GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL

Reducing harm from gambling

Community engagement summary report

MAY 2024

Background

Council is committed to preventing and reducing harm and minimising the negative impacts of gambling to our community. This is identified under priority four – 'Create healthier environments' of the *Community Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025*.

This *Plan* identifies and acknowledges Council's role in ongoing evaluation of social issues to support the communities in areas of risks, harm, disadvantage and hardship. This includes harm caused by gambling and considers the crossover between harmful lifestyle behaviours and other hardships and stressors.

The proposed *Gambling Policy* is designed to establish a framework for Council's role in minimising gambling harm and aligns with Council's legislative and strategic obligations to promote and protect the health and wellbeing of Glen Eira residents and visitors. It would be Council's first policy to address gambling related harms.

The proposed *Policy* would consolidate and strengthen Council's commitment to reducing gambling harm in the Glen Eira community, a commitment already demonstrated through:

- advocacy for gambling reforms in the Glen Eira *Priority Advocacy Projects 2023—2024* and submissions made to Victorian Government consultation papers on gambling industry reforms;
- objectives to reduce harm to our community from tobacco, vaping, alcohol and other drugs and gambling in Council's *Community Wellbeing Plan 2021—2025*;
- planning and regulation measures in relation to gaming machines in line with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and Glen Eira Planning Scheme.

Key stakeholders, including local businesses, community and advocacy groups, industry associations, government agencies and key demographic groups, were consulted to inform the *Policy* prior to the broader community engagement. This report summarises the methods we used to engage with the Glen Eira community and the feedback we received during the engagement period from 10 April to 1 May 2024.

Executive summary

Council has committed to preventing and reducing harm and minimising the negative impacts of gambling to our community. The draft *Gambling Policy* proposes to form a framework for how Council can best support the community.

We engaged with the community about our role in reducing harm from gambling over a three-week period from 10 April 2024 to 1 May 2024. We promoted the engagement through a range of channels, including social media, posters and postcards at libraries and community centres, emails with local venues, Council e-newsletters, meetings and promotions with industry stakeholders, and discussions with advisory groups.

Opportunities for formal community feedback included:

1. a Have Your Say Glen Eira web page including an online survey;
2. discussions at advisory groups; and
3. emails sent to Council.

The primary goals of this engagement were to consult the community about their views on Council's role in reducing harm from gambling and to capture feedback on the proposed *Gambling Policy*. We also collected information about the community's experiences with gambling, to assist us to better understand the social context for the feedback we received.

In total, we received 40 formal pieces of feedback from the Have Your Say platform, advisory groups, and emails received. The online survey received 35 individual submissions and provides quantitative data for the community's preferences. We received feedback from three of Council's advisory groups (consisting of 21 community members in total attendance), one email from the Victorian Local Governance Association, and one email from another person or group.

What we heard

We received a total of 35 submissions via the online survey on the Have Your Say website. Feedback from the respondents was as follows:

- **85 per cent** responded that Council has a role in preventing gambling harm.
- **75 per cent** responded that Council should have a Gambling Policy as well as a role in preventing gambling harm.
- Between **80 to 90 per cent** of respondents were concerned or very concerned about pokies (electronic gaming machines), sports betting, online betting, and gambling within video games, internet gaming platforms or apps.
- Between **55 to 70 per cent** were not concerned or have slight concern about casino table games, lotteries, scratch tickets, Keno, raffles and bingo.
- Planning and regulation (**49 per cent**) and advocacy for gambling reform (**34 per cent**) were ranked as the most important roles for Council.
- Capacity building and community engagement, collaboration and partnerships, and organisational alignment all received **consistently lower rankings** as possible roles for Council.

- **49 per cent** have gambled in the past 12 months.
- **31 per cent** have experienced harm as a result of someone else's gambling.
- **6 per cent** have experienced harm as a result of their own gambling.

