

Inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm.

Personal submission

Introduction:

Gambling has always been part of the fabric of Australian Society. Over the years the avenues available for gambling have grown, but with the advent of on line gambling these avenues have become accessible to a degree never seen before in our society.

Although gambling has been such a big part of our society there is scant evidence that it contributes anything of value to our community apart from those who operate the industry and make huge profits, the small minority who actually win and as a to boost government coffers that provides funding for certain community projects. The negative effects on individuals, families and society at large caused by those with a gambling addiction are far more harmful. It is distressing to hear of those who cannot control their addiction.

I am not a gambler and recognise that mature adults should be able to gamble if that is their desire. There is a need however to control the options and to reduce inducements to gamble in order to reduce the harm to those who are addicted and to their families.

Currently there appear to be no limits on the advertising of gambling on especially free to air television. Nightly commercial news programs contain advertisements at every ad break. Both major football codes, namely AFL and NRL, have massive amounts of gambling advertising during games, especially finals. These programs are in prime time when children are watching and being affected by what they see. My 10 year old grandson thinks that the betting organisations are actually part of the sport itself.

The effective of such advertising bombardments encouraging people to bet on line using their mobile devices and enticements such as “get their money back if your horse runs second” are clearly aimed at encouraging more betting. I get that this is the whole aim of advertising, but in this case it makes it very easy and very enticing for those with a gambling addiction to go deeper into debt and lead others into the path of addiction.

Recommendation:

I believe that all gambling advertising should be banned during prime time television as is the case with other socially destructive addictions like alcohol and tobacco for the following reasons:

- our precious children are protected from grooming by the gambling industry,
- those with gambling addictions are not enticed to gamble more and more while they are watching news and sport,
- those of us who do not gamble are bombarded by advertising seeking to entice us into potentially destructive behaviour.

I recognise that this action would have an impact on sponsorship of sport, on commercial television profits, on the gambling industry's profits and on some government revenue. It will, however, also have an impact upon our children and those with a gambling addiction. The question for your committee is: who do you care about? Those obtaining financial gain or those suffering devastating loss? I hope it's the latter.