GAMING

This policy applies to all planning permit applications to install or use a gaming machine, or use land for the purpose of gaming.

Policy basis

This policy implements the objectives of Clause 21.05-2 of the Municipal Strategic Statement by setting out how and where gaming venues should be located.

Clause 52.28 of this planning scheme requires a permit to install or use a gaming machine. This policy will guide decision making by implementing the findings of the Mitchell Shire Gaming Policy Framework, October 2007.

It is important to ensure that gaming machines are located in areas that are accessible but not convenient taking into account local characteristics which make a community more vulnerable to the negative effects of gaming.

Objectives

To discourage new gaming machines in disadvantaged areas as defined by the SEIFA (Social-Economics Indexes for Areas) index of relative disadvantage.

To ensure the location of gaming machines and design and operation of facilities containing gaming machines minimise opportunities for convenience gaming and the incidence of problem gambling.

To ensure that gaming machines are located where the community, has a choice of non-gaming entertainment and recreational activities within the venue and in the local area.

To protect the amenity of areas surrounding gaming venues.

Policy

It is policy that proposals for gaming machines are assessed against the following criteria:

Appropriate Areas

Gaming machines should not be located in areas defined by the SEIFA index of relative disadvantage as indicated in the reference document Mitchell Shire Gaming Framework, October 2007.

Gaming machines should not be located:

- In towns of relative socio-economic disadvantage in comparison to the Victorian average, as defined by the SEIFA index of relative disadvantage and shown on Map 1 of this policy.
- In a town where there are no alternative hotels or clubs without gaming in the town.
- In small settlements which predominantly service a local population catchment and have limited growth potential.

Gaming machines should be located:

- In towns which function as a major urban settlement servicing a large population catchment within the hierarchy of towns in the Mitchell Shire and are not relatively disadvantaged, as shown on the map attached to this policy.
- Where they will contribute to the redistribution of gaming machines away from areas of low relative socio-economic population in comparison to the Victorian average, as defined by the SEIFA index of relative disadvantage.
- In towns which can accommodate additional gaming due to:
- choice of alternative non-gaming entertainment and recreation facilities being available in that town including hotels, clubs, cinemas, restaurants, bars and indoor recreation facilities operating at the same time and;
- there being limited existing gaming opportunities for residents, as evidenced by a total density of gaming machines in that township which is less than the regional Victorian average and;
- identified future residential growth capacity as set out in the map attached to this policy.

- Proximate to town centres, or in areas suitable for non-residential uses which are accessible by a variety of transport modes.
- At a sports or recreation club with a land holding of more than 2 hectares.
- Ensure that gaming machines are established in venues which:
  - Have a range of entertainment and leisure options;
  - Offer social and recreational opportunities other than gaming as the primary purpose of the venue;
  - Do not allow for the operation of gaming machines when alternative entertainment is not available;
  - Do not allow for gaming machines to operate for more than 14 hours a day.

**Appropriate sites**

Gaming machines should be located on sites:

- Towards the periphery of a town centre.

- Where the location could reasonably be perceived as a destination in its own right. This would be achieved by a separation from shopping centres, railway stations and community facilities involving a high concentration of people undertaking daily activities.

- Where a gaming venue and associated uses will be compatible with the predominant surrounding land uses by ensuring that the proposed design, location and operating hours do not detrimentally affect the amenity of the surrounding area.

**Appropriate venues**

Gaming machines should not be located in venues:

- Where they are convenient to shopping centres, railway stations or major community facilities.

- In the core of town centres.

- That have 24 hour a day operation, or have a gaming floor area of more than 25 per cent of the total floor area of the venue.

- Where the gaming or any associated use will detrimentally affect the amenity of the surrounding area by way of design, location or operating hours.

**Application requirements**

All applications must include the following information:

- Details about the existing distribution and any proposed reallocation of gaming machines in the municipality and the proposal’s expected impact on patronage.
- A Social and Economic Assessment prepared by a suitably qualified person that provides an assessment of the social, environmental and economic benefits and dis-benefits of the proposed gaming machines and associated facilities, including details of forecast gaming expenditure at the venue, what community benefits are expected from the proposal and how those benefits will be distributed to the community.

- Details of the relative socio-economic disadvantage of the local town and the broader catchment of the venue in comparison to the regional Victorian average as defined in the SEIFA index of relative disadvantage.

- A venue management plan identifying strategies to manage patron behaviour and minimise problem gambling in relation to the design and management of the venue, including the applicant’s responsible gaming practices.

- Details of the design and layout of the premises including all current and proposed signage and evidence of compliance with the relevant gaming regulations for premises layout and design.

- Details of what gaming and non-gaming entertainment and recreation venues exist within 5km of the venue.

- Details of the distance to shopping complexes and strip shopping centres, community facilities and public transport, and pedestrian counts outside the proposed venue.

**Decision guidelines**

Before deciding on an application the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate:

- Whether there is a net community benefit to be derived from the application.

- Whether the net economic and social impact of approval is likely to increase the social disadvantage of an area of the Shire of Mitchell.

- Whether the location of the gaming machines or gaming premises will facilitate or discourage convenience gaming.

- Whether the venue, if located in an urban centre, is accessible by a variety of transport modes.

- Whether residents will have a choice of gaming and non-gaming entertainment and recreation venues in the local area.

- The impact of the proposal on the amenity of the area.

**Reference**

*Mitchell Shire Gaming Policy Framework 2007, Coomes Consulting Group*