


## Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy

<b>Date of Adoption</b>	16 September 2024		
<b>Adoption Method</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council	<input type="checkbox"/> CEO	<input type="checkbox"/> Other ( <i>please specify</i> )
<b>CEO Signature</b>			<b>Date</b> 19 September 2024
<b>Responsible Officer and Unit</b>	Manager Community Strengthening		
<b>Nominated Review Period</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Annually	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Every 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Other ( <i>please specify</i> )
<b>Last Endorsement Date</b>	Not applicable (replaces Electronic Gaming Machine (Pokies) Community Policy 2009)		
<b>Next Endorsement Date</b>	16 September 2028		

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

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# Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy

## Purpose

This policy outlines Council's commitment to minimising harm from gambling within the Macedon Ranges. It replaces Council's Electronic Gaming Machine (Pokies) Community Policy 2009.

## Objective

The policy's objectives are to minimise the negative social and economic impacts of gambling on the Macedon Ranges community.

## Role of Council

Council's policy direction focuses on four key roles in relation to minimising gambling harms:

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Lead:                 | Council will provide leadership by clearly stating its position on gambling and setting an example through actions in relevant strategic documents.                                 |
| Regulate:             | Within Council's sphere of influence, it will regulate to reduce gambling harms.  |
| Advocate and partner: | Where appropriate, Council will partner with key stakeholders and advocate to state and federal governments and institutions to legislate and/or regulate to reduce gambling harms. |
| Inform:               | Council will keep the community informed and raise awareness about gambling harms that might affect them.   |

## Policy

Council will:

### Lead

1. Acknowledge gambling as a public health issue and, where appropriate, integrate harm minimisation into future planning and programming. This includes the Council Plan, the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, and the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme.
2. Continue to promote a variety of non-gambling events, activities and programs that encourage residents to lead active and healthy lives.
3. Not provide financial support or provision of grants for activities that take place in gambling venues.
4. Not provide Council financial support or provision of grants for a specific activity that also receives sponsorships from gaming venues, online betting companies or other gambling providers for that same activity in that financial year. [This policy position is to become effective from 1 July 2025 to allow community groups time to transition]
5. Not accept any financial or in-kind contributions from gambling or electronic gaming machine (EGM) operators.
6. Not organise any Council meetings, functions or programs in venues with EGMs.

### Regulate

1. Assess the social and economic impact of EGM approval applications and represent community interests in regulatory processes.
2. Review the provisions of the Schedule to Clause 52.28 as part of Council's next Planning Scheme Review required under section 12B(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, to make recommendations on the alignment between any gambling related policy and the Council's Planning Scheme.
3. Discourage new or additional EGMs in communities and settlements where there are minimal or no alternative forms of recreation.
4. Not permit new or additional EGMs on Council owned or managed land.

5. Provide guidance and avenues of support for current EGM licence holders leasing Council owned or managed land to relinquish their EGM licence and divest themselves of EGMs.
6. Where a Council lease holder with EGMs has a lease due for renewal, Council will actively engage with the leaseholder two years before expiry of that lease to discuss the implementation of this policy. Should the lessee renew the lease, the new lease will clearly state the conditions and timing for the divestment of EGMs, which is to commence no later than five years into the new lease and conclude at a maximum period of ten years.
7. Not permit new or additional advertising and/or the promotion of gambling of any form at Council owned or managed facilities. Council will support clubs to exit existing sponsorship arrangements that involve the advertising or promotion of gambling.
8. Prevent access to gambling websites and explore options to block advertising from major online gambling companies on Council's information technology resources used by staff and the community.
9. Work with current community groups to divest themselves of gambling related sponsors and advertising arrangements.

### **Advocate and partner**

1. Advocate to the state government to freeze the municipal EGM cap in the Macedon Ranges to the current number of machines.
2. Advocate to state and federal governments for regulatory and legislative reforms that minimise gambling harm from all forms of gambling in local communities.
3. Partner with other local government organisations, local government peak bodies and gambling networks to advocate for reforms that minimise gambling harm.
4. Consider making a submission on any EGM licence application for new gaming venues or additional EGMs in adjacent municipalities that are located within 15 kilometres of the municipal border.
5. Partner with key local community health and support agencies to minimise gambling harm in the Macedon Ranges.
6. Engage and partner with local communities to explore solutions that minimise gambling harm in their local communities.

