Australian Government | acma Australian Communications and Media Authority

Guidance for preventing access to designated interactive gambling services

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Introduction

The Australian Government has introduced new measures to disrupt illegal online gambling services.

On 26 August 2026, the Parliament of Australia enacted the *Interactive Gambling Amendment (Gambling Reform) Act 2026* (the Gambling Reform Act). This introduced a new framework in Part 2 of the *Interactive Gambling Act 2001* (the Interactive Gambling Act) aimed at blocking Australian's access to illegal online gambling services by disrupting the digital infrastructure through which those services are accessed.

From 1 January 2027, section 15AB of the Interactive Gambling Act will require certain providers to take reasonably practicable steps to prevent their services from being used in connection with designated interactive gambling services.

This initial guidance has been developed to assist entities captured by section 15AB to prepare for the commencement of their obligations on 1 January 2027, and covers:

- regulated entities
- the ACMA's approach to the reasonably practicable obligation
- relevant factors the ACMA may consider when assessing compliance.

This guidance:

- Is intended to support a principles-based approach to compliance and does not prescribe a single compliance model. Regulated entities may adopt different measures to meet their obligations, having regard to their role, capabilities and circumstances.
- Should be read in conjunction with the Interactive Gambling Act, the Gambling Reform Act and its revised Explanatory Memorandum.
- Has been made under the ACMA's general powers to assist industry to prepare for commencement. Additional guidance may be made following commencement under the new subsection 15AC(1) of the IGA.

Compliance with the guidance does not, of itself, establish compliance with section 15AB. Whether an entity has taken reasonably practicable steps will depend on the circumstances.

The ACMA welcomes feedback on these guidelines. The guidance will be reviewed and updated as needed. It will be informed by matters raised in complaints, investigation findings, and other relevant information about developments in the technological and regulatory landscape – including emerging risks or regulatory requirements – to address the reasonably practicable measures that regulated entities must take under s15AB of the IGA in relation to illegal online gambling services.

This initial guidance is for general information only. It is not intended to provide legal advice, and does not take account of individual circumstances. It is based on the law and policy as existing at the time it was published. Changes to law or policy may cause it to fall out-of-date, or it may otherwise be inapplicable to your circumstances. You should always consider obtaining legal advice based on the particular facts of your case.

Legislative framework

Preventing use of infrastructure

Section 15AB requires certain providers to take reasonably practicable measures to prevent their infrastructure, facilities and services from being used in connection with designated interactive gambling services.

The framework is intended to block the availability and accessibility of illegal online gambling services by disrupting the digital pathways through which those services are made available to Australian customers. It strengthens website blocking arrangements by placing an active obligation on a broader range of digital service providers.

Who is captured by section 15AB

Subsection 15AB(1) applies to:

- an Internet Service Provider (ISP)
- a Domain Name System (DNS) provider
- an App Distribution Service Provider
- an Internet Search Engine Provider.

Section 15AB(3) provides that the obligation only applies to the extent that the relevant infrastructure, facilities or services are operated, controlled or provided by the entity in its capacity as an ISP, DNS Provider, App Distribution Service Provider or Internet Search Engine Provider.

Some organisations may be captured in multiple capacities where they provide more than one relevant service.

An entity should obtain its own independent legal advice if it is uncertain about whether section 15AB applies to it.

Key definitions

What is a designated interactive gambling service

Under the Interactive Gambling Act, a designated interactive gambling service is either:

- A prohibited interactive gambling service, such as an online casino-style or online slot machine service.
- An unlicensed regulated interactive gambling service, such as an online wagering or lottery service provided to customers in Australia without a licence issued under the law of an Australian state or territory.

A service may be a designated interactive gambling service whether it is based in Australia or overseas. Some providers may operate lawfully in other jurisdictions but be prohibited or unlicensed for the purposes of providing services to customers in Australia.

Australian-customer link

The meaning of 'Australian-customer link' is determined by the Interactive Gambling Act.

A designated interactive gambling service will have an Australian-customer link if, and only if, any or all of the customers of the service are physically present in Australia. That is, it is being provided to customers who are physically present in Australia.

A person's residency or citizenship is not relevant in establishing an Australian customer link. It need only be established that a customer is physically present in Australia, whether on holiday or as a resident.

Whether a designated interactive gambling service has an Australian-customer link will depend on the circumstances.

Relevant considerations may include whether persons physically present in Australia are able to access the service, or if they are able to participate in the service.

Identifying designated interactive gambling services

Categories of services that entities should consider

Some categories of services provide a stronger basis for forming a view that a service is a designated interactive gambling service, and may warrant further consideration.

Online casino-style services

Online casino-style gambling services, including online slots, roulette and blackjack services played for real money, are generally prohibited under the Interactive Gambling Act. Websites, applications, links and other services that facilitate access to online casino-style services may provide a basis for a provider to conclude that the service is a designated interactive gambling service.

