# Do you want children seeing even more alcohol advertising on TV? Then don’t miss this consultation

*This article was originally published on*[*Croakey*](https://www.croakey.org/do-you-want-children-seeing-even-more-alcohol-advertising-on-tv-then-dont-miss-this-consultation/)*.*

The industry body representing commercial television stations is seeking to extend the times that alcoholic products can be advertised by about 800 hours each year.

The changes they are proposing would extend alcohol ads into weekends, public holidays and during school holidays – right when children are most likely to watching and around when sports are being televised.

This matters because [we know](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27565582/) when children are exposed to alcohol advertising early, they are more likely to start drinking earlier and to drink at higher risk levels.

We also know that rates of violence against women and children increases during some sporting events.

For example, during the State of Origin there are significant increases in violence, with one study finding an increase of 40 per cent in domestic assaults reported to police in New South Wales.

Domestic and family violence services also see increases in people seeking support, with Berry Street, a Victorian service, [experiencing between](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-09-27/domestic-violence-spike-major-sport-events-afl-nrl-rugby-footy/104399938) 30 and 40 per cent increases in demand during the AFL and NRL grand finals.

There is already a loophole for advertising during sports, which results in [more than 10,000 alcohol ads](https://fare.org.au/action-needed-to-protect-kids-from-alcohol-ads-in-sport/#:~:text=Alcohol%20advertising%20during%20sports%20broadcasts,broadcasts%20during%20children%27s%20viewing%20times.) being played during sports each year. That’s about 75 minutes of ads per week. The proposed changes would make this worse.

The [recent Rapid Review](https://www.pmc.gov.au/resources/unlocking-the-prevention-potential) of Prevention Approaches for gender-based violence also recommended that alcohol ads be wound back.

The Review noted that ‘given the statistical increase in DFSV [Domestic Family and Sexual Violence] incidents during football grand finals, as well as the high number of children who watch sport on television and mobile apps, the Review recommends that alcohol advertising be restricted during sporting events.’

## How can this even happen?

In Australia, the rules around advertising are largely controlled by corporations that profit from these ads.

The Commercial Television Code of Practice (the Code) is an example of this. It is overseen by the commercial channels themselves through Free TV Australia. This allows them to set their own rules, including when they can show certain ads.

Under the Broadcast Act, Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) can register changes to industry Codes if they are satisfied that they provide appropriate community safeguards.

It’s pretty clear that these changes do not safeguard the community. They increase the risk of harm, and they are out of step with community concerns and expectations about harmful product marketing.

ACMA is the independent Commonwealth statutory authority that regulates media and communications services in Australia. In 2022 they developed a policy paper on [‘What audiences want – audience expectations for content safeguards’.](https://www.acma.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-06/What%20audiences%20want%20-%20Audience%20expectations%20for%20content%20safeguards.pdf)

The report raises that “there are ongoing concerns that existing alcohol, gambling and junk food advertising restrictions do not go far enough, noting the nature of harms associated with gambling, alcohol and junk food consumption involve complex health and social issues”.

In response to the proposed code changes, ACMA has [even raised](https://www.acma.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-10/ACMA-views-on-Free-TV-code-review.pdf) that “viewers may have concerns about any extension of time when alcohol advertising is permitted on television”.

Despite this, commercial TV stations are seeking to further extend alcohol advertising.

This doesn’t just show that the TV companies are out of step with community expectations, but also demonstrates what happens with industries are left to govern themselves.

We should be closing the loopholes around alcohol ads in sport – not further extending them to more times and days. And certainly not putting more alcohol ads on TV, especially around sport and when kids are watching.

There is a consultation happening on these proposed changes right now. You can be part of the consultation by filling out [the online form](https://www.freetv.com.au/code-review-2024/) by 11 November.

[fill out the form](https://www.freetv.com.au/code-review-2024/)