



City of
KINGSTON

Gambling Policy and Action Plan

2014-2019





City of
KINGSTON



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The implementation of some of the actions in this Plan is supported by financial assistance from the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments.

Council acknowledges the Kulin Nation as the Custodians of the land on which the municipality is a part and pays its respect to their Elders past, and present. Council is a member of the Inter Council Aboriginal Consultative Committee.



Cr Paul Peulich
KINGSTON MAYOR

On behalf of Council I am pleased to present Kingston's Gambling Policy and Action Plan 2014-2019 to the community. This Policy and Action Plan reflects Kingston Council's commitment to endorsing responsible gambling and promotes the awareness of problem gambling and support services.

The Policy and Plan outlines Kingston Council's position in relation to gambling and provides actions for implementation, which together with Council's planning policies, will guide a consistent response to gambling across the municipality.

This document recognises gambling as a lawful activity while acknowledging that some people gamble excessively and experience a variety of personal and financial hardships as a result of their gambling activities.

Council's Gambling Policy and Action Plan endorses and promotes a harm minimisation approach to gambling, aiming to reduce the negative impacts of problem gambling that are experienced by some community members.

Council looks forward to working with residents, social support services and organisations, community groups and other stakeholders in order to assist in the planning process around gambling and improve the health and wellbeing of our community.

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1. Introduction

The City of Kingston *Gambling Policy and Action Plan 2014–2019* has been created in response to changes in legislation in the gambling industry and Council's concern about the negative impacts of problem gambling experienced by the Kingston community.

The policy supports the Council Plan's aimed outcome for 'enhanced community wellbeing and participation in community life' (p. 31).

The *Gaming Policy and Action Plan 2014–2019* has been developed with consideration to:

- The outcomes from a community consultation conducted in June/ July 2012 and October 2013 to explore and gauge community attitudes towards gambling and the impact of gambling on the Kingston community;
- Benchmarking local government policies and strategies; and
- Recommendations and feedback from the Victorian Local Governance Association, service providers, organisations, community members, Council staff and other professionals.

The gambling policy is a whole of Council policy that will guide the work of all Council departments. The action plan will be implemented by relevant Council departments according to their areas of expertise. An annual review of the implementation will be undertaken with a focus on what actions have been implemented, identification of successes and challenges and prioritising actions for the coming year.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The *Gaming Policy and Action Plan 2014–2019* aims to minimise the negative impacts of problem gambling on the Kingston community.

The policy's objectives are to:

- Clearly articulate Council's position in relation to electronic gaming machine (EGM) matters.
- Provide guidelines to effectively respond to EGM applications submitted to the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VCGLR). The guidelines will refer to new venues, an increase or reduction in EGMs in existing venues or transfers from one venue to another.
- Participate and contribute to forums to advocate on behalf of the Kingston community to lobby State and Federal Governments for further changes to gambling legislation and industry practices to decrease the potential negative impacts experienced from problem gambling.
- Provide a basis for liaison with gambling venues, community support services and groups to minimise the negative impact of problem gambling on the community.
- Provide a structure for information provision about gambling and its associated risks to raise awareness in the community, gaming industry and community support groups.

SCOPE

This *Gaming Policy and Action Plan 2014–2019* replaces all other previous Council policies relating to gambling and electronic gaming machines. This policy applies equally to all gambling venues, whether on Council-owned / managed land or privately owned land.

While this is a gambling policy, it has a key focus on electronic gaming machines because of the role appointed to Council via planning legislation and the entitlement for Council to make submissions to the VCGLR. It is anticipated however, that the benefits resulting from this policy and action plan will also be experienced by people who may be experiencing issues related to problem gambling from other forms of gambling.

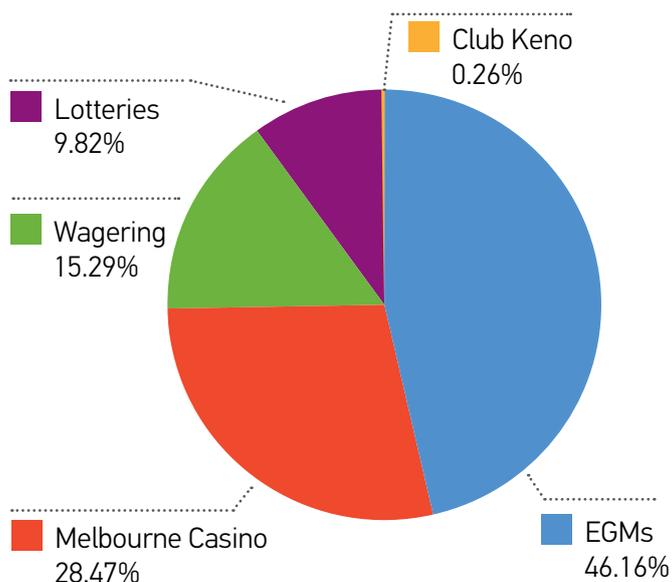
2. The Gambling Industry

The gambling industry is made up of many forms, including Lotto and 'scratchies', electronic gaming machines (EGMs) or 'pokies', table games (e.g. blackjack), wagering and online gaming.