7. Work with sporting clubs to deliver gambling free environments including online betting and gambling sponsorship and advertising.
8. Work with research bodies to understand the impact of gambling on the local community and specific community groups, including young people, women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

## **Inform**

1. Apply a public health lens to all gambling-related communication.
2. Provide public notice to the community when there is an application for new gaming premises approval or the addition of EGMs at a gaming venue, and consult to understand the community's view.
3. Raise awareness of the gambling harms occurring locally by communicating gambling losses, EGM numbers, gambling prevalence, current public health research and health and wellbeing impact.
4. Support and promote gambling support services and programs in local communities, including specialist services for diverse community groups.

## Gender Impact Assessment

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment has been conducted in relation to the subject matter of this policy.

This assessment involved a review of the impact of gender and intersectionality on experiences of gambling harm and implications for gambling harm minimisation. This was followed by a review of each of the four key roles in relation to minimising gambling harms outlined in this policy and the extent to which gender, intersectionality and accessibility had been considered and addressed.

In summary, research has shown that women are disproportionately impacted by gambling harms, whether this be through their own gambling behaviour or the gambling behaviour of intimate partners or family. The impact of gender and intersectionality on experiences of gambling harm and approaches to minimisation can be divided into five key areas; women and gender diversity; family and intimate partner violence; children and young people; intersectionality and the gambling environment. Research in each of these areas highlighted the impact of socio-cultural, environmental and industry factors on attitudes towards gambling, awareness of risk and experiences of gambling harm. These considerations have been addressed under the key roles of Advocate and Partner (dot points 5-8) and Inform (dot points 3-4) in this policy.

It is also recommended that implementation of all actions related to Council's four key roles in this policy consider the following to ensure this policy contributes to a safer and more equitable environment for women and girls, people of different ages, cultural identities, First Nation's people, and people with disabilities:

- The impact of gender, gender norms and structures on experiences of gambling harm.
- The correlation between family and intimate partner violence and gambling harm.
- The importance women's participation in decision-making.
- The impact of gender and intersectional characteristics on experiences of gambling harm and the need for partnership, collaboration and co-design to implement safe and appropriate minimisation and response actions.
- The correlation between gambling environments that serve multiple purposes (e.g. social, community and sporting venues) and awareness of risk and experiences of gambling harm, particularly for women and children.

## Definitions

Term	Definition
People harmed by gambling	Terminology shift from 'problem gambling' to refer to people experiencing harm as a result of gambling, to recognise responsibility of gambling industry.
Safer gambling	Shift from 'responsible gambling', to include responsibility of gambling industry policies and protocols in implementing protective factors.
Gambling harms	Refers to any and all harms experienced as a result of gambling, including monetary loss, mental health and wellbeing, relationships, work and social outcomes.
Gambling	For the purposes of this policy 'gambling' refers to activities involving electronic gaming machines, casino games, lotteries, race betting, sports betting and similar activities. It excludes activities such as card games, raffles, sports tipping competitions, sweeps and bingo for club social activities and fundraising.
Gambling losses	Refers to monies spent on gambling that is not returned in winnings.
Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMS)	Refers to gaming machines as defined by the <i>Gambling Regulation Act 2003</i> .



## References

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- > Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (2018). *Reducing gambling harm in First Nations communities – a guide for health workers*.
- > Women's Health in the North. *Understanding the link between Family Violence and Gambling: Information for Local Government*. Melbourne, Australia.

## Related Policies

- > Council Plan 2021-2032
- > Electronic Gaming Machine (Pokies) Community Policy 2009
- > Community Engagement Policy 2022
- > Macedon Ranges Planning Policy Framework
- > Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
- > Macedon Ranges Statement of Planning Policy
- > Victorian State Government Planning Policy Framework
- > Wyndham City Council, Gambling Harm Minimisation Policy and Action Plan 2018-2022
- > City of Greater Bendigo, Reducing Harm from Gambling Policy, 2021

## Related Legislation

- > *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- > *Gambling Regulation Act 2003*
- > *Gambling Regulation (Pre-commitment and Loyalty Scheme) Regulations 2014*
- > *Gambling Regulations 2015*
- > *Gambling Regulation Amendment (Gaming Machine Arrangements) Act 2017*
- > *Gambling Legislation Amendment Act 2018*
- > *Local Government Act 2020*