

19 March 2013 3:24 PM

To: Committee, Gambling Reform (SEN)

Subject: Submission to the Enquiry

To the Committee,

I'm not sure if submissions are being sought or accepted with regard to the current gambling reform enquiry. For that reason, I shall be as brief and as concise as possible.

Years ago, government made a decision to ban cigarette advertising on television. The rationale was simple: cigarette smoking is a) a threat to one's health, b) a burden on wider society and its health system etc. and c) not a lifestyle choice which ought to be encouraged in the light of the above. Sensibly and not before time, those advertising restrictions were imposed.

The time has come for the same strict interventions to be put in place regarding gambling on our televisions. The harm that gambling is doing on the fabric of family and society is untold, though speak to any social worker and they will tell it. Those with agendas argue that gambling is not a problem, only problem gambling. I would argue that assertion is untrue; any gambling is a manifestation of greed, and a financial pursuit with a high risk of loss which in the case of family has broad consequences. Neither are qualities we want to engender the next generation with. At any rate, one recent survey indicated that the average Australian household spent more money on gambling than charity. Yet we argue there is no problem. Household after household reels from addiction to gambling. Yet we argue there is no problem. The game of Rugby League itself reels from one match-fixing crisis, only to currently wobble upon the precipice of another, which not to put too fine a point on it, is a bed which has already been made and yet to be lay in if reports from the recent Crime Commission enquiry are to be listened to. Yet we argue there is no problem.

I implore you: ban gambling advertising on television, and do so quickly. My two reasons are clear:

1. Gambling is a scourge on our society to be discouraged not encouraged. It's long been held that to establish whether something is a virtue or vice, project the implications of a society in which all members did it. I contend on the basis of this projection and empirical data, that it is fast becoming a vice of the first order.
2. Sport itself must be kept as distant from gambling as possible, if we want it to remain pure. It is a difficult thing, in the age of professional sport, but we must for the sake of the fan and the pursuit itself maintain the image that sport is not about winning money. The likelihood of a fixing crisis looms, and when it hits, the last thing we want is a history of broadcasting which put money at the centre of the game. If we sow to the wind we will reap the whirlwind, and I cannot see how the current endless stream of pressure to bet during broadcast can be anything but sowing to the wind.

For these reasons I implore you: ban gambling advertising on TV. It makes me sick. I am a young man, with young children, and I consider it offensive that to watch free sport I and my family must endure the sickening and endless encouragement to gamble that we currently do.

Regards,

Daniel D. Odell