



Alzheimers

New Zealand

13 August 2025

Committee Secretariat
Governance and Administration Committee

Tēnā koutou

Alzheimers NZ welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on the Online Casino Gambling Bill.

About Alzheimers New Zealand

Alzheimers New Zealand is a national organisation representing people with dementia and their family. We raise awareness of dementia, provide information and resources, advocate for high quality services, and promote research about prevention, treatment, cure, and care. We also support local Alzheimers organisations that deliver support, education, information, and related services directly to those affected by dementia.

In 2025, around [83,000](#) people live with dementia, and this number is expected to double to 170,000 by 2050 as our population ages. The cost of dementia in New Zealand is projected to reach [\\$6 billion by 2050](#) (in today's dollar). Community-based dementia services play important roles in supporting those affected, but around 37,600 people with dementia cannot get the help they need due to underfunded and overstretched services.

Our submission

- Alzheimers New Zealand supports regulating online casino gambling in New Zealand, but we cannot support the Bill in its current form.

- The Bill lacks critical protections to prevent gambling harm by disregarding key public health principles in the Gambling Act 2003 and does not adequately respond to the needs of those most at risk. It also does not include provisions for Māori involvement or specific measures to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi, despite Māori experiencing disproportionate levels of gambling harm.
- We understand that the Bill does not require online casino operators to give a share of their profits to community funding. This is different from current gambling rules, where some gambling money is returned to community services to help provide important health, welfare, and social support. This change will significantly affect organisations that deliver essential health, welfare and social services.
- Community organisations like Alzheimers New Zealand are key partners with government, playing a critical role in supporting wellbeing and social inclusion. Government depends on these organisations to reach communities and deliver services that complement and extend public health and welfare systems. These organisations often operate with limited government funding, relying on other income sources, such as fundraising, lotteries and community grants, to fill the gaps and maintain sustainable. Without secure funding, these organisations are at risk and if they must be replaced by government provision, this will likely come at a higher cost to the public.
- We support the concerns raised by Age Concern New Zealand in their submission that increased access to online gambling will lead to more hidden and long-term harm particularly for people on low or fixed incomes, including many older New Zealanders, who may go without essential needs to fund their gambling.
- We do not wish to appear before the Committee but can provide further details on request.

Our recommendations

- Operators earning revenue from New Zealand gamblers should contribute a fair share of their profits to support community services. If the Bill is passed, Government should either provide alternative or new funding sources to replace current contributions from gaming trusts and lotteries, or require online casino operators to contribute to community funding. This will help sustain essential services and reduce pressure on public resources. Without action, funding for community services will decline, leaving vulnerable people with less support.

- The Bill must prioritise protecting communities over creating business opportunities for online gambling operators. We support the submissions of Age Concern New Zealand and the Problem Gambling Foundation, recognising that gambling harm can have serious consequences for older people, families, and the communities we serve. We share their concern about the need for strong protections and targeted measures to reduce harm, especially for vulnerable groups including young people, Māori, Pacific, and Asian communities.

Conclusion

While Alzheimers New Zealand supports regulating online casino gambling, we cannot support the Bill as it stands. We ask the Government to prioritise harm reduction, ensure gambling rules strong and accountable, and honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The Government should also consider the long-term impact the Bill will have on community and social service organisations, and the New Zealanders who rely on them.

Ngā mihi



Catherine Hall
Chief Executive