

Agenda

Council Meeting

Tuesday 10 June 2025, 7:00 pm Dandenong Civic Centre, 225 Lonsdale Street, Dandenong, Victoria 3175

greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au

Council Meeting Details

At the time of printing this Agenda, the Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 10 June 2025, will be open to the public to attend in person but will be subject to venue seating capacity. This will be a hybrid meeting consisting of Councillors attending in person and remotely.

If we are unable to accommodate you indoors, you will still be able to watch the webcast live on the Urban Screen in Harmony Square. To view the webcast and stay informed about the status of Council Meetings please visit Council's website.

The Civic Centre basement carpark will be opened to all members of the public during library opening hours. Any parking in this area will be subject to availability and time limits as notified by any signage posted.

Your Councillors

<u>Mayor Jim Memeti</u>	Cr Bob Milkovic
Deputy Mayor Sophaneth (Sophie) Tan	<u>Cr Sean O'Reilly</u>
Cr Phillip Danh	<u>Cr Loi Truong</u>
<u>Cr Isabella Do</u>	<u>Cr Melinda Yim</u>
<u>Cr Lana Formoso</u>	
Cr Rhonda Garad	

Cr Alice Phuong Le



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People, and pay respect to their Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters.



TTY: 133 677

Acknowledging Bunurong Country

@ council@cgd.vic.gov.au



Speak and listen: 1300 555 727 Online: relayservice.gov.au

🔊 greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au

TIS:13 14 50 8-9-9



COUNCIL OBLIGATIONS AND AGENDA REPORTS

Council has several obligations in relation to its Community Vision, Council Plan, Instruments of Legislation and Council policy. These are summarily considered in each Agenda report and further details are added as required. The obligations are as follows:

Community Vision 2040 (Community Vision | Greater Dandenong Council)

After consultation with the Greater Dandenong community on what kind of future they wanted for themselves and our city, the Greater Dandenong People's Panel developed a new Community Vision for 2040:

The City of Greater Dandenong is a home to all. It's a city where you can enjoy and embrace life through celebration and equal opportunity. We harmonise the community by valuing multiculturalism and the individual. Our community is healthy, vibrant, innovative and creative. Our growing city is committed to environmental sustainability. Welcome to our exciting and peaceful community.

Reports in this Agenda will identify when any of the above principles are relevant.

The Council Plan 2021-25 (Council Plan 2021-25 | Greater Dandenong Council)

The Council Plan describes the kind of future the Council is working for, and how Council will do this over four years. The Council Plan has the following key strategic objectives:

- A socially connected, safe and healthy city
- A city that respects and celebrates diversity, our history and the arts
- A city of accessible, vibrant centres and neighbourhoods
- A green city committed to a sustainable future
- A city that supports entrepreneurship, quality education and employment outcomes
- A Council that demonstrates leadership and a commitment to investing in the community.

Reports in this Agenda will identify when any of the above principles are relevant.

The Overarching Governance Principles of the Local Government Act 2020

Section 9 of the *Local Government Act* 2020 states that a Council must in the performance of its role give effect to the overarching governance principles. These are:

- a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;
- b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;
- c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;
- d) the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;
- e) innovation and continuous improvement are to be pursued;
- f) collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;
- g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;
- h) regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;
- i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

Also, in giving effect to the overarching governance principles above, a Council must take into account the following supporting principles:

- a) the community engagement principles (section 56);
- b) the public transparency principles (section 58);
- c) the strategic planning principles (section 89);
- d) the financial management principles (section 101);
- e) the service performance principles (section 106).

Reports in this Agenda will identify when any of the above principles are relevant.



The Gender Equality Act 2020

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* came into operation on 31 March 2021 and requires councils to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality and to promote gender equality in their policies, programs and services. The objects of the Act are as follows:

- a) to promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women; and
- b) to support the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs and delivery of services in workplaces and communities; and
- c) to recognise that gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes; and
- d) to redress disadvantage, address stigma, stereotyping, prejudice and violence, and accommodate persons of different genders by way of structural change; and
- e) to enhance economic and social participation by persons of different genders; and
- f) to further promote the right to equality set out in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Council is obligated to think about how its programs and services affect different people and different communities and how we can avoid reinforcing unintentional inequalities. Reports authors must consider the requirements of the *Gender Equality Act* 2020 and Council's Diversity, Access and Equity Policy when asking Council to consider or review any issues which have a direct or significant impact on members of the Greater Dandenong community.

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

Council, Councillors and members of Council staff are a public authority under the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act* 2006 and, as such, are all responsible to act in accordance with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities* 2006 (the Charter). The Charter is founded on the following principles:

- human rights are essential in a democratic and inclusive society that respects the rule of law, human dignity, equality and freedom;
- human rights belong to all people without discrimination, and the diversity of the people of Victoria enhances our community;
- human rights come with responsibilities and must be exercised in a way that respects the human rights of others;
- human rights have a special importance for the Aboriginal people of Victoria, as descendants of Australia's first people, with their diverse spiritual, social, cultural and economic relationship with their traditional lands and waters.

Given this municipality's diversity and inclusiveness, when developing or preparing a report for Council consideration, report authors are required to ensure their report is consistent with the standards set by the Charter.



Consideration of Climate Change and Sustainability

One of the overarching governance principles of the *Local Government Act* 2020 is that the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted.

In January 2020, this Council joined a growing number of cities around Australia and declared a "Climate and Ecological Emergency" and committed this Council to emergency action on climate change. Council has developed a Climate Change Emergency Strategy and Action Plan 2020-30 to help the City of Greater Dandenong become a resilient, net zero carbon emission city with an active community prepared for the challenges of changing climate.

When developing or preparing a report for Council consideration, report authors are required to consider what impacts their issue has on Council's Declaration on a Climate and Ecological Emergency, Council's Climate Change Emergency Strategy and the requirements of the *Local Government Act* 2020 in relation to the overarching principle on climate change and sustainability.

Related Council Policies, Strategies or Frameworks

Report authors will consider how their report aligns with existing Council policies, strategies, frameworks or other documents, how they may affect the decision of this report or are relevant to this process.

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1 MEETING OPENING

1.1 OPENING OF MEETING BY CHAIR

1.2 ATTENDANCE

1.3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF LAND

Those who wish to stand for the acknowledgement to country are welcome to do so.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People, and pay respect to their Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters and we also pay our respect and acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their Elders present here today, in acknowledging their journey.

1.4 OFFERING OF PRAYER, REFLECTION OR AFFIRMATION

As part of Council's commitment to recognising the cultural and spiritual diversity of our community, the prayer, reflection or affirmation this evening will be offered by Mr Shamim Navidi, a member of the Greater Dandenong Interfaith Network.

1.5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Meeting of Council held 26 May 2025.

Recommendation

That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held 26 May 2025 be confirmed.

1.6 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Any interest that a Councillor or staff member has deemed to be significant and has disclosed as either a material or general interest is now considered to be a conflict of interest. Conflict of Interest legislation is detailed in Division 2 – Conflicts of Interest: sections 126, 127, 128, 129 & 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. This legislation can be obtained by contacting the Greater Dandenong Governance Unit on 8571 5216 or by accessing the Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents website at <u>www.legislation.vic.gov.au</u>.

If a Councillor discloses any interest in an item discussed at any Council Meeting (whether they attend or not) they must:

- 1. complete a disclosure of interest form prior to the meeting;
- 2. advise the chairperson of the interest immediately before the particular item is considered (if attending the meeting); and
- 3. leave the chamber while the item is being discussed and during any vote taken (if attending the meeting).

The Councillor will be advised to return to the chamber or meeting room immediately after the item has been considered and the vote is complete.

2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Question Time at Council meetings provides an opportunity for members of the public in the gallery to address questions to the Councillors, Delegates and/or officers of the Greater Dandenong City Council. Questions must comply with s. 4.5.8 of Council's Governance Rules.

QUESTIONS FROM THE GALLERY

Questions are limited to a maximum of three (3) questions per individual. Where time constraints deem it likely that not all questions can be answered within the time allowed for Question Time, the Mayor at his/her discretion may determine only the first question may be presented verbally with others deferred to be managed in the same manner as public questions not verbally presented.

Priority will be given to questions that relate to items on the Council Agenda for that meeting. Questions including any preamble should not exceed 300 words.

- a) All such questions must be received in writing on the prescribed form or as provided for on Council's website and at Ordinary meetings of Council. Where there are more than three (3) questions received from any one individual person, the Chief Executive Officer will determine the three (3) questions to be considered at the meeting.
- b) All such questions must clearly note a request to verbally present the question and must be received by the Chief Executive Officer or other person authorised for this purpose by the Chief Executive Officer no later than:
 - i) the commencement time (7.00pm) of the Ordinary meeting if questions are submitted in person; or
 - ii) noon on the day of the Ordinary meeting if questions are submitted by electronic medium.
- c) A question can only be presented to the meeting if the Chairperson and/or Chief Executive Officer has determined that the question:
 - i) does not relate to a matter of the type described in section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (confidential information);
 - ii) does not relate to a matter in respect of which Council or a Delegated Committee has no power to act;
 - iii) is not defamatory, indecent, abusive or objectionable in language or substance, and is not asked to embarrass a Councillor, Delegated Member or Council officer; and
 - iv) is not repetitive of a question already asked or answered (whether at the same or an earlier meeting).
- d) If the Chairperson and/or Chief Executive Officer has determined that the question may not be presented to the Council Meeting or Delegated Committee, then the Chairperson and/or Chief Executive Officer:
 - i) must advise the Meeting accordingly; and
 - ii) will make the question available to Councillors or Members upon request.
 - iii) The Chairperson shall call on members of the gallery who have submitted an accepted question to ask their question verbally if they wish.
- e) The Chairperson, Chief Executive Officer or delegate may then direct that question to be answered by a nominated Councillor or member of Council staff.



- f) No debate on, or discussion of, a question or an answer will be permitted other than for the purposes of clarification.
- g) A Councillor, Delegated Committee Member or member of Council staff nominated to answer a question may:
 - i) seek clarification of the question from the person who submitted it;
 - ii) seek the assistance of another person in answering the question; and
 - iii) defer answering the question, so that the answer may be researched and a written response be provided within ten (10) working days following the Meeting (the question thereby being taken on notice).
- h) Question time for verbal presentations is limited in duration to not more than twenty (20) minutes. If it appears likely that this time is to be exceeded then a resolution from Council will be required to extend that time if it is deemed appropriate to complete this item.
- i) The text of each question asked and the response will be recorded in the minutes of the Meeting.



