

7.3 Strategic Development

7.3.1 National Alliance for Gambling Reform

Directorate: Strategic Development

Purpose

To report on Council's recent membership of the National Alliance for Gambling Reform.

Motion

Moved Cr Sandra Wilson, seconded Cr Carl Marsich:

That Council note its membership of the National Alliance for Gambling Reform.

Carried

Report Summary

The National Alliance for Gambling Reform is a collaboration of organisations, including the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA), with a shared concern about the harmful impacts of gambling on poker machines. The Alliance was formally launched on 4 August 2015 and aims to partner with organisations across the nation, including local government, to press for regulatory changes around poker machines.

Background

The National Alliance for Gambling Reform builds on the work of the Enough Pokies campaign which was initiated by Monash City Council in the lead up to the Victorian State elections in 2014. The campaign was widely supported by Victorian councils, including Hobsons Bay City Council.

The purpose of Enough Pokies was to highlight local government's concern about the impact of poker machines and to seek commitments from the major political parties to introduce gambling reform to minimise poker machine harm.

There have been some important developments since the campaign culminating in an upcoming meeting between the Minister for Gaming and MAV (on behalf of Enough Pokies) to discuss these matters further.

Discussion

The Enough Pokies campaign was an effective starting point in raising awareness around electronic gaming machines (EGMs) and advocating for government reform. The Alliance for Gambling Reform will continue this work, incorporating the objectives for legislative change led by the Enough Pokies campaign as well as the implementation of further strategies to minimise poker machine harms that target vulnerable communities across Australia. One of these key strategies is to lower the maximum bet on poker machines to \$1 per bet in Victoria by the end of 2018.

This Alliance will be the first time that key organisations have attempted a national collaboration to achieve important reforms on gambling on poker machines. A National Campaign Manager has been engaged and a board to oversee the Alliance's campaign has been established. The board comprises of leading experts and public spokespeople in gambling prevention, representing agencies across Victoria and Australia, one of whom is Tim Costello.

Campaign activities will be implemented post the official launch of the Alliance. Councils will play an important role in coordinating and promoting local community activities that align with the national campaign.