

Taupō District Council

Notes of Council Workshop

Group	Council
Date	18 August 2026 11.30am – 12.24pm
Venue	Chambers
Topic	Class 4 Gambling and TAB Venues Policy
Facilitated by	Andrew Wilson, Policy Advisor
Elected Members present	Mayor John Funnell, Cr Rachel Cameron, Cr Nicola de Lautour, Cr Ngāhuia Foreman, Cr Kylie Leonard, Cr Steve Manunui, Cr Wahine Murch, Cr Hope Woodward
Officers present	Acting Chief Executive (S Matthews), General Manager General Manager Strategy and Environment (W Zander), Environmental Services Manager (J Sparks), Team Lead – Environmental Health (B Brett), Principal Advisor – Mayor’s Office (B Forlong), Legal and Governance Coordinator (M Cammell)
Public / media present	No public or media present.
Documents either pre-circulated or tabled	Class 4 Gambling and TAB Venues Policy Presentation (A3969365)
Public or closed¹²	Public

Notes³

The purpose of this workshop was to inform elected members of what the Class 4 Gambling and TAB venues policy does and the need to review the policy, provide updates on the latest data and seek direction on a sinking lid approach.

The Policy Advisor gave a presentation and answered questions with the help of the Team Lead – Environmental Health.

In response to queries, the following was clarified:

- Non-casino gaming machines (pokies) were operated by specially established licensed societies such as Grassroots Trust.
- Suitability for hosting a non-casino gaming machine at a pub or bar was not assessed at the same level as an application to serve alcohol might be assessed. The

¹ Workshops are public (and are always advertised whether public or closed), unless there is a good reason(s) for information to be withheld and there is no overriding public interest in holding the workshop in public. Withholding grounds set out in the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) are a guide. If closed, cite relevant LGOIMA section.

² Workshops are recorded and livestreamed on Council’s YouTube channel unless they are closed.

³ Workshops are not decision-making forums, therefore this document contains notes of key points discussed only, not decisions.

Taupō District Council

Department of Internal Affairs would have more information as they were ultimately the organisation that makes the decision. However, a range of interventions were in place, including public awareness campaigns highlighting the harms associated with gambling and providing information on where individuals can seek support if they were experiencing gambling-related issues.

- There was not a specific clause in Taupō District Council's (TDC) Class 4 Gambling policy that refers to proximity to schools, but it would be something for the District Licensing Committee to consider when reviewing an application for selling alcohol.
- Council staff were looking for direction on whether the Elected Members wanted to tighten up the policy which was relatively permissive. They would also be talking to the communities in Tūrangi and Mangakino.
- Gaming Machine Profits (GMP) was the money lost by players after prizes were paid out. 40% of GMP must go to community groups, 23% goes to government tax, 19.5% can be kept for gaming trust administrative costs, 16% can go to the venue and 1.5% goes to a problem gambling levy for addiction support. The Elected Members of a territorial authority could not alter the percentages. That power lies with Central Government.
- Elected Members also could not make a policy around making sure the community group funds were spent locally. The Trusts that operated the machines typically do distribute the funds locally, though, with 33% of GMP going to organisations within the district from which it was collected.
- The Trusts decided where the money goes through applications for funding.
- It was not a requirement for the Trusts to have a policy or preference around funding local organisations, but they often did have such internal policies.
- To install a pokie machine, the gaming trust would make an application to the Taupō District Council outlining how they would comply and meet the current policy. Council staff would assess their application against the policy and other criteria and return a response to the applicant. The applicant would then have to approach the Department of Internal Affairs for final approval.
- The Class 4 Gambling and TAB Venues policy was required to be reviewed every three years. At the time of the last review, Council resolved to continue with the current policy without amendment.
- A "sinking lid" policy was proposed as an option at the time of the review six years ago but was not adopted. This means if a machine were surrendered when a venue closed, the limit of available machines would adjust down over time as there would be no replacements made for machines.
- Staff would be preparing a social impact assessment and reviewing the policy in preparation for a recommendation to the Council meeting at the end of September. Meetings were already setup with stakeholders. Formal consultation would begin after the September meeting and continue for one month. Then hearings and deliberations would be held in November and come to full Council.
- Organisations such as the Problem Gambling Foundation often reach out to councils proactively when they knew a review was coming up. They were informed of the consultation timeframe and encouraged to make a submission as well as to share the information with relevant stakeholders in health services and other organisations.
- Information from the Ministry of Health indicates that Māori were three times more likely than New Zealand Europeans to be prone to moderate problem gambling.
- In 2025/26, revenue from pokies in Taupō district was \$11.6 million. \$3.8 million of that went to community grants.
- Not all high risk activities in the district were given a policy or review. The review of the Class 4 Gambling and TAB venues policy was legislatively required. There was

Taupō District Council

opportunity in the future to develop local policies around other high-risk activities like alcohol.

- While much of the legislation around Class 4 Gambling was out of a territorial authority's control, there was opportunity to create a policy with a spectrum of interventions. Some authorities chose to take a softer approach to a "sinking lid" policy, for example. It would depend where on the continuum the Elected Members wanted to sit.
- Staff would include as much data as possible on harms and impacts of gambling in the report that went to Council.

The workshop closed at 12.24pm.