3 OFFICERS REPORTS - PART 2

3.1 OTHER

3.1.1 Interfaith Network of the City of Greater Dandenong Contract Review 2025

Responsible Officer:	Executive Director Community Strengthening
Attachments:	Nil

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. NOTES the valuable role of the Interfaith Network within the City of Greater Dandenong;
- 2. APPROVES the provision of \$85,000 per annum to the Interfaith Network of the City of Greater Dandenong through a four-year service agreement, commencing 1 July 2025 and concluding 30 June 2029. (Total allocation being \$340,000 over the four-year period);
- 3. NOTES that the Interfaith Network within the City of Greater Dandenong also receive inkind support from Council through the of provision of accommodation at a significantly reduced rate;
- 4. ENDORSES the development of clearer service agreement deliverables aligned to Council Plan Priorities; and
- 5. INVITES the Executive Committee of the Interfaith Network to attend a future Councillor Briefing Session to outline their strategic plan and future priorities.

Executive Summary

1. The report summarises the key findings and recommendations resulting from an end-of-service agreement review of agreed deliverables by the Interfaith Network of the City of Greater Dandenong.

Background

- 2. Established in 1989, the Interfaith Network of the City of Greater Dandenong (IFN) is thought to be the longest serving interfaith network in Australia. The IFN works to promote respect and understanding for the integrity of each person's beliefs, cultures, and traditions. Key activities include the organisation of Places of Worship Tours, the coordination of the Council Prayer Roster, and the holding of events such as Talking Faith and the Annual Schools Gathering.
- 3. Further details on the work of the IFN, including historical annual reports is available on their website: Interfaith Network (IFN) of the City of Greater Dandenong.
- 4. On 30/06/2025, the Interfaith Network (IFN) will reach the conclusion of a 4-year, \$340,000 funding service agreement with Council. (noting this was an initial 3-year contract plus one year extension).

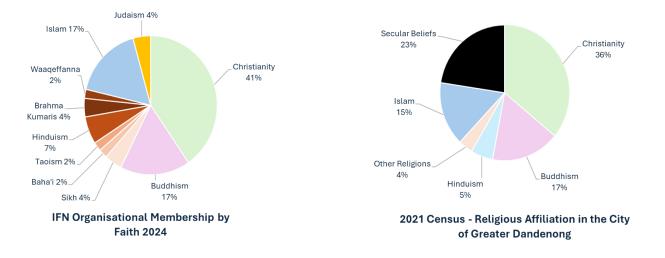


5. In anticipation of the end of the current arrangement, an in-depth review of service agreement `` deliverables has been undertaken. This review has included engagement with local faith groups and benchmarking against neighbouring networks to ascertain the social impact of the IFN, the cost-effectiveness of Council's investment, and the identification of possible enhancement to future service agreements.

Key Issues and Discussion

Review findings: IFN Performance

- The IFN performed well against its service agreement deliverables amid the challenging context of Covid-19 and chronic understaffing. The IFN achieved 63% of its set deliverables in full or in part from 01/07/2021 - 30/06/2024 and significantly outperformed expectations in key impact areas (e.g. number of interfaith tours).
- 7. The IFN of the City of Greater Dandenong compares favourably to neighbouring IFNs in terms of impact, profile, and professionalism. The benchmarking exercise found that other IFNs, where still operating and contactable, were often comparatively small, reliant wholly upon volunteers, and severely constrained by a lack of income. All lacked key services offering compared to what are delivered by the CGD IFN, such as its year-round offering of interfaith tours.
- IFN organisational membership is growing, and its composition is admirably reflective of the range of religious communities in the CGD, if not the full range of belief systems. The IFN could consider the recruitment of organisations representative of secular belief systems (e.g. Humanists Victoria) to enhance its educational outcomes and represent the growing proportion of residents (now over 20%) with no religion.



Income Summary:

Interfaith Netwo	rk Income FY22-25	
FY 2021 - 22		
	Total Income	\$152,344
	CGD Service Agreement Funding	\$90,000
	CGD Grants	\$18,000
	Other	\$44,344
FY 2022 - 23		
	Total Income	\$129,569
	CGD Service Agreement Funding	\$80,000
	CGD Grants	\$8,000
	Other	\$41,569
		(* IFN accounts state \$41,369)
FY 2023 - 24		
	Total Income	\$77,220
	CGD Service Agreement Funding	\$70,000
	CGD Grants	\$7,204
	Other	\$16,000
		(* IFN Accounts state \$15,507)
FY 2024 - 25		
	Total Income	Data unavailable
	CGD Service Agreement Funding	\$70,000
	CGD Grants	\$9,935
	Other	Data unavailable
* Please note tha	t Council's records of its grant awards can	not be fully reconciled with IFN's
	their public accounts without follow up and	l engagement. The above figures
should thus only l	be treated as indicative.	

Outputs aligned to Council Funding

- 9. The IFN provided 75 tours (against a target of 30), spoke at 31 public events (against a target of 30), coordinated Council prayer roster, published weekly 'Messages of Hope' in the Star Journal, and held multiple events such as its 2024 Annual Interfaith School Gathering that was attended by 371 students from 9 local schools.
- 10. Benchmarking indicates that the existing funding model has significantly expanded the capacity of the CGD IFN over that of its peers.

Other Council Support – Accommodation

- 11. Interfaith currently occupy part of 39 Clow Street, Dandenong, under a licence agreement with Council dated 16 March 2016. The licence agreement has expired and is in over holding on a year-by-year basis expiring July 2025.
- 12. The Interfaith Network currently pay a rental of \$330 per annum plus GST and outgoings. The commercial market rental for the space would be approximately \$20,000 per annum plus GST and outgoings.



Suggested Changes to the Funding Model

- 13. **Redesign service agreement deliverables** Agree clear definitions of service agreement terms like 'tour' and 'public speaking event' to support consistent reporting; Implement higher targets based explicitly upon evidence of prior delivery; Implement more quantifiable (i.e. numerical) targets to streamline the independent assessment of performance.
- 14. Encourage higher full-time-equivalent (FTE) staff positions The low full-time equivalence of the three (3) IFN staff roles impacted on continuity of service. The IFN should be encouraged to consider options to address this risk factor without disrupting the current stable and effective team.
- 15. Set service agreement terms of more than three (3) years Four (4) year service agreement terms will support organisational stability and help maintain momentum towards strategic goals. Ad-hoc extensions to the current IFN service agreement undermined strategic planning, as deliverables were set for the initial three-year project term and not updated for the one-year extension.
- 16. **Migrate the IFN service agreement administration process onto SmartyGrants.** This would allow the IFN to consolidate the administration of their council funding (grant and service agreement) onto a single familiar platform, thus improving the standard of record keeping and reporting between both parties and allowing the easy sourcing of data for future Council reports.
- 17. Enhance Council staff support The IFN's small team means that staff must work across a broad range of work areas that they may have little expertise in. Council is well-situated to lend help in many areas due to its large and diverse staff base. Encouraging structured access to advice / support / training from Council staff (e.g. via the Volunteer Leave Policy) has been a key request from the IFN and is a simple means of increasing the cost-effectiveness of any awarded funding.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

18. This item does not have an impact on existing human resources.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

- 19. The resource requirement associated with this report of \$85,000 per annum for a 4-year period commencing 01/07/2025 aligns with the current budget allocation for IFN funding.
- 20. The Procurement Team have advised that, as the recommended service agreement has a worth of more than \$300,000, an exemption for entering a public tender process must be sought. The exemption process has commenced, and a favourable outcome is expected due to the Interfaith Network of the City of Greater Dandenong being the only organisation with the ability to represent the diverse cultural and religious faiths and spiritual organisations of the City.

Asset Implications

- 21. Interfaith currently occupy part of 39 Clow Street, Dandenong, under a licence agreement with Council dated 16 March 2016. The licence agreement has expired and is in over holding on a year-by-year basis expiring July 2025.
- 22. The Interfaith Network currently pay a rental of \$330 per annum plus GST and outgoings. The commercial market rental for the space would be approximately \$20,000 per annum plus GST and outgoings.



Legal/Risk Implications

23. An exemption from the requirement to undergo a public tender process for the recommended service agreement is currently being sought. If Council were to enter a public tender process for this service agreement, then the consequent delay in funding this would risk serious disruption to IFN work and waste Council time/resources, as no other organisation is positioned to deliver the same services as the IFN.

Environmental Implications

24. There are no environmental implications relevant to this report.

Community Consultation

25. A community engagement and benchmarking exercise was held from 01/02/2025 - 28/02/2025. Fifteen interviews were held with local faith leaders, IFN staff, IFN board members, and volunteers from neighbouring multifaith networks. The findings of this engagement provided supporting evidence for the report conclusions set out in points 5-15.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

- 26. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:
 - Embrace diversity and multiculturalism.
- 27. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2021-25:
 - A city that respects and celebrates diversity, our history and the arts.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

- 28. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
 - The Overarching Governance Principles of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
 - Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006.



3.1.2 Medium Grants Program 2025 Round 1

Responsible Officer:	Exe	Executive Director Community Strengthening	
Attachments:	1.	Recommended Applications Community Development Grants (3) [3.1.2.1 - 1 page]	
	2.	Recommended Applications Climate Change Action Grants (1) [3.1.2.2 - 1 page]	
	3	Recommended Applications Arts Festivals and Events	

- Recommended Applications Arts Festivals and Events Grants (3) [3.1.2.3 - 1 page]
 Recommended Applications Individual Artist Grants (1)
 - Recommended Applications Individual Artist Grants (1) [3.1.2.4 - 1 page]

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. APPROVES the awarding of Community Development Grants to recommended recipients as outlined in Attachment 1;
- 2. APPROVES the awarding of Climate Change Action Grants to recommended recipients as outlined in Attachment 2;
- 3. APPROVES the awarding of Arts, Festivals and Events Grants to recommended recipients as outlined in Attachment 3 of this report, and
- 4. APPROVES the awarding of Individual Artist Grants to recommended recipients as outlined in Attachment 4 of this report.