The feedback received through the free text survey responses is broadly consistent with the quantitative data. Free text feedback substantially focused on a range of gambling harms impacting the community and a preference for action to be taken to reduce the harms. Some feedback indicated uncertainty about Council's relevance to, or possible impact on, gambling as an issue. The advisory groups indicated concerns about gambling harm and suggested that more could be done by Council to address it, including through a *Policy*.

The community engagement program shows a significant proportion of respondents believe that Council has a role in preventing gambling harm (**85 per cent**) and should have a Gambling Policy (**75 per cent**). Planning and regulation are seen as Council's most important role (**49 per cent**), followed by advocacy for gambling reform (**34 per cent**).

Engagement methods

We engaged with the community to better understand community views on Council's role in reducing gambling harm and the proposed Gambling Policy.

The three-week engagement period ran from 10 April 2024 to 1 May 2024, and included:

- a Have Your Say Glen Eira webpage – at www.haveyoursaygleneira.com.au/gambling;
- a community survey accessible on the Have Your Say webpage asking people for their views;
- consultation with three of Council's advisory groups; and
- information on Council's website and social media.

The primary goal of this engagement was to consult the community about Council's role in reducing harm from gambling and the proposed Gambling Policy. It asked respondents to rank five identified roles for Council's approach to gambling. The online survey also asked respondents to provide detail about their gambling experiences, their demographics, and gave space for further open feedback.

The survey included twelve questions about the subject matter, and six questions for demographics and contact details. In the subject matter questions, nine were multiple choice or ranking questions, and four were free-text responses. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis is provided in the **Community feedback** section of this report, followed by quotes from the free-text feedback.

Emails to Council were also considered as a channel for feedback. We received two emails through this channel.

Communication activities	Reach
Have Your Say survey page Background information and community survey. Survey opened at 12pm on 18 April and closed at 5pm on 1 May 2024.	Page views: 226 Document downloads: 26
Social media Glen Eira City Council posts on Facebook and Instagram.	Impressions: 1,323 Reach: 1,198 Engagements: 19 Link clicks: 22
Emails/Contact forms Emails or contact forms sent to key stakeholders	Gaming venues: 8 Industry bodies: 3 Gambling support providers: 2
Posters and postcards Promotional posters and postcards were distributed through Council libraries, community centres, maternal and child health centres, Council's service centre, Gamblers Help Southern, Self-Help Addiction Resource Centre, and CISVic centres.	Posters: 20 Postcards: 400

Engagement activities	Number who participated
Have Your Say community survey	Surveys submitted: 35
Advisory groups	Groups: 3 Community members: 21
Emails to Council	Emails: 2

Community feedback

Community survey

The community survey was hosted online on the Have Your Say Glen Eira website at www.haveyoursaygleneira.com.au/gambling. The webpage provided summary information about gambling harm and the proposed Gambling Policy, including the draft document and a summary of the five key roles.

Survey data – quantitative

A total of **35 surveys** were completed through the publicly available community survey. The survey comprised of **twelve questions** about the subject matter, and six questions asked for demographics, area of residence and a contact email.

Q.1 Do you think Council has a role in preventing gambling harm? *Required. Single choice.*

	Yes	Maybe	No
Count	30 (85.7 per cent)	2 (5.7 per cent)	3 (8.6 per cent)

Q.2 Council's Gambling Policy has identified five roles to help prevent and reduce gambling harm. Please rank them in order from most important to you, to least important. *Required. Ranking question. Only visible to those who answered Yes or Maybe in Q.1.*

	First choice	Weighted average
Planning and regulation	17 (49 per cent)	4.26
Capacity building and community engagement	2 (6 per cent)	2.80
Organisational alignment	0 (0 per cent)	1.85
Advocacy for gambling reform	12 (34 per cent)	4.03
Collaboration and partnerships	1 (1 per cent)	2.30

The responses indicate that planning and regulation and advocacy for gambling reform are ranked as most important roles when looking at both first choice preferences and the weighted averages. Capacity building and community engagement, collaboration and partnerships, and organisational alignment received consistently lower rankings from the community.

