

OFFICERS' ADVICE**POKIES FREE HAWTHORN FOOTBALL CLUB** Submitting

Councillor: Crs Fergeus, Lake and James

MOTION

That Council:

- i) Congratulates the Melbourne Football Club on their plan to withdraw the club from any financial interests attached to the gaming industry;*
- ii) Notes the long relationship between the Hawthorn Football Club and the City of Monash;*
- iii) Notes that venues associated with the Hawthorn Football Club were responsible for more pokies losses than any other AFL Club in the 2016-17 financial year¹, topping \$23.9 million;*
- iv) Notes that \$10.86 million of pokies losses occurred at the Hawthorn Football Club gaming venue Vegas at Waverley Gardens in the 2016-17 financial year; and*
- v) Calls on the Hawthorn Football Club to follow the example of the Melbourne Football Club and withdraw the club from any financial interests attached to the gaming industry.*

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

A commitment to advocacy in reducing gambling-related harm is ongoing within the Community Strengthening team. This is delivered within Council's existing budget through existing officer time.

Council's ongoing advocacy to reduce gambling-related harm focuses on preventative health measures. The intention of these efforts is to reduce ongoing costs associated with primary care and other support provided to community members impacted by gambling, both financially and with regard to mental and physical health services.

Any additional budget implications as a result of this motion will be managed through existing operating budgets.

If Hawthorn Football Club were to follow Melbourne Football Club's lead and not renew its current gaming entitlements within Vegas at Waverley Gardens, this could dramatically reduce the total money lost in City of Monash through Electronic Gaming Machines (EGM's), which was over \$109 million in 16/17.

IMPACT ON INTERNAL RESOURCES

This project will be managed by existing staff resources within the Community Strengthening department with support from local stakeholder organisations where applicable.

¹ http://www.pokiesplayyou.org.au/afl_fact_sheet

COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

This motion is in line with City of Monash's existing stance on gambling-related harm, as shown in the *Public Health Approach to Gambling Strategy 2016-2020*. Advocacy on this issue aligns with Council's prior advocacy efforts regarding industry reform and the minimisation of gambling-related harm.

This motion also strongly aligns with Council's 'A Healthy and Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan 2017 - 2021'. In particular, the recommendations support the priority *Active & Healthy*, which seeks 'A city dedicated to optimal health and wellbeing for its community'. Actions stated within this plan include: Improving the health and resilience of individuals and communities through proactive services and programs; and advocate to limit gambling-related harm. By advocating for Hawthorn Football Club to withdraw from any financial interests attached to the gaming industry this action, by extension, will contribute to building healthy lifestyles and support the prevention of harm.

RELEVANCE TO WORK ALREADY UNDERTAKEN BY OFFICERS OR COMMITTEES

The City of Monash has a history of state-wide leadership in the prevention of gambling-harm because of our continued work in delivering successful projects, policy and advocacy. Monash City Council has previously taken a firm stance around minimising gambling-related harm in the local community, which includes the impact of EGM's. Monash Council continues to challenge the rhetoric that venues with EGM's provide a community benefit, given the total losses and evidence of localised harm caused by gambling within the Monash community.

Hawthorn Football club is in a position of high influence within the City of Monash. It not only owns and operates Vegas at Waverley Gardens, but has a direct relationship with our community due to its residence at Waverley Park and long-standing history with the local area. This influence can also be seen through the local junior football club of the same name, the Waverley Park Hawks which reside in Wheelers Hill and field a number of both boys' and girls' teams.