

**TAUPŌ DISTRICT COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE - GAMBLING AND EASTER TRADING MEETING
HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 107 HEUHEU STREET, TAUPŌ
ON TUESDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 11.00AM**

PRESENT: Cr John Williamson (in the Chair), Cr Anna Park, Cr Maggie Stewart

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive, Group Manager: Finance & Strategy, Democracy & Community Engagement Manager, Policy Manager, Senior Policy Advisor, Senior Administrator (Policy), Senior Communications Advisor, Democratic Services Advisor

MEDIA AND PUBLIC: Four members of the public

Note: The Chief Executive, Mr Gareth Green was in the Chair for apologies; conflicts of interest; and item 4.1 – Election of Chairperson.

1 APOLOGIES

ADGET201711/01 RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Anna Park
Seconded: Cr Maggie Stewart

That the apology received from His Worship the Mayor, D Trewavas be accepted.

CARRIED

2 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil

3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Nil

4 REPORTS

4.1 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

ADGET201711/02 RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Maggie Stewart
Seconded: Cr Anna Park

That Cr John Williamson be elected Chairperson for the Gambling and Easter Trading Committee.

CARRIED

Cr John Williamson assumed the Chair and thanked his colleagues for electing him.

Easter Sunday Shop Trading Policy – Hearing of Submitter

The following submitter spoke in support of their submission and additional points were noted as below.

7 – Catie Noble on behalf of the Taupō District Chamber of Commerce and Industry

- Members of the Taupō District Chamber of Commerce and Industry had sent clear responses in relation to Easter Trading. 84% of people who responded said shops should be allowed to open; and one member said it is good to stay shut and have time with family.
- Overall the message from members was that Taupō district should be well and truly open for business.

In answer to questions Ms Noble advised that:

- The TAB already opened on Easter Sunday.
- One member had commented that it should be voluntary for employees to work on Easter Sunday and they should be paid time-and-a-half.
- Whether a business should open on Easter Sunday depends on the type of business and if it is going to be worthwhile to do so.
- The Chamber would support businesses to have appropriate conversations with employees, so that employees feel safe and free from pressure to work at Easter.

Class 4 Gambling and TAB Policy – Hearing of Submitters

The following submitters spoke in support of their submissions and additional points were noted as below.

4 – Catie Noble on behalf of the Taupō District Chamber of Commerce and Industry

- The draft Class 4 Gambling and TAB Policy had generated a lot of discussion amongst members.
- Some respondents highlighted the importance of supporting the prosperity of businesses that offer 'pokie' machines.
- Members overwhelmingly supported lowering the cap and continuing to bring the numbers of gambling machines down, given the detrimental effect of 'pokies' and gambling on certain parts of our community. The Chamber's constitution included a societal and community responsibility.

In answer to questions Ms Noble advised that:

- The Chamber did not support relocation of existing venues. The general theme was they are here, they serve a purpose by donating money back into the community; but there should not be a proliferation of these venues and they should not be permitted to move from where they are at present.
- The Chamber would also support a sinking lid policy.

5 – Toi Te Ora Public Health

The Senior Policy Advisor advised that the Toi Te Ora representative who was planning on attending the hearing was unable to do so due to illness. The organisation had therefore requested that the PowerPoint presentation be shown and speaker notes read out on their behalf. The Senior Policy Advisor made the presentation as requested (A2085250).

9 – Pastor Bryce Millar on behalf of the Taupō Baptist Church

- Taupō district is a beautiful place which offers a wonderful lifestyle and opportunities, including to raise a family. However, it punches above its weight when it comes to domestic violence, substance abuse and suicide.
- Pastor Millar works alongside many individuals and organisations who care and are trying to make the community better, more positive, safer. This is an opportunity for Taupō District Council to take steps to support the district to become a safer, more positive place by reducing the damage from 'pokies'.
- In addition to the social costs identified in Taupō District Council's social impact assessment, research also indicates harm from gambling has a ripple effect and extends to family (especially children), friends and colleagues. The harm can continue for years.
- For every new gambling machine, one person becomes a problem gambler, so therefore if you reduce the number of machines, you reduce harm.

