

RESPONSIBLE GAMING POLICY

Policy Reference No:	CP 2001-03-32
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Strategic Objective:	Health, Safety & Wellbeing
Date of Adoption:	9 December 2013
Date for Review:	December 2018
Responsible Officer:	Manager, Social Development
Department:	Social Development

1. Background

- 1.1. The Responsible Gaming Policy 2013 has been developed in response to a series of legislative changes and directions from the Minister for Gaming, as well as the changing structure of the electronic gaming machine (EGM) industry in Victoria. This policy supersedes and replaces Council's Responsible Gaming Policy 2001 which was last amended in 2003.
- 1.2. The Hume Planning Scheme also includes a section on gaming known as the Local Planning Policy on Gaming which reflects Council's planning and land-use role in the provision of gaming venues. This policy links with the Local Planning Policy to provide a sound framework on which Council can rely to inform their decision making on gaming applications.
- 1.3. While all forms of gambling may have adverse impacts and an array of risk factors may contribute to problem gambling, research by the Productivity Commission shows there is a causal relationship between problem gambling and the degree to which the community has access to gambling, particularly gambling on gaming machines.
- 1.4. Whilst this Policy primarily focusses on EGMs, Council recognises that other forms of Gambling such as sports betting and wagering on racing can also be harmful.
- 1.5. Council acknowledges that gaming is a legitimate form of recreational activity and that the gaming industry contributes to local recreation and entertainment options and provides a number of social venues across the City.
- 1.6. Council also acknowledges that although gaming is not problematic for most gamblers, in some cases gaming can lead to adverse consequences for gamblers, others and the community.
- 1.7. The impacts of problem gaming includes financial stress, unemployment, housing stress and homelessness, family violence, family breakdown and crime including theft, fraud, break and enter, forgery, false pretences, larceny and robbery.
- 1.8. Some groups are more vulnerable to problem gaming, due to financial stress, feelings of social isolation, stressors related to migration and difficulties accessing services, health issues, as well as not accurately understanding the odds of gaming. The Productivity Commission indicates there is a higher propensity for the following groups to have problems with gaming; young people, women, people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, people with mental illness, people with problematic substance use, people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, people experiencing unemployment, people who are newly arrived to Australia, family and friends of problem gamblers and EGM venue staff.
- 1.9. The Productivity Commission findings also show that gambling can have adverse health, emotional and financial impacts on many more people than those categorised as 'problem gamblers'. Council has a responsibility to ensure the best outcomes for communities and therefore minimise the risk of harm to the community through their access to gaming machines.

Policy Reference No: CP 2001-03-32	Date of Adoption: 9 December 2013
Review Date: December 2018	Responsible Officer: Manager Social Development
	Department: Social Development
Page 2 of 17	

- 1.10. Council has a direct role to play in relation to EGMs through its land-use planning role, as the 'Responsible Authority' for assessing planning permit applications. Similarly State Government policies and legislation enable Council to make submissions to the Victorian Commission for Gambling & Liquor Regulation (VCGLR).
- 1.11. Council is concerned about the negative consequences that arise for residents experiencing problem gaming, and as part of its commitment to social justice, will support initiatives that seek to minimise, prevent and respond to the harms caused by problem gaming. This includes a range of strategies such as community building, information sharing and education.
- 1.12. Council considers that it, together with the State Government and the VCGLR has a responsibility to encourage the equitable distribution of income generated from gaming towards the communities from which it was lost.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1. Council will work in partnership with community, service providers and venue operators to promote responsible gaming and minimise harm, as well as inform and empower the community about alternative social and recreational activities for its residents.
- 2.2. Council will undertake a Social and Economic Impact Assessment in relation to each application made to the VCGLR and in response to planning permit applications for a gaming venue. Council will assess each application on a case by case basis in accordance with this policy and the Local Planning Policy.
- 2.3. In addition to the decision guidelines contained in the Local Planning Policy, before deciding on an application, Council will also consider the views of the Hume community surrounding the venue.
- 2.4. Council will not support any application for an increase in the net number of EGMs in Hume if Council's assessment of the social and economic impacts of the application indicates there would be a net detrimental impact on the local, surrounding or Hume community.
- 2.5. Council will not support referrals from the VCGLR which propose new gaming venues on Council or Crown owned land, or any increase in EGMs at venues currently located on Council or Crown owned land. For a list of EGM venues located on Council or Crown land see Appendix 1.
- 2.6. Council in its capacity as landlord/licensor, will not consent to an increase in EGMs at venues currently located on Council land. Council will also include a prohibition on operating EGMs in all future leases/licence of Council land, where a gaming venue does not currently exist.
- 2.7. Council, in partnership with the Victorian Local Governance Association (Local Government Working Group on Gaming) and Gamblers Help Northern, will provide information, advice or comment to State or Federal Government inquiries on gaming, changes in legislation and regulations, as well as other initiatives.

