

# Electronic gaming machines

## **WHAT IS THE ISSUE?**

In Victoria there are 27,372 electronic gaming machines (EGMs), commonly referred to as pokies, licensed to 512 hotels and clubs. The Victorian community loses over \$2.6 billion per annum to EGMs, or \$526 per adult.

In Stonnington, there are 287 EGMs across seven venues. Our local community loses \$23M per annum, equating to \$63,103 per day or \$244 per adult.

Evidence shows that those who gamble excessively or beyond their means inflict harm to themselves, their families and ultimately their community. These losses cause untold harm on communities in terms of reduced savings; less time spent with friends and family; and feelings of regret, distress, anger and shame. This harm is experienced primarily by low and moderate risk gamblers, not just 'problem' gamblers.

The most vulnerable community members are those than can least afford to gamble. People living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and people without close social ties are known to be more vulnerable to gambling. This includes international students, young people living away from their families and social networks, and older and other isolated people.

## Stonnington statistics 2017

KEY CONCERN	CLUB / HOTEL	LICENSED EGMS	LOSSES 2016-17
Court Jester Hotel	H	48	\$6,806,395
Prahran Football Social Club	C	81	\$5,329,890
Angel Tavern	H	45	\$4,338,441
Malvern Vale Club Hotel	H	30	\$3,748,312
Racecourse Hotel	H	40	\$2,140,202
East Malvern RSL	C	25	\$567,437
Club Tivoli	C	18	\$101,886
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>287</b>	<b>\$23,032,563</b>

The Court Jester and Prahran Football Social Club near Chapel Street are considered to be 'convenience destinations' as they provide problem gamblers with the opportunity to gamble while going about daily activities.

### Our strategic approach

The City of Stonnington has adopted a *Responsible Gambling Policy* (2016) to limit EGMs expansion, provide leadership on gambling issues and advocate on behalf of the community.

### Our strategic approach

The City of Stonnington calls for EGM reforms:

- » **\$1 maximum bets** to reduce problem gambling (in line with Productivity Commission recommendations)
- » **less deceiving machine designs** for losses disguised as wins, linked jackpots and free spins
- » **reduce EGM numbers by 20 per cent** focusing on vulnerable areas
- » **fixed municipal limits** on EGMs that do not go up with population increases
- » **ban cashless gambling** which reinforces anonymous, intense and uninterrupted gambling, and increases the likelihood of harm
- » **reduced daily cash limits** that can be withdrawn in venues to \$200 per day to match current best practice in Tasmania

- » **increase minimum venue closing periods** from 4 hours to 10 hours
- » **maintain the 50:50 split** of EGM numbers between clubs and hotels
- » **maintain the existing 10 year licence term**
- » **ban political donations** and gifts by EGM owners, operators and peak bodies to local and state politicians and parties, and
- » **mandatory support assistance** to be provided by venue operators and staff to problem gamblers.

### Council action

Council will continue to minimise the negative impacts of EGMs on the community by:

- » administrating the City of Stonnington Responsible Gambling Policy
- » lobbying to the Victorian Government on gambling legislation and policy reforms
- » being an active member of Alliance Gambling Reform, and
- » partnering with Municipal Association of Victoria and Victorian Local Governance Association.