

ONLINE GAMBLING & SPORTS BETTING

Extending pre-commitment to online betting

The Government is concerned about online gambling and the impact on problem gamblers in Australia.

The Government will work with the states to make pre-commitment available to account holders on online betting services.

Banning online credit

The Government will increase consumer protections including tightening rules on the provision of lines of credit, restrictions on inducements to open accounts, and protection of consumer funds.

This means that online betting agencies will not be able to offer credit to account holders, except to professional punters.

Limiting betting inducements

There will also be strict limits on the types of betting inducements that can be offered, for example paying commissions to third parties to encourage people to open accounts online.

Increasing the powers of the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)

In addition to the existing criminal penalties, the Government will introduce civil penalties by way of an infringement notice provided by ACMA for breaches of the Interactive Gambling Act. Currently ACMA must refer infringements to the Australian Federal Police.

Reviewing the Interactive Gambling Act 2001

The Government is currently reviewing the Interactive Gambling Act, including examining how harm minimisation measures can be improved for online gambling services.

The Government will release the review by June 2012.

Following this, the Government will introduce legislation to amend the Act by the end of this year, to enable our current commitments and any further reforms as a result of the review.

Protecting online gamblers

The Government will work with the states and territories to introduce stronger provisions and enforcement of consumer rights to avoid a situation where a provider does not have the funds to pay out wins.

This would include ensuring companies cannot offer bets they can't afford to pay out.

Live Odds

The Government is concerned that the promotion of live odds during sports coverage can significantly influence vulnerable people, particularly young people, and normalise negative gambling behaviour.

The Government is working with the sporting and betting industries to reduce and control the promotion of live odds during sports coverage through amendments to their existing industry codes.

If satisfactory amendments have not been put in place by broadcasters by the end of June 2012, the Australian Government will introduce legislation to ban the promotion of live odds in sporting broadcasts.