Online poker services

Online poker services played for real money are generally prohibited under the Interactive Gambling Act. Websites, applications, links and other services that facilitate access to online poker services may provide a basis for a provider to conclude that the service is a designated interactive gambling service.

Unlicensed wagering services

The ACMA maintains a register of licensed interactive wagering service providers operating in Australia. Where a wagering service does not appear on the register, this may indicate that the service is not licensed in Australia and may warrant further consideration.

Information sources

Regulated entities may establish processes to gather and assess information from a range of sources to assist in identifying designated interactive gambling services.

This may include information obtained through:

- customer complaints and reports
- internal monitoring and detection activities
- publicly available information
- information obtained through relevant stakeholders or industry.

Maintaining appropriate processes for identifying, assessing and responding to information regarding designated interactive gambling services may assist providers in meeting their obligations under section 15AB.

Regulated entities have varying levels of visibility of information regarding illegal online gambling services. This will depend on a number of factors, including:

- the role performed by the entity within the online ecosystem
- the infrastructure, facilities and services they operate, control or provide.

This will be taken into consideration in terms of what are reasonably practicable measures, as set out in these guidelines, noting that it does not, of itself, negate an entity's obligation to take reasonably practicable measures.

ACMA information

The ACMA publishes information that may assist regulated entities in identifying designated interactive gambling services and understanding their obligations under section 15AB.

This information may include:

- information about blocked gambling websites on the ACMA's website
- the ACMA's register of licensed interactive wagering service providers
- guidance published by the ACMA under section 15AC
- information regarding ACMA investigations and enforcement outcomes
- other information published by the ACMA from time to time regarding designated interactive gambling services.

Regulated entities may establish processes to review and act upon relevant ACMA information as part of their compliance arrangements. For example, information about websites that are currently subject to the ACMA's website blocking scheme may assist providers to identify services that the ACMA has previously investigated and blocked as being provided in contravention of the Interactive Gambling Act.

While the ACMA recognises that information it publishes may assist providers to identify services for action, it is only one means of identifying designated interactive gambling services. Regulated entities should not rely solely on ACMA-published information when considering their obligations under section 15AB.

Reliance on ACMA information is unlikely to be sufficient to meet the obligation to take reasonable steps. Regulated entities are expected to proactively consider the risks arising from the infrastructure, facilities and services they operate, control or provide, and implement measures reasonably capable of identifying and responding to designated interactive gambling services.

How the ACMA may assess compliance with section 15AB

Reasonably practicable steps

Section 15AB does not prescribe a particular method or technical solution for preventing infrastructure, facilities or services from being used in connection with designated interactive gambling services. The measures adopted by a provider will depend on the nature of the services it provides, its level of control over customer access and what is reasonably practicable in the circumstances.

Consistent with the Explanatory Memorandum, the ACMA expects regulated entities to consider how their infrastructure, facilities and services may be used in connection with designated interactive gambling services and to implement measures reasonably capable of identifying and preventing such use, so far as reasonably practicable. Providers may adopt a range of measures, including policies, procedures and other controls designed to identify and prevent access to designated interactive gambling services.

The measures available will depend on the provider's role and may include removing links, apps or websites associated with access to the relevant service.

In assessing whether an entity has taken reasonably practicable steps, the ACMA may have regard to:

- the role performed by the entity within the online ecosystem
- the infrastructure, facilities and services they operate, control or provide
- the measures that were reasonably available to it in the circumstances.

Regulated entities captured by section 15AB perform different roles within the online ecosystem and have varying levels of visibility, control and technical capacity with regard to illegal gambling services. Whether a measure is reasonably practicable will depend on the facts of the individual matter, including the circumstances of the particular entity, such as the extent to which it is able to identify, prevent, or disrupt access to designated interactive gambling services through the infrastructure, facilitates and services it provides.

The requirement to take reasonable steps under section 15AB only applies to the extent that the infrastructure and facilities are operated, controlled or provided by the person in their capacity as an internet service provider, domain name system provider, app distribution service provider or internet search engine service provider.

The ACMA recognises that there may be scenarios where it is out of the control of entities to restrict access for issues relating to their operation or control over the particular infrastructure or facility, or because further action is not reasonably practicable in the circumstances. The intent is not to expect restriction to services where it is unreasonable or out of the control of an entity.

The examples set out in these guidelines are intended to assist entities in understanding the types of measures that may support compliance. They are not mandatory requirements and are not intended to prescribe a single compliance model.

Risk assessment, governance and controls

The ACMA will consider whether an entity has assessed how designated interactive gambling services could be accessed, promoted or made available through the infrastructure, facilities or services it operates, controls or provides.

