Gambling Venues Policy

Your details:

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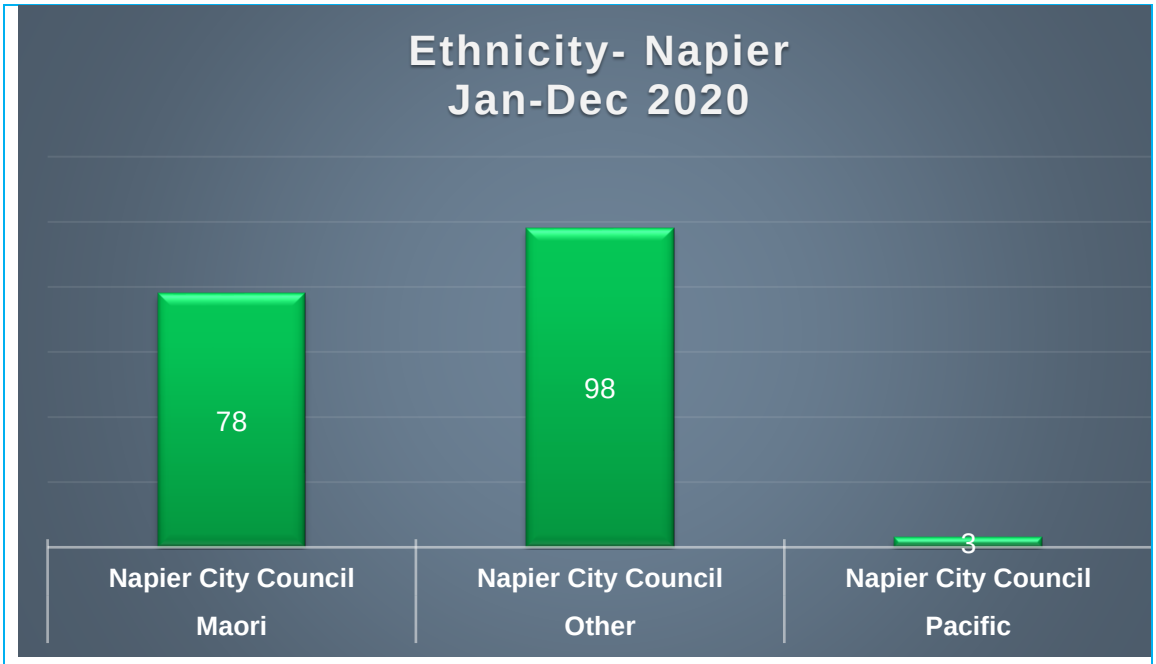
Are you submitting on behalf of a group/organisation? If so, what is its name?	Yes – Te Rangihaeata Oranga Trust
I wish to speak to my submission at the hearing (please tick): X Yes	

Your submission:

Do you support the proposed Gambling Venues Policy? X No
Comment
We support options 3 sinking lid AND 4 remove relocations
We would also like to hear publicly how Napier Council has met its responsibilities under the Local Government Act 2002 and taken account of the Treaty of Waitangi with regard to facilitating participation by Māori in the decision-making process for this policy review. We know that this Council chose to ignore the recommendation from its Māori committee which recommended a sinking lid option: Māori Committee (13 November) – To consider and make recommendations to Council. i. The members of the Māori Committee have reviewed this paper and their feedback is that Council should consider adopting a sinking lid approach as the preferred option for consultation. Māori are more at-risk of gambling harm as demonstrated by the high proportion of our service users being Māori (44%):



Also, how does this council appropriately manage the identified risks of problem gambling by issuing and renewing licences to venues which are causing harm to the community?

Apart from the Gambling Venues Policy, what ways do you think could Council prevent gambling related harm?

Monitor host responsibility at all venues to minimise gambling harm.

Some of our clients have told us that no-one intervenes when they are causing harm to themselves and their families/whānau through spending too much on gambling.

Some venues even have ATM's on the premises so the gamblers don't have to leave the venue to withdraw cash. The Gambling Societies lease these ATM's to speed up the flow of cash to the gambler and machine (despite costing $2 per transaction).

Access to these ATM's disgracefully allow gamblers to withdraw cash beyond their overdraft limit. We have been told this by clients who have spent their family's money, and we have contacted the company in Australia who lease the machines to gambling societies and venues, to confirm this.

