

# DRAFT GAMBLING HARM PREVENTION POLICY STATEMENT SUMMARY

The Draft Gambling Harm Prevention Policy Statement has been developed to guide Council's ongoing efforts to prevent harm from gambling in Hobsons Bay. It updates Council's *Problem Gambling (Electronic Gaming Machines) Policy Statement 2015*.

## What is gambling harm?

Research commissioned by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation shows that harm from gambling occurs across multiple 'domains', and can affect financial security, relationships, physical and mental health, and work and study performance.

## What is the financial impact?

In Hobsons Bay, Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs) have contributed to gambling harm over many years. Since their introduction in 1992, more than \$1.2 billion has been lost in gaming venues in the municipality, with more than \$133,000 being lost each day in the current financial year.

In recent years, online gambling has become a more prominent cause of harm, with state-wide losses reaching an estimated \$2.58 billion in 2021-22, an increase of 50 per cent since 2019-20. Local data is not available for online gambling, but it is likely that Hobsons Bay residents have experienced similar trends.

## What is the role of Council?

The Victorian and Commonwealth Governments set the key regulatory and legislative frameworks for gambling activity in Australia. However, local government can also play a role in preventing harm from gambling,

particularly through advocacy and land use planning. This is consistent with Council's role to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing, as required under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.

## What is included in the Draft Policy Statement?

Council's Draft Policy Statement is underpinned by a public health approach which aims to address the 'determinants of gambling harm', including a range of sociocultural, environmental, commercial and political factors. It is informed by engagement with key stakeholders and local communities, academic research, and initiatives undertaken in other local government areas.

The Draft Policy Statement is built around six priority areas:

1. Advocacy
2. Availability and accessibility of Electronic Gaming Machines
3. Use of Council assets and facilities
4. Access to Council resources
5. Prevention and Support
6. Research and Awareness.

Each priority area includes a series of commitments that provide further detail as to how Council will aim to prevent harm from gambling. All commitments respond to ongoing and emerging issues (such as online gambling) and are aligned to evidence-based public health approaches to preventing harm in local communities.

Several commitments have been carried forward from the 2015 Policy Statement, while others have been updated or added.

## What are the key changes from the current Policy Statement?

The key changes to the Draft Policy Statement include:

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- **Title** – removes outdated language ('Problem Gambling') and highlights the Draft Policy Statement's aim of preventing harm from gambling.
- **Scope** – expands the scope to include online gambling, while noting Council's more limited role compared to EGMs.
- **Purpose** – highlights the aim of preventing harm (as opposed to 'managing and minimising'), underpinned by a public health approach.
- **Use of Council assets and facilities** – introduces a new proposed commitment to discourage advertising of gaming venues or gambling products on Council land.
- **Access to Council resources** – introduces new proposed commitments to limit or prevent access to Council grants or funding for organisations that promote or derive income from gambling, for activities held in gaming venues, and for organisations or activities that receive sponsorship from gaming venues or online betting companies.

## How can I provide my feedback?

Council is seeking feedback on the policy statement from Friday 12 May until Friday 9 June 2023. To view the Draft Gambling Harm Prevention Policy Statement and provide your feedback please visit <https://participate.hobsonsabay.vic.gov.au/gambling-harm-prevention-policy>

If you have any questions about the policy statement, please contact Council's Social and Strategic Planning Team at [socialplanning@hobsonsabay.vic.gov.au](mailto:socialplanning@hobsonsabay.vic.gov.au) or by calling 1300 179 944.

## What support is available if I am experiencing harm from gambling?

Help is available if you are being harmed by your own (or someone else's) gambling. Please contact the following organisations for support:

- **Gambler's Helpline** – call 1800 858 858 or visit [www.gamblershelp.com.au](http://www.gamblershelp.com.au)
- **IPC Health Gambler's Help** – call 1300 472 432 or visit [www.ipchealth.com.au/gamblers-help](http://www.ipchealth.com.au/gamblers-help)
- **Settlement Services International** – Multicultural Gambling Harm Prevention Service – call 1800 329 192 or visit [www.ssi.org.au](http://www.ssi.org.au)

## What happens next?

After the consultation process ends, all feedback will be considered, and an updated policy statement will be presented to Council for consideration and adoption later in 2023.



**HOBSONS BAY  
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