

Alcohol and gambling companies and lobby groups plough almost \$2.5 million into political parties

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Alcohol and gambling companies and lobby groups donated \$2.474 million to political parties in 2023-24.

After the release of the latest donation figures this week through the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) Transparency Register, the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) and Alliance for Gambling Reform (AGR) jointly called for alcohol and gambling companies to be excluded from making political donations.

CEO of FARE Caterina Giorgi said, "When companies provide donations to political parties, they do so to try and influence decision-making.

"Time and time again alcohol companies and their lobby groups delay and stop policies and programs that could improve the health and wellbeing of families and communities across Australia.

"We need to see common sense reforms that put the community first and strengthen our democracy. This must include a ban on political donations from alcohol companies and their lobby groups."

AEC data revealed that companies that profit exclusively from alcohol donated \$998,000, while companies that profit exclusively from gambling donated \$661,000 and those that profit from both alcohol and gambling donated \$815,000.

Of these donations, 61 per cent went to the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and 38 per cent went to the Liberal National Party (LNP).

CEO of AGR Martin Thomas said, "In the last few months alone we have seen the influence and overreach from gambling lobby groups, which have stalled progress on legislating a gambling ad ban that our communities are loudly calling for.

"The evidence shows these donations spike at times when reforms are being considered. It is a blatant attempt to undermine reform and in doing so it is an attack on our democratic process.

"With political willpower it is absolutely possible for gambling and alcohol companies to be excluded from donating – we saw it with tobacco, now let's see it for these other industries that are causing significant health and social harms in our communities," he said.

The top five donors were the Australian Hotels Association and Queensland Hotels Association, Endeavour Group, Tabcorp Holdings, Clubs NSW/Australia and Sportsbet.

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Available for interview: FARE CEO Caterina Giorgi and AGR CEO Martin Thomas.

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

The Alliance for Gambling Reform is a national advocacy organisation fighting to reduce gambling harm and to give voice to those who have been impacted by gambling. Australians lose up to \$32 billion every year from gambling and it is those who can least afford these losses that are often targeted by gambling companies.