

22 November 2016

Committee Secretary  
Environment and Communications Legislation Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email to: [ec.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:ec.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Committee Secretary

**Re: Inquiry into the Interactive Gambling Amendment Bill 2016**

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the Inquiry into the Interactive Gambling Amendment Bill 2016.

We commend the Commonwealth Government for its work in ensuring gambling legislation keeps pace with the rapidly changing gambling industry.

The RANZCP is a membership organisation responsible for training, educating and representing psychiatrists in Australia and New Zealand. Psychiatrists must be accredited by the RANZCP before they can practise. The RANZCP has over 5500 members including more than 4000 fully qualified psychiatrists, representing 85% of practising psychiatrists in Australia, and around 1400 trainees.

As one of the peak bodies representing mental health expertise in Australia, the RANZCP has particular insight into the harms associated with problem gambling and its detrimental impacts on the mental health and well-being of vulnerable individuals, their families and the broader community.

Problem gambling is recognised in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th edition) as a mental disorder similar in brain origin, comorbidity and treatment to substance use disorders. Despite promising research, there is a dearth of evidence-based treatments for problem gambling, which makes other harm minimisation measures such as legislation all the more important.

Overall, the RANZCP fully supports proposals to amend the *Interactive Gambling Act 2001* to strengthen enforcement mechanisms related to offshore gambling. For more information on our recommendations for minimising the harmful effects of gambling, we invite you to refer to RANZCP Position Statement 45: '[Pathological/problem gambling](#)'.



If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this letter, please contact Rosie Forster, Senior Manager, Practice, Policy and Partnerships via

Yours sincerely

Professor Malcolm Hopwood  
**President**

Ref: 0526o