Q.3 Do you think Council should have a Gambling Policy? *Required. Single choice.*

	Yes	Maybe	No
Count	26 (74 per cent)	5 (14 per cent)	4 (11 per cent)

The responses indicate a preference from the majority of respondents in favour of Council having a role in preventing gambling harm.

Q.4 Please explain why. *Optional. Free-text.*

29 respondents provided free-text feedback about the previous question. A summary of this feedback is provided in the Survey data – qualitative section.

Q.5 Do you have any further feedback about the Gambling Policy? *Required. Yes or No question.*

	Yes	No
Count	8 (23 per cent)	27 (77 per cent)

Q.6 Please explain. *Optional. Only visible to those who answered yes in Q.5. Free-text.*

Seven respondents provided free-text feedback about the previous question. A summary of this feedback is provided in the Survey data – qualitative section.

Q.7 What is your level of concern about each of the following activities available in Glen Eira? *Required. Matrix question.*

	No concern at all	Slight concern	Concerned	Very concerned	Weighted average
Pokies (electronic gaming machines)	2 (6%)	2 (6%)	9 (26%)	22 (63%)	3.46
Sports betting	3 (1%)	6 (17%)	5 (14%)	23 (66%)	3.43
Online betting	1 (3%)	4 (11%)	8 (23%)	22 (63%)	3.46
Gambling within video games, internet gaming platforms or Apps	3 (9%)	4 (11%)	8 (23%)	20 (57%)	3.29
Casino table games such as blackjack, roulette and poker	8 (23%)	12 (34%)	7 (20%)	8 (23%)	2.43
Lotteries, scratch tickets, Keno, raffles or bingo	10 (29%)	14 (40%)	6 (17%)	5 (14%)	2.17

The responses indicate that there is a high level of concern about the pokies, sports betting, online betting, and gambling within video games, internet gaming platforms, or apps. There

are mixed levels of concern about casino table games and lotteries, scratch tickets, keno, raffles or bingo.

Q.8 Have you gambled in the past 12 months? *Required. Single choice.*

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
Count	17 (49 per cent)	18 (51 per cent)	0 (0 per cent)

Q.9 In the past 12 months, how often did you take part in a gambling activity? *Optional. Only visible to those who answered yes in Q.8. Single choice.*

	Count
Four or more times per week	0 (0 per cent)
One to three times per week	1 (6 per cent)
One to three times per month	3 (18 per cent)
Less than once per month	9 (53 per cent)
Other	4 (24 per cent)

Q.10 Have you ever experienced harm as a result of your own gambling? *Required. Single choice.*

	Yes	No	Unsure	Prefer not to say
Count	2 (6 per cent)	33 (94 per cent)	0 (0 per cent)	0 (0 per cent)

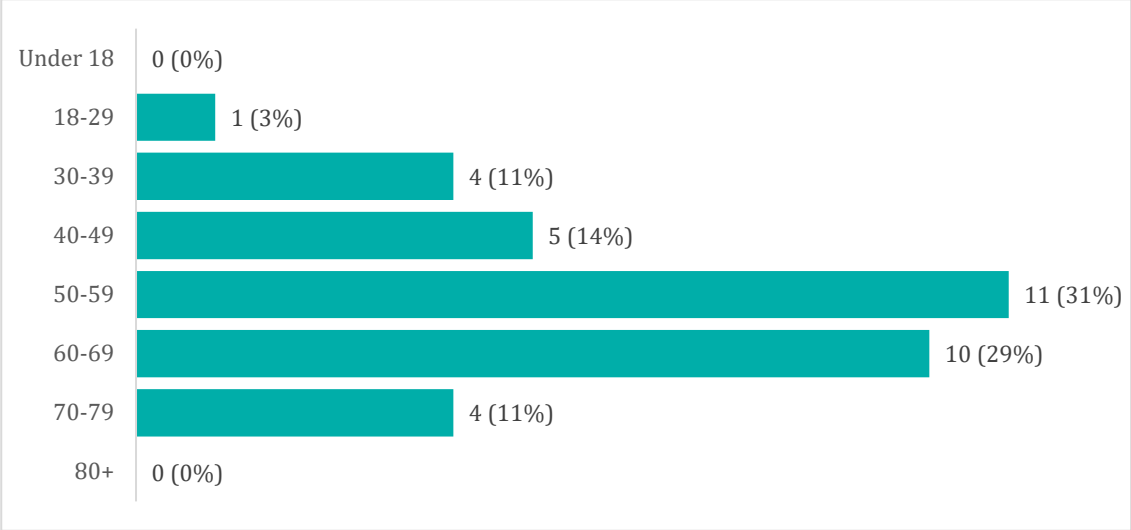
Q.11 Have you ever experienced harm as a result of someone else's gambling? *Required. Single choice.*

