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Gaming Alert - December 12, 2022



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From loot boxes to gambling addiction: experts warn video games open door to betting

Video games in which players spend money on in-built games of chance can be a gateway to gambling because they acclimatise young people to habitual use and erode their sense of caution, a coalition of experts in screen addiction has warned.

The Australian Gaming and Screens Alliance also warned that Australia was lagging in addressing gaming addiction and parents struggled to help violent, withdrawn teens whose obsession was leading to serious physical and psychological issues.

Alliance chair Professor John Saunders said gaming-related gambling ranged from monetised loot boxes – an in-game lucky dip – to betting on multiplayer online tournaments known as esports.

“There is evidence emerging that these monetised forms of video games represent an entry into online gambling,” Saunders said. “Young people spend an increasing amount of money on loot boxes, and they can run into financial problems. Parents suddenly find that a thousand dollars from their credit card has disappeared. Some spend \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year.”

The alliance's submission to the federal government's online gambling inquiry said most of the community was unaware of the way gambling was increasingly prevalent in online gaming.

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