Policy Reference No: CP 2001-03-32	Date of Adoption: 9 December 2013
Review Date: December 2018	Responsible Officer: Manager Social Development
	Department: Social Development
Page 3 of 17	

- 2.8. Council will continue to monitor Community Benefit Statements and lobby state government to ensure these dollars are being spent in the delivery of new community infrastructure or the provision of support services (e.g. financial counselling) so the dollars are returned to the community from which it was lost.
- 2.9. Council will advocate to State and Federal governments to improve consumer safety outcomes for EGMs including measures that address and prevent problem gaming and encourage responsible gaming, in particular, pre-commitment capacity.

3. Purpose

- 3.1. To assist Council in preventing and managing harms associated with problem gaming activity in Hume City.
- 3.2. To effectively respond to applications for the relocation or increase in the number of EGMs and/or licensed gaming venues in Hume City and in neighbouring municipalities when requested.
- 3.3. To encourage responsible gaming practices by venue operators in the municipality, targeting the minimisation of harm for problem gamblers and their families and encouraging a positive economic benefit to the municipality.
- 3.4. To encourage community awareness of the potential impacts of gaming and to promote alternative safe and healthy forms of recreation and leisure activities.

4. Scope

- 4.1. This policy applies to all gaming applications submitted to the VCGLR, as well as planning applications proposing new venues with EGMs; an increase in the number of EGMs at existing premises; or transfers from one venue to another that directly impact on the Hume municipality or its neighbouring municipalities.
- 4.2. This Policy fits within the strategic planning structure of Hume City Council and addresses the Hume City Plan 2030 (2009) and the Hume City Council Plan 2013 – 2017.

Policy Reference No: CP 2001-03-32	Date of Adoption: 9 December 2013
Review Date: December 2018	Responsible Officer: Manager Social Development
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- 4.3. This Policy supports the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017 which identifies problem Gaming alongside social isolation as key health and wellbeing issues.
- 4.4. The Policy demonstrates commitment to Council’s Social Justice Charter 2007 which promotes social justice, inclusion and community wellbeing, as well as identifying problem gaming as an important social issue. It will also be useful in informing Council’s role as an advocate for the community around gaming related issues.
- 4.5. The Hume Planning Scheme includes a section on gaming known as the Local Planning Policy which reflects Council’s planning and land-use role in the provision of gaming venues. The Local Planning Policy links and works in parallel with this Policy to provide a sound framework on which Council can rely to inform their decision making on gaming applications.
- 4.6. Hume City is partly covered by a regional cap of 435 gaming machines for the postcodes of 3043, 3047, 3048, 3060 and 3061. This encompasses the suburbs of Broadmeadows, Campbellfield, Coolaroo, Dallas, Fawkner, Gladstone Park, Jacana, Meadow Heights and Tullamarine. It was imposed by the VCGLR due to high relative disadvantage, significant EGM density and higher than average EGM expenditure. There can be no increase of EGMs beyond the cap, although these machines can be relocated within the capped region. Outside of the capped region, Hume City has a municipal limit of 725 gaming machines. There are 410 existing EGMs in the uncapped region, with the potential for another 315 EGMs.

Policy Reference No: CP 2001-03-32	Date of Adoption: 9 December 2013
Review Date: December 2018	Responsible Officer: Manager Social Development
	Department: Social Development

- 4.7. There are also several areas in Hume City where EGM venues are expressly prohibited (for example the Broadmeadows Shopping Complex and the Craigieburn East Shopping Centre). These areas are prohibited due to their convenience to shops, community facilities and services or key transport nodes where large numbers of pedestrians are likely to pass in the course of their daily activities. See the document ‘Hume City Council Prohibited Gaming Areas’ for maps of these sites.