	Yes	No	Unsure	Prefer not to say
Count	11 (31 per cent)	21 (60 per cent)	9 (3 per cent)	0 (0 per cent)

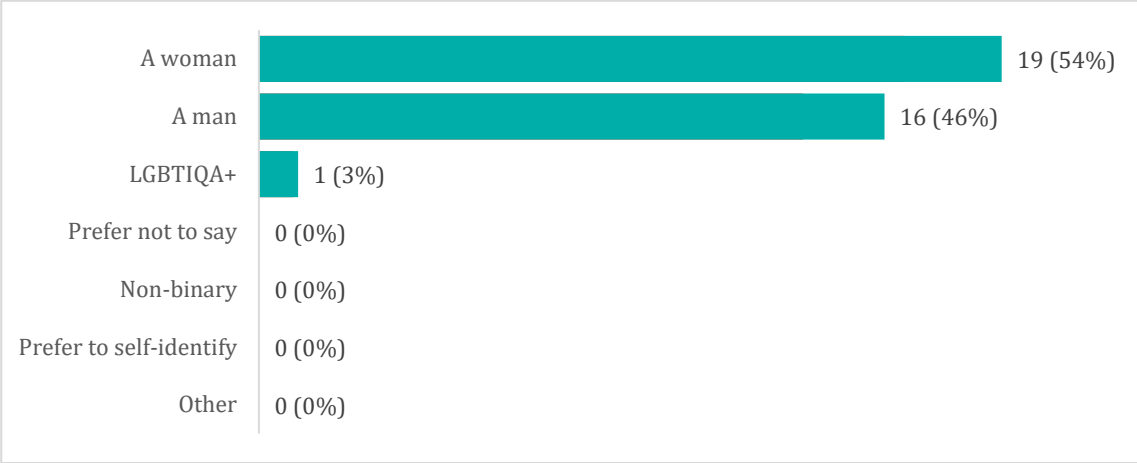
Q.12 Do you have any further feedback about gambling in Glen Eira? *Optional. Free-text question.*

- 17 respondents answered this question.
- A summary of this feedback is provided in the Survey data – qualitative section.

Q.13 What is your age group? *Required. Single choice.*



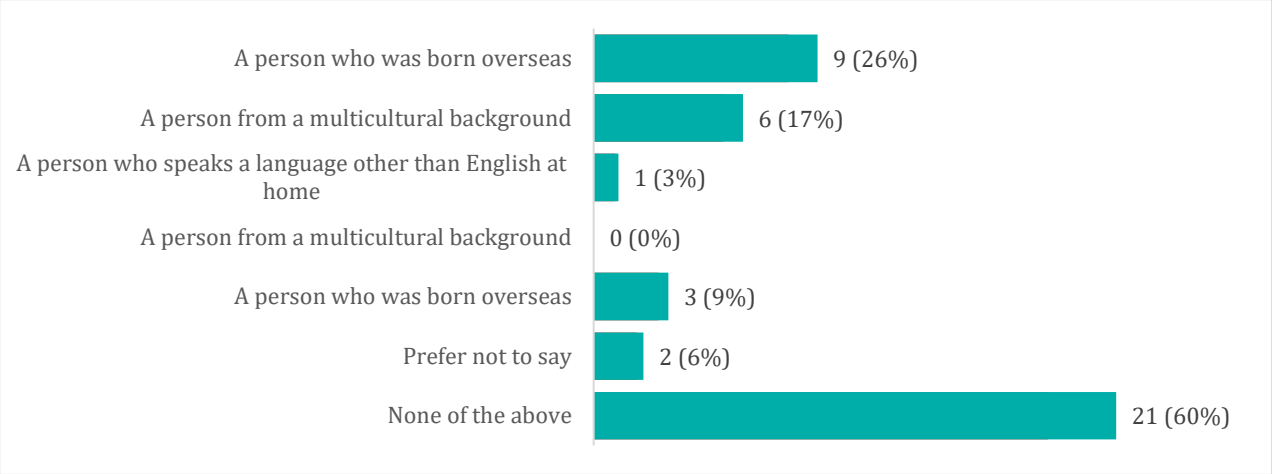
Q.14 Do you identify as any of the following? *Required.*