Executive Summary

- 1. Through the Medium Grants Program Council offers not-for-profit community groups, organisations and individual artists the opportunity to apply for one-off grants to support delivery of projects, programs and events that benefit the Greater Dandenong community.
- 2. This report outlines the assessment of applications submitted to four (4) grant categories under the Medium Grants Program 2025 Round 1:
 - a. Community Development.
 - b. Climate Change Action.
 - c. Arts, Festivals and Events.
 - d. Individual Artist.
- 3. All applications have been checked for eligibility by Council officers and assessed by an independent Community Grants Assessment Panel. The Panel recommendations are presented in this report.

Background

4. The Community Funding Program and Policy Review was conducted from April to December 2023. The outcome of the Review resulted in a new consolidated Community Grants Program Policy that incorporates strategic, governance, and operational improvements and responds to emerging community needs. 5. Under the Medium Grants Program there are two (2) funding rounds per annum. This report considers Round One application for 2025.

Key Issues and Discussion

Eligibility Check

- 6. Applications made to the Medium Grants Program undergo an eligibility check by Council officers to ensure that applicants are:
 - incorporated non-profit organisations (unless auspiced),
 - meeting key compliance requirements of Consumer Affairs Victoria, and
 - have met past grants acquittal reporting requirements of Council.
- 7. Applications deemed eligible are progressed for assessment. Ineligible applications do not progress, and officers will advise applicants of this outcome upon endorsement of this Report.

Community Grants Assessment Panels

- 8. Community Grants Assessment Panels include community representatives and Council officers with broad experience and diverse knowledge.
- 9. Panel members are governed by a Terms of Reference and a signed Code of Conduct. Each member completed an induction process and throughout the training and assessment process were supported by Council officers.
- 10. For each grant category individual panel members were tasked to complete an initial online assessment. These assessment scores were then consolidated and presented to a scheduled panel meeting for qualitative discussion and final recommendations.

Round One of the 2025 Medium Grants Program

- 11. Round One of the 2025 Medium Grants Program was opened online on 3 February 2025 and closed on 3 March 2025.
- 12. This round was highly promoted via electronic and printed material, through Council networks and social media.
- 13. Grant information and writing workshops were offered in person and via online platforms. Applicants also had opportunity to access face-to-face and remote support from Council officers to assist them develop grant applications.

Category 1 - Community Development Grants

- 14. This grant category offers single year grants of up to \$10,000 for projects that build community capacity, foster social inclusion, create healthy partnerships, prevent family violence, advance gender equity, and promote community harmony and participation.
- 15. A total of 24 applications were submitted to the Community Development Grants category. One (1) application was withdrawn, and one (1) application was ruled ineligible.
- 16. This left a total of 22 applications to be assessed seeking total funding of \$164,816.
- 17. The Community Grants Assessment Panel members individually assessed applications online from 14 April to 5 May 2025. The Panel convened on 7 May 2025 to qualitatively discuss the consolidated applications and make final recommendations. Following this it is recommended that 11 applications be funded a total of **\$72,382**.
- 18. A list of all applications recommended for funding through the Community Development Grants category is provided in Attachment 1.



Category 2 - Climate Change Action Grants

- 19. This grant category offers single year grants of up to \$5,000 for projects that deliver climate related or other positive environmental outcome and assist Council in its commitment to tackling climate change.
- 20. A total of two (2) applications were submitted to the Climate Change Action Grants category. One (1) application was withdrawn.
- 21. This left a total of one (1) application to be assessed seeking total funding of \$4,950.
- 22. The Community Grants Assessment Panel members individually assessed applications online from 14 April to 5 May 2025. The Panel convened on 7 May 2025 to qualitatively discuss the application and make final recommendations. Following this it is recommended that one (1) application be funded a total of **\$4,950**.
- 23. A list of all applications recommended for funding through the Climate Change Action Grants category is provided in Attachment 2.

Category 3 – Arts, Festivals and Events Grants

- 24. This grant category offers single year grants of up to \$10,000 for projects that promote community connection, cross cultural exchange, and appreciation of cultural diversity. Arts, festivals, and events play an integral part in building and supporting broad community involvement and social cohesion.
- 25. A total of 24 applications were submitted to the Arts, Festivals and Event Grants category. One (1) application was withdrawn and four (4) were ruled ineligible.
- 26. This left a total of 19 applications to be assessed seeking total funding of \$165,715.
- 27. The Community Grants Assessment Panel members individually assessed applications online from 14 April to 5 May 2025. The Panel convened on 8 May 2025 to qualitatively discuss the consolidated applications and make final recommendations. Following this it is recommended that eleven (11) applications be funded a total of **\$75,835**.
- 28. A list of all applications recommended for funding through the Arts, Festivals and Events Grants category is provided in Attachment 3.

Category 4 - Individual Artist Grants

- 29. This grant category offers single year grants of up to \$5,000 to individuals to develop community-based arts/cultural projects, develop relationships with community and create art that responds to community needs.
- 30. A total of two (2) applications were submitted to the Individual Artist Grants category. One (1) application was withdrawn.
- 31. This left a total of 1 application to be assessed seeking total funding of \$5,000
- 32. The Community Grants Assessment Panel member individually assessed applications online from 14 April to 5 May 2025. The Panel convened on 8 May 2025 to qualitatively discuss the consolidated applications and make final recommendations. Following this it is recommended that one (1) application be funded a total of **\$5,000**.
- 33. A list of all applications recommended for funding through the Individual Artist Grants category is provided in Attachment 4.

Support for Unsuccessful Applicants

- 34. All unsuccessful applicants will be contacted by officers and offered feedback and assistance to support them to submit an application to Round Two of the 2025 Medium Grants Program.
- 35. This round is scheduled to open on 14 July 2025.



Grant Acquittal Reports

- 36. Progress towards achieving outcomes is monitored with grant recipients throughout the duration of the program. Grant recipients are also required to submit a grant acquittal report within one month of the project being completed. The report will include a description of the activities delivered and outcomes achieved by the grant recipients and detail on how the funds were spent.
- 37. Failure to submit the required acquittal and/or deliver the outcomes agreed as part of the grant allocation would lead to the recipient being ineligible for future grant allocation.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

38. This item does not have an impact on existing human resources.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

- 39. The financial implications associated with this report are a one-off cost of \$158,167 (=\$72,382 + \$4,950 + \$75,835 + \$5,000) with no ongoing costs in future year budgets.
- 40. The Medium Grants Program has a budget of \$357,392 for the 2025-26 financial year and this leaves \$199,225 (= \$357,392 \$158,167) to be allocated in Round Two.

Asset Implications

41. This item does not affect any existing assets.

Legal/Risk Implications

42. There are no legal / risk implications relevant to this report.

Environmental Implications

43. There are no environmental implications relevant to this report.

Community Consultation

- 44. Councils Community Grants Program is extensively promoted via electronic and printed material, through Council networks and social media. Grant information and writing workshops were offered both in person and online. In addition, community groups had the opportunity to access face-to-face and remote support from Council officers to assist them develop grant applications.
- 45. During the assessment process Council Officers consulted with staff from across the organisations to seek information and advice regarding the merits of all funding applications.
- 46. Officers conducted extensive eligibility checks of applications including compliance documentation, financial report, past grants acquittal history and other matters where relevant.
- 47. All eligible applications were assessed by Community Grants Assessment Panels. Panels include community representatives and Council officers with broad experience and diverse knowledge.
- 48. Community Grants Assessment Panel's recommendations of eligible applications for funding are presented for endorsement.



Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

49. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:

- Safe and peaceful community.
- Education, training, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.
- Embrace diversity and multiculturalism.
- Sustainable environment.
- Mind, body and spirit.
- Art and culture.
- 50. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2021-25:
 - A socially connected, safe and healthy city.
 - A city that respects and celebrates diversity, our history and the arts.
 - A city of accessible, vibrant centres and neighbourhoods.
 - A green city committed to a sustainable future.
 - A city that supports entrepreneurship, quality education and employment outcomes.
 - A Council that demonstrates leadership and a commitment to investing in the community.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

- 51. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
 - The Overarching Governance Principles of the Local Government Act 2020.
 - Related Council Policies, Strategies or Frameworks.

Medium Grants Program 2025 – Round 1

Community Development Grants – Round 1

Applicant	Project	Recommended Funding
Al Hussein Cultural Association	Weekly Cultural Exchange Program	\$4,000.00
Incorporated	for Arabic Women	
Burke and Beyond Association	Beyond Gardening - Supporting	\$7,855.00
Incorporated	trainees with disabilities.	
Concern Australia Welfare Inc.	Hand BrakeTurn Mobile Workshops	\$4,250.00
Interfaith Network of the City of	Inclusion, respect and belonging for	\$10,000.00
Greater Dandenong	all people	
Jesuit Social Services Limited	Supporting women's English language	\$3,963.00
	and literacy (SWELL)	
Southern Cross Kids' Camps	Delivering Hope to at-risk kids	\$10,000.00
Springvale Rise Primary School	2025 Annual Women's Health Forum	\$5,000.00
St Martin's Youth Arts Centre	Young Changemakers: Dandenong	\$ 6,000.00
St Paul's South Eastern Suburbs	Springvale Maltese Seniors	\$2,000.00
Maltese Seniors Association Incorporated	Association	
The Water Well Project Limited	Improving Health Literacy for Migrant,	\$9,314.00
	Refugee & Asylum-Seeking	
	Communities	
Trk Care Ltd	Trk care mental health packs for	\$10,000.00
	foster kids and carers	
	Total	\$72,382

Medium Grants Program 2025 – Round 1

Climate Change Action Grants – Round 1

Applicant	Project	Recommended Funding
Rethink Recycling Co-op LTD	Empowering Youth with Disabilities for Climate Action	\$ 4,950.00
	Total	\$4,950.00

Medium Grants 2025 – Round 1

Arts Festivals and Events Grants – Round 1

Applicant	Project	Recommended Funding
Actomania Incorporated	A stage play "Still Call Australia Home" depicting migrant's journey	\$8,000.00
Al-Itqan Academy Inc.	Dandenong Eid Carnival 2026	\$8,000.00
African Women's and Families Network	Celebration of the Day of the African Child 2025	\$7,000.00
Australian Society of Graduate Tamils Inc	Tamil Youth Cultural Night	\$6,500.00
Bright Events Australia	Dandenong Diwali 2025	\$10,000.00
Cambodian Association of Victoria Inc.	Promoting Cambodian Culture	\$5,000.00
Dandenong Agricultural & Pastoral Society Inc.	Scottish Heritage Day	\$4,835.00
Fijian Community Association Victoria Inc	Fiji Day Multicultural Festival 2025	\$10,000.00
Kathryn Watt	Saluting Service, Courage & Resilience	\$5,000.00
West Alchemy Collective Inc.	Vespertine Gardens mural project	\$6,500.00
Xinjiang Chinese Association of Australia Inc.	2025 Mid - Autumn Festival Celebrations	\$5,000.00
	Total	\$75,835

Medium Grants Program 2025 – Round 1

Individual Artist Grants – Round 1

Applicant	Project	Recommended Funding
Mohammad Zia Atahi	Stories Through the Lens	\$5,000.00
	Total	\$5,000.00



3.1.3 A Review of Gambling Issues for Greater Dandenong

Responsible Officer:	Executive Manager Strategy Growth & Advocacy	
Attachments:	1.	A review of gambling issues for local government [3.1.3.1 - 80 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That Council

- 1. NOTES the Review of Gambling Issues for the City of Greater Dandenong Community (refer Attachment 1 Report); and
- 2. NOTES the gambling review document will become a publicly available resource for community education and advocacy purposes.

