



MEDIA RELEASE

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RESTRICT CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO GAMBLING ADVERTISING

More stringent restrictions on gambling advertising should be considered to protect children from being targeted by gambling operators, according to the Australian Gambling Research Centre (AGRC).

AGRC Manager, Dr Rebecca Jenkinson said gambling is promoted in sport and there's a need to learn from previous public health campaigns around alcohol, tobacco and 'junk' food as to how to better protect children.

"There is strong community concern about the harm gambling advertising is doing to children as advertising and marketing strategies continue to normalise gambling within sport," Dr Jenkinson said.

"Recent research in the field indicates that 75 per cent of children perceive that sports betting is a normal part of sport and 77 per cent can correctly identify at least one AFL club sponsor.

Preliminary findings from the project led by Dr Charles Livingstone of Monash University and funded by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation will be presented by the AGRC at the biennial Australian Institute of Family Studies' conference in Melbourne from July 25-27. Titled *Targeting Children: Restricting gambling promotions by adapting the lessons from tobacco, alcohol and food* this work focuses on what can be done to protect children from gambling marketing.

Lead AGRC researcher Cassandra de Lacy-Vawdon said this project brought together public health experts in tobacco, alcohol, obesity and blood-borne virus and sexually transmitted infection prevention to learn from these areas to develop measures aimed at gambling harm minimisation.

"Among other things, our report suggests that gambling advertising should not be permitted in connection with sporting broadcasts during times when children are likely to be watching, whether free to air, via subscriptions or online.

"Currently gambling ads are banned during live sports broadcasts on free to air TV before 8.30pm. However in the case of many evening AFL matches that means the bans are only in force up until about half time and many children and teenagers continue to watch to end of play.

"Advertising of gambling products via computer games and mobile apps classified as 'G' could also be prohibited to address the so-called 'gambification' of games.

"While the gaming industry has begun moving away from embedding gambling activities within games, for example 'loot' boxes, there are still games where characters can visit casinos, for instance.

"Gambling product advertising via social media should also be reviewed, as age restrictions on social media use do not appear to be effective in preventing teenagers from engaging with gambling operators.

"This is despite regulations requiring operators to restrict access to these products to people aged over 18.

"Tighter controls may be needed to require new betting account holders to provide identification and proof-of-age.

"A recent survey of Australian social media respondents by Southern Cross University found that two-thirds of people thought there were too many gambling promotions on social media, demonstrating that the community is concerned about gambling marketing strategies." Ms de Lacy-Vawdon said.

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