

Media Release

Govt's gambling reforms fail to protect next generation Skyrocketing sports betting is the new intergenerational challenge

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The Government's gambling reforms, presented to the parliament today, will fail to protect kids from an unprecedented assault by the gambling industry that aims to groom a whole new generation to gamble.

The CEO of the Alliance for Gambling Reform, Martin Thomas, said new technology is allowing the gambling sector to target underage kids in a way no other generation has been targeted.

"The evidence shows that underage kids as young as 14 are being targeted through social media to download gambling apps, and betting ads are appearing in children's games and increasingly popular online games are including gambling-type functions. Our kids are also exposed to a tsunami of gambling ads on television and through the sports broadcasts," Mr Thomas said.

"Tragically this target of our young kids is working with research by the Australia Institute showing more than 600,000 underaged kids (aged 12-17) bet more than \$18 million a year."

The presentation of the government's reforms to parliament today – in the shadow of the Federal Budget – are too weak and will not do enough to protect our kids.

"While it was heartening to hear the Prime Minister at his last Press Club address, acknowledge the importance of shielding children from betting ads and also the need to delink sports from gambling – the proposed reforms do not go far enough.

The reforms will put a ban on gambling ads online except where users have an option to opt out, while the ban on radio advertising during school pick up times, banning sports players and celebrities in gambling ads and the removal of betting ads from stadiums and player uniforms should be acknowledged.

But the Alliance's Chief Advocate, Tim Costello, said overall the reforms were timid and feel far short of the 31 landmark recommendations of the parliamentary *'Inquiry into online gambling and its harms'* chaired by the late Labor MP Peta Murphy.

"Not a single parent in this country would 'opt in' to their kids seeing gambling ads – that's why it's 'opt out' – many people will forget or not realise, and it just puts greater onus on parents to always be logging in and opting out of countless apps and sites, it's ridiculous," Rev. Costello said.

“The government should not claim they are fully protecting kids from gambling advertising by asking parents to opt out. The onus should be squarely on the gambling companies and the platforms.”

The Alliance is also critical of government plans such as allowing wagering companies to broadcast three gambling ads per hour between 6:00am and 8:30 pm. And then to have no cap on gambling ads after 8.30pm.

“There is still an opportunity to strengthen these proposals, to reflect what Australians really want in terms of meaningful gambling reform and we look forward to engaging with the government and all MPs as these proposals go through the Parliament,” Rev. Costello said.

The Alliance wants all 31 recommendations of the Murphy Report implemented, including:

- Ban all gambling ads on all broadcast and online platforms so children are no longer exposed to gambling on their screens.
- Ban gambling inducements and inducement advertising, stopping companies from offering free bets and promotions that trap people, young and old, trying to walk away from gambling
- Establish a national regulator with a mandate to reduce harm

The Alliance for Gambling Reform is a national advocacy organisation working to reduce gambling harm in Australia. We partner with other organisations and with local councils to reduce the alarming level of gambling harm in Australia, we work to change the laws and rules governing the gambling industry. We do not seek to ban gambling. Rather we seek to influence government to minimise the harmful behaviours of the gambling industry and to give voice to those who are impacted by gambling harm.

See [here](#) for a gambling language guide for journalists.

If you or someone you know is in need of support, please contact:

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