

Coalition committee members' additional comments

1.1 As indicated in our additional comments to the committee's 2011 report, Coalition committee members believe that while gambling is a legitimate industry, there should be fair and reasonable limits to the advertising of gambling.

1.2 The growing popularity of sports betting has brought with it an increase in the promotion of live odds during the broadcast of sporting events. This is of concern as it exposes vulnerable groups such as children and those with a gambling problem to gambling products.

1.3 This issue was included in the discussion paper released by the Coalition's Working Group on Gambling Reform in November 2011 where the Coalition sought comments on the promotion of live odds. The paper suggested that one way to address the issue would be to prohibit the promotion of betting odds while the match is in play. However, live odds could be provided during breaks in play, eg. half-time.¹

1.4 Due to its fundamental link with wagering, the Coalition believes the thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing industries should be exempt from such measures.

1.5 In January 2013 members of the Australian Wagering Council developed a Statement of Intent which already banned all promotion of live odds during matches.² This was included in its Code which was approved in the week starting 20 May 2013.³ The Coalition welcomed this initial action taken by the industry with the release for public comment of the proposed changes to the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice to address the issue of the promotion of live odds during the broadcasting of sporting events.⁴

1.6 However, responding to the level of community concern, on 6 May 2013, Leader of the Opposition, Mr Tony Abbott MP, indicated that if the television networks did not act before the September 2013 election, he would be prepared to legislate a ban on the promotion of live betting odds during sporting events.⁵

1.7 The government's announcement on 26 May 2013 is catch-up politics. The Coalition takes the concerns about the level of gambling advertising very seriously and intends to closely monitor the outcomes of the final industry codes to ensure they adequately reflect community standards.

1 *The Coalition's policy discussion paper on gambling reform*, November 2011.

2 Australian Wagering Council, *Submission 31*.

3 Australian Wagering Council, 'Statement of sports betting advertising', 26 May 2013.

4 The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP, Shadow Minister for Communications and Broadband, the Hon. Kevin Andrews MP, Shadow Minister for Families, Housing and Human Services, 'Coalition backs Industry on gambling reform', *media release*, 22 April 2013.

5 Samantha Maiden, 'Abbott pledge on live betting', *Sunday Herald Sun*, 5 May 2013.

Mr Steven Ciobo MP

Mr Josh Frydenberg MP