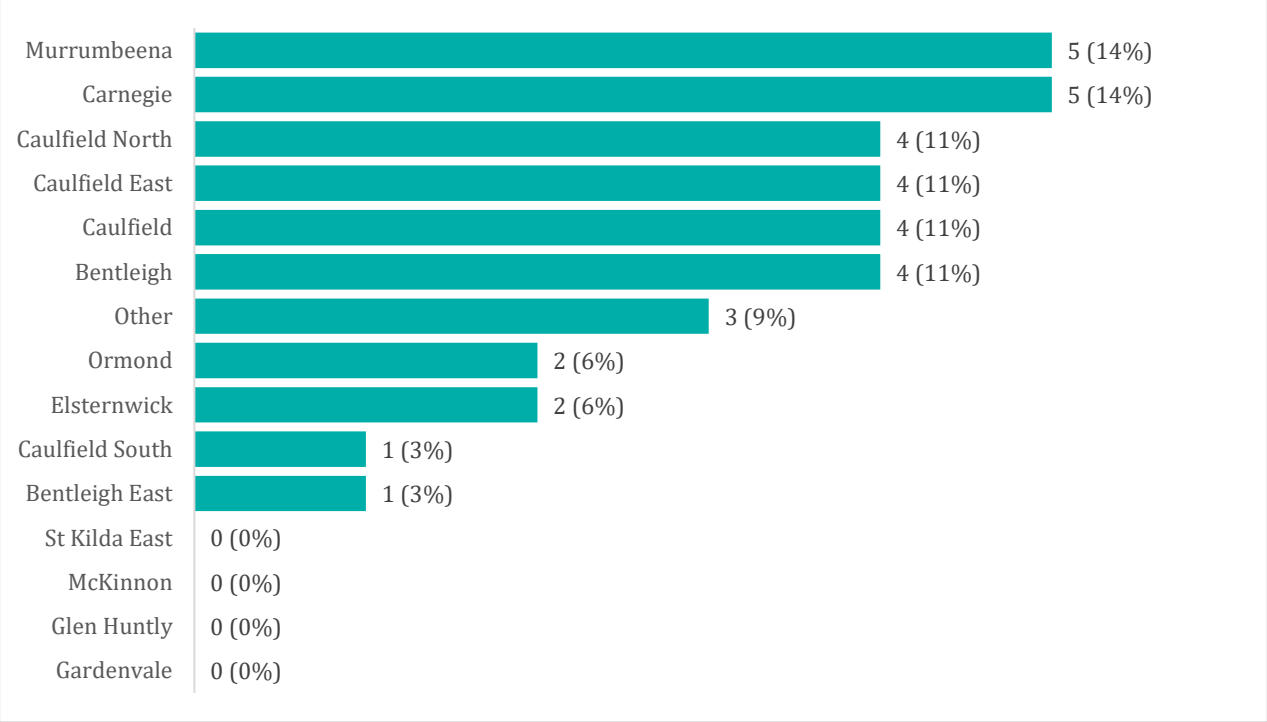
Q.15 Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander? *Required.*



Q.16 Do you identify as any of the following? *Required.*



Q.17 Which suburb do you live in? *Required.*



Q.18 Your email. *Optional.*

11 respondents answered this question.

