



Statement of Proposal - Taupō District Council Class 4 Gambling and TAB Policy Review

Taupō District Council is seeking feedback on proposed amendments to the Class 4 Gambling and TAB Venue Policy. This policy regulates the location and number of TAB venues, as well as regulating venues that house gaming machines (Class 4 venues) within the Taupō District.

Why do we need to review this policy?

The Gambling Act 2003 and Racing Industry Act 2020 require Council to have a Class 4 Venues Policy and a TAB Board Venue Policy and these policies must be reviewed every three years. Our next review of this policy is now due.

What is Class 4 Gambling?

Class 4 Gambling refers to any activity that involves the use of gaming machines (also known as 'pokies') outside of a casino (e.g. in pubs and clubs) and may only be run by a licensed corporate society. Class 4 Gambling rules also state these machines can only be used to raise money for community organisations and for non-commercial purposes.

Council can use a policy to control the total number of machines in the district and per venue, and the location of these venues.

What is a TAB/Board Venue?

A Board Venue or TAB is a premise that is owned or leased by TAB New Zealand where its main business is providing racing betting or sports betting services. A council must develop a policy which specifies whether or not new TAB venues may be established in that district and, if so, where they can be located.

What are we proposing to change and why?

When a review of a Class 4 Gambling Policy take place an assessment of the social impacts of gambling must be undertaken. We've recently completed a review that showed while the number of Class 4 gambling venues and machines has dropped in the Taupō District, the average spend has increased.

The availability of funding to community and local sports groups is considered a key benefit to the district from having Class 4 gambling venues. Recent research however shows that many of these groups have long standing concerns about their reliance on these grants. The services that these organizations provide are essential to many people, but the current system of funding from gaming machines is considered to be both uncertain and unsustainable. A number of important community social services and sporting groups rely on community funding and know that in doing so, the money is often coming from the very whānau and communities they are trying to support into wellbeing.

There are limited ways a council can influence the harm caused by gambling. One way is to prevent new venues opening, and therefore decreasing the opportunity for gambling to occur. This can be

done by lowering the total number of machines that are allowed to operate in the district. Another is to limit the ability of existing venues to relocate within the district.

There is currently a cap of 191 machines allowed in the Taupō District at any time, and we are proposing the 2020 policy adopts a sinking lid. We are also proposing that Council adopt a no relocations policy.

The implementation of a sinking lid means the number of gaming machines will not increase and if a venue closes the machines cannot be transferred or relocated elsewhere. This will result in a natural attrition in the number of venues and machines over time but would not affect existing venues or current community grant funding in the short term as the decline occurs slowly.

You can view a full analysis of options at taupo.govt.nz/consultation.

We want to hear your views.

Do you want to share your views on anything relating to the 2020 review of the Class 4 Gambling and TAB policies?

You can make a submission:

Online at taupo.govt.nz/consultation

By email: tallinson@taupo.govt.nz

Visit any council office in Taupō, Turangi or Mangakino.

Mail to: Tēmi Allinson, Taupō District Council, Private Bag 2005, Taupō 3377.

We need to receive your submission no later than 5pm on 2 November 2020. We'll then contact submitters who wish to speak about their views to attend a Council hearing to take place in November.

Do you have concerns about your own or someone else's gambling? You can call the following free and confidential helpline: 0800 654 655