

## “Sport shapes culture”: Advocates, footballers call for action to prevent gender-based violence through sport

June 22, 2026

Advocates, experts and sports players have gathered at Parliament House to today call on political and sporting leaders to acknowledge and address the role of sport to prevent alcohol-related domestic, family and sexual violence.

Gender-based violence is increasing across Australia, and its effects are catastrophic and preventable. Women and children [experience higher rates of violence](#) on the nights of major sporting events, including State of Origin and the AFL Grand Final.

The Parliamentary Friends of Ending Violence Against Women and Children, alongside the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education, have brought together experts and advocates to examine sport’s influence on masculinity, alcohol use and aggression and call for action to reduce harm.

The event at Parliament House today includes a panel discussion with author and journalist Jess Hill, former NRL player Luke Bateman and former AFL Executive General Manager of Inclusion and Social Policy Tanya Hosch AM.

**Greens Leader and spokesperson on Women, Senator Larissa Waters said**, “spikes in domestic violence around major sporting events are too often treated as isolated incidents. The evidence tells us we need to confront the broader cultural and systemic factors that enable violence,”

“Powerful vested interests have normalised the relationship between alcohol and sport for decades, but we can’t let corporate profits stand in the way of evidence-based action to keep women and children safe.

“The culture surrounding sport can reinforce harmful stereotypes, but sport could be one of the most powerful tools we have to challenge them and promote respect, equality, and healthy masculinity.

“Ending violence against women requires whole-of-community action, and that means having these conversations in the places where boys and men are listening.”

**Independent Senator for the ACT David Pocock said**, “The Government’s own rapid review recommended banning gambling advertising and restricting alcohol delivery times - it’s vital we take a preventative approach to harm as well as better supporting victim survivors. Sport is a powerful way to bring people together and it needs to be part of combatting family and domestic violence.”

**FARE CEO Ayla Chorley said**, “We cannot address gender-based violence without addressing alcohol, and more broadly the cultural influence of alcohol in sport,”

“Alcohol is involved in up to half of police-reported family and domestic violence incidents. It is known to increase the frequency and severity of harm. Despite this governments have largely focused on individual behaviour and incident response, rather than addressing the broader systems that enable violence.”

“Sport has immense power to shape culture. The alcohol industry has ingrained itself into Australia's sporting culture through team sponsorships, advertising and marketing their products as essential to the game – win or lose.”

“Parliamentarians, alongside community and sporting leaders, can champion policies and investments that recognise sport as a powerful lever for prevention through deliberate changes to culture, sponsorship, governance and accountability.”

**-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 to 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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The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) is a not-for-profit organisation with a vision for an Australia free from alcohol harms – where communities are healthy and well and where laws, policies and programs are fair, equitable and just. Working with local communities, people with lived experience of alcohol harm, values-aligned organisations, health professionals, researchers and governments across the nation, we are improving the health and wellbeing of everyone in Australia. To learn more about us and our work visit [www.fare.org.au](http://www.fare.org.au)