



The Royal
Australian &
New Zealand
College of
Psychiatrists

5 February 2016

Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC
Chair
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email to: ec.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Minister

Re: *Interactive Gambling Amendment (Sports Betting Reform) Bill 2015*

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the inquiry into the *Interactive Gambling Amendment (Sports Betting Reform) Bill 2015* (Cth).

We commend the Commonwealth Government for its work in ensuring gambling legislation keeps pace with the rapidly changing online 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 5,500 members including 4,000 fully qualified psychiatrists, representing 85% of practising psychiatrists in Australia, and 1,400 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 wellbeing 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 update the *Interactive Gambling Act 2001* (Cth) to better reflect the prevalence of online sports betting in 2016. 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](#)'.



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

Yours sincerely

Professor Malcolm Hopwood
President

Ref: 00580