
REPORT 8
(1215/12/IM)

GAMBLING VENUES POLICY REVIEW

1. Purpose of Report

This report presents the proposed draft Gambling Venues Policy (currently out for consultation) for the Board's information. A copy of the Statement of Proposal considered by Council on 17 February 2010 is attached. The Board may wish to consider making a submission on the draft policy.

2. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Tawa Community Board:

1. *Receives the information.*
2. *Notes that consultation on the draft policy commenced on 2 March 2010 and finishes on 9 April 2010*
3. *Notes that a copy of the Statement of Proposal considered by Council on 17 February 2010 is attached for information.*
4. *Notes that oral hearings will be heard by Council on Thursday 22 April 2010 and Council will make a final decision on the policy in June 2010.*
5. *Agrees to draft a submission to Wellington City Council on the draft policy.*
6. *Delegates responsibility to Malcolm Sparrow to prepare the submission for the Board's approval at the Board's 8 April 2010 meeting.*

3. Background

Council adopted a Gambling Venues Policy in 2007 in accordance with the requirements of the Gambling Act 2003. This policy outlines the Council's approach to class 4 gaming machines (non-casino gaming machines (NCGMs) or "pokies") and Totalisator Agency Boards (TABs).

Under the Gambling Venues Policy, the Wellington district has been split into seven different zones (Southern, Northern, Western, Eastern, Onslow, Lambton [excluding Central Area Zone] and the Central Area Zone. Although there are a number of general conditions:

- There are no limitations on the number of TABs, NCGMs or venues allowed in the Central Area Zone
- There is a “cap” on the number of NCGMs allowed in the remaining six ‘capped’ zones.

Overall, the current policy is meeting its stated objectives in that the number of NCGMs is not increasing. However, the three-year review has identified five ‘areas of concern’ within the district which are vulnerable to problem gambling. These five areas (Tawa, Johnsonville, Miramar, Karori, and Newtown) have also been found to contain significant clusters of NCGMs.

4. Discussion

Evidence from Ministry of Health studies and feedback from the Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand suggests that, of all the different gambling modes available, NCGMs cause the most harm from gambling and increased access to NCGMs results in more problem gambling.

To address this issue, Council agreed to consult on a new policy approach on 17 February 2010. The proposed policy approach proposes changing from a ‘fixed’ cap in the suburban capped zones to a ‘population-based’ cap (based on a ratio of 1 machine to 300 people). This means that when NCGM numbers in these areas decline due to natural attrition, they will not be replaced above the established caps. At the same time, this approach also allows the potential for NCGM numbers to increase in other parts of the city that are not considered to be ‘at risk’ and where NCGM numbers are well below the cap.

The anticipated slow decline in numbers would mean no sudden impact on the funding for sporting, recreation and community organisations generated through Wellington’s NCGMs. Any decline might also be offset by growth in numbers outside areas of concern.

The consultation period runs from Tuesday 2 March 2010 to Friday 9 April 2010. Oral hearings will be heard by Council on Thursday 22 April 2010 and Council will make a final decision on the policy in June 2010.

5. Conclusion

Wellington City Council is consulting on a new approach for the Gambling Venues Policy. The Board may wish to make a submission on the draft policy.

Contact Officer: *Brian O’Sullivan, Senior Policy Advisor, Policy Group*