



Ending the barrage of sports betting ads

GETTING GAMBLING PROMOTION OUT OF SPORT

PROTECTING PEOPLE. PROTECTING SPORT

The Greens believe sport should be about the competition on the field – not about the odds. We will introduce legislation to end the constant barrage of sports betting ads that seek to “normalise gambling” the same way that tobacco advertising was banned over 20 years ago. Let’s enjoy watching our sport without being constantly hassled to make a bet.

Australian’s love their sport, but in recent years, the connection between sport and sports betting has grown at an accelerating rate with figures showing that in the first two months of this year, the gambling industry spent \$23.7 million on advertising.¹

This expenditure coupled with a disturbing trend of betting agencies adopting similar marketing techniques to the powerful tobacco lobby to “normalise gambling” threatens to harm children, adolescents, young men and problem gamblers.²

The Greens have a bill to ban the promotion of sports betting in the same way tobacco advertising was banned in 1992³. Nobody is saying people shouldn’t have the freedom to have a punt, but watching a game of footy shouldn’t be like walking into a casino.

> PUTTING THE BRAKES ON GAMBLING ADS

To end the sporting betting barrage the Greens will introduce legislation that prohibits sports betting agency promotions and advertisements.

This ban will mean an end to:

- **Advertising** of odds to weaken the constant inducements to gamble.
- **Cash-for-comment** where sports commentators integrate promotion of betting companies into sports programs such as the footy show.
- **Sponsorship** of sporting teams by gambling companies to limit the exposure of gambling brands to young kids.

> THE SPORT-GAMBLING CONNECTION

Whether it is saturation advertising during live sport, gambling ads plastered across billboards, or constant references to betting during sporting commentary, Australians are sick of the daily bombardment of gambling ads.

In 2014, it was estimated that Australians would gamble an average \$1200 per person on 90,000 different races, soccer matches, the National Rugby League premiership, basketball games, and other national and international sporting events.⁴

Despite an industry code restricting the promotion gambling during AFL game time, data shows that in Round 1 of the 2016 season, it was the second biggest advertising category over the four AFL games shown on free-to-air in Melbourne and of the nearly 200 ads screened, 34 were for gambling.⁵

The Greens’ Bill to ban sports betting ads will make it possible to override the limitations of existing industry codes of conduct so that people will be able to sit down with their kids to watch a game of footy without being bombarded by constant messages to bet.

It will also spell an end to team sponsorship by sports betting companies and significantly reduce kids’ exposure to gambling messages, whether it on their favourite athletes Guernsey or on a stadium banner at the ground.

> THE DANGERS OF NORMALISING GAMBLING

We know that advertising plays a central role in shaping an individual’s belief about a particular product and that it has been an important advertising strategy in the promotion of

¹Tomazin, F. “Sports betting giants turn to sexual imagery and mateship to normalise gambling.” *Fairfax Online Media*. 3 April 2016. *The Age Online*. Web. 5 April. 2016.

²Hare S. Study of Gambling and Health in Victoria: findings from the Victorian prevalence study 2014. Victoria, Australia: Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation; 2015.

Note: According to recent prevalence data from the state of Victoria, 4.82 % of the total adult population, 10.56 % of 18–24 year olds, and 8.25 % of 25–34 year olds participated in sports and event betting in 2014.

³An exemption will apply for racing form guide related information printed in newspapers as well as online advertisements.

⁴Rothfield, P. Betting Boom: Australians punt \$26 billion this year on sports like NRL, AFL and basketball. *The Sunday Telegraph*; 18.10.2014. Retrieved 20.11.2014.

⁵Willingham, R. “Gambling ads dominate AFL’s round one broadcasts.” *The Age* 1 April 2016. *Fairfax Online Media*. Web. 5 April 2016.

unhealthy products such as alcohol and tobacco.

A study undertaken earlier this year that analysed 85 advertisements from 11 local and international gambling agencies found 10 main types of “appeal strategies” were used by betting agencies to market sports wagering, including sexual imagery; thrill and risk; sports fan behaviours; mateship; winning; social status; adventure; patriotism; happiness; and power and control.⁶

It demonstrated that sports betting companies may be operating from the same playbook as the tobacco lobby which raises concerns that the association between sports and betting is “grooming” children by normalising gambling as an intrinsic part of Australian culture.

In 1992 we put an end to tobacco advertising, and the Greens believe it’s now time to do the same with sports betting ads.

> RESTORING INTEGRITY TO SPORT

The Greens care about sport and put this issue on the agenda in the last term of parliament, and while the Gillard government eventually acted on the broadcast of live odds, sports betting ads still dominate sports broadcasts.

It’s time to take the gambling out of sport or we risk tarnishing our iconic Australian sporting codes and normalising gambling for our kids.

We have to stem the tide of sports betting before a trip to the footy is like a day at the races. Sport should be about community and healthy competition, not an interactive gambling experience.

> EXPERT COMMENTARY

Samantha Thomas, public health academic at Deakin University, argued:

There is a very clear ethical tension here that the AFL and broadcasters have not adequately addressed...Kids tell us that it is the marketing that they see during sport that makes them think that gambling is a normal part of sport⁷.

Mike Daube, Professor of Health Policy at Curtin University, argued:

Betting companies invest millions on promotion because they know it works. It promotes short-term gambling and a culture in which gambling is seen as a norm. While children may not bet directly, they are exposed to incessant promotion of gambling, growing up to associate gambling with sporting success, effectively being groomed to become the next generation of online gamblers...The only way to ensure that they are kept

under control will be through legislation or establishment of a completely independent oversight body⁸.

Jeff Kennett, former Victorian Premier and Chairman of Beyondblue said:

We are educating generations of young Australians that the only way people can have a successful life is by gambling⁹.

⁶ Deans E, Thomas SL, Daube M, Derevensky, Gordon R. Creating symbolic cultures of consumption: An analysis of the content of sports wagering advertisements in Australia. BMC Public Health. 2016;16:208.

⁷ <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/gambling-ads-dominate-footys-round-one-broadcasts-20160331-gnvpr.html>

⁸ <https://theconversation.com/live-sports-odds-ban-does-the-governments-plan-go-far-enough-14661>

⁹ <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/kennett-wants-betting-advertising-banned-20140820->