Survey data – qualitative

Three questions asked for free-text responses to the following questions:

- **Q.4 Do you think Council should have a Gambling Policy? Please explain.**
- **Q.6 Do you have any further feedback about the Gambling Policy? Please**

explain.
- **Q.12 Do you have any further feedback about gambling in Glen Eira?**

Responses to these questions have been sorted into the three largest cohorts:

- respondents in favour of Council having a role and a gambling policy (**74 per cent**);
- respondents in favour of Council having a role, but uncertain about a gambling policy (**11 per cent**); and
- respondents not in favour of Council having a role or a gambling policy (**9 per cent**).

From respondents in favour of Council having a role and a *Gambling Policy* (**74 per cent**), common feedback themes indicated the significant impacts of gambling harm, such as cultural, health, family, economic, and community harms, as well as the importance or relevance of Council planning and regulation. Comments referred to lived experiences of gambling harms, the presence of gaming venues and gambling culture in Glen Eira, and a preference for Council to act.

From respondents that were in favour of Council having a role but uncertain about a *Gambling Policy* (**11 per cent**), common feedback themes indicated doubt about Council's impact on the gambling harms, financial costs to Council, and the role of other levels of government.

From respondents that weren't in favour of Council having either a role or a *Gambling Policy* (**9 per cent**) common feedback themes indicated that it is the role of other levels of government, financial costs to Council, concerns about over-regulation, and that gambling is the responsibility of the adult.

A random selection of the free-text feedback provided in the survey and emails is provided in the **Quotes** section below.

Email submissions

The engagement@gleneira.vic.gov.au inbox is a formal channel for engagement and promoted through the Have Your Say website. Emails received to other Council email accounts, including officers and Councillors, were forwarded to the engagement inbox.

Emails (or contact forms when no email was available) that invited feedback were sent out to the eight gaming venues located in Glen Eira, to three industry bodies, and two gambling support providers.

Two emails were received in the engagement inbox during the consultation period that referred to the Gambling Policy engagement. One email was from the Victorian Local Governance Association, and a letter with their feedback is provided with their permission for public display in Appendix 1. The second email received has also been provided to Council to inform their decision making in Appendix 2. No feedback was received from gaming venues.

Advisory groups' feedback

Three Council advisory groups were consulted during the community engagement:

- Multicultural Advisory Committee – 17 April 2024;
- Disability Reference Committee – 18 April 2024; and
- Youth Engagement Team – 29 April 2024.

These groups consist primarily of community members that provide feedback or advice to Council.

Multicultural Advisory Committee

The Multicultural Advisory Committee was consulted on 17 April, with nine community representatives present. The committee provided the following feedback.

Feedback
Concerns about the rise of 'on-line' gambling and Sports Betting, particularly to young people.
Preventative measures – social connections through other avenues.
Face to face engagement is key and the importance of educating kids earlier.

Q.1: What is the community's experience with gambling and gambling harm? What are you concern about?
The loss of money for those on lower incomes without any monetary return, gambling advertising is prevalent on TV and other devices. The user has no control over receiving gambling ads.
Giving that venues are everywhere it is difficult for people to fight temptation. ie: the casino and other venues are a gateway to drugs, alcohol and many other problems.
Many people resort to stealing to gamble.
Community mostly is unaware of online gambling, need to prevent youth into gambling.

Q.2: How can we reach more people in the community for more diverse feedback?
State and Federal Gov need to work together to address this.
Social media, schools [x2], community houses, financial counsellors, legal services, neighbourhood houses, community radio, social media, family violence services, Monash University, public places such as Caulfied training station.

Disability Reference Committee

The Disability Reference Committee was consulted on 18 April, with 4 community members present. The committee provided the following feedback.

