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C84**GAMING**

This policy applies to all applications to install or use a gaming machine, or use land for the purpose of gaming in the Macedon Ranges Shire.

Policy basis

Research has concluded that there are links between social disadvantage, problem gambling and proximity to gaming venues. Therefore although gaming machines should generally be accessible to the community as a form of entertainment, they should not be so convenient as to encourage spontaneous gambling. Rather, they should be located at a distance that requires a pre considered decision to gamble.

There is also concern in the Macedon Ranges Shire about the impact of gaming machines on its various townships, particularly small communities. As such it is important to ensure that gaming machines are located to take account of socio-economic considerations and the vulnerability of a local population and local economy to the negative consequences of gambling.

This policy implements the relevant objectives and strategies of Clause 21.12 of the Municipal Strategic Statement by setting out how and where gaming venues should be located in the Macedon Ranges Shire.

Objectives

To ensure no net harm to the health, social and economic well-being of residents and communities.

To ensure the location of gaming machines minimise opportunities for convenience gaming and the incidence of problem gambling.

To ensure that gaming machines are located where the community has a choice of non-gambling entertainment and recreation activities within the venue or in the local area.

To protect the local economies, heritage character, tourism assets and amenity of the Shire.

Policy

It is policy to assess proposals against the following criteria:

Appropriate areas*Criterion 1*

Gaming machines should not be located:

- Where any ABS collection district within 400 metres of the proposed venue is in the 20 per cent most disadvantaged collection districts in Victoria, as set out in the latest SEIFA index of relative socio-economic disadvantage.
- In Riddells Creek, Lancefield and centres designated as Small town, Village and Hamlet/locality in the municipality's Settlement Hierarchy at Clause 21.04 (Settlement).
- In towns where the proposal would lead to the total density of gaming machines exceeding the regional Victorian average.

Criterion 2

Gaming machines should be located:

- Where they 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.
- In centres identified as having future residential growth capacity to become District Towns, Large District Towns or Regional Centres by 2036, in the municipality's Settlement Hierarchy at Clause 21.04 (Settlement) excepting Riddells Creek and Lancefield.
- Where there is a choice of non-gaming entertainment and recreation facilities operating at the times the proposed gaming venue will operate. Alternative non-gaming entertainment and recreation facilities include hotels, clubs, cinemas, restaurants, bars and indoor recreation facilities.

Appropriate sites

Criterion 3

Gaming machines should not be located:

- Where they are convenient 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.
- Where the gaming venues and associated entertainment and recreation uses, detracts from the character and integrity of the Shire's tourism and heritage assets.

Criterion 4

Gaming machines should be located:

- Where the location could reasonably be perceived as a destination in its own right. This would be achieved by a separation from strip shopping centres, shopping complexes, railway stations and community facilities involving a high concentration of people undertaking daily activities.

Criterion 5

Gaming machines may be located:

- At a sports and recreation club with a land holding of more than two hectares.

Appropriate venues

Criterion 6

Gaming machines should not be located:

- In venues that operate 24 hours a day.
- In venues with a gaming floor area of more than 25 per cent of the total floor area.
- Where the design of the venue, including signage and external lighting, detracts from the character and integrity of the Shire's tourism or heritage assets.

Criterion 7

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.

- Where the gaming venue 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.

Application requirements

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

- Social and economic impact assessments prepared by suitably qualified persons that provides a robust assessment of the social, and economic benefits and disbenefits of the proposed gaming machines.
- A venue management plan identifying mitigating strategies to manage patron behaviour and minimise problem gambling in relation to 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.

The social and economic impact assessments 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 Shire and local town, any proposed reallocation of gaming machines in the Shire, and the proposal's expected impact on patronage.
- If the applicant contends that gaming expenditure is likely to be transferred from other venues the applicant is to provide:
 - 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 the machines at the venue after the additional machines)
 - 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 (5 kilometre radius of the venue) including:
 - the relative socio-economic disadvantage of the local town and the broader 5 kilometre catchment of the venue:
 - in comparison with the latest ABS SEIFA index of relative disadvantage; and
 - having regard to projected growth, housing affordability and housing stress, income levels, unemployment rates, educational retention and attainment levels, percentage of social security recipients.
- Findings from an academically rigorous representative social impact survey from a CATI generated random digit dial sample of no less than 500 (or 300 in smaller towns) residents and businesses from the local community within a 5 kilometre radius of the proposed venue. The survey should measure current and anticipated levels of community satisfaction (happiness, contentment, and wellbeing) from living in the local area and having regard to the application with information on anticipated losses to players per year included in the preamble.

- 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 venues 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 specific 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.
- Comparative pedestrian counts for venues 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 to establish whether or not convenience gambling is likely to result having regard to the location of the venue and the proposed hours of operation.
- A detailed overall assessment which shows and summarises the economic and social impacts of the proposal and their effect on community wellbeing.

Decision guidelines

Before deciding on an application, in addition to the decision guidelines at Clause 52.28 and Clause 65, the responsible authority will consider, as appropriate:

- Whether the proposal is likely to increase social disadvantage or economic vulnerability and associated wellbeing impacts in the local community.
- Whether the location of the gaming machines or gaming premises will facilitate or discourage convenience gaming.
- Whether the venue is accessible by a variety of transport modes.
- Whether residents will have a choice of gaming and non-gaming / non-gambling entertainment and recreation venues in the local area.
- The impact of the proposal on the amenity of the area and the integrity of heritage and tourism assets.

Reference document

Macedon Ranges Shire Gaming Policy Framework, 2008 including 2011 Addendum