

10.6 Gaming

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to articulate Council's position in relation to Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs) proposed within, and in close proximity to, the Golden Plains municipality. The policy response will formalise Council's approach to gaming.

It will provide transparency and accountability for Council's overall policy position on gaming which aims to:

1. Acknowledge Council's role in relation to EGM gambling under the *Victorian Gambling Regulations Act 2003* and *Gambling Regulations Amendment Licensing Bill 2009* as a:
 - Responsible Authority: in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* in assessing an application for a planning permit;
 - Referral Authority: where an application for a planning permit is made within a neighbouring municipality and is referred to Golden Plains Shire Council for comment; and
 - Key Stakeholder and Community Advocate: to effectively advocate on behalf of the community on gambling.
2. Discourage the location of gaming machines in disadvantaged areas.
3. Discourage gaming machines in highly accessible locations to minimise opportunities for convenience gambling and the incidence of problem gambling.
4. Locate gaming venues in appropriate locations within the municipality.
5. Reduce the impact of gaming machines on vulnerable communities.
6. Minimise the amenity impacts on existing uses surrounding venues containing gaming machines.

SCOPE

The Golden Plains Shire Gaming Policy has been developed to guide Council decision making in relation to gaming applications within the municipality and is based on the following principles:

- Council does not support EGMs at venues which are situated on land that is owned or managed by Council;
- Council will consider its Gaming Policy in relation to Council owned buildings, the establishment of new contract leases, legal agreements and recreation and leisure policies;
- Gaming is a legal activity within the State of Victoria in licensed venues;
- That gambling is carried out in an environment that minimises the harm gambling can cause; and
- Council will consider the social and economic impacts of any gaming application to determine whether or not it is an appropriate location.

Responsible Gaming Principles:

In line with its commitment to promoting the municipality as "offering lifestyle and opportunities that foster social, economic and environment wellbeing" and its statutory role under the *Local Government Act 1987* to limit disadvantage, the Golden Plains Shire Council will undertake an active role in promoting responsible gaming with venue operators in the municipality.

Council will adopt a primary prevention and harm minimisation approach to reducing the negative impacts of gaming on the community.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

The following policy objectives will guide Council and officers when determining an application or matters directly associated with EGMs:

- To ensure that Council owned facilities do not house EGMs;
- To avoid the risk of exacerbating problem gambling;
- To ensure that the installation or use of electronic gaming machines will not have a detrimental impact on the amenity, culture or character of a community;
- To protect the amenity of existing uses surrounding gaming venues; and
- To define how Council will respond to applications for EGMs and other gaming matters.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. An assessment of the social and economic impacts of the proposal taking into account:
 - a. Existing and proposed distribution of electronic gaming machines in the municipality, and where appropriate adjoining municipalities.
 - b. A comprehensive impact assessment outlining the environmental, economic and social benefits and costs of the proposed gaming machines, including a description of the existing character and culture of the town and the impact on community wellbeing.
 - c. Details of the community benefits expected from the proposal and how the benefits are to be secured and distributed to the local community.
 - d. Details of existing and proposed gambling and non-gambling related entertainment and recreation facilities at the venue, the local area and within the broader 5-10km catchment.
 - e. The distance to shopping complexes and strip shopping centres, community facilities, counselling services and public transport.
 - f. A venue management plan identifying strategies to manage patron behaviour and minimise problem gambling, including the applicant's responsible gaming practices.
 - g. Assessment as to whether the proposal will have a positive, neutral or detrimental impact on the community.
2. Proposals for transfer of EGMs from one part of the municipality to another:
 - a. Details of the relative social and economic differences between the areas.
 - b. An explanation as to why the EGMs are being transferred.
3. Proposal for transfer of gaming expenditure:
 - a. Particulars as to how the level of transfer has been calculated (including, but not limited to, comparison per machine expenditure at the venue prior to and then after the additional machines, current usage levels of machines at the venue, projected usage level of machines at the venue after the additional machines).
 - b. The amount of transfer expenditure anticipated.
 - c. The resulting impact on revenue of the venue from where the expenditure is transferred.
 - d. The resulting impact on the venue from where the expenditure is transferred (such as loss of employment, loss of complementary expenditure, loss of customers, impact on ability to provide services, etc.).
4. Details of the design and layout of the premises including all proposed and existing signage and evidence of compliance with any relevant gaming regulations concerning premises layout, design and operation (neon signage).