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## Support for Senate call to ban gambling ads and gambling with credit cards

The Alliance for Gambling Reform supports a Senate motion being put today to call for a ban on gambling advertising, and a ban on credit cards being used for gambling online.

The motion, by Senator Stirling Griff and co-sponsored by Senator Rachel Siewert, calls for “a moratorium on gambling ads during the pandemic crisis to protect the vulnerable and people experiencing gambling harm” and calls on the Federal Government to introduce “legislation to ban the use of credit cards to pay for online bets, as a matter of urgency”.

Alliance for Gambling Reform Chief Advocate, the Rev Tim Costello, said the COVID-19 pandemic had made urgent gambling reform more imperative than ever.

“Families are at home watching television, watching the news more closely, enjoying family shows such as Masterchef, yet throughout these broadcasts at almost every commercial break are ads promoting gambling,” Rev Costello said.

“Gambling is an adult, dangerous and addictive product, not unlike tobacco. We haven’t seen tobacco ads on our screens for many years, yet every day children are seeing ads making gambling look glamorous, normalising it as a part of sport, and even implying that you can’t lose. It’s appalling.

“I know of parents who won’t let their children watch broadcast television anymore as they simply don’t want their kids exposed to gambling advertising. That’s why we have just launched a campaign to [#EndGamblingAds](#). More than 12,000 people have already signed on to join us in this fight. That’s how much people care about this.

“So many of us desperately want sport back on television, back being played around Australia, but we don’t want to see another ad promoting gambling to our kids. We don’t want to see sporting codes return to spruiking gambling through sponsorships and endorsements. And we don’t want our children being groomed by an industry that creates misery and tears families apart.”

Rev Costello said a ban on the use of credit cards for gambling was also an important step to help protect people from gambling harm at a time of immense vulnerability.

“The big banks launched a community consultation into this at the end of last year, and [we welcomed it](#), along with Macquarie Bank leading the way and implementing a ban on the use of credit cards for gambling in [June last year](#),” Rev Costello said.

The Australian Banking Association’s consultation paper on this move stated late last year: *Access to credit for gambling can create a unique harm whereby large amounts of debt can be accumulated in a limited period with a chance that the user will in most cases receive no tangible benefit. For people with a gambling addiction, a credit card can lead to severe financial stress for the individual and their family.*

“During the COVID-19 pandemic some people are turning to gambling online and may not realise how dangerous it can be,” Rev Costello said. “Being able to run up a massive debt on a credit card for something that is an ephemeral product can ruin a person’s financial future.

“COVID-19 has presented us with a unique opportunity to rethink the dire situation Australia has gotten itself into with the prevalence of gambling. Australians lost \$25 billion gambling last year, the highest rate of losses per head in the entire world.

“We can come out of this crisis with a real positive if we can significantly reduce gambling harm. That will not only save families and individuals from inordinate pain -- including family violence, mental ill-health and homelessness -- it will provide billions of dollars to be spent in our economy at a time when we need it most. We want to [#BuildBackBetter](#) from all this, and we can do just that.”

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