Executive Summary

- 1. Each year, Greater Dandenong residents lose nearly \$340 million to gambling. This report informs Council of the scale, impact and harm inflicted by gambling upon our community, and of efforts by Council to address gambling harm.
- 2. Accurate information about the impact of gambling on community's wellbeing is important for community education, advocacy and policy development.

Background

Legal gambling

- 3. Legal gambling in Victoria includes sports betting, racing, lotteries, keno, lotto, electronic gambling machines (EGMs or 'pokies') and the Casino.
- 4. EGMs account for nearly half of all legal gambling losses and most gambling problems, as they are widely accessible and provide people with the means to gamble continuously. In 2023/24, \$138 million was lost to EGMs operating in 14 pubs and clubs in Greater Dandenong an average of \$378,000 each day, and equal to the cost of adequately feeding 46,000 children for a whole year. This is equivalent to \$1,089 per adult the second highest rate of losses per adult in Victoria.
- 5. Sports betting holds further concerns; due to its rising popularity and the role it plays in consolidating gambling practices among young adults. The development of internet technology, increasing access to smart phones, coupled with a proliferation of gambling operators and pervasive advertising, have contributed to its rise. A growing number of young people, especially in sporting environments, are adopting sports betting as a regular source of recreation.

Impact of Gambling Problems

- 6. Most regular gamblers experience some level of harm from gambling. Problems generally arise when individuals persistently loose more money than they can comfortably afford. Practical experience in our community shows this often results in financial hardship, poverty, personal stress, family conflict and violence, deceptive actions to obtain money, distraction from work responsibilities, and homelessness.
- 7. Gambling problems tend to be most prevalent among younger people, those with limited formal education, on lower incomes or in menial occupations.



- 8. The gambling industry claims that it supports the community and creates jobs. However, studies conducted by the State and Federal Governments have shown that jobs created in the gambling industry are matched by reduced employment in other businesses.
- 9. In addition, while club gambling venues donate money to support local community initiatives, in 2023/24, just 1.6 per cent of their gambling revenue was donated to our community as gifts, donations, sponsorships and support for veterans.

How Council Responds to Gambling Issues in our Community

- 10. Council's Gambling Policy, last updated in 2022 and scheduled for revision next year, sets out several important strands of Council activity to address gambling harm.
- 11. Monitoring gambling trends monitoring information about the scale and impact of gaming in our community, informs Council and residents, permits sharing with local government partners and supports efforts to advocate for reform.
- 12. Informing residents about gambling harm and sources of help Council informs residents about the destructive consequences of gambling while advising of sources of advice or support for people experiencing gambling problems. It does this though Council screens, website, brochures and social media. Council also promotes alternate sources of recreation and social fulfillment.
- 13. A balanced relationship with the gambling industry Council maintains a relationship with the gambling industry that sets a distance between Council's functions and gambling activities. Council's policy stipulates that it may not accept funds from the gambling industry, shall deter Council-supported clubs from doing likewise, and prohibit gambling advertising at Council-owned venues (expect any functioning as a gambling venue). Council also discourages staff from conducting activities in gambling venues where alternatives are available.
- 14. Responding to gambling applications Council responds to applications for new gambling venues, or increased numbers of EGMs at existing venues, with consideration of the merits of each application as well as the harm that additional EGMs may inflict upon residents. Three applications were received in each of the years 2017 to 2019, all of them successfully opposed by Council at hearings of the Victorian Casino and Gambling Control Commission, resulting in a significant reduction of EGMs in this municipality as well as the removal of a gambling venue.
- 15. Advocacy for Gambling Reform Council's most important work is in advocacy for reforms to the regulation of gambling. The foundation of much of this work is its collaboration with the Alliance for Gambling Reform. Council is a founding and financial member of the Alliance a partnership between local governments, community groups, researchers and people with personal experience of gambling.
 - a. Council supplies detailed information to the Alliance about gambling trends to help inform its work, supports its campaigns with letters and advocacy to local parliamentarians, and participates in consultations to help set the direction of its work. Council has also strongly advocated on its own account for other reforms, including further reductions in the maximum number of EGMs permitted to operate in this municipality.
 - b. Reforms such as the removal of ATMs from gaming rooms, reduction in maximum EFTPOS withdrawals, encouragement of AFL clubs to relinquish their gaming venues, and lower EGM numbers in disadvantaged communities are largely a consequence of targeted and strategic advocacy by the Alliance.



- c. More recently, the Alliance had focused upon advocacy for reduced opening hours for gambling venues and the establishment of a mandatory precommitment mechanism for the use of electronic gambling machines a process Council supported through the provision of information about gambling trends and communication with local parliamentarians. The efforts of the Alliance were instrumental in the 2023 State Government announcement of these reforms.
- d. In the wake of the Federal election, the Alliance was escalating its campaign for a national ban on gambling advertising among the recommendation of the 2023 recommendations of the House of Representatives Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs (the Murphy Report).
- e. The Alliance also supports other proposals featured in this landmark report, such as ban on free games and other inducements offered to players, a crackdown on illegal gambling sites, improved support for people seeking help with gambling problems, reduced access by minors to games which feature simulated gambling, and the establishment of a national strategy to address the rise of online gambling.
- f. The Alliance also advocates the prohibition of donations to Australian political parties or candidates by the gambling industry.

Key Issues and Discussion

16. Losses to legal gambling in Greater Dandenong, and particularly to electronic gambling machines (EGMs) or 'pokies', worsens financial hardship among residents and communities. An understanding of the scope of such gambling losses, and some of the ways in which Council seeks to moderate the impact of gambling by advocating for reform to its regulation and other means, may help to guide future Council decisions about this topic.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

17. This item does not have an impact on existing human resources.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

18. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Asset Implications

19. This item does not affect any existing assets.

Legal/Risk Implications

20. There are no legal / risk implications relevant to this report. The purpose of this report is to make available two updated gambling resources for use within the public realm.

Environmental Implications

21. There are no environmental implications relevant to this report.

Community Consultation

22. There was no requirement for community consultation.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

- 23. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:
 - Safe and peaceful community.
 - Education, training, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.
- 24. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2021-25:
 - A socially connected, safe and healthy city.
 - A Council that demonstrates leadership and a commitment to investing in the community.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

- 25. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
 - The Overarching Governance Principles of the Local Government Act 2020.
 - Related Council Policies, Strategies or Frameworks.



H. Brown. Revised May 2025



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report, recently updated, presents an account of the nature and extent of legal gambling in Victoria, including trends in levels of participation and expenditure among different gambling types, segments of society and communities.

Consideration is given to the causes and impacts of gambling problems among individuals and communities. Emphasis is given to the particular impacts of electronic gambling machine (EGM) gambling as it accounts for nearly half of all legal gambling losses and for most gambling problems. Sports betting is also given prominence due to its rising popularity, and to the role it plays in consolidating gambling practices among young adults.

The content of the report is largely blended from research and expert commentary about this subject, as well as government tabulation of losses and other measures of the scale and impact of gambling.

This information will hold interest for local governments and other organisations which share a concern for the effects of gambling and may be participating in efforts to lessen its impact upon Victorian communities, families and individuals.

Participation in Gambling

Surveys show that approximately half of Victorian adults, and similar proportions of women and men, participate in legal gambling – such as lotteries raffles, Keno, EGMs, the Casino and sports betting, in any 12-month period

Most popular among types of gambling are lotteries, in which nearly two-fifths of adults participate, and raffles. A lesser proportion of 10.7% of adults participate in EGM gambling and 5.1% in sports betting. Notably though, participation in gambling has declined from 73% in 2008 to 52% by 2023, including a halving in rates of participation by adults in EGM gambling, from 21.5% to 10.7% during this period.

Overall, gambling is most common among older people, English-only speakers and people with limited formal education.

Gambling Losses

In 2022/23, total losses in Victoria to all forms of legal gambling reached \$7.4 billion. These were distributed unequally among the population, with gambling losses acknowledged by survey participants over six times higher for males than for females, and highest among both younger people and those in their older age, as well as among English-speakers and people with tertiary qualifications.

Losses to EGMs match a different pattern altogether. In 2023, acknowledged losses among EGM gamblers were higher among males, older people non-English-speaking people, and those with limited formal education. Such losses tend to be highest in the least affluent communities. In 2023/24 for instance, losses among EGMs situated in Brimbank - the municipality with the lowest incomes in metropolitan Melbourne - stood at \$1,172 per adult, eight times higher than the corresponding rate of \$140 in highly affluent Boroondara.

Patterns of Sports Gambling

Online gambling, including sports betting, is carried out through the internet, using computers, tablets, smartphones or other electronic devices.

Illustrating the burgeoning of online gambling in recent years, it is reported that the proportion of Australian racing gamblers who bet online, rose eight-fold, from 6.8% in 2008 to 55% by 2023.

These trends are attributed to a range of conditions, including the rise of internet technology, proliferation of gambling operators and aggressive advertising, which present many gamblers with the incentive and opportunity to bet more frequently, on a wide range of events, at any place or time of day, with the result that gambling has become an increasingly routine part of everyday life for many.

