

GETUP SUBMISSION:

Interactive Gambling Amendment (Gambling Reform) Bill 2026

To: Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee

Re: Inquiry into the Interactive Gambling Amendment (Gambling Reform) Bill 2026 and the National Self-exclusion Register (Cost Recovery Levy) Amendment Bill 2026

Submitted by: GetUp Ltd (ABN 99 114 027 986)

Summary of our position

GetUp urges the committee to recommend the bill be strengthened to implement the full, phased ban on gambling advertising recommended by the 2023 Murphy Inquiry, close the loophole that allows unlimited gambling advertising on streaming platforms, and ban gambling inducements and bonus bets.

Three years ago, an all-party parliamentary committee handed down a unanimous report recommending a simple, comprehensive fix: phase out gambling advertising altogether. The bill before this committee does not do that. It caps free-to-air and broadcast ads at three an hour, while creating a new carve-out that allows streaming platforms, where more than half of Australians now watch sport, to run unlimited gambling advertising during breaks in play, at any time of day, provided the viewer has not opted out. It leaves untouched the sign-up inducements and bonus bets that harm reduction researchers regard as among the most effective drivers of compulsive gambling.

This is not the "strongest ever" reform the government has described. It is a bill that asks families to actively opt out of harm rather than protecting them from it in the first place, and it does so despite a public record showing extensive gambling industry access to

parliamentarians while the policy was being watered down.

GetUp urges the committee to recommend the bill be amended to deliver in full what the Murphy Inquiry recommended in 2023.

GetUp members on this bill

More than 32,000 GetUp members have signed a petition calling for a full ban on gambling advertising, and this submission is made on their behalf. Selected individual comments from members appear at the end of this submission.

About GetUp

GetUp is an independent community advocacy organisation with over one million members across Australia. Our members come from all walks of life and live in every electorate in the country, united by our vision for a fair, flourishing and just Australia.

For twenty years, GetUp members have campaigned to hold powerful interests accountable and to ensure that ordinary people, not corporations, shape our future. The campaign against gambling advertising is squarely within that mission: it is a question of whether Australian children and families are protected from a well-resourced industry, or left to fend for themselves against advertising specifically designed to reach them.

This submission is made on behalf of the GetUp members whose names are attached as a separate document. Each person listed has individually added their name to call on the government to implement the full, phased ban on gambling advertising recommended by the Murphy Inquiry.

Why this bill needs to go further

1. The bill falls well short of the Murphy Inquiry's recommendations

In 2023, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs

handed down *You Win Some, You Lose More*, a unanimous, all-party report following a comprehensive inquiry into online gambling and its harms. Its central recommendation was clear and simple: phase out gambling advertising across all media within three years. The bill before this committee does not implement that recommendation. Instead, it caps television and radio gambling ads at three an hour between 6am and 8.30pm, bans them during live sport broadcasts on those platforms, and introduces a separate, weaker set of rules for streaming services. Independent MP Andrew Wilkie, addressing Parliament on the bill, described the environment it preserves as one where the gambling industry, media companies and sporting codes act "like jackals feeding on the carcass of gambling addicts." Independent MP Kate Chaney has said the government's claim that this bill goes further than the Murphy Inquiry is "outrageous," noting that nothing exceeds the simplicity and enforceability of a complete ban.

What the government promised

The government has described this bill as containing "the strongest ever reforms to address gambling harms in Australia's history." The Murphy Inquiry, handed down three years earlier with unanimous cross-party support, called for a full, phased ban. This bill does not deliver one.

2. The streaming carve-out will increase, not reduce, children's exposure to gambling advertising

The bill's most significant weakness is its treatment of streaming platforms. Television and radio keep an existing blackout on gambling ads for five minutes before and after games and during breaks in play, between 6am and 8.30pm. Streaming platforms do not. Under this bill, streaming services will be permitted to show unlimited gambling advertising during every quarter-time and half-time break, at any time of day, to any registered adult user who has not proactively opted out.

More than half of Australians now watch sport through streaming services. Liberal MP Simon Kennedy, who argued in his own party room for a tougher line on this bill, described the outcome plainly: "That's not reform. It's a retreat. Instead of reducing gambling advertising, the

prime minister has created more opportunities for gambling companies to target Australians." Deakin University gambling researcher Professor Samantha Thomas has raised the same concern about the opt-out model underpinning the streaming rules: "It assumes gambling ads are fine for everyone to see on streaming platforms. It then asks families to do the work of opting out. We should not be asking parents and young people to dodge gambling advertising. We should be making sure they are protected from it in the first place."

An opt-out model, by design, protects only those who know the option exists and take active steps to use it. It does not protect a child watching over a parent's shoulder, or a household that has not gone looking for a setting buried in an account menu.

