



Hon Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation  
Minister for Ports and Freight  
Minister for Fishing and Boating

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Cr Lara Carli  
Mayor  
Melton City Council  
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By email: [lara.carli@melton.vic.gov.au](mailto:lara.carli@melton.vic.gov.au)

Dear Cr Carli

#### **GAMBLING HARM AND COVID-19**

Thank you for your letter of 9 July 2020 informing me of Melton City Council's (MCC) recent motions to minimise gambling related harm within the City of Melton during the COVID-19 pandemic. I appreciate MCC's advocacy and concerns about the impact of gambling during this challenging time.

I note your request to establish a scheme that would provide conditional financial support to businesses willing to implement permanent harm minimisation measures (such as foregoing gaming machine entitlements) in Victoria. Victoria remains the Australian jurisdiction with the lowest density of gaming machines, except for Western Australia (which does not permit gaming machines outside the casino).

I also note your support for a moratorium on gaming licence applications during COVID-19 and the economic recovery period. The Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (the Commission) has a statutory obligation to undertake its functions in accordance with the requirements, including the timelines, set out in the *Gambling Regulation Act 2003*. The Commission believes that it can continue to determine matters at this time and will decide on applications before it based on the information and evidence presented to it.

I want to assure you and the City of Melton that the Victorian Government is committed to reducing gambling related harm. While gambling is a legitimate recreational activity, the government recognises the importance of putting in place measures to reduce gambling-related harm in communities across the State.



In the 2019-20 Budget, the government provided the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (the Foundation) with \$153 million over the next four years. The Foundation delivers communication and education strategies, commissions research and works with Gambler's Help agencies to deliver counselling and treatment services to people experiencing harm from gambling.

The Gambler's Help model has been adapted to continue to provide help to those experiencing gambling harm during the pandemic. The Foundation is working with the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) to ensure that gambling harm is considered in plans to re-open gaming venues and that support is targeted to those most vulnerable to gambling harm.

Other government reforms to reduce gambling-related harm include:

- Introducing Australia's first state-wide networked pre-commitment scheme, YourPlay, which allows Victorians to set limits on how much time and money they spend on gaming machines. Through this, players are assisted to identify and change their playing behaviours.
- Prohibiting ATMs in gaming venues and imposing \$200 transaction and \$500 daily EFTPOS withdrawal limits. Victoria is the only mainland Australian jurisdiction that does not allow ATMs in gaming venues and the only mainland jurisdiction with EFTPOS withdrawal limits in gaming venues. Further prohibitions apply on cash advanced from a credit account and on cashing cheques at gaming venues.
- Capping the total number of gaming machines in the State until 2042 and setting regional caps and municipal limits on gaming machine entitlements.
- Requiring venue operators to have a Responsible Gambling Code of Conduct that demonstrates a commitment to foster responsible gambling in their venue. On 1 March 2020, venue operators were directed to include new content in their codes by the end of August. The changes will improve harm minimisation in gaming venues, including by recognising that a venue operator has a duty to take all reasonable steps to prevent and minimise harm from the operation of gaming machines in the gaming venue.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Mr Joel Williams, Executive Director, Gaming and Liquor at the DJCS at [joel.williams@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:joel.williams@justice.vic.gov.au).

I trust this information has been of assistance to you and thank you again for taking the time to share your concerns about this important matter.

Yours sincerely

**Hon Melissa Horne MP**  
Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

20 / 8 / 20