

Victorian Local Governance Association - Gambling Industry Funding Policy

Key message: Local governments, community agencies, health services and sporting organisations should not accept gambling industry funding (funding from the proceeds of gambling).

Policy

The VLGA will:

1. Not accept funding from the gambling industry
2. Advocate to ensure that local councils, community agencies, community groups, health services and sporting organisations do not accept funding support from gambling industries
3. Assist local councils, community agencies, community groups, health services and sporting organisations that have historical arrangements which involve gambling industry funds to:
 - a. End such arrangements
 - b. Expend any funds from the gambling industry in ways that do not undermine good public health outcomes and principles.

Audience: Local councillors, local council employees, community groups and organisations that partner with councils.

Rationale

Taking money from the gambling industry is counter to good public health practice and contrary to the advice of the Public Health Association of Australia.¹

Accepting gambling industry funding is harmful to local communities because:

- Such funds serve to normalise and legitimise the gambling industry
- These funds encourage the concept of “community benefit” at the expense of efforts to reduce community harm
- Donations by gambling venues are used to promote gambling venues and encourage gambling participation

- When groups accept these funds, applications for further EGM licences are viewed more favourably
- Community groups build dependence on gambling funding which sets back regulatory reform

We accept that some communities have historical arrangements which involve gambling industry funds. We recommend that efforts be made to end such arrangements. Where such arrangements do continue, we suggest that funding is directed specifically to:

1. Community education, social marketing and campaign activities that build momentum for regulatory reform of the gambling industry
2. Funds to assist clubs with poker machines to exit the pokies business
3. Initiatives that directly address harm to people impacted by gambling
4. The delivery of local government gambling strategies

We caution against use of funds to:

1. Increase community grants programs
2. Improve budget outcomes
3. Fund community services and in particular sporting, educational and recreational activities delivered by community groups and associations.

Gambling industry operators should never be involved with council in decisions about where to direct funds.

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¹ <https://www.phaa.net.au/documents/item/1706>