

2022-2023 PRE-BUDGET (FEDERAL) SUBMISSION

Recommendation:

Increase funding to the Special Broadcasting Service by an amount equivalent to its revenue from gambling advertisers, currently approximately \$4million p.a.

Gambling advertising is already restricted during the hours when children are thought to be watching TV or engaging with on-line content, including siren to siren bans.¹ These restrictions would not be in place if gambling were like other legal products. It is not. It is potentially dangerous, and recognized as an adult activity.

In reality, children are not orderly. They watch programs with their parents after 8.30pm. They watch live sports events where gambling sponsorship is ubiquitous. These multiple ways in which sportsbetting firms and casinos market themselves requires a blanket approach from government similar to the existing bans on tobacco advertising. Australian and international evidence shows that despite regulations, children are exposed to gambling ads, they retain high levels of brand awareness, they do not understand the complex and poorly communicated information about risk, the ads normalise all gambling behaviour and in Australia, this exposure is the second most significant predictor of future gambling problems.²

Ending these ads can start with the public broadcasting system. 91% of SBS viewers want an end to gambling advertising on the public broadcaster.³ SBS now defends itself, explaining why it shows gambling ads, and that it does not allow them during certain sensitive programs.⁴

We understand that operational and editorial decision-making by SBS is properly independent of the government. We also understand that the SBS Board will not move to refuse gambling advertising unless it can make up the funding shortfall in some other way. The Alliance and our supporters will be advocating to SBS to remove gambling. The Federal Government can assist by increasing its annual budget.

¹ <https://www.acma.gov.au/rules-gambling-ads>

² Ipsos Mori for UK GambleAware 2020 *Final Synthesis Report: the effect of gambling marketing and advertising on children, young people and vulnerable adults*; Hing et al 2021 *NSW Youth Gambling Study* for NSW Responsible Gambling Fund

³ <https://saveoursbs.org/archives/5830>

⁴ <https://help.sbs.com.au/hc/en-au/articles/360004189376-Why-does-SBS-screen-gambling-advertisements->

WHO WE ARE

The Alliance for Gambling Reform is a national advocacy organisation and registered health charity formed out of an urgent need to address the harmful and unfair impacts of gambling and its normalisation in Australia. We are a non-partisan alliance of more than 60 organisations who share our objectives of preventing and minimising harm from gambling, and we are entirely funded by individuals, foundations and local governments that do not have any ties with the gambling industry.

We take a public health approach to gambling reform, centreing those with lived experience of gambling harm at the core of our work based on the principle that those closest to the harm are those closest to the solutions. We seek to collaborate meaningfully with elected representatives, local councils, service agencies, faith and community groups to prevent and reduce harm through policy change. The Alliance also provides coordination, expert advice and practical resources to our supporter organisations, community groups and the media.

Authored on behalf of the Alliance for Gambling Reform, Dr Kate da Costa 28/01/2022