

Calling full-time on sports gambling

EDITORIAL

By **DANIEL CABAN**

RUGBY League's Winfield Cup concluded in 1995 due to the introduction of the federal government's Tobacco Advertising Prohibition Act, which outlawed the promotion of tobacco in Australian sports.

In recent times, major sporting codes such as the Football Federation of Australia, Swimming Australia and Basketball Australia have agreed to cease advertising alcohol, again due to a federal government initiative.

But now, as marketers become even hungrier to promote their various brands, the ethics of advertising and sport is again being called into question.

Earlier this year, the federal government announced an inquiry into gambling advertising during sporting events.

Greens senator Richard Di Natale called for a committee on gambling advertising reform that could have substantial consequences for major sporting organisations.

"Not only do we risk undermining the integrity of sport, we risk creating another generation of problem gamblers," Senator Di Natale said.

"Sports betting advertising is out of control and kids are finding it hard to know where a game of sport ends and gambling begins."

Despite the rhetoric, no meaningful legislation has been passed. And while the matter sits lifeless on the floor of Parliament, book-makers nationwide are reeling in the profits, while the normalisation of gambling continues apace.

Though Parliament has started tentative action against the broad commercialisation of betting, it is evident that to prevent future problems, stronger action must be taken now.

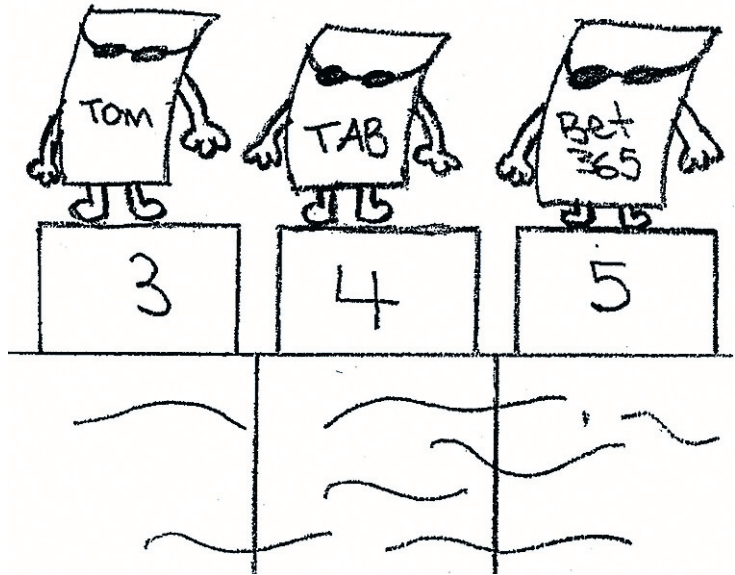
We have seen the devastating effects which tobacco caused and advertising aided. In 1995, 30 per cent of Australians smoked, which directly attributed to over 19,000 deaths per annum.

Since the prohibition of tobacco advertising, a distinct drop in these figures has occurred. That advertising works to normalise harmful behaviours is clear.

Therefore, the current situation regarding almost saturation advertising for gambling during sport cannot go on.

Like tobacco advertising, politicians need to support the cessation of the development of a normalised gambling culture in our country.

The likelihood that the next generation of sports fans will be sports gamblers is growing with each round of competition.



Cartoon: Nathan Boon



ISOLATED: Surf clubs have to compete for funds. Picture: Emily Mors

Funds divide arts and surf

By **CAMERON ANDERSON**

THE beaches, surf clubs and swimming clubs of Newcastle provide countless opportunities for residents of the Hunter Region.

However these surf clubs are rapidly deteriorating due to lack of ongoing maintenance and development.

Similarly, the Newcastle Art Gallery provides a community space that enriches the cultural life of the city, but it too needs work.

The federal and state governments, along with Newcastle City Council, pledged \$21 million for the redevelopment of the Newcastle Art Gallery, now in doubt.

Lord mayor Jeff McCloy has re-

signed from the new gallery's project control group committee and is stepping up attempts to scrap any plans for a redeveloped gallery.

Cr McCloy, arguing against the redevelopment of the gallery said: "How do we tell Beresfield people, or surf club people that we've got no money when we're spending \$21 million on the art gallery? That's impossible for me to do."

Although no specific requests were made by the people of Beresfield, nor surf clubs for an increase in funds, Cr McCloy's statements appear to be dividing the community as to what is more beneficial and equitable.

And meanwhile, the impasse continues.

A nation of overweight decisions

By **CHARLOTTE CLEMENSON**

WE'VE heard about it before, we've been warned – yet the obesity crisis continues.

Health professionals have been issuing the grim news regarding Australia's fat culture for some time – and it seems that reality TV shows are cashing in on the crisis.

Australia's *Biggest Loser* television series is now into its eighth season. The popularity of the show, like the size of Aussies, just keeps growing.

And alarmingly contestants are getting younger and are breaking records for their size.

This year's series features the heaviest contestant ever, Big Kev, who weighs 254.7 kilograms. Joining him is Todd, who at the age of 15 tips the scales at 112.2 kilograms.

The existence of the show itself points to the seriousness of the problem.

One of the show's trainers, Shannon Ponton, claims that 66 per cent of Australians are overweight. He suggests children are likely to mirror their parents' lifestyle choices, and therefore our society needs a revolution in its approach.

The *Biggest Loser's* popularity continues amid a disturbing cultural phenomenon – nightly, according to *TV Tonight*, approximately 1 million Australians sit down with their desserts and voyeuristically participate in our nation's most lethal struggle.

Marching on with young alongside the old

By **NATHAN BOON**

LAST week's Anzac Day events were a time for remembrance – to respect the servicemen and women who died and served for our country.

Anzac Day commemorates the day when Australian soldiers landed in far-off Gallipoli in World War I.

The traditional Anzac Day ceremonies commenced with a dawn service to replicate the time of the actual Gallipoli landing, then later a ceremony in which children could

march and participate.

Bill Jasen, President of Doyalson RSL Youth Club, and war veteran said: "schools and sporting groups have always marched down the road. It puts a smile on our faces seeing the children of today waving around the Australian flag proudly".

The RSL try to make the day more inclusive by giving children chips, a drink and an iceblock afterwards.

Across the Hunter, schools conducted their own ceremonies with wreath laying and buglers.



TRADITION: Anzac Day ceremonies remember those that have fallen. Picture: Emily Mors.

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