

8 March 2013

Ms Lyn Beverley
Committee Secretary
Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Beverley,

Harness Racing Australia (HRA) appreciates the invitation to provide a submission to the Joint Select Committee's inquiry into the advertising and promotion of gambling services in sport.

Advertising and promotion of gambling services in sport is a significant issue for HRA, as over 90% of the revenue generated by the harness racing industry comes from wagering. Indeed, the link between the racing industry and wagering is unique and it is this which distinguishes it from other sports.

This direct dependency on wagering has many functions, but primarily supports an entire industry and over 19,000 people who rely on harness racing in part or totality for their livelihood. Whilst an AFL game or cricket match can go ahead without betting, and its participants are no worse off, the racing industry would not exist without wagering.

HRA's submission in July 2011 to the Committee's inquiry into gambling reform also highlighted that this link between wagering and the industry results in the industry itself demanding and commanding the highest standards of integrity. It achieves this by devoting substantial resources to integrity and by providing broad powers to Stewards.

HRA therefore endorses the announcement from the COAG Select Council on Gambling where Ministers agreed that the racing industry be exempt from advertising restrictions due to its long standing integral connection with wagering.

HRA also supports a regulated sports betting environment, but one with an increased focus on integrity and improved standards for advertising and promotion of gambling services - to protect both the public and the athletes themselves.

To this end, HRA supports the Australian Government's initiative regarding in-program commentary and the promotion of live odds which was backed by an announcement on 29 June 2012 that broadcasters had agreed to amend their existing codes of practice to restrict live odds promotion, including by banning sporting commentators from mentioning live odds and banning all live odds promotion during play. HRA further submits this should also extend to sponsored betting segments during sporting event broadcasts.

This self-regulation approach will be eagerly watched, however, if it is ultimately unattainable, HRA submits, again in keeping with the position of the COAG Select Council on Gambling, that legislation be considered by the Australian Government.

Should you or the Committee have any further queries or request for information, please do not hesitate to contact me at anytime.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Kelly
Chief Executive