MEDIA RELEASE
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Church providers unite to call for action on gambling advertising

Some of Australia's largest church-based community service providers are joining forces to call on the Federal Government to take urgent action on gambling advertising and gambling harm.

Anglicare Australia, UnitingCare Australia, The Salvation Army and St Vincent de Paul Society say Australians are being saturated with gambling advertising, while frontline services are left dealing with the consequences.

The organisations are calling for a package of reforms to reduce gambling harm, including:

- A phased ban on gambling advertising;
- Stronger regulation of online gambling, including a ban on inducements and promotions;
- A national gambling regulator with stronger enforcement powers;
- More funding for gambling harm support services; and
- National leadership on mandatory cashless gaming systems for poker machines.

The call comes as representatives from the organisations and frontline workers come together at Parliament House this week to meet directly with MPs and Senators and make the case for change.

"Every day, we see people struggling with debt, falling behind on their rent and bills, and families put under enormous pressure because of gambling harm," said Anglicare Australia Deputy Director Maiy Azize.

"Our frontline workers are the people helping to pick up the pieces. This week, they will be taking those experiences directly to Parliament and asking MPs and Senators to act."

"Gambling impacts people across all parts of our community and the harm is felt far beyond just the person who is directly gambling. In our services we see how gambling can lead to hardship and disadvantage for parents, children, siblings, partners and friends.

"This is why we are focused on calling for reform that will safeguard our community from gambling harm," said Jennifer Kirkaldy, General Manager Policy and Advocacy at the Salvation Army.

"Gambling advertising is now almost impossible to avoid. It is built into sport, television and online platforms, exposing children and young people to gambling long before they are old enough to place a bet," said Toby oConnor, CEO of the St Vincent de Paul Society National Council.

"We know what needs to change. What we need now is the Government to exercise the courage necessary to stop tinkering around the edges and deliver reforms that genuinely reduce, and indeed which will prevent harm. This must include a ban on gambling advertising.

"It is time to put the wellbeing of Australian families ahead of the interests of the predatory gambling industry and their enablers and dependents," said Rev Stu Cameron, CEO of Wesley Mission.

Representatives from the organisations and frontline services will meet with MPs and Senators at Parliament House this week to share their experiences of gambling harm and make the case for reform.

For media inquiries, call Maiy Azize on 0434 200 794