- The Taupō Baptist Church strongly recommends that Council reconsiders its initial indication to reduce the total numbers while allowing increases in particular venues. Please reduce the total number and implement a sinking lid policy. This would be the right decision to make homes safer in the Taupō district.

Pastor Millar concluded with a prayer in the hopes that God would bless Council with wisdom and compassion in its decision-making.

7 – Carla Evans on behalf of Tina Marie Winikerei, General Manager of arc Counselling Services

- Ms Evans is a support worker in the community.
- arc Counselling Services has been supporting people with drug, alcohol and gambling addictions in the Taupō district for 30 years, with offices in Taupō and Turangi and outreach services in Mangakino.
- Asking for a sinking lid policy, given the social implications of people with addictions.
- Ms Evans works with families and whānau to address problems arising from addiction. In the last six months there has been an increase in clients with gambling addictions. The figures only show a few, but often people present initially with a drug or alcohol problem and the gambling issue becomes apparent later.
- The biggest problem created by gambling is homelessness, as addicts gamble their rent money and eventually get evicted. The homelessness problem is rising.
- Financial mentoring is offered because often debt builds up due to non-payment of essential bills – people gamble their food and power money away.
- Employment issues – often people are sacked because they are not turning up to work.
- CYFS and other agencies are involved in many cases – whānau do what they can, but a multi-level approach is often required.
- Relationship breakdowns are also common.
- Poly addiction is common – i.e. gambling is not the person's only problem, they also have problems with alcohol. There is a view that gambling and drinking are legal – so it's okay. Then it becomes an addiction problem.
- The problem extends to children – not attending school, or going to school hungry/cold/lacking essential needs.
- 'Pokies' have had their day – if we have any more, the social implications will be terrible.

In answer to a question Ms Evans advised that people can 'self-exclude' themselves from particular gambling venues, or from all gambling venues. This had been successful for some, however it's a big ask – the individual has to get to the point where they are ready to stop. It was possible for the 'self-exclusion' to be lifted however, or they could just find other way to gamble, for example go to another town.

6 – Jarrod True on behalf of the Class 4 Working Party

Mr True made a PowerPoint presentation (A2085237). He added that if problem gamblers 'self-exclude' themselves from venues, that cannot be revoked for two years. In relation to community funding, Mr True explained that gaming machines generate \$3.25m for Taupō community groups. The suggestion from some that 40% of funds from the district are not returned here is incorrect, as the method of collation of information is imperfect (e.g. if a recipient is not named on a public website, it is not counted). In conclusion Mr True stated that nothing has changed within the last three years to justify changes to the policy. It was not as simple as less machines results in less harm; all you are doing when you reduce machines is encouraging migration to other types of gambling.

In answer to questions Mr True advised that:

- Sinking lid policies do have an effect, for example 12 venues closed as a result of the Canterbury earthquakes and because a sinking lid was in place, a large part of the pool was gone.
- It was important to strike a balance. Mr True would not advocate having 100 more machines in the community, but he would like to see evidence-based decision-making. His family benefited from community funding – why would we shut that model down when it is working?
- There is no direct correlation between a decrease in machines and a decrease in gamblers.
- Council should adopt a policy with a cap that allows for a small modest amount of growth.

8 – Eru Loach on behalf of the Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand

