

OFFICERS' REPORT**POKIES FREE HAWTHORN FOOTBALL CLUB**

Submitting Councillor: Cr Fergeus

MOTION

That Council:

- i) Congratulates the Collingwood 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; and write requesting to meet with the Hawthorn Football Club board about their potential exit from the gaming industry;*
- iii) Notes that venues associated with the Hawthorn Football Club continue to be responsible for more pokies losses than any other AFL Club in the 2017-18 financial year¹, topping \$24.3 million;*
- iv) Notes that \$10.95 million of pokies losses occurred at the Hawthorn Football Club gaming venue Vegas at Waverley Gardens Mulgrave in the 2017-18 financial year; and*
- v) Highlights a potential conflict in commitments and comments made by Jeff Kennett, President of the Hawthorn Football Club in relation to the exposure of their fans and members to sports betting, whilst still operating Electronic Gaming Machine venues.*

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

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

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.

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.