Feedback
Lotto is not highlighted enough. Will Council concentrate on the lotto places in Glen Eira? There are a lot of places in Glen Eira and are very accessible.
What is going to be done by Council, education sessions by Council for community, what are the alternatives (leisure and social connection aspects).
Education about the consequences of gambling, who it impacts.
Young people and their mobile phones. Downloading apps and the next minute they are gambling. Can Council partner with football clubs and other sporting clubs to educate young people.
Getting into schools and educating young people about gambling and what the facts and odds are around gambling.
Is there data about people with disability and gambling?
Council online sessions.
Advertise in Glen Eira News.

Youth Engagement Team

The Youth Engagement Team was consulted on the 29 April, with 8 community members present. The team provided the following feedback.

Feedback
Gambling forms taking place at home and online are scarier and more harmful – becomes an addiction/people might do it as a hobby at home.
Young people are involved in subtle forms of gambling such as betting on games/sports.
Lived experience - men bet more compared to women in general and are more consistent. Receive more satisfaction and are motivated throughout the day because of betting.
Educating people about gambling rather than making it illegal/banning it.
Providing help to young people struggling with gambling addiction – creating more awareness, removing the stigma from seeking help.
Educating parents on signs their young people may be gambling.

Quotes

Below is a random selection of anonymised quotes from free-text feedback in the survey and emails to Council. Approximately 50 per cent of the received free-text feedback has been directly quoted below. All feedback has been provided to Council to inform their decision making in Appendix 2.

As it has a very serious impact on the local community. Council should have the ability to restrict access to venues that allow gambling and also provide services locally to gambling addicts.

I hope there is a strategy to target youth, online gambling is very popular for the footy and tatslotto gambling is normalized/told to be ok from parental generations

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Council are best placed to limit gaming venues, to monitor and advocate to minimize gambling harm, to educate community regarding impact of gambling, as well as strengthening support for those affected by gambling.

Strong statements to educate Glen Eira residents about the impacts of gambling including online gambling and sports betting are needed. A range of education and support services are needed for residents of all ages, to be promoted and provided.

Information needs to include the strong stigma and shame as well as relational breakdown, conflict and stress that impacts those affected by gambling, not only financial stress.

Community and government reliance on gambling revenue should be removed. Overseas profiteers should be removed. Profiteers in Australia should be transitioned to doing something for the community not against the community.

No point unless you put controls in the planning scheme. Otherwise it will be toothless

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Need to look at current state laws. Council shouldn't have over reach nor should it wasteful of funds and time if existing regulations are appropriate and adequate

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Clients have been impacted by gamblers losing money and then stealing from others in including employers

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This is the role of state and federal government ! Council should not be spending rate payers money on being an echo chamber for policy that has plenty of coverage by the above mentioned.

There are already many gambling outlets in our council area, including the racecourse and related pokies venue. The council should have a policy that addresses the number of outlets where they are sited and their opening hours

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There are too many pokies clustered together particularly in Bentleigh. They need to be more spread out.

This is an issue that hurts the community particularly women and children. I have lived experience of the harm gambling does to relationships

Very glad to see Council being proactive about this issue.

Speaking with Lived Experience people should be essential when writing these policies as their stories of gambling harm can impact people to change minds about how they think about gambling harm.

I see gambling as an addiction that can easily be hidden from view with the technology available and has far reaching detrimental consequences not only to the addict but to their families and also their community

I encourage any action the council can take to lobby State and Federal Governments to treat the constant advertising of gambling on all forms of media as that applies to smoking. Even to the introduction of increasing taxation on premises/ corporations etc involved in the industry.

Gambling has become entrenched in the community. It has also become intertwined with sporting clubs and facilities and this filters through to our children too.

Our council therefore is the first layer of government and the coal face where decision making can make a difference.

The way gambling is presented and the levels of access can make a significant difference to our community and the council can have input through planning reform and interaction and advocacy.

Harm minimisation; community engagement and education, and strong planning controls can assist in gambling reform.

They should lobby state gov to stop advertising

Im sure there is sufficient research that gambling hurts individuals, families and communites and can lead to crime

It is extremely harmful from 10 years of age at sporting events, tv etc through to the elderly. People are suffering greatly.

