

8.1 NOTICE OF MOTION- SUPPORT FOR GAMBLING REFORM

Submitting Councillor/s:	Dr Josh Fergeus
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RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. Notes that there are 955 electronic gaming machines operating in our municipality across 15 venues.
2. Notes that \$121,417,688.02 was lost to these machines between July 2023 and June 2024, a staggering loss of \$331,742.32 per day.
3. Reiterates Council's support for:
 - reduced and set opening hours for all electronic gaming machine venues;
 - reform of electronic gaming machine design to remove predatory features,
 - \$1 maximum bets.
4. Supports a ban on all gambling advertising

INTRODUCTION

Council is concerned about the impact gambling has on the most vulnerable members of our community. The City of Monash has a history of leadership in the prevention of harm from gambling.

ISSUES AND DISCUSSION

Statistics on the use and prevalence of electronic gaming machines is available through the Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission¹.

Council's prevention initiatives to date include:

- Being a founding member of the Alliance for Gambling Reform
- Leadership of the 'Enough Pokies' campaign
- Creation of supportive environments to prevent and reduce gambling harm in at risk community groups through the Clayton CANVAS project
- Development of strong Public Health Approach to Gambling Harm Prevention Policy statements that guide our ongoing action.

Monash Council's Public Health Approach to Gambling Harm Policy expresses Council's position through policy, leadership, advocacy and community action. The policy outlines our commitment to minimising the harm from gambling in the local community. The key emphasis is placed on reducing the economic, social and health harms associated with Electronic Gambling Machines (EGMs) and other forms of gambling in Monash.

Despite Council's work in this area, losses to electronic gaming machines remain incredibly high.

¹ [Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission` : Monthly LGA EGM Statistics \(vgccc.vic.gov.au\)](https://vgccc.vic.gov.au)



CONCLUSION

Council should continue its strong advocacy in support of pokies reform.

ATTACHMENT LIST

1. Officers Response to NOM [**8.1.1** - 2 pages]

OFFICER'S REPORT

Electronic Gaming Machines: Pokies Losses In Monash 2023-24

Submitting Councillor: Dr Josh Fergeus

MOTION

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BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

This motion has no financial impact to Council.

IMPACT ON INTERNAL RESOURCES

There is no impact on internal resources given the commitment and work currently being undertaken by officers to reduce harm from gambling within the City of Monash.

Through existing frameworks, policies and involvement in networks and working groups, Council seeks action towards systemic change to reduce gambling harm.

The specific requirement to support for reduced and set opening hours for all pokies venues, reform to pokies design including \$1 maximum bets, and a ban on gambling advertising during sports broadcast is in line with the advocacy aims of Council Public Health approach to Gambling Harm policy and Alliance for Gambling Reform.

COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

The following motion is consistent with a range of strategic policy directions of Monash Council

- Public Health approach to Gambling Harm Policy
- Monash Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
- Council's membership of Alliance for Gambling Reform

RELEVANCE TO WORK ALREADY UNDERTAKEN BY OFFICERS OR COMMITTEES

Council's has a long-standing commitment to reducing harm from gambling within the City of Monash, strategies and actions undertaken by the City of Monash include;

- The Public Health Approach to Gambling Harm Policy outlining Council's commitment to reducing harm from gambling within the City of Monash and guides Council in its decision making on gambling harm prevention. *The Policy articulates how Monash Council will:*
 - Support initiatives that aim to reduce gambling harm within the City of Monash through education and advocacy.
 - Not provide support or resources to community groups or clubs which promote gambling, in particular EGM (pokie machine) venues, sports betting, and online gambling
 - Only allow access to Council-owned land and facilities for groups or clubs adhering to the policy.
- Implemented a one-off grant program for sports club to primarily assist them with the implementation of the Monash Public Health Approach to Gambling Harm policy
- Council takes an active role in advocacy and is a member of the Alliance for Gambling Reform. The alliance advocates for public health reforms that are evidence-based and community-backed with the sole purpose of reducing and preventing gambling harm in Australia.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

From 30 August 2024 all venue operators in Victoria are prohibited from allowing a gaming machine to be played between the hours of 4am and 10am. These changes are in line with Council Advocacy aims to 'Reduced and set opening hours for all pokies venues'" and as such are strongly supported by Council.

People experiencing harm from gambling will be better protected with mandatory closure periods of gaming machine. While relatively few people gamble at pubs and clubs at 4 am, the people who do are at a much higher risk of experiencing gambling harm. These mandatory closure periods are also aimed at curbing the practice of some venues staggering opening hours to encourage gaming with no breaks.