



The City of Whitehorse
Responsible Gambling Policy 2011

Executive Summary

This policy outlines the City of Whitehorse's position on Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs) within the municipality. It builds on the previous *Responsible Gambling Policy and Action Plan (2004-2006)* and the substantial work that Council has undertaken over the past five years in this arena.

Council's overarching policy position is that it has a responsibility to minimise the harmful and negative impacts of EGMs in the local community. This includes but is not limited to preventing increases in gambling opportunities within the local area.

The following table outlines the approach Council will take to address gambling in the municipality.

Role	Approach
Land use planning	Council will develop a Local Planning Policy for inclusion in the Local Planning Scheme. This will complement and reflect the policy basis and statements contained within the <i>Whitehorse Responsible Gambling Policy 2011</i> .
	Council require all applicants to demonstrate that their proposal will have a net community benefit. This involves provision of specific information as contained in <i>Section 5. Information required by Applicants</i> .
	Council will undertake a review (independent, peer or otherwise) of the social and economic impact assessment submitted by the applicant and consider this in their Planning Permit assessment.
Contributing to licensing process	Where Council considers that a proposal will be detrimental to the economic and social wellbeing of the community, Council will submit a social and economic impact assessment to the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation.
Landownership and lease agreements	Council will not permit EGMs on Council owned or controlled land.
Advocacy and partnership	Council will advocate for the provision of adequately funded and readily available support services for people affected directly or indirectly by gambling.
	Council will advocate to improve consumer protection measures, strengthen legislative controls and reform industry practices when they are shown to be deficient. This includes supporting mandatory pre-commitment.
	Council will work in collaboration with the State Government and other key bodies/regional networks on EGM related issues.
	Council will work with local venue operators to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss issues of mutual concern, including business development, responsible business practices and marketing strategies; - Ensure venue operators offer a range of entertainment, recreation and leisure activities in addition to gambling.
	Council will promote and support agencies that deliver gambling support services in the local community.
	Council will continue to support emergency relief and counselling agencies to provide assistance to those people affected by gambling.
	Council will collaborate with culturally specific agencies to address support issues for migrant groups.
Community engagement and alternate activities	Council will promote and provide a range of social, cultural and recreational opportunities in the City.
	Council will provide a mechanism for gaining feedback from local residents, businesses and community groups on gambling industry applications before Council.
	Council will support community forums for discussion about gambling related issues.
Research	Council will, where appropriate, participate in local research and education programs related to EGMs, problem gambling, access to gambling, and links between gambling and migration/settlement issues.
	Council will, where appropriate, help further research to inform leisure/social programs

Role	Approach
	for potentially marginalised and marginalised people in the community.
	Council will support research within the community about problem gambling, access to gambling and migration/settlement issues.

1. City of Whitehorse Responsible Gambling Policy 2011

This policy outlines the City of Whitehorse's position on Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs) within the municipality. It builds on the previous *Responsible Gambling Policy and Action Plan (2004-2006)* and the substantial work that Council has undertaken over the past five years in this arena. While Council's position and focus on gambling remains much the same, this updated Policy reflects legislative changes and the expansion of Local Government's role in relation to EGMs. The Policy should be read in conjunction with the City of Whitehorse's Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS).

Refer to Appendix A – *Responsible Gambling Policy Background Paper* for information about Gambling in the City of Whitehorse and Victoria.

2. Policy Basis

The Whitehorse City Council *Responsible Gambling Policy 2011* is based on the following:

- a. EGM gambling is a legal recreational activity in Victoria.
- b. EGMs can have significant social, economic and health impacts on individuals, families and communities. These impacts are felt disproportionately by different segments of the community and more vulnerable groups tend to sustain the biggest losses.
- c. There is a high level of community concern about the negative impacts of gaming machines in the City of Whitehorse¹ (Refer to Appendix B – Whitehorse Gambling Impact Study 2003).

Council's overarching policy position is that it has a responsibility to minimise the harmful and negative impacts of EGMs in the local community. This includes but is not limited to preventing increases in gambling opportunities within the local area.

3. Policy

It is policy is to:

- Ensure that the social and economic impacts of EGMs are considered in assessing applications for new venues or variations to the number of machines at existing venues;
- Ensure that the operation of gambling in Whitehorse delivers a net community benefit;
- Ensure that the location and design of EGMs minimises the incidence of problem gambling. This includes prohibiting venues in shopping centres or at shopping strips to minimise opportunities for convenience gambling (as stipulated in Clause 52.28 of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme);
- Ensure gambling premises offer a range of non-gambling entertainment and recreation activities rather than be stand alone gambling premises;
- Ensure that the operation, location and design of gambling premises does not have a negative impact on the amenity, character, community values and safety of the area.

