



Mildura Rural City Council

Harm Minimisation from Gambling Policy

Policy – CP029

Prepared	Reviewed	Approved	Date	Council Minute No.
General Manager Healthy Communities (GMHC)	ELT	Council	December 2023	2023/0189
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1. The purpose of this policy is

To outline Mildura Rural City Council's approach to minimising the social, economic and wellbeing harm associated with gambling in our community.

2. Policy Statement

The policy outlines Council's position on gambling, with a focus on electronic gaming machines (EGMs).

Council recognises that gambling has a harmful impact on community health and wellbeing and will consider how to minimise this impact through:

- considering gambling within the context of public health
- promoting alternatives to EGM gambling
- recognising the leadership role that Council can play in minimising gambling-related harm including through planning controls
- advocating to other levels of government to reduce opportunities to gamble.

3. Principles

3.1 Health and wellbeing: Promoting and supporting alternative social and recreational pursuits

Council will:

- undertake its functions prescribed by the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to protect, improve and promote the public health and wellbeing of the municipality
- recognise that the harmful costs from gambling are born not just by the individual who gambles but by the community at large. This can in turn impose substantial costs and unintended negative consequences for the entire community

- recognise that people who gamble, and those close to them, experience a range of harms including harm related to finance, work and study, health, emotional and psychological and relationships.
- continue to promote a range of non-gambling events, activities and programs that encourage residents to lead active and healthy lives.

3.2 Council leadership

As in many matters that affect the social and economic wellbeing of the community, Council plays a leadership role to support gambling harm minimisation. Council will:

- advocate to the Victorian Government to review the current regional EGM cap in Mildura and influence legislative reform based on evidence-based public health research and policy
- support other advocacy efforts aimed at reducing harm from all types of gambling where appropriate based on evidence-based public health research and policy
- continue to fund services that improve social connection and local infrastructure that provide alternative recreational activities to gambling activities
- not hold Council facilitated activities or meetings in venues that have gambling activities
- install and maintain internet filtering to prevent access to gambling sites on Council provided internet connections
- consider opportunities to limit the impact of gambling in our community through amendment of the Mildura Planning Scheme
- consider ways to educate staff and the broader community on the harm caused by and impacts of gambling on our community.

3.3 Partnerships and advocacy

Council is in a unique position to collaborate with local organisations and advocate to other levels of government to reduce gambling-related harm experienced by the Mildura Rural City Council community. Council will:

- actively participate in local government networks to advocate for regulation and system reform to reduce gambling-related harm
- advocate to the Victorian Government to reduce the regional cap and advocate for any EGMs given up by venues to be automatically removed from the regional cap
- support any advocacy work targeted towards preventing and minimising gambling harm
- respond to and support gambling-related research, data collection or government enquiries.

4. Implementation

General Manager Healthy Communities.

5. Definitions

Electronic Gaming Machine (EGM)	<p>The <i>Victorian Government Gambling Regulation Act 2003</i> (p.17, amended 10 March 2021) defines:</p> <p><i>“An Electronic Gaming Machine (EGM) is any device, whether wholly or partly mechanically or electronically operated for the purpose of playing a game of chance or a game of mixed chance and skill. As a result of making a bet on the device, winnings may become payable”</i>.¹</p>
Gambling	<p>The Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation defines gambling <i>“as requiring a player to risk losing something of value (usually money) for the chance of winning more.”</i> Gambling outcomes may depend on correctly predicting an uncertain outcome or luck.²</p> <p>The <i>Victorian Government Gambling Regulation Act 2003</i> (p.45, amended 10 March 2021) states:</p> <p><i>“For the purposes of this Act, gambling means an activity in which:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>(a) a prize of money or something else of value is offered or can be won; and</i><i>(b) a person pays or stakes money or some other valuable consideration to participate; and</i><i>(c) the outcome involves, or is presented as involving, an element of chance”</i>.³<p>For the purpose of this policy, raffles, bingo, and sports tipping for fundraising activities have been excluded.</p>
Harm minimisation	<p>Harm minimisation is a framework that considers the health, social and economic consequences of an activity to the individual and community. The three core elements of harm minimisation are supply reduction, demand reduction and harm reduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supply Reduction: Achieving appropriate EGM/1,000 adult population densities; promote sound planning.• Demand Reduction: Promoting and supporting alternatives such as recreational and social pursuits, community education (for instance, gambling risks) and addressing economic disadvantage.• Harm Reduction: Promoting gamblers’ help services; and advocating for inbuilt safety mechanisms in EGMs; promote safety.

Source:

1. <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/gambling-regulation-act-2003/087> (p.17, amended 10 March 2021, accessed 16 March 2021)
2. <https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/resources/glossary/#g> (accessed 16 March 2021)
3. <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/gambling-regulation-act-2003/087> (accessed 16 March 2021)

6. Legislation and other references

6.1 Legislation

For further information related to this policy, see:

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Victorian Gambling Regulation Act 2003* (1 July 2020)
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- The Victorian Gaming and Casino Control Commission:
<https://www.vgccc.vic.gov.au/>
- Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation:
<https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/>

6.2 Documents

This policy is implemented in conjunction with the following document:

- Community Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- Mildura Planning Scheme.

6.3 Risk Assessment Reference

Please tick the corporate governance risk(s) that this policy is addressing.

Risk Category	✓	Risk Category	✓
Asset Management		Financial Sustainability	
Committees		Human Resource Management	
Compliance – Legal & Regulatory		Leadership & Organisational Culture	✓
Contract Management		Occupational Health & Safety	
Contract Tendering & Procurement		Organisational Risk Management	
Corporate Governance		Project Management	
Environmental Sustainability		Public Image and Reputation	