

Ten Years of Gambling Harm Advocacy

2025 marks the 10th Anniversary of the Alliance for Gambling Reform

Over the past decade, the Alliance has grown from a small coalition of passionate advocates and Victorian councils into a national voice for change - working tirelessly to prevent and reduce gambling harm, amplify lived experience, and hold the gambling industry to account

**ALLIANCE FOR
GAMBLING REFORM**



Fighting to reduce gambling harm

Together with Leadership Councils, partners, supporters, and communities, the Alliance has achieved some remarkable milestones.

Here are just a few of the highlights from our first 10 years:

Growing Public Awareness of Gambling Harm

- Through cohesive and consistent advocacy, the Alliance has driven national recognition of gambling harm. Surveys show that 76% of Australians now support banning gambling advertising.

Groundbreaking Campaigns

- The “Pokies Play You” campaign in 2016 reframed gambling as a public health issue drawing on research and working closely with councils on public events to highlight our message.
- Our petition to ban gambling ads has been signed by nearly 40,000 Australian's.

Policy and Legislative Reform

- Worked with crossbenchers, oppositions, and government MPs and ministers to push for legislative and regulatory changes in all states, territories, and nationally that support the prevention of gambling harm.
- The Federal Inquiry into Online Gambling which featured the submissions and testimony of the Alliance and many of our Voices continues to shine a light on the harm of online gambling and the need for immediate action by the Federal Government.

Media and Public Advocacy Leadership

- Called for a nationwide ban on gambling advertising, backed by an open letter signed by former PMs, premiers, sports leaders, and social justice figures.
- Persistently highlighted the staggering scale of gambling losses, such as the \$32 billion lost by Australians in 2022–23, framing gambling as a national health crisis.

Empowering Lived Experience Voices

- **Raising Community Awareness:** Voices participants share their stories of lived experience in the media, at community events, and through Alliance campaigns, helping to build greater public understanding of the real impacts of gambling harm.
- **Influencing Decision Makers:** Participants present directly to government inquiries, local councils, and parliamentarians, ensuring that lived experience is front and centre in shaping laws and regulations.
- **Driving Advocacy and Reform:** Many Voices participants go on to become active advocates, leading public conversations, contributing to Alliance campaigns, and highlighting how harmful products like sports betting affect individuals, families, and children.
- **Shaping Policy and Practice:** Voices participants provide input into Alliance policy submissions and strategic decisions, ensuring reforms are grounded in the reality of those most affected.
- **Empowerment and Leadership:** Through training, peer support, and opportunities to engage with decision-makers, the program empowers Voices participants to transform their experiences into meaningful advocacy for change.

Community and Local Leadership

- Partnered with local councils across Australia through our Leadership Council program, equipping them with information and support to prevent gambling harm.
- Delivered community engagement tools such as the Ka-Ching! screening kit, engaging thousands in grassroots action.

Influencing Casino Reforms and Oversight

- Engaged in casino inquiries across the country, including supporting those with lived experience to share their stories, which resulted in changed legislation and regulation, increased oversight and enforcement.

A Legacy of Advocacy You Can Trace Back

- From its founding impetus in Victoria - set up by concerned individuals, councils and organisations over poker machine harm – the Alliance now spans federal, state, and territory advocacy, partnering with councils, media, advocates, and researchers to elevate the call for reform across Australia.

Our Recent Activities

Over the past 12 months, the Alliance has led a national campaign calling on the Federal Government to adopt all 31 recommendations of the Murphy Report – the landmark parliamentary inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing harm.

A major highlight was our full-page advertisement in the national press, calling on leaders to fully implement the recommendations. This action became a lightning rod for support, attracting over 75 signatures from prominent Australians and key organisations and academics – including John Howard, Malcolm and Lucy Turnbull, Rosie Batty, and Craig Foster.

Throughout the year, we have amplified the voices of people with lived experience and focused on engaging directly with parliamentarians and the media, which has helped us build broad community momentum. By pushing for the full adoption of the Murphy Report's recommendations, the Alliance continues to drive meaningful reform to better protect individuals, families, and communities from gambling harm.

Three in four Australians support a total ban on gambling advertising



The News Bayside

Murphy Report inaction 'inconceivable'

"We know from polling that 76 percent of Australians want a full gambling ad ban, so it seems inconceivable that the government not only hasn't moved on it but hasn't officially responded to that report."

Martin Thomas
CEO - Alliance for Gambling Reform



Shocking new figures revealed that national gambling losses for 2023-24 totalled

\$32.18 billion

a massive jump from the previous high of \$31.46 billion in 2022-23.

These figures also reflected record losses across most of our states and territories - it should be a wakeup call and certainly increase pressure on our politicians to act.

The quest to ban gambling ads

The AFL & NRL Grand Finals highlighted the issue of gambling ads in sport once again. With support of a major donor, we ran advertisements in national newspapers which helped raise awareness of the issue of gambling in AFL & NRL Finals. We launched a 'swarm' campaign targeting key ALP seats in Sydney coinciding with the football finals, to increase pressure for a full gambling ad ban.

In November 2024, we joined forces with activist share trading platform SIX to use investor power to stop gambling ads at Australia's big media companies. The Alliance's Chief Advocate – Tim Costello, **Voices** advocate – Mark Kempster, and other shareholders and advocates questioned Nine Entertainment's Board on its reliance on gambling advertisements and its lobbying against gambling reform legislation.

2025 kicked off with a significant win as the NSW Government announced it was banning gambling advertising on its public transport network. The ban applies to internal and external advertising on trains, metro, buses, light rail, train stations, and ferry terminals, and extends to all casino, lottery, and online betting advertising. The NSW transport ban is significant in both scale and intent.

