

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Gambling ad reforms fall short of protecting Australians from harm

The federal government's new gambling advertising reforms fail to provide the comprehensive protections needed to reduce online gambling-related harm, particularly among children and young people.

Australian Medical Association Vice President Associate Professor Julian Rait said the measures announced today acknowledge the scale of the problem but do not go far enough to address the health impacts of gambling addiction.

"Australians lose more to gambling than any other country in the world," Associate Professor Rait said.

"Gambling addiction is a serious health issue linked to mental illness, substance abuse, family breakdown and severe financial distress.

"The changes announced today are a step in the right direction, but they are not the strong, comprehensive response Australians need and deserve."

The government's package includes caps on advertising volume, extended blackout periods around sporting matches, opt-out tools for social media and streaming platforms, a phased ban on stadium and jersey advertising, and restrictions on ads around school pick-up times.

However, the AMA is concerned the reforms do not include a national independent gambling regulator or a pathway to a total ban on online gambling advertising, as recommended by the Murphy review.

"Partial bans do not work," Associate Professor Julian Rait said. "We have seen this repeatedly across public health. Anything less than a comprehensive ban will continue to expose Australians — especially children — to relentless gambling promotion."

The AMA has long warned that gambling advertising is now embedded in sport and online environments, normalising gambling for young people. Research shows children are increasingly aware of gambling brands and odds, and many report seeing gambling ads during times and in places where they should not.

"Children should be able to enjoy sport without being targeted by gambling companies," Associate Professor Rait said. "Relying on opt-out tools or age-restriction technologies that have already proven ineffective will not protect young people."

The AMA has advocated for stronger regulation of gambling since 2013, calling for a comprehensive ban on all online gambling advertising; an independent national gambling regulator; consistent, enforceable rules across all platforms; and immediate action to reduce exposure for children and vulnerable communities.

"The government must put the health of Australians ahead of industry interests," Associate Professor Rait said.

"A full ban on online gambling advertising is the only effective way to reduce harm. The government must strengthen these reforms and implement a comprehensive ban without delay."

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