The share of spending between gambling forms has changed significantly since the mid-eighties, with the greatest rise in EGM gambling.

In Victoria in 2012/13 expenditure on all forms of gambling amounted to \$5.4 billion. EGMs accounted for just less than half (46%) and the Melbourne Casino accounted for 28% of this amount.

Figure 1: Total expenditure on gambling in Victoria 2012/13



Source: VCGLR Annual Report 2012-13, VCGLR website
http://assets.justice.vic.gov.au/vcglr/resources/c40b12bb-d1a2-4858-b458-326fe8777f1f/annualreport2012_2013.pdf

Gambling provides a source of significant tax revenue for governments. In 2012/13 the Victorian Government received \$1,745 million in taxation levied mainly on private lotteries, electronic gaming machines, casino operations and racing. This accounted for 11.24 per cent of total tax revenue to the State Government for 2012/13.

Part of the Victorian Government's revenue (8.33 per cent) derived from gaming machines located in hotels is distributed through the Community Support Fund (CSF). In 2012-13 the CSF received \$85 million and was distributed to various Victorian Government departments for investment in programs and projects in the community. Legislation outlines CSF funding is to be allocated to projects with a focus on problem gambling; drug education, treatment and rehabilitation; financial counseling for families; youth programs; sport and recreation; and arts and tourism.

Clubs with gaming machines receive a tax free rate on gaming revenue. However, they are required to spend 8.33 per cent of the income gained from gaming machines for community purposes and are to declare how they have spent this income in a Community Benefit Statement (CBS).

ELECTRONIC GAMING INDUSTRY

As at June 2013 the City of Kingston had 16 gaming venues operating with 880 electronic gaming machines in use. In 2012/13 EGM players in Kingston lost \$79 million. Comparing this to all Victorian local government areas (62 Councils), Kingston ranks the third highest for number of licensed venues, the sixth highest for number of EGMs and the tenth highest for player losses.

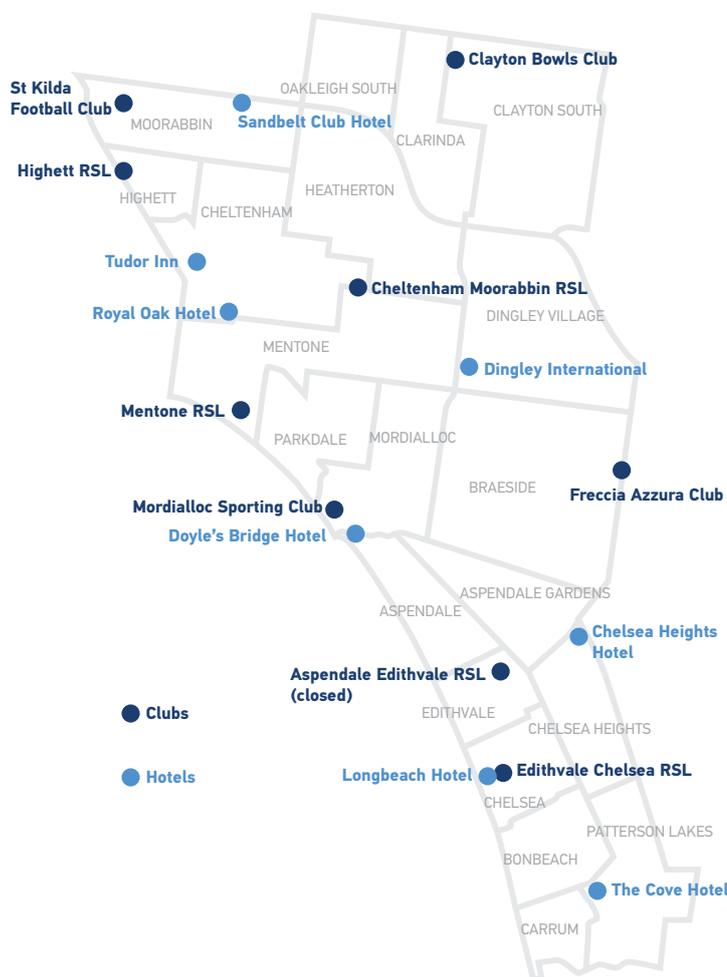
The density of the number of EGMs per 1,000 adults is used to compare EGMs across areas. Kingston has a high density of 7.27 gaming machines in use per 1,000 adults in the municipality when compared to 5.51 in Metropolitan Melbourne and 5.75 for the Victorian average.

