

Community organisations call for AFL, NRL to phase out alcohol, gambling advertising ahead of surge in violence towards women and children on grand final night

25 September 2025

Community organisations and leading family violence experts are calling on the AFL and NRL to take action to help curb the surge in violence towards women and children around grand finals by phasing out harmful alcohol and gambling advertising that fuels the crisis.

As the AFL's Grand Final approaches this Saturday, Victoria Police are bracing for a [20 per cent increase](#) in calls for help from women and children experiencing family violence, while research shows a [40 per cent increase](#) in NSW on State of Origin game nights.

Both the AFL and NRL continue to have significant ties to alcohol and gambling sponsorship, meaning fans of these sports, including children, are saturated with alcohol and gambling advertising – whether it is through television, player jerseys, sportsgrounds, or star player endorsements. Alcohol and gambling are both well understood to contribute to and exacerbate violence.

The National Women's Safety Alliance Executive Director Katherine Berney said, "Sport shapes culture. The AFL and NRL can keep taking cheques from alcohol and gambling, or they can put the safety of over 50 per cent of their fanbase first and cut ties. The choice is clear."

University of Technology Sydney Industry Professor, journalist and advocate, Jess Hill said, "Sport has long been identified as a key setting for preventing gender-based violence. But how can sporting codes and clubs justify running government-funded prevention programs while, at the same time, vigorously promoting products that exacerbate men's violence against women and children? It doesn't add up."

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education CEO Ayla Chorley said, "We know from victim survivors and a body of research, that alcohol intensifies and exacerbates violence towards women and children,"

"Right now, you can't watch an AFL or NRL match without being bombarded with alcohol and gambling advertisements throughout stadiums and on TV.

"These strong links between the nation's most popular sports and alcohol and gambling, help normalise drinking and betting."

"Through the partnerships they enter, these football codes are setting the culture from the top. The harm impacts not just the wider community but the players – many of whom struggle with high-risk drinking after they leave a game."

An expert panel, appointed by the federal government last year to conduct [a rapid review into how to prevent violence towards women and children](#), recommended the removal of all alcohol advertising during sport due to its links to increased rates of violence. It also called for an end to all gambling advertising.

Alliance for Gambling Reform CEO Martin Thomas said, “Gambling losses in Australia, which are the highest per capita than any other country, not only have a financial impact but unleash social harm on an industrial scale across our communities,”

“Research shows that where there is gambling in a family there is up to a 30 per cent greater risk of family violence. Gambling and alcohol are too often a dangerous cocktail that leads to increases in partner and other violence – particularly at times when there are major sporting events such as the football grand finals.”

-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 1800Respect 1800 737 732, Lifeline 13 11 14, 13YARN 13 92 76 or the National 24/7 Alcohol and Other Drugs Hotline 1800 250 015.*

Available for interview:

- FARE CEO Ayla Chorley
- Alliance for Gambling Reform CEO Martin Thomas
- National Women’s Safety Alliance Executive Director Katherine Berney
- UTS Industry Professor Jess Hill

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