5. Objective

- 5.1. Acknowledge that gaming is a legal activity which has been found to be problematic for the ordinary consumer and can have highly detrimental consequences for those affected by problem Gaming and for the wider community.
- 5.2. Provide Council with a framework to respond to gaming applications in a consistent and consultative manner, through Social and Economic Impact Assessments.
- 5.3. Articulate Council’s harm minimisation approach that aims to reduce the negative impacts and maximise the positive impacts of gaming venues for local communities and the City as a whole.
- 5.4. Achieve a transparent and equitable process of revenue received through gaming to be distributed back to the Hume community.

6. Policy Implementation

- 6.1. Council has contributed to the development of a Social and Economic Impact Assessment Framework for responding to EGM applications. This procedure that Council will follow forms Appendix 5 and incorporates information required by the VCGLR.
- 6.1.1. The Social & Economic Impact Assessment Framework includes information on defining the catchment area, locational factors (e.g. socio-economic disadvantage, EGM density, EGM expenditure and geographical accessibility of EGMs), priority populations (e.g. those who are socially isolated, people with comorbidities, lack of financial resilience), as well as positive and negative impacts of introducing EGMs.
- 6.2. Council will require all applicants who submit a gaming application to the VCGLR concerning Hume City and which propose an increase of EGMs at a venue (including all transfers), to seek the views of the surrounding community through an attitudinal survey.
- 6.2.1. This must be administered by an independent social market research firm and a copy of the raw data and survey instrument submitted to Council.
- 6.2.2. The survey must list each aspect of the proposal and ask the respondents attitude to each. It must also seek the impact on the wellbeing of the community as a consequence of the application.

Policy Reference No: CP 2001-03-32	Date of Adoption: 9 December 2013
Review Date: December 2018	Responsible Officer: Manager Social Development
	Department: Social Development
Page 6 of 17	

- 6.2.3. The final survey must also be approved by Council’s Research Department prior to implementation. A sample survey is included as Appendix 6.
- 6.3. Council will continue to represent Hume City at working groups and forums including the Victorian Local Governance Association’s Local Government Working Group on Gaming (LGWGOG).
- 6.4. Council will negotiate with EGM applicants as well as lobby State government through LGWGOG to ensure all gaming venues in Hume City provide direct community benefits to local communities within their catchment areas (5km radius of where the venue is located) and within Hume by supporting activities that address problem gaming and build community cohesion.
- 6.5. Council will advocate for increased transparency in data collected by the VCGLR and gaming venues and supports the release of such data regularly.
- 6.6. Council will advocate for added support for programs and services addressing problem gambling throughout the municipality.
- 6.7. Council will support education initiatives that inform the community about the potential risks associated with gaming and promote available community support services.
- 6.7.1. Council will develop and maintain a website that provides information and links to service providers that assist problem gamblers, with information on alternatives to gaming and space for community comment on gaming applications.
- 6.8. Council will continue to keep a working brief on online gaming to understand the impacts and then to devise strategies that minimise the negative impacts.

7. Definitions and Abbreviations

EGMs: Electronic Gaming Machines; sometimes referred to as gaming machines, poker machines or pokies.

Gambling: ‘An entertainment based on staking money on uncertain events driven by chance, with the potential to win more than staked, but with the ultimate certainty that gamblers as a group will lose over time. The fact gamblers must lose and that Gaming is intended to be a recreational activity, distinguishes Gaming from investment activities, where chance also plays a prominent role.’ (Australian Productivity Commission, 2010)

Gaming: Gaming activity on EGMs. EGM Gaming is considered a more risky and problematic form of Gaming than keno, bingo, lotteries and casino tables.

Problem Gambling: Behaviour people can experience as a result of EGM use, including difficulties in limiting money and/or time spent Gaming, which leads to adverse consequences for the gambler, others and for the community.

Responsible Gaming: The provision of Gaming services in a way which seeks to minimise harm to gamblers and the community.

