



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **NEW ONLINE TOOL AIMS TO START A CONVERSATION ABOUT PROBLEM GAMBLING**

Talking to a loved one or friend about a gambling problem has become less awkward thanks to an innovative new animated e-card initiative developed by the NSW Government.

The Talkward program provides free e-cards aimed at breaking the ice and initiating a conversation with someone facing a gambling problem.

The e-cards, which can be customised and personalised, humorously focus on a thorny subject but carry a serious message: now we've got the awkward bit out of the way, let's have a talk in real life.

Director of Stakeholder Engagement at Liquor & Gaming NSW, Natalie Wright, said the Talkward program recognises the key role family and friends play in encouraging problem gamblers to take the vital first steps towards recovery.

"One of the biggest challenges can be raising the issue of problem gambling. It can be a very awkward thing to do. People are often afraid that mentioning someone's gambling problem may damage their relationship with that person," Ms Wright said.

The Talkward initiative has grown in popularity since its launch in May as part of Responsible Gambling Awareness Week 2016, with almost 700 e-cards created and sent.

"Liquor & Gaming NSW is now undertaking a social media campaign to further spread the word about Talkward and help encourage problem gamblers to access free support tools and counselling services," Ms Wright said.

To see how Talkward works, visit [Talkward.com.au](http://Talkward.com.au).

A new booklet has also been published with practical advice for family and friends to manage themselves while helping loved ones. Free and confidential counselling, including legal assistance and financial counselling, can be accessed on 1800 858 858 or [www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au).

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