



Policy Brief | 13 February 2026

Gambling advertising

Social Policy section

Issue

Evidence shows that gambling advertising is contributing to increasing individual and social harms. Many Australians are also frustrated by current levels of gambling advertising, and especially about children's exposure to it. In light of such evidence and concerns, in 2023 the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs (the Murphy inquiry) recommended a comprehensive ban on advertising for online gambling. Since then, several private members' and senators' bills have been introduced that seek to impose further restrictions on gambling advertising. This Policy Brief outlines the drivers behind the Murphy inquiry recommendation, the current state of gambling advertising regulation, and possible avenues for change.

Key points

- Research evidence supports a strong causal relationship between gambling advertising, increased gambling activity, and related individual and social harms.
- The regulation of online gambling falls largely to the Australian Government. Currently, restrictions on gambling advertising scheduling and content are largely imposed through industry codes of practice, enforced by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA).
- It would be possible for the government to introduce tighter restrictions on gambling advertising without legislative change, depending on how comprehensive it wished such restrictions to be.

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Context

In June 2023, the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, chaired by [Peta Murphy MP](#), reported on its inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm (the Murphy inquiry). The *You win some, you lose more* report made 31 recommendations, the key one being to implement a comprehensive ban on all forms of advertising for online gambling, to be introduced in 4 phases, over 3 years, commencing immediately (recommendation 26). To date, the government has neither formally responded to the inquiry nor committed to adopting the advertising ban recommendation.

What are the issues with gambling advertising?

Research into the impacts of gambling advertising demonstrates strong causal links between gambling advertising and gambling-related harm. A 2023 [systematic review of literature](#) on the impacts of gambling-related advertising on gambling-related harm found that studies:

... consistently support the existence of a causal relationship between exposure to advertising of gambling products/brands and more positive attitudes to gambling, greater intentions to gamble and increased gambling activity at both individual and population level. There is evidence of a 'dose-response' effect; greater advertising exposure increases participation which leads to a greater risk of harm. There was more evidence for the impact on children and young people and for those already at risk from current gambling activity with those most vulnerable more likely to be influenced. (p. 124)

These findings [are consistent](#) with those related to the impacts of alcohol and tobacco advertising.

The review concluded that 'gambling advertising restrictions could reduce overall harm and mitigate the impact of advertising on gambling-related inequalities' and recommended that policies limiting exposure to advertising should form part of public harm prevention strategies (p. 124). [A critical and meta-analytic review](#) of research from the past 2 decades broadly echoed the above findings and concluded that '[i]n the absence of effective government regulation, gambling advertising is likely to increase and be more influential, and lead to greater societal harm' (pp. 12–13).

Volume of gambling advertising

According to [Nielsen Ad Intel](#), the gambling and gaming industry spent an estimated \$187.75 million on advertising in 2024, [down from \\$239 million in the previous year](#). This excludes in-stadium advertisement or sponsorship. The [Australian Communications and Media Authority \(ACMA\) reported](#) that in the year to 30 April 2023:

- the majority of gambling advertising spend was in free-to-air (FTA) TV markets (68%)
- over 1 million estimated gambling advertisements aired on FTA TV and metro radio

- 50% of spots from gambling providers on FTA TV and metro radio were advertising online gambling services
- online gambling providers' spending (including social media) amounted to 64% of all gambling advertising.

The recent drop in spending bucks the earlier trend of a [sharp increase in gambling advertising between 2011 and 2021](#). Some reports suggest the reduction is in anticipation of [restrictions](#) being imposed, following the Murphy inquiry recommendation.

How is online gambling advertising currently regulated?

Regulation of advertising for online gambling services is primarily an Australian Government responsibility, with state and territory governments and industry self-regulation also playing roles.

Australian Government – scheduling of advertisements

The ACMA regulates TV and radio broadcasting services under the [Broadcasting Services Act 1992](#) (BSA), which also contains provisions for regulating parts of the internet industry.

