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GAMING

This Policy applies to all applications for the installation and use of gaming machines.

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Policy Basis

Greater Geelong has a high overall density of gaming machines and level of expenditure exceeding the Melbourne and State averages. Existing machines are distributed unevenly across the municipality with the highest concentrations in Breakwater, Moolap, North Geelong, Norlane, Portarlington, Waurn Ponds and Corio – a number of which are the most disadvantaged areas in Greater Geelong. Consequently, the State Government has capped the entire Greater Geelong region, including the adjacent Borough of Queenscliffe in the south east.

Research has concluded that there are links between social disadvantage, problem gambling and proximity to gaming venues. Although gaming machines may be accessible to the community as a form of entertainment, they should not be convenient so that a pre-determined decision is required to gamble.

Furthermore the location of gaming machines should account for the socio-economic characteristics of the municipality. A number of areas within Greater Geelong are particularly disadvantaged, and can therefore least afford the potential harmful effects of gaming.

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Objectives

To avoid the risk of exacerbating problem gambling.

To protect the operations and amenity of existing uses surrounding gaming venues.

To ensure that the area, site and venue characteristics contribute to net community benefit.

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Policy

It is policy that proposals for gaming machines are assessed against the following criteria:

Appropriate Areas

Gaming machines should be located in areas:

- Where they will contribute to a redistribution of gaming machines away from disadvantaged areas as defined by the SEIFA (Socio Economic Indicators for Areas) index of Relative Disadvantage.
- Where the community has a choice of non-gaming entertainment and recreation activities and established social infrastructure, some of which operate during the times that the proposed gaming machines will operate in the local area.
- Where socio-economic disadvantage is relatively lower.
- Where the electronic gaming machine density of the locality and its catchment is equal to or below the overall municipal average.
- Where the population is growing or expected to grow. In these areas gaming machines should not be established ahead of the provision of non-gambling entertainment, recreation activities and social infrastructure.

Gaming machines should not be located in areas:

- Where socio-economic disadvantage is high, as defined by the SEIFA index of Relative Disadvantage.
- Identified for growth where the density of machines exceeds 10 gaming machines per 1,000 adults in the relevant postcode.

Appropriate sites

Gaming machines should be located on sites:

- That minimise the likelihood of people passing the venue in the course of their usual business or every day activities.
- Near activity centres, or at a sports or recreation club with a land holding of more than 2 hectares.

In respect of machines near activity centres, gaming machines should be located on sites:

- Close to an activity centre that serves more than a local catchment.
- At the periphery of the activity centres, outside of the main transport, shopping, community and civic functions of the centre.

Appropriate venues

Gaming machines should be located in venues that:

- Promote non-gaming activities that increase net community benefit.
- Offer social, entertainment or recreational opportunities other than gaming as the primary purpose of the venue.
- Have a range of entertainment and leisure options.
- Promote responsible gaming practices.

Gaming machines should not be located in venues that:

- Have gaming floor area of more than 25 per cent of the total floor area of the venue.
- Have 24 hour-a-day operation.
- Are located within a prohibited area identified in Clause 52.28.

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Application requirements

It is policy to require applications to include the following information:

- Details about the existing and proposed distribution of electronic gaming machines in the municipality, and where appropriate adjoining municipalities.
- A robust assessment of the social and economic benefits and dis-benefits of the proposed electronic gaming machines.
- Details of the nature and extent of community benefits expected from the proposal and how the benefits are to be secured and distributed to the local community.
- If relevant, details of existing gaming expenditure at the venue (over a 3 year period prior to the application) and a forecast of the anticipated expenditure at the venue if the proposal was to be approved.
- Details of existing and proposed gambling and non-gambling related entertainment and recreation facilities at the venue and within the local area.
- If electronic gaming machines are to be relocated from other venues, the likely social and economic impact of the proposal on those venues and the local area within which those venues are located.
- If the Applicant contends that gaming expenditure is likely to be transferred from other venues, the Applicant is to provide:
 - Particulars as to how the level of transfer has been calculated (including, but not limited to, comparison per machine expenditure at the venue prior to and then after the additional machines, current usage levels of machines at the venue, projected usage level of machines at the venue after the additional machines).

- The amount of transfer expenditure anticipated.
- The resulting impact on revenue of the venue from where the expenditure is transferred.
- The resulting impact on the venue from where the expenditure is transferred (such as loss of employment, loss of complementary expenditures, loss of customers, impact on ability to provide services etc).
- If it is proposed to move electronic gaming machines from one part of the municipality to another, details of the relative social and economic differences between the two suburbs or small towns.
- An explanation as to why the electronic gaming machines are being transferred is to be provided.
- The relative socio-economic disadvantage of the local suburb or neighbourhood and the broader catchment of the venue in comparison to the Melbourne and Victorian average in the SEIFA index of Relative Disadvantage.
- A venue management plan identifying strategies to manage patron behaviour and minimise problem gambling in relation to the design and management of the venue, including the applicant's responsible gaming practices.
- Details of the design and layout of the premises including all proposed signage and evidence of compliance with the relevant gaming regulations for premises layout and design.
- Details of what gaming and non-gaming entertainment and recreation venues and social infrastructure exist within 5km of the venue.
- The distance to shopping complexes and strip shopping centres, community facilities, counselling services and public transport.
- Pedestrian counts outside the proposed venue on different days and at a variety of times.

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Decision guidelines

Before deciding on an application the responsible authority must consider as appropriate:

- Whether the proposal will cause a redistribution of gaming machines away from areas of relatively high socio-economic disadvantage within the capped region.
- The net community benefit to be derived from the application.
- Whether approval is likely to increase the socio-economic disadvantage of the local community.
- Whether the location of the gaming machines or gaming premises will facilitate or discourage convenience gaming.
- Whether the venue is accessible by a variety of transport modes.
- Whether the venue offers a range of entertainment, leisure or recreation options.
- Whether residents will have a choice between entertainment and recreation venues with and without gambling in the local area, as well as established social infrastructure.
- The impact of the proposal on the amenity of the area and surrounding land uses.

References

Greater Geelong Gaming Policy Framework, City of Greater Geelong 2007