

20 July 2011

Lyn Beverley
Committee Chair
Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 600

By email to: gamblingreform@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Beverley

Re: Inquiry into the Interactive Gambling and Broadcasting Amendment (Online Transactions and Other Measures) Bill 2011

Thank you for your letter of 29 June 2011 advising that the Interactive Gambling and Broadcasting Amendment (Online Transactions and Other measures) Bill 2011 had been referred to the Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform for inquiry and report.

As outlined in our earlier submission the committee, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) strongly supports the development of guidelines for interactive and online gambling and gambling advertising to improve responses to those individuals dealing with problematic gambling. The RANZCP is pleased that these issues are being addressed through the proposed amendments to the Bill.

The section of most relevance to the RANZCP is Schedule 3 – Amendments relating to broadcasting about gambling. Comments have therefore been limited to Schedule 3 only. This schedule amends the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* and introduces conditions for commercial television broadcasting licencees in relation to advertising of betting venues, online gambling sites and gambling odds.

Items 1, 2 and 3 requires the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to enforce conditions that require commercial television, radio and subscription television broadcasting licencees not to broadcast any advertising of betting venues and online gambling sites during all G classified programs and sports or sports-related programs. It also requires ACMA to enforce conditions to require commercial television, radio and subscription television broadcasting licencees not to broadcast betting odds where there is a commercial arrangement between the licencee or an agent of the licencee (i.e. presenter) to provide betting odds.

The RANZCP is fully supportive of these amendments, which are in line with our previous submission calling for tighter regulations to monitor the advertising of gambling to reduce the impact it can have on vulnerable groups and problematic gamblers. Recommendations included that commentators not be allowed to discuss or talk about any odds on offer at any point in time, and that display of odds on television screens during broadcast should be limited. The RANZCP is pleased that the proposed amendments to the Bill appear to prohibit these activities. Please refer our previous submission for the full rationale of our position on this matter.

The RANZCP thanks the Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform for the opportunity to make a submission on this matter and would be pleased to contribute to the development of guidelines or strategy.

Yours sincerely

Dr Maria Tomasic
President