

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Additional Estimates Hearings February 2015**

**Communications Portfolio**

**Australian Communications and Media Authority**

**Question No: 26**

**Program No. Australian Communications and Media Authority**

**Hansard Ref: Page 48-49, 24/02/2015**

**Topic: Gambling Ads**

**Senator Xenophon asked:**

**Ms McNeill:** We get some global information about statistics. I am not conscious of there being a breakdown. It would be open to us to seek that. Can I say, even my that rider, first port of call for code matters is usually the broadcasters and then the matters are escalated to asked if people have enduring concerns. We, in the lead-up to the registration of these code provisions, were receiving quite a number of complaints directly. So a lot of people are ringing and making inquiries. We have seen a significant drop-off in that level of contact since the codes were registered. I do not have the figures to hand.

**Senator XENOPHON:** If you could take that on notice.

**Ms McNeill:** I would be happy to provide them to you. We have seen a reduction.

**Senator XENOPHON:** I accept that the broadcasters would get the complaints directly, and that is what normally would occur. Is there any requirement on the broadcasters to at least provide you with that information so that you have an idea of the sorts of complaints that are being received and how they are being dealt with by the broadcasters?

**Ms McNeill:** There is not, no. However, the point that I would make about that is that it suggests that a co-regulatory scheme is working satisfactorily if people go to the broadcaster, raise their concerns, the concerns are addressed and they are not escalated to us.

**Senator XENOPHON:** You do not know, do you?

**Ms McNeill:** We do know that, when people complain to a broadcaster about a code matter and the broadcaster responds to the complainant, the broadcaster is obliged to tell the complainant that they can escalate their concerns to us if they remain unhappy. Then we have good visibility of the number of complaints that come to us.

**Senator XENOPHON:** But you only know of those that actually make to a complaint to you...

**Senator XENOPHON:** ...If you could take on notice the global statistics and also the exchange of information between the two, because I thought that it may have been useful in terms of ACMA's role...

**Ms McNeill:** ...I will take those matters on notice and give you a comprehensive response.

**Answer:**

**How many complaints do broadcasters receive about live odds and other gambling advertising?**

Under the *Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice 2010*, Free TV Australia provides the ACMA with quarterly reports which provides summary information about code complaints received by free-to-air television licensees.

Since July 2013 (when the live odds code was registered), quarterly reports have included statistics on complaints relating to gambling in sport. The statistics reflect the number of

complaints about gambling promotion in general sports programming rather than a more specific set of complaints about live odds promotions in live sports broadcasts.

Reports submitted by Free TV Australia for the period 1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014 showed its members received 38 complaints about gambling advertising during sport. This represented 1.8% of total complaints for the 12 month period.

One commercial television network has advised the ACMA that there has been a significant decrease in complaint numbers about gambling advertising. In the six months prior to the registration of the live odds code the broadcast network had over 200 complaints whereas, it had less than 30 complaints between July 2013-December 2013 following registration the live odds code.