and addictive gambling can be accessed by calling 0800 006 008; WhatsApp/SMS HELP To 076 675 0710 or email to helpline@responsiblegambling.org.za.

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