Restrictions related to the **scheduling** of gambling promotional content on **commercial and subscription radio and broadcast television** were introduced in 2015 and tightened in 2018. These restrictions are outlined in [industry-developed codes of practice](#), registered by the ACMA under the BSA. The ACMA monitors compliance with these codes, which are currently [under review](#) and subject to change.

[The codes restrict the placement of gambling advertisements](#) during live sports programs, with restrictions tightest between 5:00 am and 8:30 pm. [Commercial television licensees](#) face additional limits on gambling promotions in children's programming (5:00 am to 8:30 pm) and programs classified G or lower between 6:00 am and 8:30 am, and 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm (p.19). Restrictions also apply to the national broadcasters: the ABC, [by legislation](#) (section 31), must not have any advertisements on its broadcast offerings, [while the SBS](#) (point 4.2.1) follows the provisions in the above codes of practice.

Rules applying to the **scheduling** of gambling advertisements during [live sporting events streamed over the internet](#) are comparable to the restrictions in the broadcasting industry codes. Specific restrictions are provided in the [Broadcasting Services \(Online Content Service Provider Rules\) 2018](#).

Australian Government – prohibited advertisements

The [Interactive Gambling Act 2001](#) (IGA) imposes prohibitions on certain interactive gambling and wagering services. Part 7A of the IGA provides that advertisements for prohibited interactive gambling services or unlicensed regulated interactive gambling services cannot be broadcast, datacast or published online, in an app or in TV or film.

Industry regulation – advertising content

In addition to government regulation, advertising **content** in Australia is governed through industry self-regulation. Advertising of wagering products and services provided by licensed operators in Australia must comply with the [Wagering Advertising Code](#) and a broader [Code of Ethics](#). These are administered by the [Australian Association of National Advertisers](#) in conjunction with [Ad Standards](#). Under the Wagering Advertising Code, gambling advertisements **must not**:

- target children or suggest that children are gambling
- exaggerate how likely a gambler is to be successful
- suggest that gambling is a way to achieve success
- make a connection between gambling and alcohol.

Industry self-regulation is a [complaints-driven](#) system. If the Ad Standards Community Panel [determines there has been a breach of a code](#), the advertiser is required to modify or remove the ad. If they do not do so, Ad Standards may contact the media owner or platform to request the ad's removal. Decisions in response to complaints are published [online](#).

State and territory responsibilities

State and territory governments are [responsible for the regulation of advertising in outdoor settings](#) (p. 6), including billboards, stadiums and player jerseys.

They may also set restrictions on gambling advertising for wagering services that are provided within their jurisdiction. While there is some variation in restrictions between states and territories, the [National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering](#) (an agreement between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments, last updated May 2022), provides consistency in 'minimum protections for consumers of interactive wagering services licensed in Australia' (p. 1). [Since 2023, this has included a requirement that gambling messages contain an approved tagline](#), for example 'Chances are you're about to lose' (p. 7).

Murphy inquiry recommendation

Recommendation 26 of the [Murphy inquiry](#)

... the Australian Government, with the cooperation of the states and territories, implement a comprehensive ban on all forms of advertising for online gambling, to be introduced in four phases, over three years, commencing immediately:

- Phase One: prohibition of all online gambling inducements and inducement advertising, and all advertising of online gambling on social media and online platforms. Removal of the exemption for advertising online gambling during news and current affairs broadcasts. Prohibition of advertising online gambling on commercial radio between 8.30-9.00am and 3.30-4.00pm (school drop off and pick up).

- Phase Two: prohibition of all online gambling advertising and commentary on odds, during and an hour either side of a sports broadcast. Prohibition on all in-stadia advertising, including logos on players' uniforms.
- Phase Three: prohibition of all broadcast online gambling advertising between the hours of 6.00am and 10.00pm.
- Phase Four: by the end of year three, prohibition on all online gambling advertising and sponsorship.

Gambling advertising on dedicated racing channels and programming should be exempt from the ban.

Small community radio broadcasters should be exempt from further restrictions until December 2025.

Based on numerous submissions, the [Committee argued](#) that a comprehensive ban on all advertising for online gambling across all media was necessary because 'recent history shows that ... the adoption of restrictions in one place or time results in an increase in advertising elsewhere' (p. 114).

