



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Warrnambool Gaming Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Losses from Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs) in Warrnambool and ratio of machines to adults are high when compared with the rest of the Victorian community¹. As a result, in 2006 the Victorian Department of Justice imposed a regional cap of 234 EGMs for the City. This is due to be reviewed in 2011.

Whilst it is recognised that electronic gaming has some economic benefits, the social impact is also significant with research showing gaming losses result in diminished standards of living, not just for gamblers but also for their children and other dependents.

The Gambling Regulation Amendment (Licensing) Act 2009 sets out new arrangements for electronic gaming from 2012. This builds on previous legislation that outlines a role for Council in the areas of planning. Council's response to this role, along with its other legislated leadership and community support roles, is outlined in this policy.

1.2. Purpose:

The purpose of the Responsible Gaming Policy is to communicate Council's position in relation to gaming within the Municipality. The policy response will formalise the City's approach to gaming. It will provide transparency and accountability for the City's overall position on gaming which aims to achieve the following strategic and planning objectives:

- i. Provide a strategic policy context that assists with the ongoing implementation and good governance of gaming
- ii. Promote economic, social and environmental viability and sustainability of the municipality
- iii. Improve the quality of life of the people by promoting principles of equity and access by limiting particular disadvantage via the implementation of the "no-disadvantage test"
- iv. Provide leadership by establishing strategic objectives for gaming and monitor their achievement.
- v. Provide the capacity to advocate for the economic and social impact of electronic **gaming machines will not be detrimental to the wellbeing of the City's community**

1.3. Scope

This policy has been developed within the legislative frameworks and policy contexts for the State of Victoria which requires the Warrnambool City Council to facilitate the implementation of ongoing licensing and management of electronic gaming as a legal activity within the municipality.

The Council's gaming policy approach will support Council decision-making and also help applicants in relation to gaming to understand Council's objectives and requirements in relation to the operation of gaming venues within the municipality.

¹ Warrnambool has: high levels of gaming losses per electronic gaming machine (\$765 / adult 2009/10) when compared with other the Victorian average (\$611/adult 2009/10), and 9.36 EGMs per adult, approximately 30% more machines than the state average of 6.28 EGMs per adult.

The Gaming Policy is based on the following principles:

- Gaming is a legal activity with the State of Victoria
- Whilst the total number of EGMs in the municipality exceeds the state wide average, Council will not support any additional machines in Warrnambool.
- Council will not consider the transfer of machines from a more socio-economically advantageous area to a less socio-economically advantageous area.
- That gaming is carried out in an environment that develops and reinforces a commitment to responsible gambling.

1.4. Definitions

EGMs:	electronic gaming machines, or 'pokies'
Gaming	those activities which give rise to and facilitate the operation of Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs).
Gaming venue:	a hotel or club approved by the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation (VCGR) as a premises suitable for EGM gaming

1.5. References

- 1.1.1. Warrnambool Planning Scheme, Municipal Strategic Statement
- 1.1.2. Gambling Regulation Act (2003)
- 1.1.3. Local Government Act (1989)
- 1.1.4. Taking action on problem gambling in South West Victoria. Southwest Primary Care Partnership. May 2010.
- 1.1.5. Problem gambling from a public health perspective. Victorian Department of Justice. September 2009.
- 1.1.6. Gambling: A Review of Issues for Local Government. H Brown. City of Greater Dandenong. Sept 2010
- 1.1.7. Productivity Commission, Gambling: Productivity Commission Draft Report, October 2009
- 1.1.8. 2003 Victorian Longitudinal Community Attitudes Survey, The Centre for Gambling Research, Australian National University
- 1.1.9. Electronic gaming machines: Expenditure and location, Victorian Commission for Gaming Regulation
- 1.1.10. International Principles for Social Impact Assessments www.socialimpactassessment.com/resources-sia.asp?ID=38
- 1.1.11. Gambling Policy: City of Greater Dandenong. December 2009
- 1.1.12. Council Strategic Gaming Policy, City of Greater Geelong, June 2009
- 1.1.13. Warrnambool Municipal Public Health Plan, 2009

2. POLICY

2.1. Policy Statement

Council will plan, advocate and respond to the needs of its community, with the objective that the net economic and social impact of electronic gaming machines will not be detrimental to the wellbeing of the City's community.

