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Stop putting media moguls ahead of Australians' health: comprehensive ban on gambling ads required.

Statement by Dr Sophie Scamps, Member for Mackellar

Today I asked the Health Minister, Mark Butler, whether the Albanese government would act to deal with the serious public health issue that gambling poses for our children.

The Albanese Government knows exactly what sort of misery gambling wreaks on people's lives and health.

Australians lose approximately \$25 billion on legal forms of gambling each year, representing the largest per capita losses in the world.

The health impacts - psychological harm, addiction, suicide, family breakdown and homelessness - were documented by the Parliamentary Committee chaired by the late Labor MP Peta Murphy. The committee noted that problem gambling disproportionately affected indigenous communities and increasingly, children.

But I fear the Albanese government is continuing to prioritise the pecuniary "health" of a few big media players and gambling companies ahead of the health of families, children and taxpayers, who bear the cost.

It is not an answer that the television networks are facing financial pressure so we should allow them run some gambling ads. It's time to act decisively. Public health experts are united that a ban is needed. Partial bans will just create loopholes and not work.

Labor has shown itself better than this in the past. It's been a world leader in protecting our young people from the harms of tobacco and vaping.

We particularly need to protect our young people, who are being targeted as new customers by betting services. Data provided by Gambling Help Online revealed a 16% increase in the number of young people aged 24 and under contacting the help service in the 2022-23 financial year.

The public health community is united in their call for a complete ban on gambling advertising. Nothing else will be effective.

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