Causes of Gambling Problems

Causes of gambling problems are often complex and may involve individual factors, the nature of the gambling experience, and the accessibility and range of gambling opportunities.

Gambling behaviour is often influenced by irrational or superstitious conceptions about the probability of winning or the role of skill in gambling. Unrealistically hopeful expectations may be fostered by aspects of gambling machine design, such as those which display symbols which convey the misleading impression of a near win.

Accessibility of gambling is also associated with higher levels of gambling losses and problems. Evidence, reviewed here, points to proximity to gambling venues, as well as venue characteristics such as a welcoming, comfortable and safe environments, late-night operations, meals and free tea and coffee, high levels of social activity, a sense of anonymity often fostered by larger venues, and the bells and whistles which frequently accompany gambling machines, as conditions which may attract individuals who are susceptible to gambling-related problems.

Prevalence of 'Problem Gambling'

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Survey found that 8.5% of all Victorian adults, including 11.2% of males and 5.9% of females, experience consequences of gambling which placed them in the categories of low risk (5.3%), moderate risk (2.3%) or problem gambling (0.9%). The prevalence of gambling problems is highest among people with limited formal educational levels and on lower incomes. The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Survey also found that 6.9% of Victorian adults, or 13% of gamblers, experienced at least one form of gambling harm during the previous 12 months, such as personal stress, financial hardship, poverty, distraction from work, family conflict and violence, crime and deceptive attempts to obtain money, and homelessness.

Limitations of Surveys of the Prevalence of Gambling Harm

While community surveys and other evidence provide important insights into the prevalence and characteristics of problem gamblers, such findings should be interpreted with caution. Authors of the 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Study observed that declining response rates, typically lower than

5% in Australian phone surveys, may reduce the representativeness through "... differences between those who are selected into a particular sample and those who end up completing the survey". In addition, many people with gambling-related problems are inclined to conceal their difficulties, under-reporting their losses. This subject is explored in further detail here, to lend perspective to the findings of such research.

Help Seeking

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Survey concluded that approximately two-fifths of gamblers did not know of any gambling support services. Another survey found that just one in forty regular gamblers had sought help with their gambling in the previous year, including about one in ten who sought assistance from Gambler's Help, Gamblers Anonymous or Gambler's Help lines in the previous year, with few subsequently participating in counselling.

Characteristics of people with gambling problems

Research generally tends to the conclusion that gambling problems are most prevalent among males, younger people, people with limited formal education, lower incomes, menial occupations and Indigenous people.

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Survey found that 2.5% of men were classified as problem gamblers, compared with 1% of women, with the prevalence of problem gambling declining steeply with age, from 2.8% of 18-24-year-olds, to 0.3% of people aged 75 years or more.

Investigations have found that the prevalence of problem gambling was highest among people on lower incomes, who are unemployed or socioeconomically disadvantaged.

The prevalence of gambling and gambling-related problems is also higher among people with limited educational attainments, than others, one inquiry documenting a prevalence of 2.8% among people with less than year 12 education, and 0.8% of those with tertiary qualifications. Research also points to a higher prevalence of gambling problems among sales workers, machinery operators, drivers and labourers.

The prevalence of gambling problems also appears to be higher among Aboriginal people than the general population, with one investigation concluding that approximately 8.7% of Indigenous people were problem gamblers, compared with 0.7% of the overall adult population.

Further details concerning the prevalence of gambling and of gambling-related problems, accompanied by the range of evidence underpinning them, are reviewed in the main report.

Benefits of Gambling

While the gambling industry claims that it supports the community and creates jobs. The findings of government investigations though, provide no support to this conclusion. Inquiries conducted by the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission federal Productivity Commission concluded that the impact of the gambling industry upon employment was neutral.

Locally, club EGM venues do provide funds to support to the community activities. The extent of this funding is limited however: in 2022/23, club EGM venues in Victoria returned an average of just 1.6% of their gambling revenue to their local communities as gifts, donations, sponsorships and support for veterans.

The Impact of Gambling upon Our Community: what the numbers tell us

Electronic gambling machines (EGMs or 'pokies') play a prominent role in the impact of gambling in Greater Dandenong. Since they are widely accessible and provide people with the means to gamble continuously, they account for nearly half of all legal gambling losses and are responsible for most gambling problems. In addition, Victorian local governments may support or oppose the addition of EGMs or venues, in hearings before the Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission.

Gambling Machines

• 928 EGMs operate at 14 clubs and hotels in Greater Dandenong – the fifth highest number in Victoria. Sixty-one more EGMs may be installed in local venues before the municipal limit on EGM numbers, of 989, is reached.

EGM Gambling Losses

- In 2023/24, \$138 million was lost to EGMs in our municipality an average of \$378,000 each day, and equal to the cost of adequately feeding 46,000 children for one year.
- Losses in that year averaged \$1,089 per adult the second highest rate in Victoria, and nearly twice the metropolitan level of \$597 per adult.
- Since their introduction in 1992, \$4.8 billion (in 2024 dollars) has been lost to EGMs in Greater Dandenong.

Surveys show that participation in EGM gambling is higher among younger people and those with limited formal education.

Only one-tenth of EGM gamblers, equal to 1% of Victorian adults, participate weekly, so most gambling losses are borne by a small segment of the community.

Total Gambling Losses

 In addition to EGM losses, an estimated \$199 million is lost each year by Greater Dandenong residents to other legal forms of gambling, bringing total annual gambling losses in Greater Dandenong to approximately \$337 million in 2023/4, or an average of \$2,592 per adult.

Sports Betting

Recent years have seen soaring levels of participation in, and losses to, sports betting in Victoria - though information about local losses is unavailable. Sports betting is five times more common among men than women, most widespread young people and rises with income.

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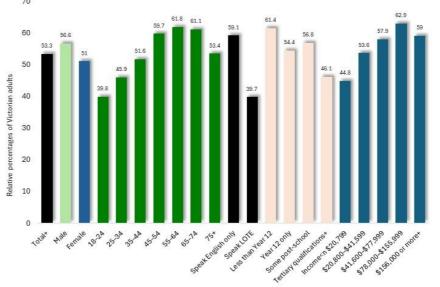
Participation in Gambling

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Study found that approximately half (53%) of Victorian adults had gambled during the previous 12 months, including 51% of women and 56% of men.

This proportion had declined from 73% in 2008, including a halving in rates of participation in EGM gambling from 21.5% to 10.7%, during that period. Alone among the major forms of gambling, sports betting recorded a rise in participation, from 4% in 2008, to 5.1% by 2023.

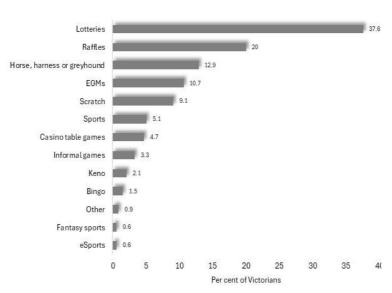
The prevalence of gambling recorded in the 2023 investigation rose with age, from 40% of 18-24-yearolds, to its peak of 62% among people aged 65-74. Gambling participation was higher among people who speak English only in their homes, among those with more limited formal education and among people on higher incomes. 70

Per cent of adults who gambled in the previous 12 months, by selected characteristics: Victoria, Victorian Population Gambling and Health Study 2023



Participation in Gambling Types

The 2023 study determined that approximately a third of Victorian adults participated in lotteries and one fifth in raffles, while one in nine (10.7%) - including 11.9% of males and 9.6% of females - had participated in EGM gambling and about one in twenty (5.1%) in sports betting.



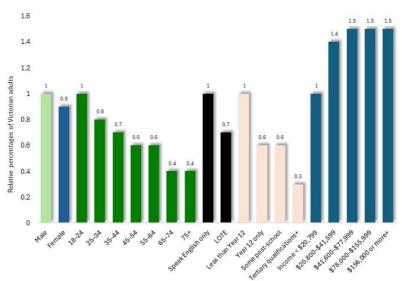
Per cent of adults who gambled in the previous 12 months, by type of gambling: Victoria, 2023 Rates of gambling participation among segments of the community vary widely among the various types of legal gambling. The diagrams presented below illustrate these differences with odds ratios. For each variable shown here, such as sex, age, spoken language, educational attainment and income, one category is assigned the value '1', with the number assigned to other categories of that variable showing the rate of participation, relative to that category.

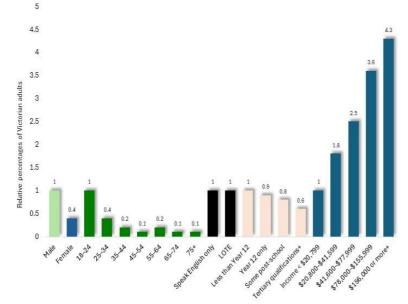
For example, in the diagram below, illustrating levels of participation in EGM gambling, the number 1 is assigned to males, with the number 0.9, assigned to females, signifying that women were 90% as likely to participate in such gambling as men.

Note: these odds ratios may only be compared among categories of a particular variable, such as sex, age, income and so on. The odds ratios may not be compared between categories of different variables, for instance, between 26-34-year-olds and people with year 12 education.

According to these findings, rates of participation in EGM gambling tended to be slightly higher among men, younger adults, English-only speakers and those with limited formal education, and rose with increasing income.

Odds Ratios, for participation in EGM gambling, by social characteristic: Victoria, 2023





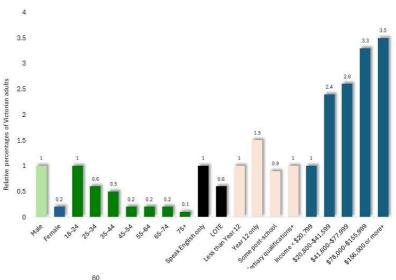
The proportion of Victorian adults who were found to participate in Casino gambling was more than twice as high among males as among women, highest among young people, somewhat higher among people with more limited formal education, and with rose increasing income.

Odds Ratios, for casino gambling, by social characteristic: Victoria, 2023

2

Participation in sports betting was five times higher among men than for women, highest among young people and those who speak English-only at home, and rose with increasing income.

