**Gambling in Hong Kong**

**Figure 1 – Participation rate of gambling amongst persons aged 15-64 in Hong Kong, 2001-2016**(1)

![Graph showing participation rate of gambling amongst persons aged 15-64 in Hong Kong, 2001-2016.]

Note: (1) Gambling activities included Mark Six lottery, horserace betting, football betting, Macau casino wagering, gambling in mahjong house or casino ship, and social gambling.

**Figure 2 – Average monthly spending on gambling activities of HKJC, 2001-2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horserace betting</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>5,611</td>
<td>+985%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Six lottery</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>+220%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football betting</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>1,599</td>
<td>+129%(1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (1) Change during 2008-2016.

**Figure 3 – Local betting turnover of HKJC by major category, 2003-2019**(1)

![Graph showing local betting turnover of HKJC by major category, 2003-2019.]

Note: (1) Financial years ended 30 June.

**Highlights**

- The propensity of the population in Hong Kong to participate in gambling has been on a visible downtrend over the past 15 years, conceivably in part due to enhanced public education. Based on studies commissioned by the Government, about 62% of local citizens aged 15-64 participated in various gambling activities in 2016, down from the peak of 80% in 2005 (Figure 1). The respective decline in gambling propensity was more significant amongst secondary school students over the same period, halving from 54% to 22%.

- Despite the downtrend in gambling propensity, the stakes in those authorized gambling activities offered by the Hong Kong Jockey Club (“HKJC”) have increased significantly in money terms. During 2001-2016, the average monthly amount of horserace betting surged by 985% to HK$5,611 per gambler, and that on Mark Six lottery by 220% to HK$160 (Figure 2). Both outpaced the concurrent inflation of 34%. For football betting which was legalized in August 2003, the average monthly spending leaped by 129% to HK$1,599 in 2016.

- As such, the betting turnover of HKJC almost tripled from HK$87 billion in 2003-2004 to HK$229 billion in 2018-2019 (Figure 3). While HKJC allocated 84% of this turnover as prizes, dividends and rebates to customers, the remaining 16% was revenue to the HKJC. Within the turnover, football betting is now the largest contributor, with its share surging from 18% in 2003-2004 to 50% in 2018-2019. This is followed by horserace betting, with its share in turnover receding from 75% to 46% over the same period.
Gambling in Hong Kong (cont’d)

Figure 4 – Distribution of HKJC revenue in 2018-2019(1)

- Revenue HK$37 billion
- Returned to society 78%
- Tax contribution

Note: (1) Financial year ended 30 June.

Figure 5 – Person arrested and bet seized in operations against illegal gambling, 2009-2018

- Value of bet on credit and cash seized: HK$1,938 million (2014-2018) vs. HK$1,000 million (2009-2013)

Figure 6 – Enquiries and people receiving treatment against gambling, 2015 and 2018

- Enquiries received via hotline: 8,429 (2015) vs. 8,819 (2018)
- People receiving counselling and treatment services: 1,933 (2015) vs. 2,482 (2018)

Highlights

- Betting duty (i.e. bets and sweeps tax) provides a stable source of revenue to the Government, taking up 4.6%-5.2% of annual government revenue during 2008-2018. For HKJC alone, it disbursed some HK$23.3 billion to the Government either in the forms of betting duty or profits tax in its financial year 2018-2019, making it the largest single taxpayer in Hong Kong (Figure 4). This apart, HKJC donated a total of HK$5.6 billion to charities and Lotteries Fund. Taking into account both donation and tax payment together, HKJC returned a total of HK$28.9 billion or 78% of its revenue to the society in 2018-2019.

- For illegal gambling falling outside the ambit of HKJC, the Government has been stepping up law enforcement, with the number of persons arrested for illegal gambling increasing by 4% from 21,306 during 2009-2013 to 22,134 during 2014-2018 (Figure 5). The value of bet on credit and cash seized in such operations increased more significantly, by 75% to HK$1,938 million over the same period.

- To address gambling disorder in society, the Government established the Ping Wo Fund in September 2003, financing counselling and treatment services in four dedicated centres. By 2018, annual funding reached HK$22 million. During 2015-2018, the enquiries received via the Fund’s hotline increased by 5% to 8,819, while the number of recipients of counselling and treatment services increased more significantly by 28% to 2,482 (Figure 6).

Data sources: Latest figures from Home Affairs Bureau, Hong Kong Jockey Club, Hong Kong Police Force, Ping Wo Fund and The Treasury.

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