Relevant considerations may include whether the entity has:

- identified the points at which designated interactive gambling services may interact with its infrastructure or services
- considered the extent to which it can detect, disrupt or restrict access to designated interactive gambling services
- identified information sources that may assist in recognising designated interactive gambling services, including information published by the ACMA
- established appropriate internal arrangements to support compliance with section 15AB including:
    - documented policies or procedures relating to the identification and disruption of designated interactive gambling services
    - established processes for reviewing relevant information from the ACMA, customers or other sources
    - implemented escalation and decision-making processes for services that may require action
    - maintained appropriate records of information relied upon, and the actions taken in response to, identified designated interactive gambling services.

Online services, technologies and methods used to facilitate access to designated interactive gambling services may evolve over time. Accordingly, regulated entities should periodically review their compliance arrangements to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Policies, procedures and systems

Regulated entities should implement policies, procedures and systems designed to identify services that may be designated interactive gambling services.

Depending on the provider and the infrastructure, facilities and services it offers, this may include (but is not limited to):

- establishing policies, procedures and systems to monitor for designated interactive gambling services such as online casinos and online poker services
- reviewing information published by the ACMA
- reviewing wagering services that do not appear on the ACMA's register of licensed interactive wagering service providers.

Where appropriate to the nature, scale and technical capability of the provider, regulated entities should implement policies, procedures and systems, with a view to automating processes for the identification, prevention or disruption of designated interactive gambling services.

Regulated entities may be able to leverage existing operational, detection, moderation, review or disruption processes when implementing section 15AB obligations.

Complaints and reporting mechanisms

Regulated entities may establish complaints or reporting mechanisms that allow customers, members of the public or other stakeholders to report websites, apps, domains, links or other services that may facilitate access to designated interactive gambling services.

Such mechanisms may assist providers to identify services that would not otherwise come to their attention and support timely assessment and response.

Mirror sites and circumvention

Where technically feasible, regulated entities should consider measures to identify alternate domains, mirror sites or related services with a designated interactive gambling service. This may include identifying services that have been redirected, replicated or re-established using alternate domains, links or applications.

It is common for operators of designated interactive gambling services to seek to circumvent disruption measures, such as website blocking, by establishing alternate domains or mirror sites. The service itself remains readily identifiable through branding, content, functionality or ownership though the location may have changed.

For example, a service originally available through one domain may subsequently become available through a different domain (examplecasino.com becoming examplecasino1.com) or a previously identified website may be converted into a landing page that redirects users to the service at an alternative website.

Ongoing review, testing and improvement

The ACMA may consider whether a regulated entity makes a sustained and meaningful effort over time to maintain effective compliance arrangements. This may include the adequacy and frequency of testing, monitoring, assurance, audits and reviews, and whether identified weaknesses are addressed promptly.

Entities should keep their risk assessments, policies, procedures and controls under active consideration. Reviews may be prompted by changes to products or systems, intelligence received from the ACMA or other sources, complaints, control failures, or evidence that designated interactive gambling services have changed their behaviour.

Entity-specific considerations

The ACMA recognises that entities captured by section 15AB perform different functions and have differing levels of visibility, control, technical capability and operational resources. Accordingly, what is reasonably practicable for one entity may not be reasonably practicable for another.

In assessing whether an entity has taken reasonably practicable steps to comply with section 15AB, the ACMA may consider all relevant circumstances, including:

- the extent to which the infrastructure, facilities or services are operated, controlled or provided by the entity

- the extent to which the entity is able to influence, identify, prevent or disrupt access to designated interactive gambling services through those infrastructure, facilities or services
- the nature, scale and complexity of the entity's operations
- the size, resources and technical capabilities of the entity
- the information reasonably available to the entity, including information published by the ACMA, publicly available information and intelligence obtained through complaints or other sources
- whether the entity has taken action in relation to services that could reasonably be identified as designated interactive gambling services
- the availability, effectiveness and cost of measures capable of preventing or disrupting access to designated interactive gambling services
- the entity's governance, escalation and record-keeping arrangements.

In assessing compliance, the ACMA recognises that an entity's ability to prevent or disrupt access to a service may be limited by the nature of the infrastructure, facilities or services it operates, controls or provides. The ACMA will have regard to the practical measures available to the entity in the circumstances.

While the degree of visibility and control available to entities may vary across the digital ecosystem, all entities captured by section 15AB of the IGA are expected to consider the steps reasonably available to them. The fact that another participant may have greater visibility of, or control over, a service does not, of itself, negate an entity's obligation to take reasonably practicable steps. This may include working with other participants to share information, develop controls and support the identification and disruption of relevant designated interactive gambling services. There may also be value in sharing information with the ACMA to support these activities.

Providers captured in multiple capacities

Some organisations may be captured in several capacities under section 15AB. In assessing compliance, the ACMA may have regard to the provider's ability to identify and disrupt access to designated interactive gambling services across the range of regulated services it operates, controls or provides. This is consistent with subsection 15AB(3), which applies the obligation by reference to the capacity in which infrastructure, facilities or services are operated, controlled or provided.