Odds Ratios, for sports betting, by social characteristic: Victoria, 2023



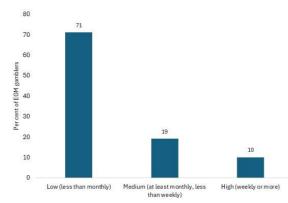
Gambling Frequency

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Survey also found that half of Victorians who participate in gambling do so less than monthly, with about a quarter gambling at least monthly, but not weekly, and the balance participating at least every week.

5

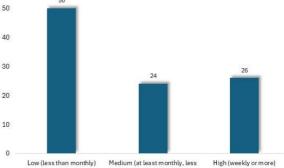
Per

Per cent of gamblers, by frequency of gambling: all gambling, Victoria, 2023



Similarly, among people who participated in Casino gambling, nearly nine-tenths did so less than monthly and only 2.9% as often as weekly.

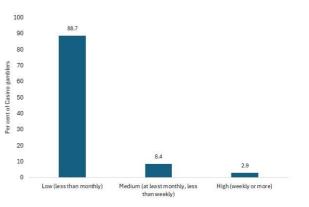
Per cent of gamblers, by frequency of gambling: casino gambling, Victoria, 2023

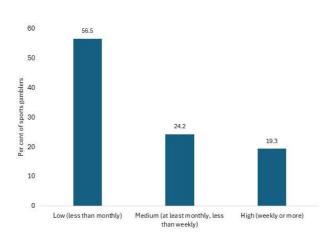


than weekly)

Among EGM gamblers, 71% participated less often than monthly, with only one-tenth (representing about 1% of Victorian adults) participating weekly.

Per cent of gamblers, by frequency of gambling: EGM gambling, Victoria, 2023





Sports betters gambled more frequently than EGM or casino gamblers, with over half participating less often than monthly, but nearly one-fifth participating at least every week.

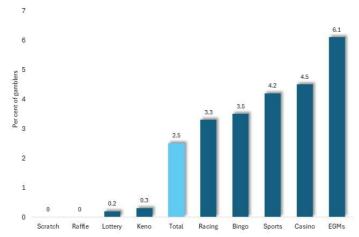
Per cent of gamblers, by frequency of gambling: sports gambling, Victoria, 2023

EGM Losses

In 2024, the Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission (VGCCC) reported that there were 26,377 attached electronic gambling machines [EGMs or 'pokies'] operating at 488 hotels and clubs throughout the State. In 2023/24, \$3.03 billion was lost to these EGMs - equivalent to an average of \$6.2 million per venue, \$115,000 per machine, or \$581 per adult – and representing 41% of all legal gambling losses in 2022/3 (Queensland Government Statisticians Office, 2024). These losses were equivalent to the cost of feeding 1,013,400 children for a year¹.

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Survey informs us that approximately 10.7% of Victorian adults use gambling machines in a 12-month period. Dividing the total Victorian EGM losses in 2023/24 by the number of adults who gamble on EGMs, gives a figure for average EGM losses among such gamblers during that year, of \$5,201.

The survey also documented the proportion of gamblers who acknowledged losses of more than \$10,000 in the previous 12 months, a figure which stood at 2.5% among gamblers in general. Among EGM gamblers though, this rose to 6.1% - the highest percentage among all gambling types. Among Casino gamblers, 4.5%



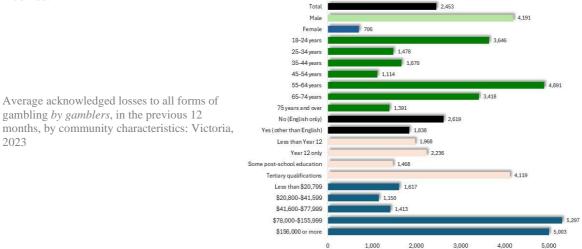
lost over \$10,000 in the previous year, while for sports gamblers the figure was 4.2%. By contrast, less than 1% of scratch, raffle, lottery and Keno gamblers recorded such losses. Survey findings about gambling losses though, should be viewed with caution.

Per cent of gamblers who lost over \$10,000 in the previous 12 months to gambling, by type of gambling: Victoria, 2023

¹ Based on the findings of the 2014 Healthy Food Access Basket Survey, conducted by Queensland Health, which concluded that in 2014 the minimum cost of providing an adequate diet to an adult was \$126 per fortnight. The fortnightly cost of feeding a child is estimated at \$88 per fortnight - based on the proposition that the cost of living for a child is 70% that of an adult – in accord with the OECD equivalence scales used to estimate the prevalence of poverty. This figure is then adjusted by CPI to \$115 per fortnight in 2024 - equal to \$57.5 per week or \$2,990 in a year. Finally, 2023/24 EGM gambling losses of \$3030.1 million in Victoria are divided by \$2,730 to give 1,013,387 – the number of children whom these gambling losses could feed for a year.

Gambling Losses and Social Characteristics

Average annual gambling losses acknowledged by participants in the 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health survey were over six times higher for males than for females, and highest among young people and those in their older age, among English speakers, those with tertiary qualifications and people on higher incomes.

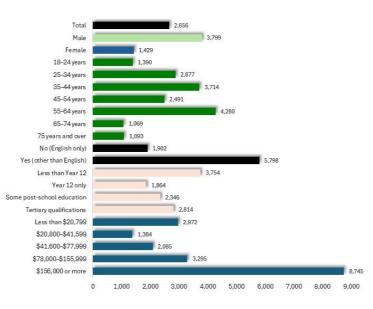


Though losses acknowledged by survey participants understated the true scale of EGM losses₂, the survey findings may still provide some suggestion of the *relative* levels of average EGM losses among various segments of the community. In

particular, among gamblers, acknowledged losses were higher among non-English-speaking people, those with limited formal education and higher income earners.

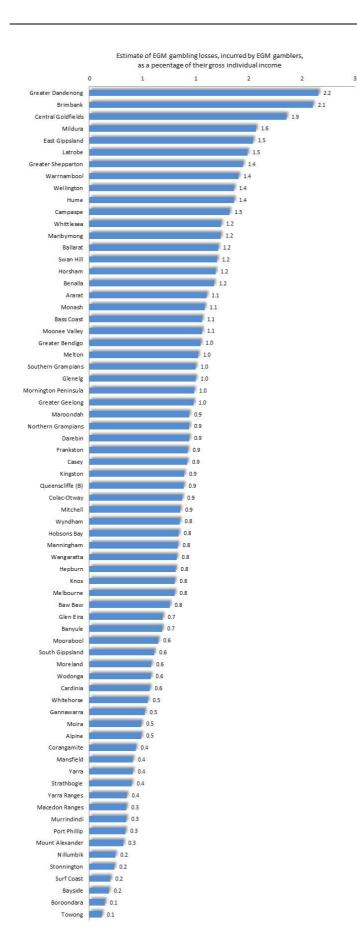
Average acknowledged losses to all forms of gambling by EGM gamblers, in the previous 12 months, by community characteristics: Victoria, 202

Losses in the previous 12 months were highest among frequent gamblers. For example, among those who gamble at least weekly, the average acknowledged loss during the previous



12 months was \$8,212, compared with \$158 among those who participated less often than monthly. Similarly, among EGM gamblers, average losses among weekly gamblers stood at \$5,344 compared with \$312 among those who gambled less often than monthly.

 $^{^2}$ These expenditure figures should be treated with circumspection. If the average losses per EGM gambler are multiplied by the number of EGM gamblers in Victoria (equal to 10.7% of the State adult population of 5.44 million) to give an estimate of total Victorian EGM losses, the result is \$1.547 billion, about half (51%) of *actual* losses recorded in 2023/24. This discrepancy confirms that a substantial proportion of EGM losses was unreported by respondents to the survey.



Gambling Losses and Incomes

Where losses are measured in relation to personal income, the disparity between gambling losses among the most and least affluent localities is still more marked.

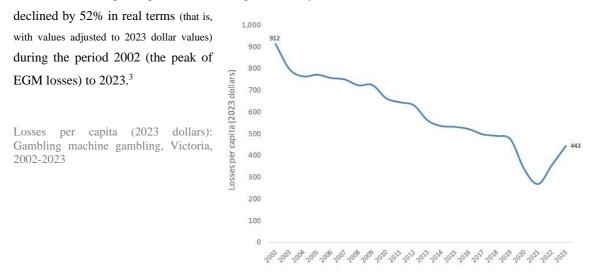
Estimated Proportion of Gross Individual Income Lost to EGM Gambling, 2021/22: Victorian Municipalities

The relationship between EGM gambling losses and incomes levels may be examined comparing gross personal incomes, most recently documented in the 2021 Census with EGM losses recorded at a similar time, in 2021/22.

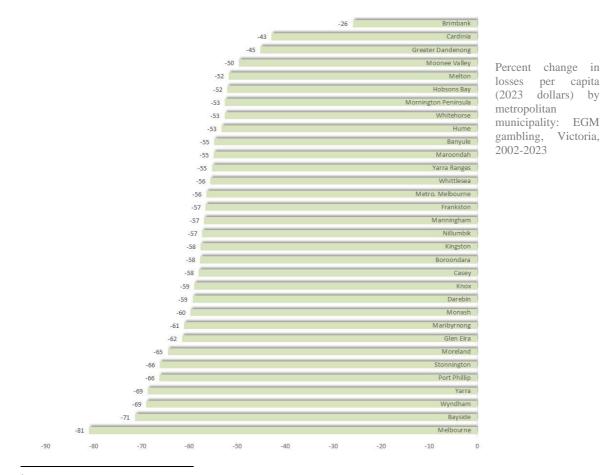
These figures showed that losses to EGMs, relative to total incomes, ranged from 2.2% in Greater Dandenong, to 0.3% or less in municipalities such as Nillumbik, Stonnington, Bayside, Boroondara and Surf Coast.