Gambling kills people through suicide. It is at epidemic proportions in our society. And at schools!! Not enough being dine

Gambling advertising should not be allowed at community events

You must be over the age of 18 to gamble legally. You are therefore an adult and able to make decisions for your self - between local Councils and the State Government we are living in a complete nanny state. Stick to collecting rubbish, maintaining infrastructure and the like and stop telling people how they should live their lives.

Good to be active in gambling prevention, education and promotion, however, how much can Council really influence increasing community awareness and reducing the statistics?

Because there is evidently no-one in the state government who has the will to impose any real restrictions or proper support and assistance for problem gamblers. I know people who work in gambling compliance and they are appalled at the lack of will. There are clear solutions that could be put in place tomorrow, but the regulator doesn't want to because problem gamblers account for a lot of revenue at venues. It's disgusting.

It is not clear what will be done under capacity building and collaboration. The policy should include more specific details and targets. No new gambling venues or machines at existing venues is a clear target.

Council definitely needs to have a gambling policy since, as mentioned above, it has a legislated role in responding to applications for new gambling venues and new poker machines at gambling venues. Up to now, I believe council has been way too lenient in facilitating gambling in the municipality. One glaring example of this is the approval recently given to the construction of a new Glasshouse on Caulfield Racecourse. While this may be termed an entertainment venue, it is principally a gambling facility which has the potential to cause immense harm to Victorians, both within and outside of the community by encouraging their use of pokies.

They have a responsibility to do what they can to protect the community and advocate for the things we need that aren't in their control.

I would’ve liked to see more emphasis on the fact that poker machines EGMs are a dangerous product and that's why we need a public health approach. Possibly they could add it to the EGM descriptor.

I wonder what their vaping/tobacco policy says about the products…..

Appendix 1

This appendix includes a letter received from the Victorian Local Governance Association, published with permission.

Victorian
Local Governance
Association

8 May 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Glen Eira City Council - Draft Gambling Policy

The Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) works in partnership with Victorian local government areas to upskill and support councils to use their local expertise in developing policy and implementing actions to reduce harm from gambling.

As a respected independent organisation committed to supporting councils in good governance, and an extensive history working in the space of gambling harm prevention, we are well placed to provide comment on the Glen Eira City Council Draft Gambling Policy.

We thank Glen Eira City Council for the opportunity to participate and contribute to this consultation, and for undertaking the process to implement the first Gambling policy for Council. This policy is an important addition to support Council in the reduction of gambling harm in the municipality.

To further build on this feedback, the VLGA commends Glen Eira City Council for the important inclusions of:

- Capturing forms of gambling activity beyond Electronic Gaming Machines.
- Committing to a public health approach to preventing gambling harms.
- Outlining the importance of building strong partnerships, including working with the VLGA.
- Considering the dimensions of harm from gambling, and their impact across the entire community.

The VLGA would like to add further comment to:

- Demonstrating the need for a Gambling Policy by providing further context to the impact and social costs of gambling with the inclusion of current research and statistics.
- The current absence of information regarding the specific EGM venues operating in the Glen Eira.
- Reviewing the wording for '*activities such as bingo, raffles, card games and sports tipping competitions can be conducted for the benefit of community and charitable organisations, to create social environments and fundraise for local causes'* under the draft policy scope. There is potential to re-frame this to still enable these activities yet keeping in line with the Council policy approach to gambling (in all forms) as harmful.

The VLGA appreciates the opportunity to support and comment on the Glen Eira City Council Draft Gambling Policy and welcomes any further discussion. This policy will become a great platform for Glen Eira to further support the health and wellbeing of it's residents by looking to prevent and reduce gambling harm and normalisation in the community.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Harrex
Program & Policy Lead
VLGA

Appendix 2

This appendix includes all free text feedback received in response to the community engagement about reducing harm from gambling. This feedback is provided directly to Council.

- One email
- Full responses to Q.4 Do you think Council should have a Gambling Policy? Please explain.
- Full responses to Q.6 Do you have any further feedback about the Gambling Policy? Please explain.
- Full responses to Q.12 Do you have any further feedback about gambling in Glen Eira?