

CRACKING DOWN ON ONLINE BOOKMAKERS

THE GREENS' PLAN TO REDUCE HARM FROM SPORTS BETTING

Online sports betting is the fastest growing sector of the gambling industry. But so far it has escaped the scrutiny and regulation that applies to other parts of the harmful gambling industry. The Greens will fix this imbalance and move to reduce the harm caused by online gambling.

Sports betting is the fastest growing sector of the gambling industry. Average losses for Victorian adults have doubled in the past five years. Today, Victorians spend approximately \$1.2 billion annually on wagering and betting on horse and greyhound racing, sports and other events.

The ease of betting on a game from a computer or a smartphone is creating a whole new generation of problem gamblers. And the proliferation of sports betting ads across Victoria is normalising gambling as a part of sport.

At racecourses and football ovals, the scoreboards, boundary fences, and other signage are covered in advertising for bookmakers. Betting odds are now part of the conversation kids have about sport – one in five kids can identify three or more sports betting brands, and two-thirds of kids can name one.ⁱ An eight-year-old watching AFL footy today will have never seen a game without gambling ads.ⁱⁱ

Last year the gambling industry spent more than \$253 million on advertising in Australia, up from \$89.7 million in 2011.ⁱⁱⁱ Given that more of us are betting on sports than ever before, the industry's enormous marketing push is clearly working.

THE GREENS PLAN

To combat the predatory nature of online gambling and the harm it creates for families and the community, the Greens will:

- **Introduce a blanket ban on betting advertising.** We will ban all online betting agency ads from public spaces and in sporting venues.
- **Work with federal government to ban all media-based betting advertising** (e.g. on TV and radio). Regulating TV, radio and the internet is the responsibility of the federal government. We will work with our federal colleagues to ban sport-betting ads on TV and radio so our kids can watch sport for the love of it and not be bombarded with gambling ads.
- **Increase the rate of the online betting tax to 15%** to ensure the multi-national on-line gambling companies pay their fair share of tax to the Victorian community.

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REGULATING ONLINE SPORTS BETTING

Earlier this year the Labor Government introduced new restrictions on advertising by bookmakers, banning static betting ads near schools and on public transport. While these changes are welcomed, the limited nature of these restrictions means that bookmakers are free to continue advertising in other public spaces and at sporting grounds.

Evidence shows that partial advertising bans on harmful products have little or no effect, because the industry simply diverts resources to other types of advertising, promotion and sponsorship.^{iv}

The Greens moved amendments to the Labor legislation to expand the ban to all public outdoor space including sports grounds themselves. Both Labor and the Liberals voted against our amendments. We will continue to pursue such bans so all of us, and in particular our kids, can watch sport without being bombarded with ads encouraging them to gamble.

INCREASING THE POINT OF CONSUMPTION TAX

The Victorian Greens will increase the rate of the online betting tax to 15%. The tax will apply to the revenue online bookmakers receive from customers located in Victoria. The Parliamentary Budget Office has advised that a 15% rate will bring in over \$400 million over the next four years.^v

In the last moments of the parliamentary term, the parliament passed Labor's 8% point of consumption tax on online bookmakers. Western Australia, South

Australia, Queensland and the ACT have a similar tax set at the rate of 15%, and NSW has a 10% tax rate.

Our low rate puts Victoria at risk of becoming a haven for online bookmakers, where companies will take advantage of our low tax rate and target our people for their business. We are likely to be bombarded by even more advertising from online betting companies, making the ban on some online betting advertisements useless.

Labor is in thrall to the on-line gambling industry, whose key lobbyist is Stephen Conroy, a former federal Labor Minister, and the racing industry in Victoria. Labor has guaranteed a stream of income to the Victorian racing industry from the on-line betting tax. Not only does Labor refuse to ban the cruelty of greyhound racing but it is now providing greyhound racing and other racing guaranteed funding support.

The Greens proposed 15% rate will bring Victoria into line with other states, and prevent Victorian from becoming a haven for online bookies. It will also provide additional revenue to be used by the government to look after communities. We will remove provision guaranteeing funding to the racing industry.

ⁱ Thomas, SL, Pitt, H, Bestman, A, Randle, M, Daube, M, Pettigrew, S 2016, *Child and parent recall of gambling sponsorship in Australian sport*, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, Melbourne.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Gambling advertising, Gambling in Victoria, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, <https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/resources/gambling-victoria/gambling-advertising/>

^{iv} World Health Organisation, Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, 2013 http://www.who.int/tobacco/global_report/2013/enforce_bans.pdf

^v 15% Point of Consumption Tax PBO Costing <https://sway.office.com/s/WzBm6WeYMyRQw16B/embed>