This observation is borne out by [research by the ACMA](#) that examined trends in gambling advertising during live sport on TV, radio and streamed online, following the introduction of the 2018 restrictions. The study found that gambling advertising decreased during restricted hours for most sport events, but shifted to later times, resulting in an overall increase in TV and radio gambling advertising.

Possible avenues for change

The government could further restrict gambling advertising on broadcast media or online in relation to the live-streaming of sport without new legislation. [Section 125A of the BSA](#) provides that the Minister for Communications may direct the ACMA to develop a 'gambling promotion program standard', via legislative instrument, which could further restrict gambling advertising on broadcast media in conjunction with live sport. Similarly, under [Schedule 8, Part 2 of the BSA](#), the ACMA could tighten gambling advertisement restrictions on online content service providers in conjunction with live sport via new online content service provider rules, made by legislative instrument.

It is also possible for the ACMA, with government backing, to demand tighter regulation of gambling advertisement on broadcast media through the process of reviewing and registering broadcast industry codes of practice under the BSA. Changes to gambling advertising rules in 2018 were achieved primarily via [amendments to these codes](#). This was with the [regulatory backup of section 125A of the BSA](#), which was inserted into the BSA in 2018 for this purpose (p. 2).

Any additional tightening of restrictions is likely to require legislative change. [Private members' and senators' bills introduced during the 47th Parliament](#) provide a possible blueprint for enacting gambling advertisement bans through amendment to the BSA and the IGA.

A prohibition on all in-stadium advertising, including logos on uniforms, and on gambling sponsorship would likely require cooperation with state and territory legislators.

Contested issues

In August 2024, chief executive of Responsible Wagering Australia – the peak body for Australia’s online gambling industry – [Kai Cantwell was reported](#) as arguing that ‘a blanket ban would drive Australian punters into the arms of illegal offshore providers’. Cantwell cited Betting and Gaming Council (a global lobby group for gambling firms) figures which, he claims, show high rates of illegal offshore market gambling in countries where gambling is ‘overregulated’.

Gambling researcher Professor Samantha Thomas [has questioned Cantwell’s claim](#), arguing that financial counsellors assisting people recovering from gambling related harm observe that most harm comes from gambling providers licenced in Australia. Thomas also noted that the Murphy inquiry looked closely at illegal offshore gambling, and cited evidence from the Spanish gambling regulator which found gamblers did not migrate to illegal operators following advertising restrictions.

[Broadcasters have argued](#) that further gambling advertising restrictions would, by reducing their revenue, detract from their ability to provide FTA content (pp. 118–120). Similarly, some of Australia’s biggest sporting codes [have argued](#) that any reduction in the value of sports media rights due to reduced advertising revenue would compromise their ability to sponsor teams and events, including grassroots sports activities.

These claims have been questioned by public health and business experts. In a [supplementary submission](#) to the Murphy inquiry, Emeritus Professor Mike Daube noted that similar arguments were made by the tobacco industry, and sporting bodies that received tobacco sponsorship, in response to Western Australian Government attempts to ban tobacco advertising in 1983. [Following the ban](#), ‘major sporting events secured new sponsorships from both government and the commercial sector’ (p. 117). [Similarly](#), health promotion foundations in Victoria, South Australia and elsewhere ‘demonstrated that alternative sponsors were not so difficult to attract’.

Marketing expert Dr Andrew Hughes [has argued](#) that based on current gambling industry advertising expenditure figures, this revenue represents a relatively small amount of FTA TV companies’ total annual revenue. The Australia Institute [has suggested](#) FTA media companies could be compensated for lost revenue through a 2% levy on gambling revenues.

Looking forward

There is a growing body of evidence linking gambling-related advertising with increased gambling activity and related harms. In this context and following the Murphy inquiry’s recommendation of a comprehensive ban on advertising for online gambling, pressure to further restrict gambling advertising is mounting. Several regulatory options to achieve this

Gambling advertising

are available to the government, the choice of which would depend largely on how comprehensive it may wish any new restrictions to be.

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