Policy Reference No: CP 2001-03-32	Date of Adoption: 9 December 2013
Review Date: December 2018	Responsible Officer: Manager Social Development
	Department: Social Development

Venue Operator: an entity that holds a club or hotel venue operator’s license enabling them to acquire gaming machine entitlements that authorise the conduct of gaming in an approved venue.

VCGLR: Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation; the Gaming and liquor regulator in Victoria (formerly the VCGR).

8. Related Documents

Hume City Council – Council Plan 2009-2013

Hume City Council – Gambling Survey Report 2013

Hume City Council – Hume City Council Prohibited Gaming Areas November 2007

Hume City Council – Local Planning Policy on Gaming 2009

Hume City Council – Social Justice Charter 2007

Hume City Council – Strategic Reference Document for Gaming in Hume City 2007

State Government – Gambling Regulation Act 2003

State Government – The Gambling Regulation Amendment (Licensing) Bill 2009

Victorian Local Governance Association – Social & Economic Impact Assessment Framework

Policy Reference No: CP 2001-03-32	Date of Adoption: 9 December 2013
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Appendix 1: EGM Venues on Council or Crown Owned Land

	Venue	Address	EGMs	Nature of Land Use
1	Broadmeadows Sporting Club	111 Sunset Boulevard, Jacana	55	Council owned.
2	Craigieburn Sporting Club	Willmott Park, Craigieburn Road, Craigieburn	70	Council owned.
3	Sunbury Bowling Club	49 Riddell Road, Sunbury	78	Part Council & Crown owned.
4	Sunbury Football Social Club	Clarke Oval, Riddell Road, Sunbury	38	Part Council & Crown owned.
5	Sunbury United Sporting Club	Langama Park, Mitchells Lane, Sunbury	50	Council owned.
			291	

Source: HCC Rates Database and Victorian Commission for Gaming & Liquor Regulation website.

There are 291 EGMs on Council or Crown owned land. This accounts for 35.7% of all EGMs in Hume City.

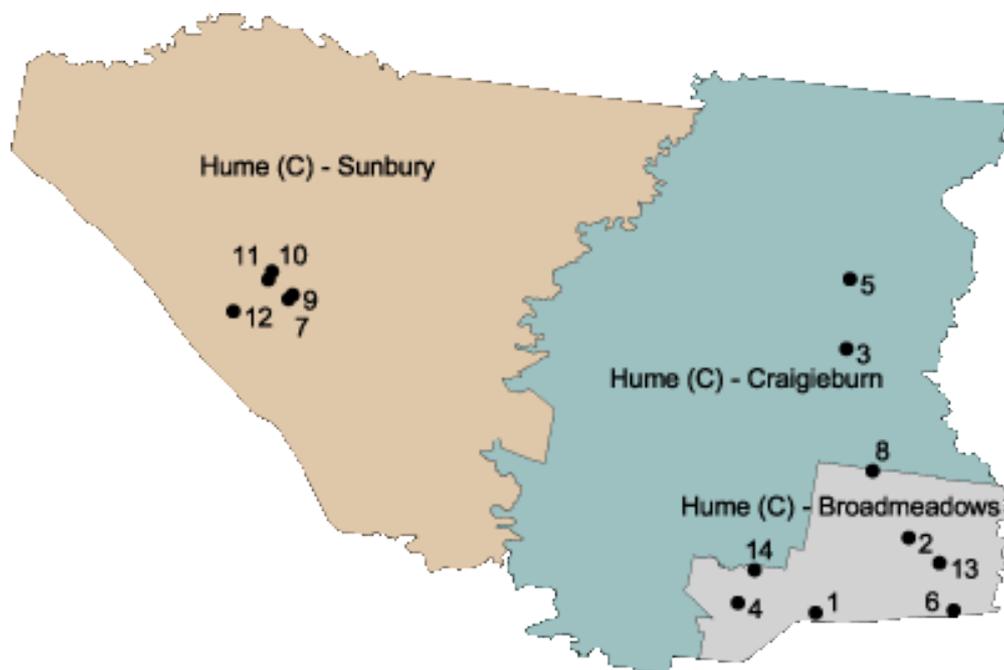
Appendix 2: Details of EGM Venues in Hume City