Table 1: A snapshot of electronic gaming in Kingston compared to Victoria and Metropolitan Melbourne 2012/13

AREA	NO. VENUES	NO. EGMS IN USE	NET EXPENDITURE	2013 ADULT POPULATION (18+)	ADULTS PER VENUE	NET EGM EXPENDITURE PER ADULT	EGMS PER 1000 ADULTS (DENSITY)
City of Kingston	16	880	\$79,986,274.55	112,328	7,021	\$712.08	7.27
Melbourne Metro	324	18,508	\$1,954,489,816	3,361,497	10,375	\$581.43	5.51
Victoria	509	26,068	\$2,490,488,906	4,532,258	8,904	\$549.50	5.75

Source: VCGLR website <http://www.vcglr.vic.gov.au/home/resources/data+and+research/data/>

Figure 2: Gaming venue locations in Kingston



PROBLEM GAMBLING

Problem gambling affects a small proportion of gamblers; however people who have gambling problems account for a significant proportion of gaming expenditure (losses). It is estimated that 0.7% of Victorian adults experience problems with gambling¹ and their share of total Australian EGM losses equates to around 40 per cent.²

The use of gaming machines is associated with a greater risk of experiencing problems from gambling. Of people who have severe problems with gambling (CPGI 12+ in Figure 1), 80 per cent spent the most of their gambling money on EGMs and less than five per cent on lotteries. In contrast, less than one in ten people who have no risk of problems from gambling spent the most on EGMs and over 20 per cent spent the most on lotteries.

Gambling for many people is a fun recreational activity and Council's concern lies with people who experience issues related to problem gambling. The harms experienced by problem gambling are experienced by individuals, their families, friends and community. Problem gambling can be associated with issues such as:

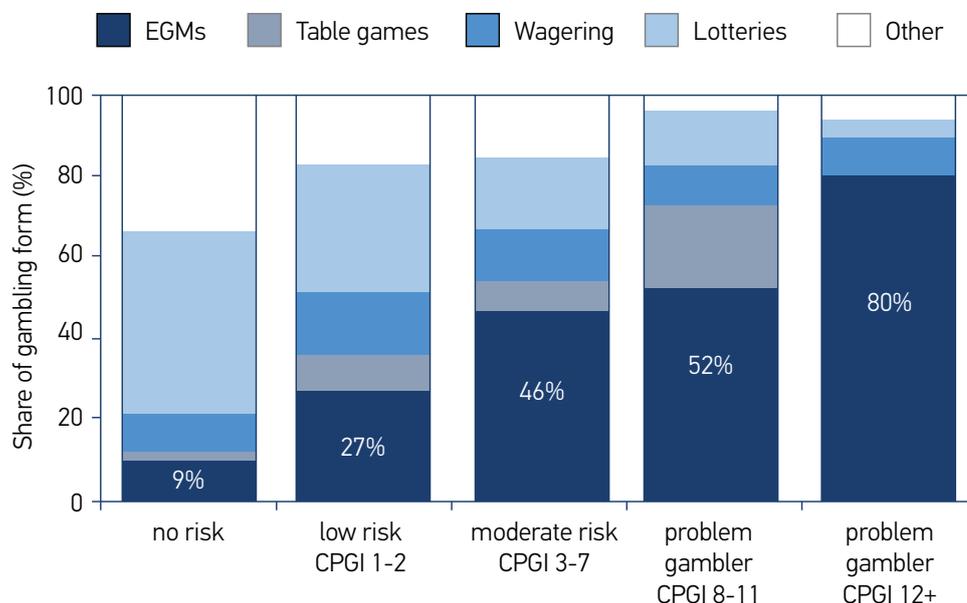
- Higher levels of depression, anxiety, emotional disturbance and suicide;
- Damaged relationships, child neglect, family disruption and family break ups;
- Financial hardship, poverty, homelessness and fraud; and
- Broader flow on effects in the local community, such as crime and a loss in local economic activity.³

