

GAMING

This policy applies to all applications to install or to use land for gaming machines under Clause 52.28 or to use land for a Gaming premises.

Policy Basis

This policy takes into account specific characteristics of the local community that make it vulnerable to the negative impacts of gaming.

Gaming is a legitimate form of recreation; however, research indicates there are significant social and economic costs to those in the community who are vulnerable to problem gambling. The location, design and operation of gaming venues, particularly by guiding the location of gaming machines to appropriate areas, sites, and venues, can assist in reducing the harm caused by electronic gaming machines and maximising the benefits to a community.

For the purposes of this policy, social (community and public) housing means housing that is owned and leased by the Department of Health and Human Services, or its regulatory successor, or registered housing associations or not for profit housing organisations. A concentration of social (community and public) housing will generally be said to exist if there are 25 or more dwellings of that type within a circle with a 150 metre radius.

Objectives

To minimise harm from gaming and the incidence of problem gambling.

To provide for access to gaming venues while deterring impulse gambling.

To discourage the location of gaming machines in and close to disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.

To minimise opportunities for convenience gaming.

To protect the amenity of surrounding uses from venues containing gaming machines.

Policy

It is policy to locate gaming machines in accordance with the following criteria:

Appropriate areas and sites

Gaming machines should be located where:

- The location will make a positive contribution to the redistribution of gaming machines away from relatively disadvantaged areas, as defined by the latest ABS SEIFA index of relative socio-economic disadvantage.
- The venue will be separated from areas of every day activity with high levels of pedestrian activity, to minimise the likelihood of people passing the venue in the course of their usual business or every day activities.
- The location is at the periphery of activity centres, away from the main transport, shopping, community and civic functions of the centre.
- The majority of patrons will need to make a conscious plan to travel to the venue.
- There is either a choice of non-gaming entertainment and recreation facilities operating in the vicinity at the times that the proposed gaming venue will operate, such as hotels, clubs, cinemas, restaurants, bars or indoor recreation facilities; or
- The proposed venue would function as a destination in its own right. This could:
 - be achieved on a large site that is separated from strip shopping centres, shopping complexes, railway stations and community facilities involving a high concentration of people undertaking daily activities.
 - include a sports or recreation club with an extensive land holding.

Gaming machines should not be located in areas or on sites:

- That abut, are adjacent to, opposite, in the direct line of sight or in such close proximity to prohibited areas under Clause 52.28, so that a proposed venue would be particularly convenient to users of the shopping strip or centre.
- Where any ABS statistical areas within 400 metres walking distance of the proposed venue is in the 20percent most disadvantaged statistical areas in Mount Alexander Shire, as set out in the latest ABS SEIFA Index of relative socio-economic disadvantage.
- Where there is convenient access to concentrations of shops, major community facilities or key public transport nodes where large numbers of pedestrians are likely to pass in the course of their daily activities.
- Within 400 metres walking distance of a concentration of social (public and community) housing.
- Within line of sight of a social support agency or gamblers' help centre.

Appropriate venues

Gaming machines should be located in venues:

- That have a range of entertainment and leisure options and offer social and recreational opportunities other than gaming as the primary purpose of the venue.
- That are designed to comply with best practice and the full ambit of the VCGLR Venue Manual or any regulatory successor.
- Where the premises and associated uses are compatible with the predominant surrounding land uses.
- Where the design and operating hours will not detrimentally affect the amenity of the surrounding area.
- That limit play by condition of approval to times when alternative entertainment and recreation is also operating and available.

Gaming machines should not be located in venues:

- That operate 24 hours a day.
- With a gaming floor area of more than 25 percent of the total floor area accessible by the public.
- That are located in an area discouraged by this policy.

Application Requirements

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

- How the application is consistent with the broader State and Local Planning Policy Framework, including policies on recreation and entertainment and activity centres.
- A venue management plan identifying mitigating strategies to manage patron behaviour and minimise problem gambling through the design and management of the venue, including the applicant's responsible gaming practices.
- Detailed plans of the design and layout of the premises including the location of all existing and proposed gaming machines, signage, external lighting, and evidence of compliance with any relevant gaming regulations for premises layout, design and operation of the gaming venue.
- A social and economic impact assessment prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced person(s) that provides a robust assessment of the social and economic impacts (positive and negative) of the proposed electronic gaming machines.

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- The social and economic impact assessment should address but not necessarily be limited to the following:
 - Details on the proposed number of gaming machines and associated forecast gaming expenditure (player losses).
 - Details about the existing and proposed distribution and density of gaming machines in the municipality and local area, any proposed reallocation of gaming machines in the municipality, and the proposal's expected impact on patronage.
 - If the applicant contends that 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 comparison per machine expenditure at the venue prior to and then after the additional machines, current usage levels of machines at the venue, and projected usage of machines at the venue after the additional machines); and
 - The amount of transfer expenditure anticipated.
- 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 broader local community.
- A detailed social profile of the population within the catchment area of the venue including:
 - The relative socio-economic disadvantage of the local neighbourhood and suburb and broader 5 kilometre catchment of the venue;
 - The latest ABS SEIFA index of relative socio-economic disadvantage; and
 - The projected growth, housing affordability and housing stress, income levels, unemployment rates, educational retention and attainment levels, and percentage of social security recipients.
- Details of existing and proposed gambling and non-gambling entertainment and recreation facilities at the venue and within a 5 kilometre radius of the venue including existing and proposed electronic gaming machine density and location of other gambling venues.
- Details of the venue's distance to shopping complexes, strip shopping centres, major areas of community congregation, proximity to areas of normal daily activity such as public transport, shops, community facilities, schools, early childhood centres, health services, and proximity to welfare and counselling services.
- Details of currently available social support services including problem gambling services, financial counselling services, and material and financial aid services; the location of these services in relation to both the venue and patron catchment area; and the level of current demand for these services.
- Pedestrian counts for venues that are within close proximity to places where large numbers of pedestrians are likely to pass in the course of their daily activities. Pedestrian counts should be taken on different days and at a variety of times.
- A detailed overall assessment, which shows and summarises the economic and social impacts of the proposal and their effect on community wellbeing and health.

Decision Guidelines

Before deciding on an application the responsible authority will consider, as appropriate:

- Whether the proposal will positively respond to harm minimisation.
- Whether the proposal will be close to areas of socio-economic disadvantage.
- Whether the proposal will facilitate convenience gambling.
- Whether there is to be a net community benefit derived from the application, in addition to any community contribution scheme.

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- Whether users of the gaming venue will have a genuine choice of gaming and non-gaming entertainment.
- Whether the proposal is consistent with the Mount Alexander Shire Gaming Policy, 2014.