	Venue	Address	EGMs	Venue Type	Capped Region
1	Broadmeadows Sporting Club	111 Sunset Boulevard, Jacana	55	Club	Yes
2	Coolaroo Taverner	Cnr Barry Road & Maffra Street, Coolaroo	48	Hotel	Yes
3	Craigieburn Sporting Club	Willmott Park, Craigieburn Road, Craigieburn	70	Club	No
4	Gladstone Park Hotel	186-202 Mickleham Road, Tullamarine	86	Hotel	Yes
5	Highlands Hotel	Cnr Grand & Aitken Boulevards, Craigieburn	60	Hotel	No
6	Meadow Inn Hotel	1435 Sydney Road, Fawkner	70	Hotel	Yes
7	Olive Tree Hotel	111 Evans Street, Sunbury	43	Hotel	No
8	Roxburgh Park Hotel	225 Somerton Road, Coolaroo	71	Hotel	Yes
9	Royal Hotel (Sunbury)	63 Evans Street, Sunbury	31	Hotel	No
10	Sunbury Bowling Club	49 Riddell Road, Sunbury	78	Club	No
11	Sunbury Football Social Club	Clarke Oval, Riddell Road, Sunbury	38	Club	No
12	Sunbury United Sporting Club	Langama Park, Mitchells Lane, Sunbury	50	Club	No
13	Sylvania Hotel	1631 Sydney Road, Campbellfield	75	Hotel	Yes
14	Westmeadows Tavern	10 Ardlie Street, Westmeadows	40	Hotel	No
			815		

Source: Victorian Commission for Gaming & Liquor Regulation website, *City of Hume: Current Venues*, <http://www.vcglr.vic.gov.au> accessed in November 2013.

Appendix 3: Map of Gaming Venues in Hume City

Source: Victorian Commission for Gaming & Liquor Regulation website, *City of Hume: Current Venues*, <http://www.vcglr.vic.gov.au> accessed in November 2013.