When fully implemented, it will clear gambling advertisements from nearly

800 station billboards

over 3,500 buses

and dozens of digital displays across our most populous state

More than a policy shift, it acknowledges that our public spaces should serve the public good

In Victoria, we have been regularly engaging with the Minister and their office, as well as the Department of Justice and VGCCC on the landmark reforms announced in 2023, as well as other reform issues to reduce the impact of pokies in Victoria.

Mandatory carded play

The Alliance have responded to numerous media inquiries and advocating strongly for the roll-out of mandatory pre-commitment. We also issued an Open Letter to the Tasmanian Premier, Jeremy Rockliff in November 2024 urging them to resist the efforts of the gambling lobby to undermine the promised poker machine mandatory pre-commitment card reforms. These reforms remain on the backburner.

Working with councils

We engaged with councils in early 2025 as they worked through their Council Plans, providing a webinar, stories of lived experience, and guidance around the importance of recognising gambling harm at this stage to underpin work over the council term.

In the last year we visited, met with, and spoken to many councils and councillors, supporting their queries, policy development, and providing data and research. We also met with many councils at the National General Assembly Conference in Canberra with our first ever exhibition ever booth!

Another first this year was a survey of council officers. The survey identified opportunities to provide greater benefits for leadership councils, including:

- upcoming Gambling Harm Action Week activities
- a monthly newsletter just for councils and,
- developing a member only web page for leadership councils

This has been supported by additional resourcing in 2025 meaning we can be more responsive to the needs of our partners, whilst still campaigning across the country for much needed reform.

Research and data

Over the past year we released a series of significant research reports that shed light on the scale and impact of gambling harm in Australia, providing powerful support for our reform agenda.

Our publications included groundbreaking research by Equity Economics into the impact of gambling on Australian household budgets. The findings revealed the deep financial strain gambling places on families, highlighting the urgent need for gambling reform.

This research was the cornerstone of our federal election campaign, driving home the message that stronger protections are needed to safeguard household finances and support Australian families. The research found Australia's annual gambling losses now eclipses governments spend on aged care (\$28.3bn) and rivals that spent on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (\$35.2bn).



Australian households spent \$3,045 on gambling in 2022-23 more than they spent on essential utilities like electricity, gas, and other fuels (\$2,821)



There has been a **25%** spike in gambling losses on pre-pandemic losses



Gambling losses have risen
6.8%



Real wages have declined
5.7%

[Read the full report here](#)

The Alliance commissioned a national survey through The Australia Institute to gauge public support for banning gambling ads, and the results were overwhelming showing:



[Read the media release and full report here](#)

Partnering with VicHealth

In 2025 we began a partnership with VicHealth to scope an intervention that could reduce the impact of gambling and gambling marketing on young Victorians. This will be co-designed with youth, and as we approach the phase of engaging with young people, we are really excited about providing them an opportunity to have their voices amplified on an issue that is so critical to their futures.

Federal Election Campaign

As part of our federal election campaign, we held a blitz campaign across key marginal seats to raise awareness of gambling harm and to ask voters to ask their candidate if they support gambling reform and a ban on gambling ads. We ramped up our media coverage to reach more Australians than ever before and released new research by The Australia Institute showing 600,000 teenagers under 18 years of age are gambling!

[Read the media release and full report here](#)

In the lead up to the federal election, the Alliance partnered with the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) to renew our call for an end to all political donations from alcohol and gambling companies.

This is an important issue as figures released in February 2025 from the Australian Electoral Commission's Transparency Register revealed that alcohol and gambling companies and lobby groups donated \$2.47 million to political parties in the 2023-24 financial year. The Alliance finds it appalling that lobby groups continue to influence important government reform, despite widespread community support to better regulate the gambling industry.

We need better laws around political donations so that powerful interests such as the gambling lobby can't continue to wield so much political power and hold the nation to ransom.

About us



[Read our 2023 – 2024 Annual Report](#)



[Visit our website](#)

About our Board

Sharon Dickson - Chair

Sharon is a Non-Executive Director, technology executive and diversity champion. Passionate about building an inclusive and positive culture in organisations, her work as Chair of the QBE Insurance Pride Committee earned industry sector recognition and brought about groundbreaking culture change in the sector. Sharon is member of the Alliance Risk and Audit Committee.

Kathy Richardson – Deputy Chair

Kathy is an Executive Director and Chaos Controller at Our Community, a self-sustaining social business that exists to provide practical, affordable training, leadership and technological solutions for not-for-profit and grant making organisations.

Amanda Power – Treasurer and Secretary

Amanda is a Certified Practicing accountant who is passionate about the community sector, volunteering and health and wellbeing.

Tim Lo Surdo – Board Member

Tim is the Founder and former National Director of Democracy in Colour - Australia's first racial and economic justice organisation led by people of colour.

Pita Williams – Board Member

Pita has practised as a lawyer for more than 30 years, primarily in the financial services industry.

Catherine Murphy – Board Member

Catherine is a passionate advocate for social welfare and justice reform. She has been a member of national Boards and Committees dealing with a wide range of issues including mental health, domestic violence, chronic pain and employment training programs.

Stuart James – Board Member

Stuart is an ICT & Cybersecurity Manager of a large multinational IT firm, current Councillor and two-time Mayor at Monash Council, and sits on the Board of the Municipal Association of Victoria.

Jon O'Keeffe – Board Member

Jon is the co-Founder and CEO of PX Partners, a governance, risk and compliance (GRC) consultancy. Prior to this, Jon has spent over two decades working for regulated firms in Financial Services both in Australia and overseas.

Angela Tillmans – Board Member

Angela Tillmanns has an extensive Senior Executive and Board career across the public, private and community sectors throughout Australia.

Have a question or want to know more?

Don't hesitate to reach out to either Bec or Angela

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