

25 June 2012

Director
Online Gambling & Regulatory Section
Digital Economy Services Division
Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy

By email: online.gambling@dbcde.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

**SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE TO THE INTERIM REPORT OF THE REVIEW OF THE
*INTERACTIVE GAMBLING ACT 2001 (CTH)***

The Australian Subscription Television and Radio Association (ASTRA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Interim Report of the Review of the *Interactive Gambling Act 2001 (Cth)* (IGA).

As noted in our submission in October 2011 to the Discussion Paper for this Review, ASTRA is supportive of Government initiatives that are likely to be effective in addressing issues of problem gambling, and that are aimed at preventing inappropriate advertising of gambling services to minors or others at risk of harm.

We confine our comments on the Interim Report to recommendations of direct relevance to subscription television (STV) providers:

Advertising and promotion

In principle, ASTRA would not be opposed to the introduction of civil penalties to be administered by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), for breach of advertising prohibitions under the IGA, as detailed in Recommendation 17. We would, however welcome the opportunity to view a draft of proposed legislative amendments to implement this recommendation to assess their reasonableness and appropriateness.

ASTRA agrees with Recommendations 18 and 19, to clarify the scope of provisions in the IGA relating to 'accidental or incidental' advertising of online gambling services, and to the advertisement of 'free-play' sites, respectively.

ASTRA further agrees that the regulatory framework for the prohibition against the advertising of prohibited interactive gambling services should continue to operate at the federal level and be administered by the ACMA as per Recommendation 20.

Online wagering

ASTRA has no comment on the appropriateness or otherwise of certain forms of betting. We note that Recommendation 25 would prohibit 'micro-betting' irrespective of the electronic medium by which the bets are placed, with that ban also applying to wagering services provided through other devices and technologies such as smartphone applications and interactive television. We also note the Interim Report recommendations provisions in the IGA to complement the Government's measures to deal with integrity in sports and match fixing, which could include relevant state/territory regulatory authorities and relevant sports controlling bodies authorising forms of sports betting (Recommendation 27).

ASTRA has no comment in relation to the prohibition or definition of 'micro-betting', and would support any approach that effectively and appropriately addresses community concerns regarding integrity in sport and match fixing. We do, however, submit that the regulation of any form of sports betting should be platform-neutral. That is, where a type of sports betting is permitted, it should be permitted across all platforms and a STV provider should not be prohibited from providing such a service through its interactive capabilities if it chooses to do so.

Please feel free to contact myself or Simon Curtis, Policy and Regulatory Affairs Manager, on (02) 9776 2684 if you wish to discuss further anything in the above.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Petra Buchanan".

Petra Buchanan
CEO