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GAMING POLICY

This policy applies to all applications which require a permit to install or use a gaming machine or to use land for the purpose of gaming.

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Policy Basis

Clause 52.28 of the Monash Planning Scheme requires that a planning permit be granted prior to the use and installation of gaming machines. This policy will guide decision making by setting out criteria for the location of gaming venues.

Monash 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 high concentrations in the most disadvantaged areas in Monash.

This policy is based on evidence that there are links between vulnerable communities, problem gambling and proximity to gaming venues. This policy seeks to discourage the location of gaming machines that are proximate to vulnerable communities and seeks to ensure that the location of gaming machines minimises opportunities for convenience gaming.

Taking into account specific characteristics of the local community that make it vulnerable to the negative impacts of gaming, this policy guides the location of gaming machines to appropriate areas, sites and venues. Despite the municipality's overall level of advantage and socio-economic status, parts of the City of Monash's residential population are disadvantaged in socio-economic terms. In addition, multiple community support services and community facilities are relied upon by the community particularly the disadvantaged and those vulnerable to the potentially harmful effects of gaming. Given these characteristics, the basis of the policy is to discourage gaming machines in disadvantaged areas and in locations that are convenient to vulnerable communities.

For the purposes of this policy, social (community and public) housing means housing for people on lower incomes that is owned or leased by the Department of Housing, registered housing associations or not-for-profit housing organisations.

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Objectives

- To minimise harm from gaming and the incidence of problem gambling.
- To discourage the location of gaming machines in, and proximate to, disadvantaged areas and vulnerable communities.
- To minimise opportunities for convenience gaming and the incidence of problem gambling.
- To protect the amenity of existing uses surrounding venues containing gaming machines.

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Policy

It is policy to locate gaming machines in accordance with 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 of the local community and catchment area in a 2.5km radius of the venue location is relatively lower.

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- Where the electronic gaming machine density of the locality and its catchment is equal to or below the overall municipal average.

Gaming machines should not be located in areas:

- Where socio-economic disadvantage of the local community and catchment area in a 2.5km radius of the venue location is high, as defined by the SEIFA index of Relative Disadvantage.
- Within the same buildings as residential dwellings.
- Within 400 metres walking distance of locations with, or concentrations of, support/referral services and welfare agencies servicing vulnerable communities.
- Within 400 metres walking distance of social (public and community) housing developments:
 - with 50 or more dwellings; or
 - where a cluster of social housing exceeds 50 dwellings.

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.
- Venues with extended opening hours. That is they are open before 9:00am and/or remain open after 1:00am..
- Are located within a prohibited area identified in Clause 52.28.
- Have significant adverse amenity impacts on the adjoining land uses as a result of operating hours, traffic, noise, car parking, safety and security.

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Application requirements

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

All applications must include the following information to the satisfaction of the responsible authority:

- Details about the existing and proposed distribution and density of gaming machines in the municipality and its neighbourhoods.

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- 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.
- 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.
- If an application includes a reduction in the number of car parking spaces required in Clause 52.06, a Traffic Impact Assessment and Parking Report which assesses the existing traffic demand and parking provision and the need for improved traffic and pedestrian amenity, including any additional car parking based on the number of gaming machines proposed and likely additional venue patron numbers generated by this use.
- An assessment of the social and economic benefits and disadvantages of the proposed gaming machines including:

Socio-economic impacts

- An analysis of the venue's projected patron catchment and its socio-economic profile. The analysis should include justification and details of the projected catchment area.
- If it is proposed to move gaming machines from one part of the municipality to another, details of the relative social and economic differences between the two areas. An explanation of why the 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 with the Melbourne and Victorian average in the SEIFA index of Relative Disadvantage.

Location assessment

- Characteristics of the local area including the location of and walking distance to shopping complexes and strip shopping centres, community facilities, welfare services, early childhood centres, schools, health services, social housing, counselling services and public transport.
- Details of existing and proposed gambling and non-gambling related entertainment and recreation facilities and activities at the venue and within 2.5km of the venue.
- Pedestrian counts outside the venue on different days and at a variety of times.

Gaming machine impact

- Details of existing gaming expenditure at the venue over a 3 year period prior to the application (if relevant) and a one year forecast of the anticipated gaming expenditure at the venue if the proposal was to be approved.
- If gaming machines are to be relocated from other venues, and as a result gaming expenditure is likely to be transferred from other venues:
 - Particulars as to how the level of transfer has been calculated (including, but not limited to, a comparison of per machine expenditure at the venue prior to and 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).

Analysis and net community impact

- Assessment of key social and economic issues and overall net community impact.
- 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.
- Measures to mitigate any negative impacts.
- Permission for Council to survey patrons exiting the venue at any time after application is submitted.
- Applicant provide an academically rigorous representative social impact survey from residents and businesses within a 2.5km radius of the venue. The survey should measure current and anticipated levels of community satisfaction (ie. happiness, contentment, wellbeing) from living in the local area and having regard to the application with information on anticipated losses to players per year included in the preamble.

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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 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.
- Whether the application is likely to minimise harm from gaming and avoid a detrimental net social and economic impact upon the local community.
- Whether approval is likely to increase the socio-economic disadvantage of the local community or have other adverse impacts on vulnerable communities.
- Whether the proposal will result in a redistribution of gaming machines away from vulnerable communities and areas of relatively high socio-economic disadvantage.
- Whether the proposed use or development will have an impact upon the amenity of the area and surrounding uses as a result of traffic and parking, crowd or patron related noise, hours of operation, and/or an increase in the intensity of the use due to an increase in patron numbers.

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References

Monash Responsible Gambling Strategy (2012-2015), City of Monash