



4 in 5 Australians back action on harmful gambling, alcohol, unhealthy food ads as new campaign calls on Federal Govt to *give us an ad break*

4 March 2026

New polling shows overwhelming public support to curb pervasive gambling, alcohol and unhealthy food advertising, as over 130 key organisations and leaders call on the Federal Government to seize this opportunity to protect children and improve long-term health outcomes.

Launched today, the national public health campaign, *Give us an ad break*, warns that relentless marketing of harmful products is driving increased consumption — and with it rising rates of cancer, liver disease, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, mental ill health and financial hardship.

“Whether browsing online, scrolling your feed or watching sport, Australians, including children, are constantly exposed to ads for harmful products like alcohol,” **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education CEO Ayla Chorley said.**

“There is resounding community support for putting common sense limits on how these multi-million dollar companies can promote their products.”

Under the current system, alcohol, gambling and unhealthy food companies are largely left to make their own rules about where, when and how they can advertise.

The *Give us an ad break* campaign is calling for the Federal Government to introduce a new piece of legislation – a *Harmful Products Marketing Act*.

The proposed law, modelled on Australia’s world-leading tobacco legislation, would set clear, enforceable rules about when, where and how harmful products can be marketed, particularly where children are exposed, ensuring they can grow up free from relentless pressure to consume harmful products.

More than 130 organisations and leaders across health, sport, social services and research have signed a statement released today, joining the call to the Federal Government to prioritise community wellbeing – not industry profit.

The move has strong community support, with polling undertaken in February finding 4 in 5 Australians want less advertising for gambling, alcohol and unhealthy foods, and are concerned about the harm caused by these ads.*

“We hear from parents who simply want their children to enjoy sport without being surrounded by alcohol ads, and from people who feel targeted wherever they go, online and offline,” Ms Chorley said.

“These companies collect extensive personal data to tailor advertising enticing people to buy more, which makes it very hard for people trying to cut out, or cut back.”

VicHealth CEO Professor Anna Peeters AM said reducing children’s exposure to harmful marketing is one of the most powerful steps towards improving the nation’s long-term health.



“The environments our children grow up in shape their health for life. Right now, those environments are saturated with advertising for products linked to cancer, liver disease, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and financial harm across the community. Reducing children’s exposure to harmful marketing is one of the most effective prevention levers available. It is practical, evidence-based and will deliver benefits for generations,” she stated.

Alliance for Gambling Reform CEO Martin Thomas said, “Gambling losses in Australia, which are the world’s highest per capita, not only have a financial impact but unleash immense social harm each day across our communities.”

“The companies spend millions on marketing because they know it will result in profits through both short-term sales and long-term normalisation of their harmful products, so they can hook in generations to come. They sell an idealised and glamourised experience because showing the reality wouldn’t make them money. But when products are harmful, the result is just that: harm.

“We’re calling on the government to step up and implement legislation that gives Aussies a fair go. Australia has led the way before; let’s do it again.”

Food For Health Alliance Executive Manager Jane Martin said, “These companies target children and young people with unhealthy food ads in places they know they’ll see, like during prime time TV shows, at bus stops, and online.

“We know this advertising works, influencing our kids’ behaviour, what they eat, want and ask for – and it’s putting their future health at stake. We know the community wants to see this change. We have a chance now to set the stage for a better, healthier future.”

*FARE commissioned Pureprofile to conduct a survey of 2015 Australians in February 2026. The sample was nationally representative for age, gender and location.

-ENDS-

Media outlets are requested to promote help-seeking information when reporting on alcohol and other drugs, in line with the [Mindframe National Guidelines](#). Suggested wording relating this media story: *If you or someone you know needs support, please call Lifeline 13 11 14, the National 24/7 Alcohol and Other Drugs Hotline 1800 250 015 or 1800RESPECT 1800 737 732.*

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Background: Evidence of harm

Alcohol

- [One Australian dies every 90 minutes, and another is hospitalised every three and a half minutes](#) because of alcohol.
- For children and adolescents, [exposure to alcohol marketing increases the likelihood that they will start drinking alcohol earlier](#) and go on to drink alcohol at high-risk levels.
- [Alcohol marketing is shown to increase positive alcohol-related emotions and cognitions and trigger alcohol cravings](#) among people at-risk of or experiencing an alcohol problem, and is seen to trigger a desire to drink among people in recovery from an alcohol use disorder.

Gambling

- In 2022–23, [total gambling expenditure \(net losses\) in Australia was \\$31.5 billion, the highest it has been in the last 2 decades](#). Per capita gambling losses in Australia were estimated at around \$1,527, up from \$1,461 (in real terms) in 2021–22 (QGSO 2024).
- Gambling is harmful by design, with almost half (46%) of all adults that gamble in Australia either at-risk or already experiencing gambling harm.
- Exposure to gambling marketing is [associated with gambling among adolescents](#), with an Australian study finding greater exposure to gambling marketing increases [the likelihood that an adolescent gambles at high levels](#).

Unhealthy foods

- Discretionary foods, high in salt, fat and sugar, account for [37% of the average daily energy intake for children aged 5 to 11 years](#). This includes foods that are often ultra-processed and unhealthy
- 36% of children aged 2–17 [do not meet the recommended daily serves of fruit and 96% do not meet the recommended daily serves of vegetables](#)
- Children's exposure to unhealthy food [marketing leads to more positive attitudes and preferences towards unhealthy foods](#) as well as to increased consumption of unhealthy foods.