

**STRENGTHENING THE RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING CODE OF CONDUCT****OFFICERS' REPORT**

Submitting Councillor: Cr Fergeus

**MOTION**

*That Council:*

- 1) Notes that the Victorian Government is currently reviewing the Responsible Gambling Code of Conduct for EGM venues in line with a 2018 election commitment and that the Gaming Minister is expected to announce the outcome of this review in the coming weeks.*
- 2) Notes that harm from gambling is a public health issue and that Council supports reform in order to protect the local community from gambling harm, including strengthening of the Responsible Gambling Code of conduct for EGM venues.*
- 3) Publicly supports reform of the EGM venue codes of conduct so that:*
  - a) All venue staff are prohibited from engaging in activities aimed at increasing the amount of money people lose.*
  - b) All venue staff be required to monitor people gambling to identify signs a person is being harmed by gambling. Further, venue staff should be required to intervene and offer assistance to people displaying signs they are being harmed by their gambling.*
  - c) Introduce mandatory breaks and maximum daily limits on gambling time.*
  - d) The Code forbids the provision of free drinks (excluding water) in the pokies area of the venues and encourages people to take a break by having to go to other parts of the venue for food and drinks.*
  - e) The Code should prohibit the giving of gifts, inducements or any other item of value to people who are gambling.*
  - f) The Code requires pokie venues to assist in any research around reducing gambling-related harm that has been approved by the Victorian Government.*
- 4) Writes to the Hon Marlene Kairouz MP, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming & Liquor Regulation to communicate Council's support for these reforms to the venue code of conduct.*
- 5) Writes to our local members of State parliament encouraging them to support these reforms.*

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

***IMPACT ON INTERNAL RESOURCES***

The impact on resources will be minimal. Encouraging the State Government to revise the Responsible Gambling Code of Conduct with the specific requests outlined within this motion, are aligned with our current advocacy work. This includes the 'Pokies Play Monash' campaign which aims to reduce gambling harm locally and mobilise the community. This motion also aligns with current work through our research projects with Deakin University.

Feedback from residents within this research project has outlined large support for council to advocate towards local venues with licences to operate Electronic Gaming Machines being held more accountable and provide a safe environment for patrons.

***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.

Council has historically taken a firm stance to minimise gambling-related harm (including harm as a result of Electronic Gaming Machines) in the local community. Through this approach, Monash City Council challenges the rhetoric that venues which have EGM's provide a community benefit given the amount of localised harm that can be caused.

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.

***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 and policy. Advocacy on this issue aligns with Council's prior advocacy efforts regarding industry reform and the minimisation of gambling-related harm. It also compliments the key asks of the 'Pokies Play Monash' campaign that was launched in 2018.