

Ruvani Panagoda
A/g Assistant Secretary
Broadcasting and Gambling Branch • Broadcasting, Media and News Policy Division
By email to: Online.Gambling@communications.gov.au

15 June 2026

Dear Ms Panagoda

Submission on the *Interactive Gambling Amendment (Gambling Reform) Bill 2026*

Children and Media Australia (CMA) is the national peak not-for profit body representing the interests of children as media consumers. Its mission is to support families, industry and decision makers in building and maintaining an enjoyable media environment that fosters the health, safety and wellbeing of Australian children. Its membership includes major national and state education, welfare and parent organisations and individuals.

CMA's core business is to collect and review research and information related to children and the media; to provide information and advice on the impact on children of print, electronic and screen-based media; to provide reviews of current movies and apps from a child development perspective; to advocate for the needs and interests of children in relation to the media; and to conduct and act as a catalyst for relevant research.

In its work, CMA is always guided by child development research and by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) noting article 18, which recognises the role of parents, and places an obligation on States to support them in their child-rearing:

For the purpose of guaranteeing and promoting the rights set forth in the present Convention, States Parties shall *render appropriate assistance* to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children. (emphasis added)

The provision of an effective system for protecting children's online safety is an important aspect of this assistance, especially in modern times when the role of online engagement in children's lives is bigger than ever, and continuously growing.

Further information about this submission can be obtained from CMA Board Member Ms Noni Walker at admin@childrenandmedia.org.au.

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General support

We acknowledge the proposed Interactive Gambling Amendments as a first step in actions by the Australian Government intended to protect vulnerable Australians – particularly children and young people – from online gambling harms.

Concerns

When these amendments are implemented, some reductions to can be expected but there will still be significant exposure to gambling advertising and promotions. Only a full ban would be sufficient to protect our community.

A notable omission from the amendments is the prohibition of online gambling inducements and inducement advertising. Online content providers will also be able to provide access to wagering advertising to logged-in users and to users who have not opted out of receiving the advertising. Exposure to advertising can normalise gambling participation, lead to early uptake of online gambling and increased risk of harm and can encourage impulse betting and continued and intensified wagering.

CMA urges that a phased ban on online gambling advertising is necessary to curb the harm occurring now to young people, particularly young men using sports-related applications online or who are constantly hit with a barrage of gambling pop-ups when they are playing games or posting content online.

CMA notes plans outlined in the FAQ document to provide for the development of “a digital online gambling public awareness and education campaign to increase public awareness of online gambling harms, with the design and scope to be informed by research. The campaign will be focused primarily on those at greatest risk, which is anticipated to be young men (aged 18-34), First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities.”

We are concerned that this does not include children and young people, parents and care-givers – groups identified in Recommendation 4 of the Murphy Report with recent [research](#)¹ concluding that:

parental acceptance and their own gambling behavior are significantly associated with adolescent gambling initiation, suggesting children mimic parental behaviors. Furthermore, parent–child communication and disclosure were associated with both gambling initiation and problems. Enhancing parental awareness is essential to prevent underage gambling initiation and curb future problematic gambling behaviors, given the influential role of parent–child communication, attitudes, and behaviors on adolescents’ gambling habits.

Inclusion of children and young people, parents and care-givers in the awareness and education campaign is therefore vital.² Their exclusion does not seem to be consistent

¹ Boson K, Andersson M, Gurdal S, Claesdotter-Knutsson E, Kapetanovic S. Parental Influence on Adolescent Gambling: the Role of Communication, Rules, and Social Support. J Gambl Stud. 2026 Mar;42(1):321-338. [link](#)

² This is a neglected area of resourcing unfortunately very familiar to Children and Media Australia as we have suspended our [Know Before You Load](#) app review service due to a lack of funding.

with the Commonwealth's international obligation to make children's interests a primary consideration in matters such as this.³

Children and Media Australia urge the Government to undertake a full implementation of the Murphy Report recommendations to make a significant contribution to Australia's fulfilment of its international obligations under article 18 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (the UNCRC).

Conclusion

We thank the Department for the opportunity to comment on these proposed reforms and we shall be happy to provide a more detailed submission, in writing or orally, at your convenience.

Yours sincerely



Professor Elizabeth Handsley FAAL

President

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³ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 3(1).