Trends in EGM and other gambling Losses

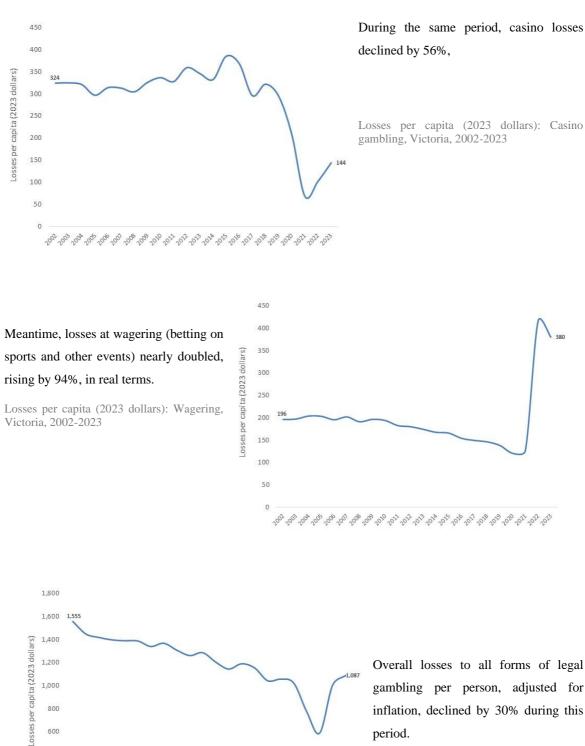
Losses to EGMs per capita in Victoria, published by the Queensland Government Statisticians Office,



The percentage change in real losses per person, in the period 2001/02 to 2023/24, for each metropolitan municipality, are illustrated in the accompanying chart.



³ This and other information on the following two pages: Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, Queensland Treasury, Australian gambling statistics, 37th edition, accessed at: https://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/statistics/theme/society/gambling/australian-gambling-statistics#current-release-australian-gambling-statistics (See tab '5 Total Gambling/Casino etc. Expenditure')



Overall losses to all forms of legal gambling per person, adjusted for inflation, declined by 30% during this period.

> Losses per capita (2023 dollars): All legal gambling, Victoria, 2002-2023

1,000

800

600

400

200

0

The EGM Gambling Industry and Distribution of Gambling Losses

Under the Gambling Regulation Act 2003, a maximum of 30,000 electronic gambling machines (EGMs) may operate within Victoria: 2,628 within the Melbourne Casino, and 27,372 machines evenly divided among clubs and hotels throughout the state. Of those EGMs operating in hotels and clubs, a minimum of 5,474 must operate outside the Melbourne Statistical District, with the consequence that no more than 21,898 may operate within the metropolitan region. The Act further specifies that a maximum of 105 electronic gambling machines may be permitted within a single venue (Victorian Government, 2008).

The 488 venues with gambling machines outside the casino in 2024 were either hotels or clubs. Since all EGM gambling venues must hold a liquor license, if that license is cancelled, approval for EGM gambling at that venue is rescinded.

EGM gambling losses, or the revenue obtained from gambling machines, are distributed among the state and Federal Governments, as well as the clubs and hotels which serve as gambling venues. Hotels pay 8.3% of gambling revenue to the State Government Community Support Fund, which is allocated to problem gambling programs, drug education and treatment, youth programs, community advancement, sport and recreation, the arts, tourism and other purposes. Clubs, on the other hand, are expected to contribute 8.3% of their gambling revenue to support the community, with its contribution documented in annual community benefit statements published by the VCGLR.

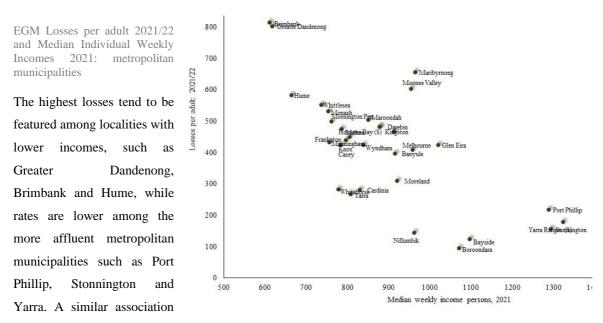
The Victorian Government 2023-24 Financial Report reports that \$1.383 billion in gambling taxes were collected from losses incurred at electronic gambling machines, representing 46% of the \$3.030 billion in EGM losses recorded that year.

EGM Losses and Disadvantaged Municipalities

A variety of studies, reviewed further on, have found that gambling losses are largely sustained by those who can least afford them: people on lower incomes, in manual employment, those without paid work and people of limited educational attainments. Inversely, others in paid work, with more skilled occupations, higher incomes or educational attainments, by contrast, generally spend less on gambling.

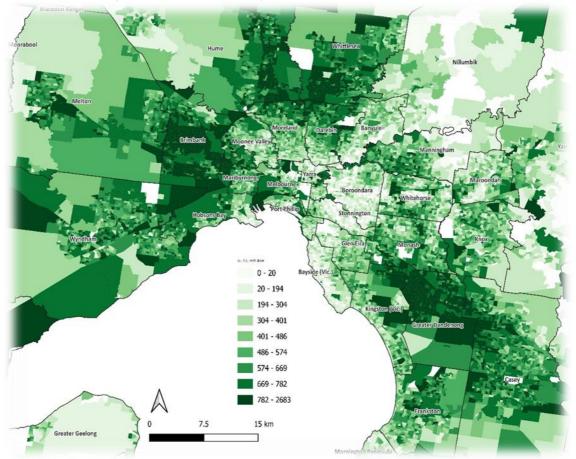
This tendency is mirrored by differences in EGM gambling losses among various localities in Victoria, where the most disadvantaged communities tend to incur the highest gambling losses. In 2023/24 for instance, gambling losses among EGMs situated in Brimbank - metropolitan municipality with the lowest incomes recorded in the 2021 Census - stood at \$1,172 per adult, the highest rate of losses in Victoria and eight times higher than the corresponding rate of \$140 in highly affluent Boroondara. Thus, the residents of the community with the highest gambling losses in Victoria are among those least able to bear the financial burden.

The relationship between social disadvantage and gambling losses is illustrated in the accompanying diagram which, for each metropolitan municipality, matches annual EGM losses per 1,000 adults in 2021/22 (chosen to nearly coincide with the date of most recent Census), to the median individual weekly income levels for 2021 recorded in that Census. Notably, the diagram shows the general tendency for higher rates of gambling losses to be incurred by the communities with the lower average income levels.



may be seen in the relationship between EGM gambling losses per adult and the SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage, formal educational attainments and median incomes.

The map below depicts differences in estimated losses per adult across metropolitan Melbourne.



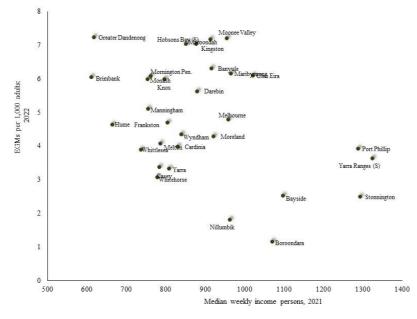
Estimated EGM Losses per Adult: SA1 areas of metropolitan Melbourne, 2021/22

EGM Density and Disadvantaged Municipalities

As with EGM losses, the density of EGMs throughout Victoria [measured as the number per 1,000 adult residents] are genrerally highest among the least affluent municipalities. For example, the average EGM density in the *most disadvantaged* four metropolitan localities [as measured by 2021 median personal incomes] in 2022 was 5.4 per 1,000 adults, compared with 3.1 among the *least disadvantaged* localities. In the case of Greater Dandenong, the density of EGMS stood at 7.2 per adult in 2022 – the highest concentration of gambling machines in metropolitan Melbourne and substantially in excess of the metropolitan average of 4.8.

Least affluent localities	EGMs/1,000 adults, 2022	Losses/ adult, 2021/22	Most affluent localities	EGMs/1,000 adults, 2022	Losses/ adult, 2021/22
Whittlesea	3.9	552	Yarra	3.3	267
Hume	4.6	582	Stonnington	2.5	156
Brimbank	6	815	Port Phillip	3.9	217
Greater Dandenong	7.2	801	Bayside	2.5	128
Average	5.4	\$688	Average	3.1	\$191

Rate of EGM Losses and EGM Density: Most and Least Affluent Victorian Municipalities



EGM Density 2022 by Median Individual Weekly Income 2021: metropolitan Municipalities

The association between EGM density (EGMs per 1,000 adult residents) in 2022, and 2021 median individual income, for each metropolitan municipality, is presented at left. The resulting pattern partly reflects that of EGM losses, shown earlier, with the highest numbers of EGMs per 1,000 adults found among

localities of lower income levels, such as Brimbank and Greater Dandenong, while lower densities are featured among more affluent localities such as Bayside, Port Phillip, Stonnington and Yarra.

Contemplating evidence of the higher densities of EGMs in less affluent localities a quarter of a century ago, the Productivity Commission observed that high densities of EGMs in disadvantaged areas "...can serve to concentrate the social costs in communities that are less able to bear them." (1999: 30) and accentuate the withdrawal of incomes from these communities.

Evidence linking levels of gambling opportunity, including the density of EGMs or EGM gambling venues, with levels of gambling and gambling-related problems, is surveyed further on, in the section 'Access to Gambling Opportunities'.

II: SPORTS AND ONLINE GAMBLING:

Levels and Patterns of Sports and Online Gambling

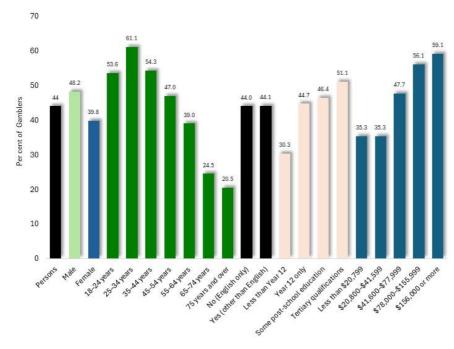
Online gambling is conducted through the internet, using computers, tablets, smartphones or other devices. Gambling on sports is largely conducted online, with the result that recent rises in participation and expenditure on sports betting are largely enfolded with the burgeoning of online gambling.

By 2015, online gambling was the most rapidly growing form of gambling in Australia (Gainsbury, 2015), with Australian expenditure subsequently surging from \$5.6 b. in 2019 to \$9.6b. by 2022 - a rise of 72% in three years (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, 2023).

Surveys show that the popularity of online gambling has risen commensurately. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs (2023) relates that the prevalence of online gambling in Australia rose from 13% in 2010/11⁴ to 31% by 2019. Within Victoria, the 2018/19 Victorian Population, Gambling and Health Study determined that 19.1% of adults gambled online during the previous 12 months (Rockloff et al, 2020). And by 2023, the Victorian Population Gambling and Health Survey found that nearly a quarter (23%) of Victorian adults (up from 19% in 2018/19), and 44% of gamblers (up from 28% in that year), gambled online in the previous 12 months.

