

31 October 2022

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Submission to Parliamentary Inquiry into Online Gambling and its Impacts on Those Experiencing Gambling Harm. <https://www.aph.gov.au/onlinegambling>

I wish to express my concern regarding the incessant and insidious advertising of online gambling tools and applications on the Australian media. I am not opposed to gambling per se, have not personally suffered from its consequences nor do I hold a moral opposition to it. What concerns me most, however, is that others clearly have and most Australians would find it extremely difficult to escape the continuous bombardment of the advertising and promotion of the almost endless online gambling options available to them.

I have long held the view that the volume and number of these advertisements is increasing. What finally prompted me to express my concerns, here, was the number of betting commercials on Channel 7 Adelaide, during its 6.00-7.00 pm news broadcast on Sunday 30 October 2022. In 60 minutes, there were eight. Prime time television, dominated by gambling advertisements. Easily verifiable by requesting Channel 7 for a copy of its program transcripts.

One is left with many questions, including as to why:

- Every commercial break during this period had a gambling advertisement;
- Our media seems so dependent upon it for their revenues;
- Key sporting codes have become so reliant upon, and now benefit so strongly from, its sponsorship and income generation;
- As a community and economy we seemingly have so little else to advertise, and
- We delude ourselves that the vulnerable, and in particular young people, can resist or escape its saturated promotion, ease of access and addictiveness?

Importantly, commercial stations are not the only ones engaging in high density promotions of gambling, online and otherwise: SBS for example, a publicly funded service, also saturates its broadcasts with online gambling advertisement each night.

After many years of extensive research and unequivocal evidence, we are now very clear about the negative impacts of gambling on individuals and communities and the persuasiveness of public media advertising on its uptake. How we continue, in the face of that evidence, to condone the promotion of any form of gambling in our media, is reprehensible.

As a country, we have successfully removed the promotion of alcohol and tobacco advertising, particularly in prime time and we should do the same with gambling sponsorship in our public and commercial media.

I look forward to reading the results of your inquiry and thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Ric Bierbaum