



Pokies Switched Off

Pokies are switched off in Victoria for the first time in 28 years and there has been considerable debate about what clubs and pubs will look like once they can reopen their doors. The VLGA's Local Government Working Group on Gambling (LGGWG) has been meeting in small workshop groups to discuss this issue as it relates to councils. Victorian councils are facing a challenging problem - how can we support communities, in a context of increases vulnerability to gambling harm, when the pokies get switched back on?

With higher levels of unemployment, social and economic stress and decline in overall resilience we must consider ways to ensure those who do return to the pokies are protected from harm. What role can council play in this? There are a lot of unanswered questions about how the next few months will unfold. However, it is clear that Councils could have a role in combatting any potential increase in gambling harm.

We are hosting a LGGWG session specifically on this topic and we are keen to get perspectives and ideas from a diverse range of councils around Victoria. Does your Council have people who may be interested to join the conversation?

On **Wednesday 6 May** from **10.30 to 11.30** via Zoom we will be meeting to brainstorm how councils have the ability to protect their communities. If there is a high level of interest, we will be running another session for the following week.

To RSVP email Rose O'Leary on rose@vlga.org.au

On another note, we wish to congratulate the City of Casey on their active participation in an application for 100 poker machines at a new hotel venue in Clyde North. The Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation rejected the application last month and both council and community participation played a critical role in that positive outcome for the community. Had the venue been approved it would have taken over \$10 million a year out to the local community. Well done Casey!