



## Unwanted Noise – The need to ban Gambling Advertising

October 2024

*It took years to rewire my brain to reclaim me and the life I should have been living. But the urge to gamble is still triggered by advertising images, sounds and pop-ups...I am one of the fortunate ones. I survived. I didn't lose everything, but I always carry the scar of the harm that it caused me. I always have to fight the "stupid, loser" voice in my head.*

Testimony from a person harmed by gambling to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, quoted in "You win some, you lose more" June 2023 report.

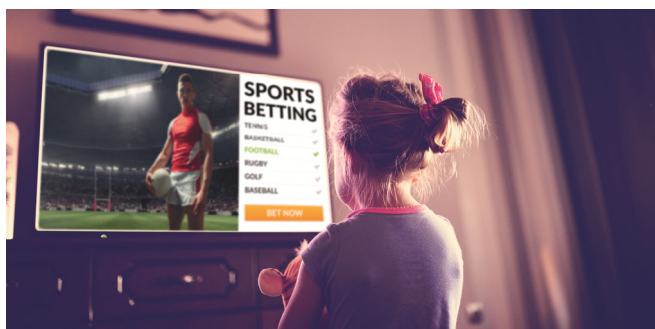
Gambling advertising seeks to maximise profits for online gambling corporations on the losses of people who too frequently cannot afford it. The advertising also harms children, creating an association between sports and gambling. Between May 2022 and April 2023, gambling corporations spent \$238.6 million on advertising on TV, radio and online.

Research has found:

- Over 90% of children can recall seeing a sports betting advertisement.
- Many children have a detailed recall of betting advertisements' content – including brand names, plot lines, and 'deals'.
- Three-quarters of children aged 8 to 16 think betting on sport.
- 6% of children aged 12 to 17 have gambled online. Starting to gamble as a child increases the risk of being harmed due to gambling as an adult.

The harms caused by gambling include:

- Suicide;
- Relationship breakdown;
- Bankruptcy;
- Lowered productivity and job loss;
- Depression and anxiety; and
- Crime (especially fraud).



For every person harmed by gambling, the lives of several people will be impacted, including dependent children, spouses, anyone in their care, employers and work colleagues.

Throughout the Biblical text, including the Gospels, it is clear that God does not want people to exploit others for their benefit.

The inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm recommended a ban on gambling advertising. The Labor chair of the Committee, the now deceased Peta Murphy, wrote in the final report of the Committee:

*Online gambling companies advertise so much in Australia because it works. Online gambling has been deliberately and strategically marketed alongside sport, which has normalised it as a fun, harmless, and sociable activity that is part of a favourite pastime. Gambling advertising is grooming children and young people to gamble and encourages riskier behaviour. The torrent of advertising is inescapable. It is manipulating an impressionable and vulnerable audience to gamble online. Australia's largest professional sporting codes and broadcast media were largely in lockstep with their advertising and sponsorship partners in the gambling industry during this inquiry to oppose further restrictions.*

*The Committee shares the concerns of many witnesses and the community that the status quo is leading to a generation of young Australians who view gambling and*



*sport as inextricably linked. This is concerning, not only because of the potential increase in Australians experiencing gambling harm, but also about changes to the culture of sport. Australia would be diminished if sport was to be so captured by gambling revenue that providing an opportunity for betting came to be seen as its primary purpose.*

*A phased, comprehensive ban on all gambling advertising on all media – broadcast and online, that leaves no room for circumvention, is needed. Partial bans on gambling advertising do not work. The 2017 media reforms resulted in gambling advertising on television increasing. Harmful industries have shown they will identify and capitalise on any gaps in marketing restrictions and that they are taking advantage of the less regulated online environment. The advertising ban should be enforced sequentially, with advertising that has the highest risk of harm to be addressed immediately. To enable sporting bodies and broadcasters adequate time to locate alternative sources of advertising revenue and to comply with current contractual obligations, the Committee recommends that the comprehensive ban be phased in over a three-year period.*

There has been recent public pressure for the Government to implement a total ban on gambling advertising. However, so far, the Government has resisted the call. The Leader of the Opposition, Peter Dutton, has also publicly stated that the Coalition only supports further restrictions on gambling advertising, rather than a ban. With media corporations a key beneficiary of selling space for gambling corporations to advertise, if only one major party supports a ban on gambling advertising, the media corporations can punish the other side in the lead-up to the coming Federal election. Both sides of politics need to support the ban. We have the opportunity to push for the ban now.

**What you can do:**

Write polite and respectful letters to:

**The Hon. Michelle Rowland MP**

Minister for Communications  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP**

Prime Minister  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

E-mail: [Minister.rowland@mo.communications.gov.au](mailto:Minister.rowland@mo.communications.gov.au)

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Salutation: Dear Minister

**The Hon. David Coleman MP**

Shadow Minister for Communications  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**The Hon. Peter Dutton MP**

Leader of the Opposition  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Salutation: Dear Mr Coleman

Salutation: Dear Mr Dutton

Points to make in your letter:

- Express deep concern that gambling advertising increases the harms caused by online gambling and normalises the association between gambling and sports for children.
- Urge that they follow through on the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs recommendation and support the implementation a comprehensive ban on all forms of gambling advertising.