We currently have 217 clients from Napier City who are receiving counselling because they are experiencing harm from gambling. When you consider that up to 10 others are affecting by someone's harmful gambling, i.e. children, relatives, employers, friends, the impact is severe (up to 2,000 people impacted directly).

Of note, 22 of these gamblers are in the 60 - 79 years age group. The majority of these clients are experiencing harm from gambling in the pokie venues in Napier city.

The graph below highlights how most problem gamblers live in lower socio-economic suburbs (Maraenui and Tamatea).

Taradale has the highest number of gamblers because it has 4 venues within close proximity to each other, some are students from EIT:

Do you have any other comments / feedback?

Pokies are harmful to our community, employers, families, individuals and whānau.

We reject outright the claim by Gambling Societies that “people play pokies in a fun and safe way” – we see this is not true on a daily basis.

Playing pokie machines is not social, it is an isolated activity, and it is not safe – you can spend as much as you can access, and some female gamblers have reported being ‘stood over’ when they leave a venue to intimidate them to part with any cash they may have won.

Research supports the argument that increased numbers of pokie machines leads to increased problem gambling prevalence.[i]

[1] Centre for Social and Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation. (2008). Assessment of the social impacts of gambling in New Zealand.

Retrieved from https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/social-impacts-gambling-nz08.pdf

A Class 4 Gambling Venue policy which adopts a sinking lid approach and no relocation of machines will see the number of pokie machines coming down *very slowly*. This reduction in machine numbers is primarily not occurring in the most deprived communities which is where it is needed.

The Gambling Societies and community groups reliant on pokie grants are worried there would be no community funding if machine numbers continue to go down. Councils are

adopting sinking lid policy in increasing numbers around New Zealand. Councils' (TLAs) with sinking lid policies have seen no drastic or immediate reduction in the amount of community funding going to national or local community interest groups.

These groups can therefore continue to be effective in their communities. Te Rangihaeata Oranga Trust is keen to work with Council and groups to explore alternative fundraising methods for community work.

Gaming Machine Societies - who own the pokie machines, e.g. NZCT, claim that "ATM's are excluded from gaming rooms" – not true - venues have ATM's on their premises which our gambling clients are accessing at a cost of $2 per transaction because it is available in the venue and allows them to go over their limit of available cash.

Gaming Societies also claim that "Venues have a harm minimisation policy and pamphlets explaining how to seek help for problem gambling".

Not true - upon visiting some venues in Napier City our health promotion staff have not sighted a harm minimisation policy or pamphlets in the gaming rooms to trigger that a gambler should seek help.

Gaming Societies claim that: "All staff at the venue must undertake comprehensive problem gambling awareness training":

Not true – our health promotion team have spoken to staff at pokie venues who have not received training and reveal they would feel reluctant to intervene with a customer's choice to gamble.

In summary, the common scenario when our staff visit venues to facilitate the 'ban yourself' process for clients who have banned themselves from playing pokie machines at specific venues, is that of one or 2 drinkers in the bar and 10 -12 gamblers at the pokie machines in the gaming room – gambling for hours with no supervision or attendance by venue staff.

THIS IS NOT HOST RESPONSIBILITY!

AND THIS IS WHY WE NEED A SINKING LID AND NO RELOCATION POLICY TO HELP ADDRESS THE VENUES WHO ARE NOT REPSONSIBLE HOSTS WHILST ENABLING MORE RESPONSIBLE HOSTS AND FEWER VENUES TO ACCOMMODATE PEOPLES DESIRE TO GAMBLE IN A SAFE MANNER WITHIN THE MEANS OF THEIR PERSONAL FUNDS.

THE COMMUNITY SHOULD CARE ABOUT GAMBLING HARM BECAUSE GAMBLING DEBTS BECOME LARGE AND TURN PEOPLE INTO FIRST TIME CRIMINALS ESPECIALLY IF THEY HAVE ACCESS TO FUNDS THROUGH THEIR JOB OR FAMILY – ALWAYS INTENDING TO PAY IT BACK OF COURSE (BEFORE THE THEFT IS NOTICED). THIS OFTEN WHEN THEY SEEK OUT OUR SERVICE – WHEN IT IS ALL TOO LATE!