

THE POKIES PLAY YOU

Where is the gambling reform with all these Melbourne sports deals?

Friday, April 13, 2018

The Alliance for Gambling Reform today called on Cricket Australia, the AFL, the Victorian Government and Australia's major media companies to ensure gambling reform is included in this week's mega deal making over stadium development and media rights.

Alliance spokesman and director Tim Costello said that if the Victorian Government is going to give a \$225 million grant to the AFL to redevelop its privately owned stadium at Docklands, it should at least be contingent on the AFL terminating its betting sponsorship arrangements and actively facilitating pokies divestment by AFL clubs.

"It has now been 10 months since the British Football Association [terminated](#) all gambling sponsorships and the AFL is still taking money from CrownBet," Mr Costello said.

"Similarly, with a new \$1 billion media rights deal Cricket Australia should be able to terminate its gambling sponsorship deals and also provide compensation to suburban clubs wishing to exit the pokies industry."

"Australians are the world's biggest gamblers with losses expected to hit \$25 billion in 2018 and both the media industry and the elite sporting codes have been major contributors to this tragic outcome."

The Alliance also welcomed ACMA [belatedly investigating](#) extending the recently enacted gambling advertising restrictions on television to online streaming of live games.

"It is farcical to ban advertising on free to air television and Foxtel and then tolerate an ongoing deluge of online gambling ads on hand held devices across Australia from the same sporting codes and media companies which are banned from doing this on broadcast media during children's viewing hours," Mr Costello said.

The advertising restrictions commenced on April 1.

The Alliance also welcome Melbourne Football Club's announced exit from the pokies industry but noted the following 10 AFL clubs are yet to commit to do the same: Hawthorn, Essendon, Carlton, Collingwood, Geelong, Richmond, St Kilda, Western Bulldogs, Brisbane Lions and Port Adelaide.

"All of the Victorian clubs will benefit from the Victorian Government's large stadium investments and should be able to thrive and prosper like North Melbourne without pushing predatory pokies," Mr Costello said.

For more information see The Alliance's [AFL pokies fact sheet](#).

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