1 Department of Justice 2009, A Study of Gambling in Victoria: Problem Gambling from a Public Health Perspective, <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/liquor+gambling+and+racing/research+and+statistics/problem+gambling+from+a+public+health+perspective>, viewed 18.01.2013

2 Australian Productivity Commission 2010, Gambling, Report no. 50, <http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/gambling-2009/report>, viewed 16.01.2013

3 Capire, 2012, Community Attitudes Towards Gambling, City of Kingston.

Figure 3: Risk of problems with gambling and the gambling form on which gamblers spent the most money in the previous year



Source: 2008 Victorian prevalence study – Australian Productivity Commission, 2010, Gambling Report no. 50

*Based on Commission analysis of unit record data from the Victorian 2008 prevalence survey (described in Hare 2009). Problem gambling is attributed to the form on which gamblers spent the most money over the last year.

POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Victorian Legislation:

Gambling Regulation Act 2003
 Planning and Environment Act 1987
 Local Government Act 1989
 Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008

Federal Legislation:

National Gambling Reform Act 2012

Council is guided by the *Gambling Regulation Act 2003*, *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and Victorian Planning Provisions for its involvement in gaming management in Kingston. The *Gambling Regulation Act 2003* entitles Council to make a submission to the VCGLR about social and economic impacts of gaming applications. The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* requires a planning permit to be applied for from Council for the installation of gaming machines. The Victorian Planning Provisions in the Planning Scheme provide local governments with decision making powers over the location of EGMs.

Ministerial direction sets the maximum number of gaming machines available for gaming in Victoria. The Municipal Limit criteria permits ten EGM entitlements per 1,000 adults for each municipal district in Victoria, giving Kingston a maximum permissible number of EGM entitlements of 1,135. Kingston is below its cap of 1,135 EGMs (or ten EGMs per 1,000 adults) as at March 2014, but it has a higher rate of EGM expenditure and quantity of EGMs per adult than Victoria and Melbourne Metro averages (refer to Table 1 for details).

3. Policy Statement

Kingston City Council adopts the following position statements in relation to EGM gaming in Kingston:

- 1)** Council acknowledges that EGM gaming is a legal activity and that it should be a safe and enjoyable recreational pursuit. However, Council also recognises the negative impact that problem gambling can create for some people, their families and the broader community and will work toward its reduction in the Kingston community.
- 2)** Council is concerned about the high density of EGMs in the municipality, the amount lost (\$80M in 2012/13) and the negative impacts on the community resulting from problem gambling. Council will therefore seek opportunities to reduce the density of EGMs in the municipality.
- 3)** Council will selectively and strategically seek to moderate any changes in the number of EGMs and EGM venues, and therefore minimise the impacts of problem gambling in Kingston by:
 - Completing a social and economic impact assessment for every application as outlined in statement 4 below; and
 - Identifying areas of higher vulnerability to problem gambling issues in the municipality and working toward no additional EGMs being located in these areas.
- 4)** Council will complete a social and economic impact assessment regarding the individual merits of every EGM licence application within Kingston, submitted to the VCGLR. The following factors will be considered to determine whether or not there will be no harm caused by the application on the health, social and economic wellbeing of the community:
 - Community attitudes regarding the application.
 - The degree of the density of gaming venues and EGMs in the local area (2.5km radius) and whether Kingston overall will be affected by the application.
 - Whether less harm may come from additional EGMs being located in an area that has rapid population growth forecast.
 - Whether the relocation of EGMs would result in a reduction of EGMs in an area of socio-economic disadvantage.
- The degree to which the community has choices of other types of recreational activities and entertainment facilities in the venue and the local area.
- The degree to which established social infrastructure, services and networks exist within the local area for community members to engage with for support when required.
- Benefits that will be experienced by the community as a result of an increase in gaming in their local area (economic, entertainment and contributions).
- The extent to which the applicant will have, and demonstrates, a commitment to the Industry Code of Practice for Responsible Gambling.
- Additional EGMs or new venues should not be located in areas:
 - Of relative socio-economic disadvantage;
 - Where populations of people who are socially disadvantaged and are most vulnerable to the harms of problem gambling live in the local community;
 - Where activities are focused on children or young people;
 - Where people from vulnerable communities visit the area for a purpose, e.g. a mental health clinic, public housing, tertiary education setting etc.; or
 - Where people go about their everyday business, in addition to the prohibited shopping strips identified in Council's Planning Scheme (e.g. a concentration of shops, major community facilities or key public transport modes).
- 5)** Council officers will consider applications submitted to the VCGLR for gaming venues within a 2.5km radius in neighbouring Councils in accordance with the social and economic impact assessment factors as stated in position statement 4.
- 6)** Council will take a public health approach through the implementation of the Action Plan to work in collaboration with State Government, other local Councils and relevant organisations to minimise negative impacts related to problem gambling experienced by the Kingston community.