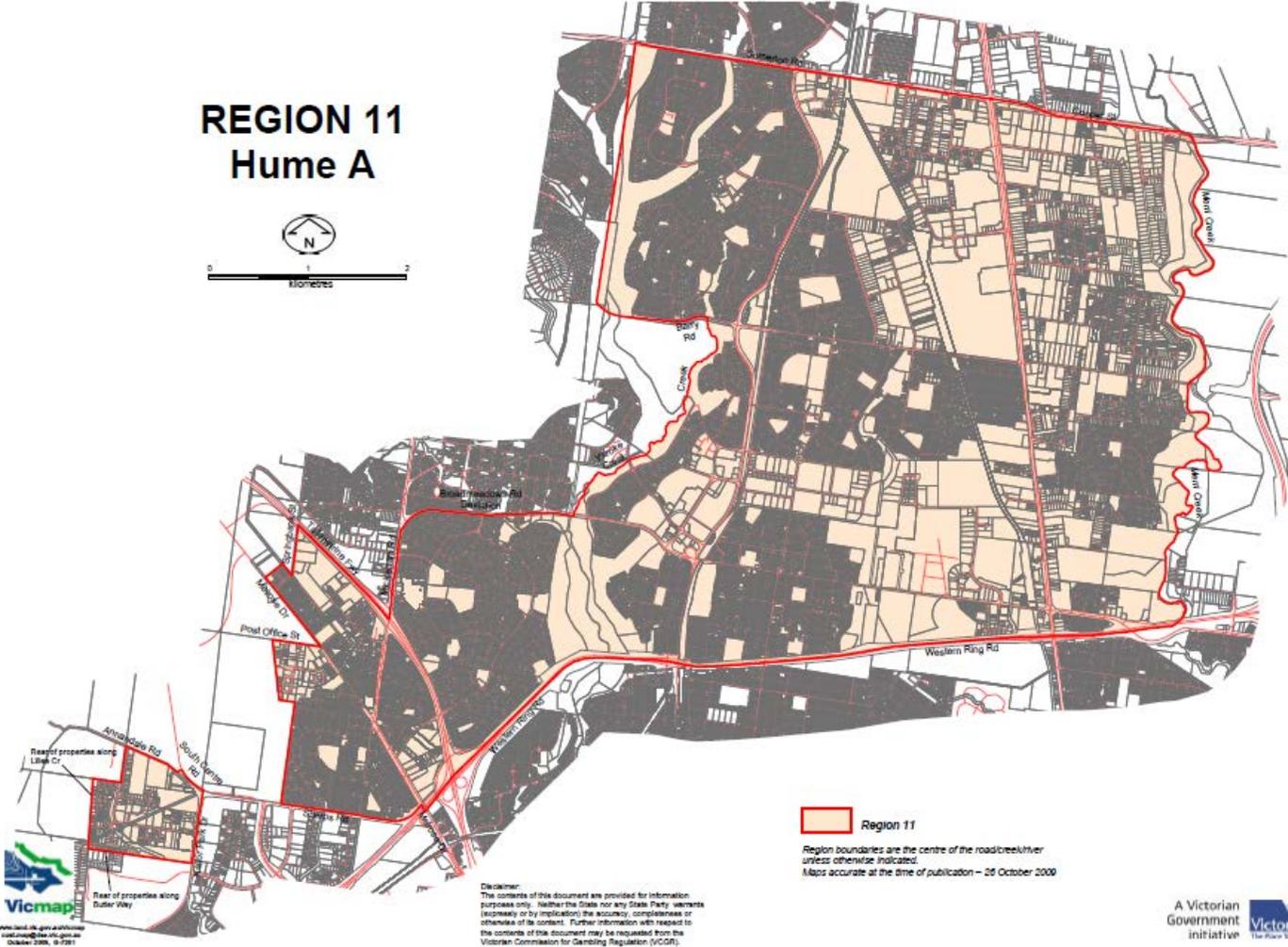
Legend

1	Broadmeadows Sporting Club	Broadmeadows
2	Coolaroo Taverner	Broadmeadows
3	Craigieburn Sporting Club	Craigieburn
4	Gladstone Park Hotel	Broadmeadows
5	Highlands Hotel	Craigieburn
6	Meadow Inn Hotel	Broadmeadows
7	Olive Tree Hotel	Sunbury
8	Roxburgh Park Hotel	Craigieburn
9	Royal Hotel (Sunbury)	Sunbury
10	Sunbury Bowling Club	Sunbury
11	Sunbury Football Social Club	Sunbury
12	Sunbury United Sporting Club	Sunbury
13	Sylvania Hotel	Broadmeadows
14	Westmeadows Tavern	Broadmeadows

There are 374 EGMs in the Broadmeadows (45.9%), 201 EGMs in Craigieburn (24.7%) and 240 EGMs in Sunbury (29.4%).

Appendix 4: Map of Regional Capped Area in Hume City

REGION 11 Hume A



Region 11
 Region boundaries are the centre of the road/creek/river
 unless otherwise indicated.
 Maps accurate at the time of publication – 26 October 2000

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Appendix 5: Social & Economic Impact Assessment Framework for Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs)

The Social & Economic Impact Assessment Framework is maintained by the Victorian Local Governance Association and can be accessed from the following website: <http://socialimpactsofpokies.org.au/>. Key elements of the framework include:

- Location factors
 - Socioeconomic disadvantage
 - EGM density
 - EGM expenditure
 - Geographical accessibility of EGMs
 - Alternative entertainment
 - Community attitudes towards gaming
 - Presence of vulnerable groups
- Priority populations
 - People who are socially isolated
 - Cultural background
 - Young people and students
 - People with comorbidities
 - Lack of financial resilience
 - People with cognitive impairment
 - Problem gamblers
- Positive impacts
 - Entertainment and enjoyment
 - Social enjoyment with family and friends
 - Increased revenue for gaming venues
 - Increased support for community groups
 - Community benefit from clubs
 - Contribution to local economy
 - Employment
 - Tourism
- Negative impacts
 - Loss of health
 - Loss of personal finances
 - Relationship breakdown
 - Family violence
 - Intergenerational transmission of problem Gaming from problem gamblers to their children
 - Impact on community support services
 - Workplace fraud
 - Decrease in work productivity
 - Redistribution of expenditure within the local economy
 - Increased crime levels
 - Community perceptions of safety and wellbeing

Appendix 6: Research Questions for Community Attitudinal Survey

Hello my name is [*insert name*], I am calling on behalf of [*insert organisation name*] a social research company investigating residents' attitudes about their local community. Would it be okay if I asked you a few quick questions? It should only take a couple of minutes and any information you provide will not lead to the identification of individuals and all information will be kept strictly confidential in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2001*.