3. The bill leaves the most harmful advertising practice untouched

Beyond the timing and placement of ads, this bill does not address sign-up inducements and bonus bets, the "bet \$10, get \$50 in bonus bets" style offers that harm reduction researchers consider among the most effective drivers of compulsive gambling, precisely because they are designed to target new and lapsed customers at the moment they are most vulnerable to re-engagement. The Murphy Inquiry recommended banning these inducements outright. This bill does not.

4. The delay in meaningful reform has coincided with extensive gambling industry access to parliamentarians

The gap between the Murphy Inquiry's 2023 recommendations and this bill has not occurred in a vacuum. Between 2023 and 2025, the AFL and NRL gave Australian politicians close to \$245,000 in match tickets, while campaigning against gambling advertising reform. At least 19 MPs have accepted hospitality from gambling companies at events including the Melbourne Cup and the Australian Open. The gambling industry's peak lobby group holds a corporate membership in Parliament's internal sports club, chaired by the Prime Minister, providing regular access to more than 200 MPs.

Independent Senator David Pocock, who has followed the development of this bill closely, has described the scale of this lobbying as "deeply concerning." We raise this not as an allegation of

wrongdoing by any individual parliamentarian, but as necessary context for why a unanimous, evidence-based reform package handed down three years ago has arrived in this form.

5. Broad public and cross-party support exists for a stronger bill

Three-quarters of Australians support a full ban on gambling advertising. That support is reflected in the unusual political alignment this bill has already produced: the Greens and the Coalition, who agree on almost nothing, joined together to ensure this bill would face scrutiny through this inquiry rather than pass as introduced. More than 32,000 GetUp members have signed a petition calling for the full ban the Murphy Inquiry recommended, and their comments are included at the end of this submission.

6. A stronger bill is achievable within the current process

This inquiry gives the parliament the opportunity to align the bill with the recommendations it has already, unanimously, endorsed. Amending the bill to close the streaming loophole, ban inducements, and commit to the phased full ban recommended in 2023 would not require new evidence or further inquiry. The evidence base already exists, in the Murphy Inquiry's own findings, and in the cross-party recognition, from Wilkie to Chaney to Kennedy, that the current bill does not go far enough.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Implement the Murphy Inquiry's full, phased ban. The bill should be amended to commit to a complete phase-out of gambling advertising across all media within the timeframe recommended by the 2023 Murphy Inquiry, rather than the partial, time-limited restrictions currently proposed.

Recommendation 2: Close the streaming loophole. Gambling advertising rules for streaming platforms should be no weaker than those applying to broadcast television and radio. The current carve-out allowing unlimited streaming ads during breaks in play should be removed.

Recommendation 3: Ban gambling inducements and bonus bets. The bill should be amended to prohibit sign-up inducements and bonus bet offers, consistent with the Murphy

Inquiry's recommendations and the evidence on their role in driving compulsive gambling behaviour.

Recommendation 4: Replace opt-out protections with default protections for children.

Where advertising restrictions rely on account settings, the default setting should exclude gambling advertising, with users required to opt in if they wish to receive it, rather than the reverse.

Recommendation 5: Set a binding, non-negotiable implementation timeline. The committee should recommend a clear timeline for full implementation of the strengthened reforms, rather than leaving further weakening open to future negotiation with affected industries.

Consistency with government commitments

Acting on these recommendations is consistent with the government's own stated position. The government has described this legislation as delivering "the strongest ever reforms to address gambling harms in Australia's history," and has said it wants to "break the connection between gambling and sport" and minimise children's exposure to wagering advertising.

The gap is not one of ambition but of mechanism. A bill that creates a new carve-out for the platform more than half of Australians now use to watch sport, and that leaves the most harmful advertising practice, inducements, untouched, cannot be described as the strongest possible response to a problem the government itself has called serious. The Murphy Inquiry, commissioned by this parliament and endorsed unanimously by members of every party, already set out what a genuinely strong response looks like. This inquiry offers the opportunity to align the bill with that standard.

Conclusion

GetUp members urge the committee to recommend that the Interactive Gambling Amendment (Gambling Reform) Bill 2026 be strengthened to deliver the full, phased ban on gambling advertising recommended by the 2023 Murphy Inquiry, to close the loophole permitting unlimited

gambling advertising on streaming platforms, and to ban gambling inducements and bonus bets.

The evidence for going further already exists. It was established, unanimously, by this parliament's own inquiry three years ago. The task before this committee is not to establish whether stronger action is warranted, but to ensure that the bill finally delivers it.

This submission is lodged on behalf of all GetUp members who have added their names (see attached below).

Signed

(To be added)

Individual member comments

(To be added)