2.2. Planning

- Council will not support planning proposals where the venue is situated in, or adjacent to¹, residential areas of relative socio-economic disadvantage².
- Council may support the transfer of EGMs from one part of the municipality to another, if the proponent can demonstrate net economic and social benefit through an impact assessment complying with International Principles for Social Impact Assessments.
- Council will give preference in approving any potential transfer of EGMs to proposals that do not result in additional venues within the municipality.
- Council will not support planning proposals which are located within convenient walking distance (400m) of strip shopping centres and shopping complexes, community centres, transport hubs and other areas where people go about their daily routines, unless an impact assessment demonstrates that the proposal will deliver net economic and social benefit.
- Notwithstanding the above, Council will give preference to planning proposals for venues located close to other opportunities for social participation and entertainment.
- Council will not support planning proposals near venues where activities are targeting children, families or young people.
- Council will favour planning proposals at venues which offer a variety of recreational opportunities, not just a focus on electronic gaming.
- Council will not support planning proposals for venues that offer extended hours of operation.
- Council will not support a proposal if there are reasonable grounds to consider that the operation of the gaming venue and its associated activities may adversely affect the amenity of the surrounding area, due to the gambling itself, opening hours of the venue, management of patrons, generation of noise or disturbance, or other causes.
- Applications for new venues or additional EGMs should include impact assessments that identify the economic and social impacts on the community. The methodology used should be in accordance with the International Principles for Social Impact Assessments.
- Applications should include a local community consultation process, the methodology of which should be developed in consultation with Council Officers

¹ “adjacent to” is considered to be within convenient walking distance (400m)

² “relative disadvantage” is considered to be CCDs in the lowest quintile (1st & 2nd deciles) using the SEIFA Index of Disadvantage.

2.3. Advocacy

- Council will not support, and will proactively advocate against, the lifting of the local cap of 234 EGMs while the relative losses in the city remain higher than the state wide average.
- Council will support the use of pre-commitment technology.
- Council will advocate for a greater return to the community of funds allocated to the State Government's Community Support Fund.
- Council will advocate for increased transparency in the allocation of the gaming revenue of local clubs to activities that benefit the community.
- Council will support, with information and guidance, efforts of community groups to inform residents about gambling related issues or to advocate for gambling reform.
- Council will participate with other councils in state-wide and regional forums, to exchange information and resources, advocate for gambling reform and collaborate to achieve reductions in gaming losses from EGMs.

2.4. Community Benefit Fund

- Council will work with club gaming venues to facilitate allocation of their community benefit funds on activities that benefit the local community.

2.5. Code of Conduct

- Council will require that all planning proposals incorporate an in-house Responsible Gaming Policy consistent with contemporary standards that aim to minimise problem gambling occurring within the venue.

2.6. Sponsorship

- Council will not seek or approve Council sponsorship of gambling related events.

3. GOVERNANCE

3.1. Owner

Director of Community Development

3.2. Review

The Director of Community Development will review the policy for any necessary amendments no later than 3 years after its formulation or after the last review.

3.3. Compliance Responsibility

i. Executive Management Team

- The Chief Executive & Directors are responsible for ensuring Managers, Supervisors, and Employees, under their control comply with actions detailed in this policy.

ii. Managers and Supervisors

- Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring Employees under their direct control comply with actions detailed in this policy (and related procedures).
- Demonstrate Warrnambool City Council values through being positive role models for this policy.

- Ensure any revised or newly developed policies/procedures are communicated appropriately to all relevant staff

3.4. Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007).

Warrnambool City Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve elected employee health and safety representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.