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- 7)** Council will raise community awareness regarding the facts about gambling in Kingston to keep local residents informed and reduce the effects of problem gambling experienced by the community.
 - 8)** Council will advocate for funding from the Community Support Fund and community benefits from clubs and hotels to be maximised and returned to the local community from which they were derived.
 - 9)** Council will provide information in relation to good grant making processes, if requested for input from clubs or hotels regarding the allocation of community contributions.
 - 10)** Council will adhere to its adopted Sponsorship Policies (sponsor and recipient) and any subsequent revisions when sponsorship proposals involve organisations or individuals that are directly involved in the gambling industry.
 - 11)** Council will prefer to host Council run events, activities or social outings in venues that do not have gaming machines. Such activities may be held in a gaming venue if the venue offers a unique setting required by the program.
 - 12)** Council will actively promote to the community details about support services available to assist people who are experiencing issues associated with problem gambling.

To support the above commitments, Council undertakes a public health approach and adopts the following action plan to minimise the negative impacts of gambling on the community.

PRIORITY AREA 1

ADVOCACY

Goal: Contribute to advocacy campaigns targeting issues related to gambling

- 1.1** Participate in working groups related to gambling as a platform for Council's lobbying and advocacy to reduce the harms of problem gambling in Victoria. Advocacy issues will be presented to Council for consideration and support.
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PRIORITY AREA 2

AWARENESS RAISING

Goal: Increase awareness and knowledge in the community about gambling and the affects it has on the community

- 2.1** Provide information and educate the community about:
- The risks and potential impacts of gambling;
 - Services and supports available for gambling related problems;
 - Detecting early signs of gambling related distress;
 - Responsible gambling practices;
 - Alternative recreational activities and the Act Belong Commit campaign; and
 - Gambling trends, expenditure data and community benefit in Kingston.
- 2.2** Provide customised education and awareness raising for identified vulnerable groups (multicultural people, young people, isolated older people) and within socio-economically vulnerable areas of Kingston.
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PRIORITY AREA 3

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Goal: Increase networks with professionals and other organisations to work in collaboration on reducing issues related to problem gambling in the community

- 3.1** Work in collaboration with State Government, VLGA, MAV and other local Councils on key gambling related issues.
- 3.2** Liaise with the gambling industry to reduce harm experienced by people with gambling problems and their families.
- 3.3** Develop closer links with and provide support to organisations, services and the community to address the impacts of gambling related issues in Kingston and improve pathways for referrals to gambling support services.
- 3.4** Work with organisations and services providing support to people with gambling problems to collect useful data about the impacts of gambling in the Kingston community to help inform future social and economic impact assessments.

PRIORITY AREA 4

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Goal: Build capacity in community members and groups to participate in non-gambling related entertainment options

- 4.1** Support, develop and promote alternative leisure and recreational opportunities through Council programs, services and infrastructure development for the participation of local communities.
- 4.2** Support local services, organisations and community groups to provide and promote alternative recreational activities in the community.
- 4.3** Encourage the promotion of alternative recreational activities and support services in gambling venues.
- 4.4** Identify and engage with vulnerable communities who are at most risk to the harms associated with problem gambling, e.g. people who are socially isolated, communities that are socio-economically disadvantaged and young people.

POLICY AND PROCESSES

Goal: Develop and contribute to Council policies and processes to minimise the negative impacts of problem gambling on the community

- 5.1** Consult with the community, Council staff and other stakeholders about gambling and applications for gaming machines and venues made to the VCGLR in accordance with the framework outlined in Council's Community Engagement Kit.
- 5.2** Integrate gambling issues and strategies into Council's Health and Wellbeing Plan and other Council plans as relevant.
- 5.3** Prepare a briefing paper for Councillors on the possible inclusion of a local policy on EGM gambling within the planning scheme to strengthen Council's statutory power in relation to EGM activity within the municipality.
- 5.4** Research and define Council's position and capacity for action regarding other forms of gambling such as online betting, TAB etc.
- 5.5** Assess and identify areas in Kingston of heightened vulnerability to issues with problem gambling, and work to ensure additional EGMs or new venues are not located in these areas.



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