

OFFICER REPORT**ROYAL COMMISSION INTO THE GAMBLING INDUSTRY**

Submitting Councilor: The Mayor, Cr Stuart James

MOTION

That Council:

1. Notes that a motion supporting a Royal Commission into the gambling industry was supported by an overwhelming majority of Councils at the 2019 Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA), including Monash, and that point 2 of this resolution mirrors that adopted motion

2. Calls on the Federal Government to:

a. Establish a Royal Commission into the gambling industry and the \$24 billion in annual gambling losses nationally, the highest in the world in per capita terms.

b. Embrace national harm minimisation policies to reduce gambling harm in Australia, such as:

i) Supporting a ban on credit card usage with Australian licensed online gambling companies;

ii) Introducing further restrictions on gambling advertising, emulating the approach taken with the tobacco industry;

iii) Establishing a national ombudsman scheme to process consumer complaints and resolve customer disputes with online gambling companies;

iv) Introducing a ban on federally registered political parties from owning gambling licenses issued by Australian governments, including for the operation of poker machine venues.

3. Calls on the Federal Government, with the support of ALGA, to investigate the gambling industry's influence on the democratic process, including political donations and third-party campaigning.

4. Resolves not to accept any corporate sponsorship for Council based activities from gambling/gaming entities, without exception

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

A commitment to advocacy in reducing gambling-related harm is ongoing within the City of Monash. This is delivered within Council's existing budget.

IMPACT ON INTERNAL RESOURCES

This project will be managed by existing staff resources within the Community Strengthening department.

COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

This motion focuses on harm minimisation strategies, which are 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*.

Any advocacy for the harm-minimisation around gambling activities aligns with current work being undertaken by officers, and within the current policy.

Officers note that motion 2d) '*Introducing a ban on federally registered political parties from owning gambling licenses issued by Australian governments, including for the operation of poker machine venues*' is outside the scope of our currently endorsed *Public Health Approach to Gambling strategy 2016-2020* and will require further exploration.

RELEVANCE TO WORK ALREADY UNDERTAKEN BY OFFICERS OR COMMITTEES

The *Public Health Approach to Gambling Strategy 2016-2020* has a focus on reducing gambling-related harm. Mentioned within the motion 2c) '*Establishing a national ombudsman scheme to process consumer complaints and resolve customer disputes with online gambling companies*' would support the changing landscape in which we work.

Writing a letter to Federal Government for any measures that promote the reduction of gambling harm locally, including calling for a Royal Commission, is supportive of work already undertaken by Officers within the gambling portfolio. As a leadership Council within the Alliance For Gambling Reform this request is consistent with Council's advocacy.

If the Notice of Motion is supported, Officers will work together with the Alliance For Gambling Reform, Frankston City Council and the VLGA to explore a combined effort from local Councils and the alliance.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Nil