- Mr Loach has worked in the sector for nine years, the last two-and-a-half years at the Problem Gambling Foundation. Prior to that he worked for the New Zealand Police.
- Submitters to this process all come with a different lens. The Problem Gambling Foundation was not motivated or driven by money, but rather the well-being of communities. Others are motivated by money.
- He heard what Mr True said about the amount of funding redistributed into communities – there needs to be more transparency through the gambling sector so that the figures are available and clear.
- Some venues are primarily funded by gambling and are therefore not compliant under the legislation.
- The number of machines has decreased overall but the problem gambling levy has not increased. How can the Problem Gambling Foundation show that more clients exist when they do not have the resources to support them?
- Increase in funding - is a criminal element involved in money laundering through gaming machines and if yes, what is Council's position on this?
- 41%-60% of community funding comes from problem gamblers in high deprivation communities – what is Council's moral position on this?
- There is not enough information available to show the prevalence of problem gambling in New Zealand, for example the Police do not include gambling problems in any family violence documentation – there is more of a drugs and alcohol focus.
- Ministry of Health research released earlier this year clearly shows a link between family violence and gambling, however there is a gap in the hard data to support this. It is important to look beyond the hard data.
- Online gambling – we do not know the statistics. The percentage of online gamblers coming through the Problem Gambling Foundation services is low, maybe 2%. The myth of online gambling is just that – a myth. We have to look after what we *can* look after.
- Co-existing problems are real. We can no longer think that gambling harm is just the loss of money – other problems come from it, including depression, violence, suicide etc.
- Community funding is not going to change. Even if there was a reduction in numbers of machines in Taupō district, local organisations can still apply for funding from other areas. The key focus should be on the harm in our communities. This is an opportunity for Council to step up and lead, draw a line in the sand.
- Sinking lid, with no relocation is appropriate.

RECEIPT OF SUBMISSIONS

Eight submissions on the draft Easter Sunday Trading Policy had been received and circulated; along with 10 submissions on the draft Class 4 Gambling and TAB Policy.

ADGET201711/03 RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Anna Park

Seconded: Cr Maggie Stewart

That the Ad Hoc Committee - Gambling and Easter Trading:

1. Receives the written and oral submissions on the draft Easter Sunday Trading Policy (summarised in attachment 1 to the report, full copies in attachment 2).
2. Receives the written and oral submissions on the draft Class 4 Gambling and TAB Policy (including one late submission from the Ministry of Education), summarised in attachment 1 to the report, full copies in attachment 2).

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at this point (12.01pm) and reconvened at 12.23pm.

4.2 EASTER SUNDAY SHOP TRADING DELIBERATIONS REPORT

In answer to a question the Senior Policy Advisor explained that Facebook comments had been provided for members' information, but were not considered, by officers, to have the same weight as formal submissions. The Policy Manager added that how much weight was given to all information before the committee was a question for members as they went through the decision-making process.

Members agreed there was benefit in having a consistent approach to Easter Sunday shop trading across the Taupō district.

ADGET201711/04 RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Maggie Stewart

Seconded: Cr Anna Park

That the Ad Hoc Committee - Gambling and Easter Trading recommends to Council that the draft Easter Sunday Trading Policy (Attachment 3) be adopted.

CARRIED

4.3 DRAFT CLASS 4 GAMBLING AND TAB POLICY DELIBERATIONS REPORT

Members considered the draft Class 4 Gambling and TAB Policy, including whether or not to have a cap and what that might be; whether or not to implement a sinking lid policy; and whether or not to allow relocation of existing venues.

The Senior Policy Advisor explained the sensitive land use clause as permitted by gambling legislation and supported by the Ministry of Education and Toi Te Ora submissions. She added that although such a clause would enable Council to control new venues moving into sensitive areas (e.g. near Marae or schools), it could not control the reverse – e.g. a childcare centre could move next to a gambling venue even if the policy included a sensitive land use clause. In addition, entrances to gambling venues are not particularly visible, so the extent to which children would be exposed to gambling from particular venues in the vicinity of school is questionable.

In answer to a question the Senior Policy Advisor explained there was not a lot Council could do about existing licences, in terms of location. The other aspect was that in some instances relocations may actually be better for the community, for example moving out of high deprivation suburbs into town centres.

It was decided that the draft policy as consulted on should be recommended to Council for adoption. This included a cap of 191 machines; no sinking lid policy; and the ability for existing venues to relocate.

ADGET201711/05 RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Anna Park

Seconded: Cr Maggie Stewart

That the Ad Hoc Committee - Gambling and Easter Trading recommends to Council that the draft Class 4 Gambling and TAB Policy (attachment 3) be adopted.

CARRIED

5 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Nil

The meeting closed at 1.07pm.

The minutes of this meeting were received at the Council meeting held on 12 December 2017.

.....
CHAIRPERSON