4. Council's Role & Approach

Council will work to minimise the negative effects of EGMs through:

1. Land use planning;

¹ A population survey undertaken as part of the Whitehorse Gambling Impact Study (2003) found that about three quarters of people considered EGMs to be a serious social problem. Almost 12 percent of people said that someone in their household had a gambling problem.

2. Contributing to the licensing process;
3. Landownership and lease agreements;
4. Advocacy and partnership;
5. Community engagement and alternate activities;
6. Research.

This is elaborated on in the table below.

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	programs related to EGMs, problem gambling, access to gambling, and links between gambling and migration/settlement issues.
	Council will, where appropriate, help further research to inform leisure/social programs for potentially marginalised and marginalised people in the community.
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5. Information required by Applicants

Any application to Whitehorse City Council for a Planning Permit for a new venue or to increase EGM numbers in an existing venue will be required to include a robust impact assessment of the social and economic benefits and risks of the proposal. Factors to be included in this assessment are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 – Factors to be included in impact assessment

Factor	Information required
Locational features	Description of the gambling venue and its proposed location. Details about the existing and proposed distribution of EGMs in the municipality.
Patron profile	Social and demographic profile of the current and/or anticipated patrons of the gambling venue including how the profile and conclusions about patrons were reached. Rationale for the patron catchment based on established patterns of movement by local residents and visitors. Supporting evidence (such as attendance records) provided of patronage and anticipated patronage.
Social profile	Detailed profile of the residential population in the catchment area (5km radius of venue). Include the Social and Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) scope for the area, population profile and projected growth, level of housing affordability and housing stress, income levels, employment and unemployment rates, educational retention and attainment levels, social security recipients (if available), levels of demand for financial aid/social support services (if available). Appropriate comparative measures to be provided to assess the relative vulnerabilities and strengths of the local community.
Vulnerability and supports	Description of currently available support services including: specific problem gambling support services, financial counselling, social and financial support services, general psychological support services and their location in relation to the anticipated patron catchment area. Level of current demand for gambling help services, financial counselling, material and financial aid (if available).
Community and stakeholders	Evidence of the community's attitude toward the application for increased EGMs in the municipality broadly and the local area more specifically. The Applicant needs to provide evidence of this attitude by conducting a technically sound and robust attitudinal survey of patrons of the premises and more broadly.

	Where the application concerns a club licence (as opposed to a hotel licence) evidence that the application has the support of the majority of the club's members. This would ordinarily require a copy of a club resolution following full details of the application being conveyed to the club members and debated.
Community benefit	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. Where, for example, the Applicant claims that the proposal will result in improvements being made to the premises or improvements to services, how the community will be assured that these improvements will occur once the application is approved. Where the application concerns a club licence (as opposed to a hotel licence) details of the distribution of Community Benefit Funds to the local community.
Alternate entertainment	Details of existing and proposed gambling and non-gambling related entertainment and recreation facilities within the local area and, if it is being contended that those facilities are not satisfying the current or future needs of the community, provide evidence of the contended needs.
Expenditure	<p>Details of existing gambling expenditure at the venue (over a 3 year period prior to the application) and a forecast of anticipated expenditure at the venue if the proposal was to be approved.</p> <p>If the Applicant contends that gambling expenditure is likely to be transferred from other venues (including venues in other municipalities), the Applicant is to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the level of transfer has been calculated (including, but not limited to, a comparison per machine expenditure at the venue prior to and after the additional machines, current usage levels of machines at the venue, and 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 being transferred. • The resulting social and economic impact on the venue from where the expenditure is transferred (such as loss of employment, loss of complementary expenditures, loss of customers, and impact on ability to provide services). • The resulting social and economic impact on the local area within which those venues are located. • Details of the relative social and economic differences between the two venue catchments (be measure by SEIFA indices, ABS data and other relevant data). An explanation as to why the EGMs are being transferred is to be provided. <p>This would ordinarily require a statement from the operators of other venues.</p>
Harm prevention and product safety measures	Details of the design and layout of the premises (including gambling area) including all proposed and existing signage and evidence of compliance with any relevant gambling regulations concerning the premises' layout, design and operation. Details of any current or

	proposed measures by the applicant to minimise harms due to problem gambling that are additional to regulatory requirements.
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