



Rationale

The aim of this policy is to assist Council to understand the social and economic impact on the community and the local economy, so they can assess Electronic Gaming Machine (EGM) applications in a considered and transparent way in order to minimise harm to the community.

Council recognises the important role of local government in protecting communities from the risks and harm associated with gaming.

While gambling is a legitimate industry and plays a significant role in the Victorian economy, there is strong evidence that gambling can adversely affect some individuals, their families, friends and communities. The social and economic impacts associated with problem gambling include health and emotional problems, family breakdown, financial hardship and gambling-related crime, leading to significant costs for the individuals, the community, business and government at all levels.

Terms & Definitions

Council – Baw Baw Shire Council.

Responsible Gaming - (as defined by the Gambling Regulation Act 2003)

- Gaming refers to gambling activity on Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs).
- Responsible gambling is the provision of gambling in a way that seeks to minimise harm to the community.

Harm Minimisation - (as defined by the Victorian Local Government Association)

- A Harm Minimisation approach involves putting measures in place to promote other forms of recreation, to protect more vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, and to reduce the harm gambling can cause.

Legislative and Organisational Context

- Gambling Regulation Act 2003
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Local Government Act 1989
- Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation Bill 2011

Policy

Council is committed to minimising the harmful effects of electronic gaming.

It is Councils policy to:

- Discourage new gaming machines in disadvantaged areas.
- Support the cap of 299 EGMs for the municipality.
- Prohibit the installation of gaming machines in shopping complexes, strip shopping centres or in any Council owned facility in line with Cause 52.28 Gaming of the Planning Scheme.
- Request EGM applicants to consider the potential social and economic impacts of gaming in new applications.
- Request EGM applicants to minimise opportunities for convenience gaming and the incidence of problem gambling, and to offer non-gaming entertainment and recreation activities.
- Request that EGM venues participate in the Gambler's Help Venue Support Program
- Require that Council's written agreement be obtained prior to the distribution of annual community contributions from all gaming operations.
- Exercise Council's right to make submissions to the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation where it believes an increase in the number of EGMs may be detrimental to the community.

Additional Documents

- Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (July 2012) *Inquiry into the Social and Economic Costs of Problem Gambling in Victoria*
- Victorian Local Government Association (2012) *Pokies Assessments: A 'how-to' guide*

Effective Date	September, 2013
Next Review Date	TBC
Responsible Position	Manager Community Strengthening