



**ALLIANCE FOR
GAMBLING REFORM**

Sponsorship in Sport

NOVEMBER 2023

Key points

- » Gambling, alcohol and unhealthy foods contribute to significant health and social harm in Australia.
- » Almost half of Australian adults watch sport content and live sports events feature in the top 30 programs for children and young people, these events are a very large platform for harmful products advertisement.
- » Over three quarters (77.6%) think there is too much gambling advertising in sport and more than half of Australians think there is too much junk food (56.1%) and alcohol (52.9%) advertising in sport.
- » Over two thirds (71.3%) of Australians think that gambling advertising should not be allowed during sport, followed by alcohol (54.8%) and junk food (48.0%).
- » Gambling, alcohol and unhealthy food sponsorship in sport normalises the association between harmful products and sporting events. These events should be healthy and safe spaces for everyone, particularly children and young people who are more vulnerable to the adverse effects of harmful product marketing.

About the polling

The polling was conducted by Pure Profile online between 14 June 18 June 2023. The sample comprised 1,004 people aged 18 years and over, residing in Australia. The sample is nationally representative for age, gender and jurisdiction.



Background

For many of us, sport is how we come together, get fit, make new friends, and push our boundaries. Unfortunately, companies that sell gambling, alcohol and unhealthy food products currently flood sporting events and broadcasts with advertising for these harmful and addictive products. This puts our health and wellbeing at risk, as research has long shown that exposure to marketing for gambling, alcohol and unhealthy food is associated with increased use and consumption of these products.¹

Exposure to gambling marketing is also associated with gambling among adolescents,² and children's exposure to unhealthy food marketing leads to increased consumption of unhealthy foods.³ For children and adolescents, exposure to alcohol marketing increases the likelihood that they will start drinking alcohol earlier and go on to drink alcohol at higher risk levels.⁴

With almost half of Australian adults watching sport content⁵ and live sports events featuring in the top 30 programs for children and young people,⁶ the detrimental effects of harmful product sponsorship in sport for all Australians are therefore undeniable. To illustrate this, the 2023 National Rugby League (NRL) State of Origin had 16 gambling, alcohol and unhealthy food sponsorships.⁷ This equates to one in four sponsorships being harmful products and included branding on the players and field, and marketing activities including social media and limited-edition products, such as branded beer cans. The final game of the 2022 State of Origin had more than 3 million viewers and the highest Broadcaster Video on Demand viewership for a live broadcast.⁸ With so many people watching, this event became one large advertisement for harmful products, including for children and young people.

It doesn't have to be this way. Governments across Australia can take action to ensure common sense measures are put in place so that families and communities are healthy and safe at sport events. The federal Government, acting with support from states and territories, could immediately take a promising step toward this goal, by implementing a key recommendation from the federal Parliamentary inquiry into online gambling to implement a comprehensive ban on all forms of advertising for online gambling.

Many Australians think there is too much gambling, alcohol and unhealthy food advertising in sport.

Australians were asked whether they think there is too much gambling, alcohol and junk food advertising in sport.

More than three quarters (77.6%) of Australians think there is too much gambling advertising in sport and more than half of Australians think there is too much junk food (56.1%: Table 1) and alcohol (52.9%) advertising in sport.

For gambling and junk food, results were consistent between men and women.

Table 1. There is too much gambling, alcohol and junk food advertising in sport, by gender (N = 1004).

	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
	%	%	%
Gambling			
Strongly disagree	3.3	3.9	2.7
Disagree	4.2	4.1	4.3
Neutral	14.9	13.3	16.5
Agree	28.2	28.0	28.4
Strongly agree	49.4	50.8	48.1
Alcohol			
Strongly disagree	4.9	5.7	4.1
Disagree	11.8	12.2	11.3
Neutral	30.5	32.7	28.4
Agree	33.4	32.4	34.2
Strongly agree	19.5	16.9	22.0
Junk food			
Strongly disagree	2.7	3.7	1.8
Disagree	9.7	8.6	10.7
Neutral	31.6	33.3	30.0
Agree	33.8	32.7	34.8
Strongly agree	22.3	21.8	22.8

Many Australians think that gambling, alcohol and unhealthy food advertising should not be allowed in sport.

Australians were asked whether gambling, alcohol and junk food advertising should be allowed during sport.

Over two thirds (71.3%) of Australians think that gambling advertising should not be allowed during sport. More than half (54.8%; Table 2) of Australians think that alcohol advertising should not be allowed during sport and just under half (48.0%) think that junk food advertising should not be allowed during sport.

Table 2. Gambling, alcohol and junk food advertising should not be allowed during sport, by gender (N = 1004).

	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
	%	%	%
Gambling			
Strongly disagree	3.1	4.3	1.9
Disagree	8.5	8.8	8.2
Neutral	17.1	17.1	17.1
Agree	26.7	24.1	29.2
Strongly agree	44.6	45.7	43.6
Alcohol			
Strongly disagree	3.3	4.1	2.5
Disagree	16.0	18.0	14.2
Neutral	25.9	29.2	22.8
Agree	28.4	27.1	29.6
Strongly agree	26.4	21.6	30.9
Junk food			
Strongly disagree	3.7	4.9	2.5
Disagree	16.1	16.5	15.8
Neutral	32.2	36.1	28.4
Agree	25.7	20.4	30.7
Strongly agree	22.3	22.0	22.6



Alliance for Gambling Reform

The Alliance for Gambling Reform is a national peak body which represents a collaboration of organisations with a shared concern about the harmful aspects of gambling and its normalisation in Australian culture. We are a registered health promotion charity. The Alliance supports public policy and regulatory regimes that make Australia a safer, healthier, and more equitable society by reducing the level of gambling harm.

References

- 1 Jernigan D, Noel J, Landon J, Thornton N, Lobstein T. Alcohol marketing and youth alcohol consumption: A systematic review of longitudinal studies published since 2008. *Addiction*. 2017;112:7-20; Bouguettaya A, Lynott D, Carter A, Zerhouni O, Meyer S, Ladegaard I, Gardner J, O'Brien KS. The relationship between gambling advertising and gambling attitudes, intentions and behaviours: a critical and meta-analytic review. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*. 2020;31:89-101; Smith R, Kelly B, Yeatman H, Boyland E. Food marketing influences children's attitudes, preferences and consumption: a systematic critical review. *Nutrients*. 2019;11(4):875.
- 2 Newall PWS, Moodie C, Reith G, Stead M, Critchlow N, Morgan A, Dobbie F. Gambling marketing from 2014 to 2018: A literature review. *Current Addiction Reports*. 2019;6(2):49-56.
- 3 Smith R, Kelly B, Yeatman H, Boyland E. Food marketing influences children's attitudes, preferences and consumption: A systematic critical review. *Nutrients*. 2019;11(4):875.
- 4 Jernigan D, Noel J, Landon J, Thornton N, Lobstein T. Alcohol marketing and youth alcohol consumption: A systematic review of longitudinal studies published since 2008. *Addiction*. 2017;112:7-20.
- 5 Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications. 2021 Media content consumption survey: Key results. 2022. Available at: <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021media-content-consumption-survey-key-results.pdf>
- 6 Australian Communications and Media Authority. Attachment B Children's television viewing Analysis of audience data 2001-13. March 2015. p.6. Available at: <https://www.acma.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-08/Attachment%20BChildrens%20television%20viewingAnalysis%20of%20audience%20dataFinal%20pdf.pdf>
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