

# Submission identifies gambling as significant public health issue

The AMA (WA) recently made a submission to the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety regarding the *Review and Reform of Western Australian Gambling Laws – Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement (CRIS) 2025*.

The submission highlights gambling-related harm as a significant public health issue linked to mental illness, suicide, family violence and financial hardship. The AMA (WA) advocates for a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to address gambling harm – emphasising prevention, early intervention, treatment, and community education.

Key recommendations include:

**Objects of legislation:** Prioritise community wellbeing and harm prevention over economic or entertainment goals, incorporating public health principles, equity, and cultural safety.

**Responsible gambling training:** Mandate training for licensees and staff to promote responsible gambling and mental health awareness.

**Statutory duty of care:** Establish a duty of care requiring proactive harm-minimisation actions, including player monitoring, intervention protocols, and civil penalties for breaches.

**Gambling advertising:** Advocate for a phased restriction leading to a comprehensive or near-total ban on gambling advertising, including at state-owned venues and events.

**Protections for young adults:** Maintain the minimum gambling age at 18, but introduce enhanced protections for 18–24-year-olds – such as spending limits, prohibition on inducements, and education programs.

**Aboriginal health perspective:** Address disproportionate gambling harm in Aboriginal communities through culturally safe, community-led prevention and treatment services.

**Emerging technologies and risks:** Future-proof legislation to address risks from new technologies like online platforms, AI-driven betting, and cryptocurrency.

**Compensation mechanism:** Support trauma-informed, low-cost compensation processes with pro bono legal assistance for those affected by gambling harm.

**Transparency in fundraising:** Mandate disclosure of proceeds, cap third-party service provider fees, and require annual public reporting.

**Regulation of bookmaking:** Apply harm minimisation, transparency and accountability standards to all bookmaking activities.

The submission emphasises the need for a public health-focused legislative framework, integration of international best practices, and a strong focus on Aboriginal health. It calls for the establishment of an independent Gambling Harm Research and Practice advisory body funded by a levy on the gambling industry to coordinate research, evaluate interventions, and improve workforce training.

View the submission at [amawa.com.au/community/advocacy/wa-health-system-advocacy](https://amawa.com.au/community/advocacy/wa-health-system-advocacy)



## Three distinguished AMA (WA) members have been recognised in the Australia Day 2026 Honours List.

**Emeritus Professor Bruce Armstrong AM** was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) in the General Division – for eminent service to medical research, to environmental and genetic cancer epidemiology, to screening service development, to academia, and to public health administration.

**Mr Robert Fitzpatrick** was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the General Division – for significant service to plastic and reconstructive surgery, and to the community of Western Australia.

**Clinical Professor Lesley Ann Cala** was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the General Division – for service to tertiary education.

The Governor General, Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC acknowledged the quality of this group of recipients.

"Throughout 2025, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Australian honours system and the people who, for the past half century, have epitomised the best of Australia," the Governor General said. "The qualities and accomplishments of this year's honourees reflect Australia's values for service, community, kindness, curiosity, tenacity and care." ■