

27 February 2013

Committee Secretary  
Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600

By email to: [gamblingreform@aph.gov.au](mailto:gamblingreform@aph.gov.au)

Dear Committee Secretary

**Re: Inquiry into the advertising and promotion of gambling services in sport**

Thank you for providing the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) with the opportunity to provide comment to the Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform's inquiry into the advertising and promotion of gambling services in sport.

In considering the terms of reference the RANZCP has limited its comments to those outlined under term E:

*Contribution to the prevalence of problem gambling, and mechanisms to reduce that prevalence;*

Problem gambling is defined as a pattern of behaviour that compromises, disrupts or causes damage to health, family, personal or vocational activities; the extreme end of this behaviour can be described as 'pathological gambling'.

Gambling advertisements have become increasingly prevalent on television and radio during sporting events screened in Australia, which is of great concern to the College. There is strong evidence of the relationship between the advertisement of products that can lead to gambling and subsequent problem gambling behaviour. The RANZCP recommends that the advertisements for betting and gambling companies during commercial breaks be restricted to a set number of times per hour - twice would be appropriate. Such adverts should also advise the viewer of the issue of problem gambling and information about how to seek help. This information should be easily visible in clear printing and be visible for a minimum of five seconds display.

Further, television presenters and match commentators repeatedly discussing sports betting and gambling serves to normalise this activity. Such commentary is likely to have a strong influence over the viewing audience, particularly as a number of presenters are former professional sports people. This 'cult of personality' may sway audiences, particularly young people, to believe that gambling is a normative component of watching or participating in sport. The RANZCP calls for commentators to be prohibited from talking about odds on offer at any point in time during televised sporting events. The RANZCP supports the development of systems that monitor 'host responsibility' programs, to ensure that companies that offer gambling options create a safer gambling environment through provision of practical information and support on ways to reduce gambling problems.

The RANZCP has developed a number of documents on the issue of problem gambling. They include:

- [Position Statement 45: Pathological/problem gambling](#)
- [Submission to the Joint Committee on Gambling Reform's Inquiry into the prevention and treatment of problem gambling \(March 2012\)](#)
- [Submission to the Online Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform's Inquiry into gambling and gambling advertising \(June 2011\)](#)

Yours sincerely

Dr Maria Tomasic  
**President**

Ref:2929