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Time ticking for Government to implement ban on gambling ads

December marks six months since the multi-partisan recommendations from the public committee inquiry into online gambling reform were tabled in Parliament.

The report by the Social Policy and Legal Affairs Committee – ‘You Win Some, You Lose More’ – recommended, with unanimous support, a range of robust reforms, including the phasing out of online gambling advertising over three years. The Committee was chaired by the late Peta Murphy MP.

The Committee heard more than 40 hours of evidence and received 161 written submissions.

Federal Member for Curtin Kate Chaney MP, a member of the Committee, said there’s momentum both publicly and politically to implement the recommendations in full, including the advertising ban.

“Six months have now passed since Peta Murphy tabled the report in Parliament, and the Government is yet to announce its response. In the wake of Peta’s death, politicians from across the Parliament voiced support for implementing the recommendations in full to her honour her legacy,” said Ms Chaney.

Amid the Government’s continued inaction on the issue, documents have been obtained under a Freedom of Information request sought with the assistance of former Senator Rex Patrick, that reveal Minister for Communications, Michelle Rowland, has had more than 60 meetings with gambling stakeholders since the report was tabled – some of whom had not participated in the inquiry.

“The FOI response shows Government is meeting extensively and privately with gambling stakeholders, with large parts of the FOI response redacted claiming commercial in confidence. The level of redaction is ridiculous.

“With the ongoing delay in acting on the recommendations and now this secrecy around Minister Rowland’s dealings with gambling, media and sporting organisations, the Government will struggle to prove it’s acting in the interests of the community, not these powerful stakeholders. It doesn’t help when the Minister responsible also accepted \$19,000 in donations from SportsBet.

“This is an opportunity for the Albanese Government to demonstrate it’s got the guts to stand up to the gambling lobby, and to prioritise our kids, to prioritise community mental health, to prioritise the victims of this insidious industry – by banning the ads that promote online gambling and sports betting.”

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