



Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory

Standing Committee on the Integrity
Commission and Statutory Office
Holders

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the Electoral (Gambling Industry) Amendment Bill 2026

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Submission - Inquiry into the Electoral (Gambling Industry) Amendment Bill 2026

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Introduction

The Australian Multicultural Action Network (AMAN) welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the ACT Legislative Assembly Committee Inquiry into the *Electoral (Gambling Industry) Amendment Bill 2026*.

AMAN supports the objective of strengthening public confidence in democratic decision-making by reducing the potential for conflicts of interest and ensuring that public policy is developed solely in the interests of the ACT community.

Our organisation approaches this issue from a community wellbeing perspective rather than a political one. Through our work with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities across the ACT, we have observed that gambling harm often extends well beyond financial impacts. It affects families, relationships, mental wellbeing, social cohesion, cultural participation and community resilience.

The proposed legislation represents an important opportunity to further strengthen public trust by ensuring that decisions relating to gambling policy are transparent, independent and guided by evidence and community wellbeing.

AMAN believes that effective gambling reform should be supported by three interconnected principles:

- Integrity in public decision-making.
- Prevention of gambling-related harm.
- Genuine community engagement across all sectors of society.

We therefore support the intent of the Bill.

About AMAN

The Australian Multicultural Action Network (AMAN) is a community-led organisation working across multicultural communities throughout the ACT.

Our work focuses on strengthening community wellbeing through education, inclusion, health promotion, consumer empowerment, digital literacy, financial capability, social cohesion and community resilience.

Over recent years AMAN has successfully delivered numerous government-funded education initiatives involving multicultural communities, including projects relating to:

- Gambling harm prevention
- Digital and media literacy
- Consumer protection
- Financial wellbeing
- Climate resilience
- Community leadership
- Health literacy
- Community capacity building

Our approach is centred on prevention, education and partnership.

Rather than responding only after harm has occurred, AMAN seeks to equip communities with the knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions before problems arise.

Why This Bill Matters

Public confidence in democratic institutions depends upon the belief that elected representatives make decisions in the public interest.

Where industries that are directly affected by government regulation are able to provide political donations, some members of the community may perceive that public policy could be influenced by financial relationships rather than objective evidence.

Whether or not any actual influence occurs, maintaining public confidence requires that democratic systems minimise circumstances that could reasonably create perceptions of conflicts of interest.

Strong governance is built not only on accountability but also on public trust.

The proposed legislation contributes positively to both.

Gambling Harm Extends Beyond Financial Loss

Public discussion often focuses on gambling losses measured in dollars.

Our experience working with multicultural communities demonstrates that the consequences are considerably broader.

Gambling harm can affect:

- Family relationships
- Emotional wellbeing
- Mental health
- Financial security
- Housing stability
- Employment
- Social participation
- Community trust
- Intergenerational wellbeing

In many multicultural communities, gambling-related problems frequently remain hidden due to stigma, cultural expectations or lack of awareness about available support services.

Families may seek assistance only after significant harm has already occurred.

This highlights the importance of ensuring that public policy is guided solely by community wellbeing.

Prevention Should Remain the Primary Focus

AMAN strongly believes that prevention delivers the greatest long-term benefits.

Every dollar invested in prevention reduces future social, economic and health costs.

Preventative approaches include:

- Community education
- Financial literacy
- Digital scam awareness
- Early intervention
- Family conversations
- Community leadership
- Accessible support pathways
- Culturally appropriate information

When governments are able to develop policy free from perceived competing interests, preventative reforms are more likely to receive the attention they deserve.

Importance for Multicultural Communities

ACT multicultural communities are growing rapidly and contribute enormously to the social, cultural and economic life of Canberra.

However, culturally diverse communities often experience unique barriers including:

- Language differences
- Limited access to culturally appropriate information
- Different cultural understandings of gambling
- Limited awareness of available support services
- Fear of stigma

- Hesitation to seek formal assistance

These barriers reinforce the need for policies that prioritise community wellbeing and ensure equitable access to prevention initiatives.

Future gambling reforms should continue recognising multicultural communities as active partners in policy development rather than passive recipients of information.

Integrity Strengthens Public Confidence

Integrity is one of the foundations of democratic government.

Community confidence grows when decision-making processes are transparent, accountable and independent.

Measures that reduce the possibility—or perception—of undue influence contribute to:

- Greater public confidence
- Stronger democratic institutions
- Increased transparency
- Improved accountability
- Better evidence-based policy
- Higher community participation

The ACT has previously introduced measures restricting political donations from certain sectors where conflicts of interest may arise.

This Bill follows a similar principle of protecting public confidence.

Looking Beyond the Bill – Building a Stronger Prevention Framework

While AMAN supports the proposed legislation, we believe it should form part of a broader long-term strategy for reducing gambling harm.

Future opportunities include:

1. Multicultural Community Education

Develop culturally appropriate education programs in partnership with trusted multicultural organisations.

Education should go beyond translation by incorporating cultural values, lived experiences and community leadership.

2. Community Co-Design

Communities affected by gambling harm should participate in designing prevention initiatives.

Policies are often most effective when shaped alongside those who understand local needs.

3. Financial Wellbeing Programs

Strengthen practical education covering:

- Household budgeting
- Consumer rights
- Online gambling risks
- Scam awareness
- Financial resilience

4. Youth Prevention

Early education can help young people understand:

- Probability and risk
- Advertising influence
- Digital gambling environments
- Social media promotion
- Financial decision-making

Building resilience before gambling behaviours develop is one of the most effective long-term prevention strategies.

5. Cross-Sector Partnerships

Effective gambling harm prevention requires collaboration between:

- Government
- Community organisations
- Health services
- Financial counselling
- Researchers
- Consumer advocates
- Education providers
- Multicultural organisations

Partnerships enable earlier intervention and more sustainable outcomes.

6. Measuring Community Outcomes

Future reforms should include evaluation frameworks measuring:

- Community awareness
- Financial wellbeing
- Help-seeking behaviour
- Community confidence
- Cultural accessibility
- Long-term prevention outcomes

This allows policies to evolve based on evidence.

AMAN's Commitment

AMAN remains committed to supporting initiatives that strengthen:

- Community wellbeing
- Social inclusion
- Public integrity
- Financial resilience
- Consumer empowerment
- Evidence-informed policy
- Multicultural participation
- Collaborative governance

We believe that trusted community organisations have an important role in supporting governments to deliver practical education that reaches communities who may otherwise remain disconnected from mainstream services.

Our experience has consistently shown that prevention, partnership and community leadership achieve stronger outcomes than isolated interventions.

Conclusion

The Electoral (Gambling Industry) Amendment Bill 2026 provides an important opportunity to strengthen public confidence in democratic decision-making while reinforcing the principle that public policy should always place community wellbeing at its centre.

AMAN supports the Bill because it promotes transparency, integrity and public trust—values that underpin effective government and healthy communities.

At the same time, legislative reform should be accompanied by continued investment in prevention, culturally responsive education, community partnerships and evidence-based policy development.

Together these measures can help build a future where decisions affecting gambling policy are informed by the wellbeing of the community, where vulnerable individuals and families receive stronger protection, and where all Canberrans—regardless of cultural or linguistic background—have confidence that public policy is developed fairly, transparently and in the public interest.

AMAN appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this important inquiry and looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with government, community organisations and stakeholders to strengthen integrity, reduce gambling harm and promote healthier, more resilient communities across the ACT.