

Gambling Advertisements

Current issue

- *Community concern about the volume and impacts of gambling advertising*

Brief talking points

- Recent media coverage has highlighted community concern about the number of gambling advertisements being shown.
- The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) ensures broadcasters meet their responsibilities when showing gambling advertising.
- My Government wants to get the balance right, to warn people and prevent harm, particularly for children, young people, and problem gamblers.
 - We are introducing consistent messaging in gambling advertisements.
 - We are working with ACMA to finalise arrangements for the National Self-exclusion Register – BetStop.
 - On 15 September, my Government initiated a House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on problem gambling.
 - My Government is also considering its response to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services' inquiry into the regulation of the use of financial services such as credit cards and digital wallets for online gambling in Australia.

Key facts

- *An ACMA investigation found that both Seven and Nine breached gambling advertising rules during broadcasts of the Olympics and 2021 NRL Grand Final.*
- *Regulations that apply to live sports coverage do not apply to coverage of sporting related programs.*
- *Research-based consistent messaging will highlight the risk of harm from online wagering.*
- *BetStop will allow individuals to self-exclude from all licensed interactive wagering services for a minimum of three months and up to a lifetime.*
- *The inquiry into online gambling will investigate whether current laws, regulations, consumer protections, and education and support programs are enough to reduce harm to gamblers.*
- *The previous inquiry into the regulation of credit cards and digital wallets was tabled in November 2021. The key recommendation was to ban the use of credit cards and digital wallets for online gambling.*

Background

- *Seven and Nine have entered into court-enforceable undertakings with ACMA to implement systems and refresh staff training to ensure compliance with gambling advertising regulations.*
- *Consistent messaging is being introduced as part of the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering. The seven new messages will replace the “gamble responsibly” tagline. New messaging must be implemented by 30 March 2023.*
 - *Online wagering companies and broadcasters raised concerns, which resulted in changes to the implementation of the messaging.*

Existing regulations

- *Most content broadcast in Australia is regulated by co-regulatory codes developed by the broadcasting industry in accordance with the Broadcasting Services Act 1992.*
- *Regulation of gambling advertisements typically focus on when advertisements can be shown (scheduling) and what they contain (content), not the number of advertisements shown (volume).*
 - *Codes of Practice, eg the Commercial Television Code of Practice, overseen by ACMA, apply for scheduling, both in general broadcasting and during live sports coverage. Current rules attempt to limit children’s exposure to gambling advertisements.*
 - *Codes of practice, eg the Australian Association of National Advertisers’ Wagering Advertising Code, overseen by Ad Standards, also regulate the content of gambling advertisements. This code requires that gambling advertisements must not target minors, depict a person aged 18-24 engaged in wagering activities, state or imply a promise of winning, or link wagering with increased sexual success or attractiveness. Advertisements also must not portray, condone or encourage wagering in combination with the consumption of alcohol, participating in wagering as a means to relieve financial or personal difficulties, excessive gambling, or peer pressure.*

Relationship between gambling and suicide

- *In February 2022, Suicide Prevention Australia and Financial Counselling Australia released a report Gambling and Suicide Prevention – A roadmap to change that outlined 10 recommendations, including to ban gambling industry advertisements.*
- *Gambling behaviour and problem gambling can contribute to poor mental health and to several suicide risk factors, including financial loss and relationship breakdown.¹*

Scale of gambling losses

- *Estimates suggest that Australia has the highest rate of gambling losses per person in the world. For example, in 2018-19, Australians are estimated to have lost approximately \$25 billion on legal forms of gambling.² The social costs of gambling – including adverse financial impacts, emotional and psychological costs, relationship and family impacts, and productivity loss and work impacts – were estimated at around \$7 billion in Victoria alone.³*

Contact Officer: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Contact Number: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

¹ Suicide Prevention and Financial Counselling Australia, *Gambling and Suicide Prevention – A roadmap to Change*, 2022.

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), *Gambling in Australia*, 16 September 2021.

³ AIHW, *Gambling in Australia*, 2021.