Before we begin with the main questions, I'm going to ask you a couple of background questions.

Background

1. How happy do you currently feel living in your local neighbourhood?
 - Very unhappy
 - Unhappy
 - Neither happy nor unhappy
 - Happy
 - Very happy

2. How would you rate your sense of wellbeing living in your local neighbourhood?
 - Very low
 - Low
 - Moderate
 - High
 - Very high

3. How satisfied are you with the social and recreational opportunities in your local neighbourhood?
 - Very unsatisfied
 - Unsatisfied
 - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - Satisfied
 - Very satisfied

4. Thinking about pokie machines that are up to 5km from your home, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
a) Gaming venues provide local employment opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
b) Pokies are too widely accessible.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
c) Gaming venues have improved my social life.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
d) The increased availability of Gaming venues have increased the incidence of problem Gaming in my local area	<input type="checkbox"/>					
e) Gaming venues help to promote tourism.						
e) Gaming venues provide an enjoyable atmosphere.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
f) Pokies contribute to serious social issues in my local area.	<input type="checkbox"/>					

{Insert venue name} is proposing to renovate/upgrade their existing facilities to include {insert details of proposal}.

5. Overall to what extent do you support the renovation works at {insert venue name}?

- Strongly oppose the development
- Somewhat oppose the development
- Neither support nor oppose the development
- Somewhat support the development
- Strongly support the development

{Insert venue name} is also proposing to install an additional {insert number} pokie machines in their venue.

6. Please indicate how strongly you support or oppose increasing the number of pokie machines at {insert address}?

- Strongly oppose
- Somewhat oppose
- Neither support nor oppose
- Somewhat support
- Strongly support

7. To what extent do you believe the introduction of additional pokie machines at *{insert address}* will impact on your local neighbourhood?

- Very negative impact
- Negative impact
- No impact
- Positive impact
- Very positive impact

8. *{Insert venue name}* may not be able to proceed with the redevelopment works if the additional *{insert number}* pokie machines are not installed. Given this, please indicate how strongly you support or oppose increasing the number of pokie machines at *{insert address}*?

- Strongly oppose
- Somewhat oppose
- Neither support nor oppose
- Somewhat support
- Strongly support

9. What would your level of happiness be if pokies were installed?

- My level of happiness would greatly decrease
- My level of happiness would decrease
- My level of happiness would not change
- My level of happiness would increase
- My level of happiness would greatly increase

10. Which of the following best describes how you would feel if pokies were installed?

- My sense of wellbeing in the community will greatly decrease
- My sense of wellbeing in the community will decrease
- My sense of wellbeing in the community will not change
- My sense of wellbeing in the community will increase
- My sense of wellbeing in the community will greatly increase

Demographics

11. Are you male or female? Male Female

12. Which age group do you belong to?

- Under 18 years
- 18 – 24 years
- 25 – 34 years
- 35 – 49 years
- 50 – 64 years
- 65+ years

13. In which suburb do you live? _____

14. Which best describes the type of household you live in?

- Single person, I live alone
- Couple with no children
- Couple or single parent with children
- Share house with other friends or family members
- Other (Please specify): _____

15. What is the ownership status of your home?

- Fully owned
- Paying off a mortgage
- Renting privately or through a real estate agent
- Renting through government / public housing
- Other (please specify) _____

16. If you are a couple or single parent with children, how many children do you have in each age group?

0-4 years _____ 5-11 years _____ 12-17 years _____ 18+ years _____

17. What is your main occupation or activity? (Please select any many as apply)

- Working (full-time or self employed)
- Working (part-time, casual)
- Other (please specify) _____
- Unemployed
- Student
- Home duties
- Retired

18. Which of the following best describes the level of your household income?

- \$0
- \$1 to \$9,999
- \$10,000 to \$29,999
- \$30,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$69,999
- \$70,000 to \$89,999
- \$90,000 to \$109,999
- \$110,000 to \$129,999
- \$130,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 +
- Don't know

19. Do you have any further comments? _____
