

# OUR YOUNG PEOPLE NEED STRONGER SPORTS GAMBLING REGULATIONS

Sports gambling is the fastest growing form of gambling in Australia. Advertising is becoming increasingly pervasive and is particularly harmful to children. Advertising normalises the link between gambling and sport. This is a growing public health problem and must be a priority for the Federal Government. Strict regulation of advertising is as necessary for gambling as it was for tobacco.

We seek a ban on all sports gambling advertisements:

We require the Federal Government to strengthen sports gambling laws to protect the harm that gambling is having on our future generation.



## INCREASING PREVALENCE OF SPORTS GAMBLING

Sports gambling is the fastest growing form of gambling in Australia and is increasing at an alarming rate of **15 per cent per year**. The gambling industry spent **\$253.2 million** on advertising in Australia in 2017, up from **\$89.7 million in 2011** (excluding sponsorships and in-program content, such as during live sport broadcasts).<sup>1</sup>

As a result gambling is more promoted than ever before. It's in public places, on public transport, on television, on radio and online. It is estimated that young people are exposed to more than **two hours of gambling advertisements** every week.<sup>2</sup>

Young people mostly recalled seeing gambling advertising on television (**over 90 per cent**), followed by stadiums, websites and hearing advertising on radio. While television is still the environment most young people recalled seeing gambling advertising, **55 per cent** had seen gambling advertising on social media, including YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat.<sup>3</sup>

## RESTRICTIONS ON GAMBLING ADVERTISING NEED TO BE EXTENDED

In April 2018 the Australian Government introduced changes to gambling advertising regulations during live sports programs. These changes apply on commercial television, commercial radio, subscription television, SBS and online platforms. The changes restricted gambling advertisements from five minutes before a live sports event commences, during the event and for five minutes after the event has concluded. The restrictions apply between **5am and 8.30pm**. These regulations do not include the placement of gambling logos which are part of a sponsorship arrangement.

Despite the regulations, **74 per cent** of Victorians think adolescents are being exposed to too much gambling advertising.<sup>4</sup>

The Alliance for Gambling Reform (Australia's peak body for gambling reform) has also identified sports gambling as a key advocacy priority and the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation has developed the *Love the Game, Not the Odds* initiative to address this public health issue.

## SPORTS GAMBLING ADVERTISEMENTS ARE HARMING OUR CHILDREN

We require Federal Government regulations to strengthen sports gambling laws to protect the harm that gambling is having on our future generation.

Sports gambling advertisements are grooming our children to become the next generation of gamblers with the harm associated with gambling already emerging among our young people.

- On average **one student** in every Australian high school classroom is already gambling dangerously.<sup>5</sup>
- **One in five adults** gambling dangerously started before they were 18.<sup>6</sup>

In the past 12 month period:

- **two-thirds** of teenagers have gambled.<sup>7</sup>
- up to **a quarter** of young people have participated in sports betting.<sup>8</sup>

## GAMBLING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

Gambling advertising has been considered a significant influencing factor on young people's gambling attitudes and behaviours.

Gambling advertising creates a misconception among teenagers that gambling is a normal part of sport.<sup>9</sup> Young people are influenced by the advertising that they see during sport, with

some believing that gambling on sport makes people more invested in the game, and a more committed sports fan.<sup>10</sup>

These advertisements are influential in shaping positive perceptions about sports gambling with some adolescents describing sportsbetting advertising as depicting sportsbetting as easy, and could add excitement to the sports viewing experience.<sup>11</sup>

Exposure to gambling advertising is higher for 13 to 17-year-olds than for adults.<sup>12</sup> The more people are exposed to advertising for potentially harmful products the more they are likely to want to try products in the future. Research has found that a third of young people would like to try gambling either now or in the future, with most young people wanting to try sportsbetting.<sup>13</sup>

- **75 per cent** of young people think betting on sport is normal.<sup>14</sup>
- **33 per cent** want to gamble now or in the future.<sup>15</sup>

Sports gambling advertisements are leaving their mark on our future, with most young people having a clear recall and awareness of sports betting brands.

Young people can recall the name of betting companies, where they have seen advertisements, and the plot lines or strategies used within advertisements.<sup>16</sup>

- **Three out of four** adolescents can name at least one sports betting brand.<sup>16</sup>
- **One in four** adolescents can name at least four betting brands.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, <https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/resources/gambling-victoria/gambling-advertising/>

<sup>2</sup> Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, kidbet campaign. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAV3GVLOcdM>

<sup>3</sup> Thomas SL, Bestman A, Pitt H, Cassidy R, McCarthy S, Nyemcsok C, Cowlshaw S, Daube M. Young people's awareness of the timing and placement of gambling advertising on traditional and social media platforms: A study of 11-16 year olds in Australia. Harm Reduction Journal. 2018;15:51.

<sup>4</sup> Responsible Gambling Foundation 2018 Community Attitudes Survey <https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/reducing-harm/love-the-game-program/>

<sup>5</sup> Purdie N, Matters G, Hillman K, Murphy M, Ozolins C & Millwood P 2011, Gambling and young people in Australia, Gambling Research Australia, Melbourne.

<sup>6</sup> Hare, S 2009, A study of gambling in Victoria – problem gambling from a public health perspective, Victorian Government Department of Justice, Melbourne.

<sup>7</sup> Purdie N, Matters G, Hillman K, Murphy M, Ozolins C and Millwood P 2011, Gambling and young people in Australia, Gambling Research Australia, Melbourne

<sup>8</sup> Purdie N, Matters G, Hillman K, Murphy M, Ozolins C and Millwood P 2011, Gambling and young people in Australia, Gambling Research Australia, Melbourne

<sup>9</sup> Thomas, SL, Pitt, H, Bestman, A, Randle, M, Daube, M & Pettigrew, S 2016, Child and parent recall of gambling sponsorship in Australian sport, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, Melbourne.

<sup>10</sup> Pitt H, Thomas SL, Bestman A. Initiation, influence, and impact: adolescents and parents discuss the marketing of gambling products during Australian sporting matches. BMC Public Health. 2016; 16 (1):967

<sup>11</sup> Korn DA, Hurson T, Reynolds J. Final report: Commercial gambling advertising: Possible impact on youth knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behavioural intentions. Ontario, Canada: Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre, 2005.

<sup>12</sup> Sproston, K, Hanley, C, Brook, K, Hing, N & Gainsbury, S 2015, Marketing of sports betting and racing, Gambling Research Australia, Melbourne.

<sup>13</sup> Pitt H, Thomas SL, Bestman A, Daube M, Derevensky J. Factors that influence children's gambling attitudes and consumption intentions: Lessons for gambling harm prevention research, policies and advocacy strategies. Harm Reduction Journal. 2017; 14(11):1-12.

<sup>14</sup> Responsible Gambling Foundation qualitative study of kids who watched sport aged 8-16 years <https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/reducing-harm/love-the-game-program/>

<sup>15</sup> Pitt H, Thomas SL, Bestman A, Daube M, Derevensky J. Factors that influence children's gambling attitudes and consumption intentions: Lessons for gambling harm prevention research, policies and advocacy strategies. Harm Reduction Journal. 2017; 14(11):1-12.

<sup>16</sup> Pitt H, Thomas SL, Bestman A, Daube M, Derevensky J. What do children observe and learn from televised sports betting advertisements? A qualitative study among Australian children. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health. 2017; 41(6):604-10.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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