Among the most pronounced rises in online gambling in recent years is in level of participation of sports betters, which quadrupled from 22% in 2008 to 86% by 2023; and the proportion of racing gamblers who bet online, which rose eight-fold, from 6.8% to 55% in that period.

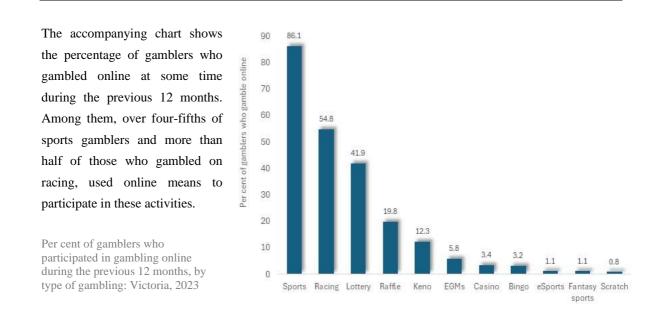
The 2023 inquiry found the proportion of gamblers who gambled online was similar for males and females, at approximately 48% and 40% respectively; declined gradually with age, from 61% of 25-34 year olds to 20.5% of people aged 75 or more; was similar for English and non-English speakers; was higher among people with tertiary qualifications, at 51%, compared with 30% of those with less than year 12



education; and was highest among high income earners, at 59% of those earning \$156,000 or more p.a. compared with 35% of those on less than \$20,799 p.a.

Per cent of gamblers who used online platforms to gamble in the previous 12 months, by characteristics: Victoria, 2023

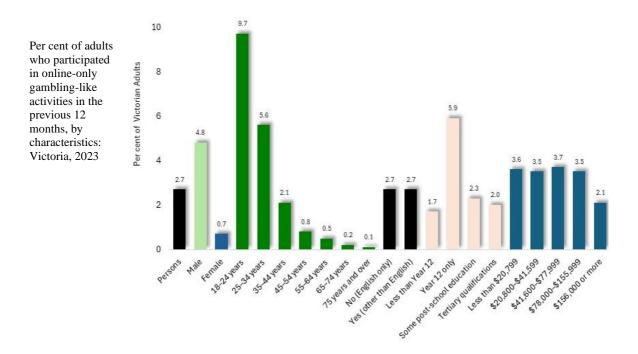
⁴ A survey conducted in 2011 found that 8.1% of Australian adults had participated in online gambling during the previous year (Gainsbury et al, 2015).



Participation in Online-only Gambling-like Activities

In addition, the 2023 Population Gambling and Health Survey determined that 2.7% of Victorian adults participated in online-only gambling-like activities including loot boxes, skins, fantasy sports and eSports betting. Levels of participation in these activities were seven times greater among males than females, and nearly 100 times more prevalent among young adults than among older people.

The pattern of participation in such online-only activities, with respect to such social characteristics, is reminiscent to that for online gambling, with the principal exception that levels of engagement differed little with income level.



13

Sports Betting

Forty-four per cent of Australian adults surveyed in 2022 had participated in sports or racing gambling during the previous 12 months (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs (2023). The 2023 Population Gambling and Health Study determined that approximately one in twenty Victorian adults had participated (5.1%) in sports betting during the previous 12 months.

Sports betting closely interacts with online gambling, for just as most sports betting is conducted online, a substantial proportion of online gambling relates to sports betting. A 2015 Australian survey determined that 59% of those who used the internet for gambling had participated in online sports betting (Winders and Derevensky, 2019), echoing other Australian findings (Parke and Parke, 2019) and global trends.

Gender

Local investigations confirm that participation in sports betting is highest among young people, and males in particular (Miller, 2017).

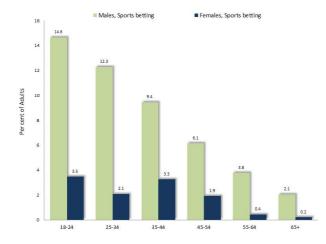
The 2023 Population Gambling and Health Study found that proportion of men who participate in sports betting is five times higher than for women. Sports betting participation was also highest among young adults, declining to a tenth of that level among people aged 75 years or more.

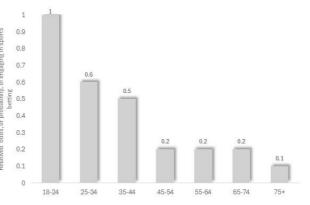
The reasons given for the higher level of participation in online and sports gambling among young men include their higher level of interest in sporting outcomes, and engagement with networks that are influenced by sports (Winders and Derevensky, 2019; Deaner et al, 2016), a more prevalent tendency to seek out intense or thrilling experiences (Rahamani and Lavasami, 2012; Cross et al, 2013), and exaggerated perceptions of the role of skill in determining gambling outcomes (Hing et al, 2014).

Age

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Survey found that the proportion of Victorian adults who stated that they had participated in sports betting during the previous 12 months declined steeply with age, from its highest level among young people.

Odds Ratios, for sports betting, by age: Victoria, 2023





A 2015 Victorian study reported the same pattern, with 14.6% of 18-24-year-old males engaging in sports betting in the previous year – more than four times the corresponding proportion of women the same age, of 3.5%. A substantial, though declining, proportion of older men also participated, including 12.3% of 25-34 year-olds and 9.4% of those aged 35-44 (Hare, 2015) (chart, right).

Prevalence of sports betting by sex and age: Victorian adults, 2015

The same age profile of sports betters recurs in the findings of previous inquiries (Dowling et al, 2010; Delfabbro et al, 2009; Purdie et al, 2011).

Other Characteristics of Sports Betters

Aside from age and gender, the 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Study revealed that people who spoke English only were about twice as likely to participate in sports betting, and those on the highest fifth of incomes about 3.5 times more likely to participate as the lowest fifth of income earners. Levels of participation did not differ markedly with education.

The HILDA survey found that sports betters were generally employed (85%), unmarried (55%), had an average, or above-average, education and income, and were renting (Siegff, 2017; Armstrong and Carroll, 2017; Palmer, undated). Further segments of the community who may be at risk of harm from sport or online gambling include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, members of CALD communities and young people (Gainsbury, 2015; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, 2023; Wardle et al, 2007; Griffiths and Parke, 2002; Hing et al, 2015; McCormack et al, 2013).

Personal Circumstances which Attract People to Sports and Online Gambling

Growth in sports and online gambling may be attributed to a range of conditions, including the personal circumstances of those who participate in sports and other online gambling, as well as the convenience and marketing of such activities.

Among the circumstances highlighted in the research are gamblers' participation and interest in sport (Winders and Derevensky, 2019; Palmer, undated), the influence of their friends and family with a similar interest in sports and gambling (Pitt et al, 2017; Miller, 2017), and the effect of gambling in strengthening connections with peers (Nyemcsok et al, 2022), sometimes compounded by unrealistic confidence in their ability to foresee the outcomes of sporting events (Winders and Derevensky, 2019; Siegff, 2017, Nyemcsok et al, 2022).

Efforts to ease social isolation, boredom and stress, and to establish connections with friends, may also fuel sporting and online gambling (Co-As-It, undated). In a survey of 2,000 online gamblers during the pandemic, largely young men, most cited social isolation and boredom as conditions which enticed them to participate in sports and online gambling. One gambler commented that he became so bored that he would gamble "...just to get a thrill of it... with no knowledge of the sport..." (Silva, 2020).

Among young people in particular, sport and online gambling – as well as gambling problems – also appear to be associated with poor coping skills, mental health issues and impulsivity (Siegff, 2017). Regarding impulse control, Remo et al (2015) report attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) – notably, more prevalent among men, with a male-to-female ratio estimated from 3:1 to 9:1 (Australian Guidelines on Attention Deficit disorder, Royal Australian college of Physicians, 2009) – among 23% of people seeking gambling treatment. Sharpe and Jain (2000) explain that individuals with ADHD have limited control of impulses – as do many problem gamblers – and conversely, that the boredom, depression and low self-esteem which often accompany ADHD are alleviated by the 'stimulus and reward' of gambling.

Impulse control problems may not be particular to online or sports gambling though, as a high prevalence of such problems is reported among people with gambling problems more generally (Mestre-Bach et al, 2020; Ioannidis et al, 2019).

Other mental health concerns, including the alleviation of personal distresses, efforts to cope with past trauma, and the influence of drug use, may also promote engagement in sports and other online gambling (Hing et al, 2017). In addition, Siegff (2017) observes that for many young people, gambling may foster the appealing illusion of power, success and control.

The Convenience and Appeal of Online Gambling

Aside from the personal characteristics and social circumstances of individuals, the ready availability of online gambling, coupled with its promotion by gambling operators, exert a crucial influence upon levels of participation in such activities.

In its report on gambling regulation in Victoria, the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (2023) observed that online gambling "...is accelerating in Victoria and can be particularly harmful to users because of its accessibility, normalisation and the aggressive marketing methods employed", its "immersive design", capacity to target individual users and potential for covert participation, and insufficient regulations, adding that children most vulnerable. These issues form the subject of this section.

Access to the Internet: Access to the internet has surged in the past two decades, with 86% of Victorian households having internet connections by 2016 (ABS, 2017), 80% of adolescents possessing a smartphone (Miller, 2017), and the proportion of the overall Australian population with a smartphone expected to reach 80% by 2025 (Granwal, 2020).

Meantime, the proportion of Australians who used the internet to gamble more than doubled in six-years, from 16% in 2012 to 34% by 2018, while the proportion who gambled on a smartphone rose four-fold during the same time, from 5.6% to 23% (Roy Morgan Research, 2019). Similar trends have been witnessed overseas, with a ten-fold escalation in world-wide mobile phone gambling expenditure reported in the five years to 2021 alone (Guillou-Landreat et al, 2021).

Advancement in Gambling Technology: The development of internet technology, coupled with a proliferation of gambling operators, presents gamblers with an opportunity to bet frequently, on a wide range of events, with a variety of engaging or immersive products, at any place or time of day (Siegff, 2017; Parke and Parke, 2019; Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2023), thereby intensifying their experience (Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2023) and making gambling a routine part of everyday life for some (Nyemcsok et al, 2022; Gainsbury, 2015). As a result, much gambling has shifted out of hotels and other social environments, to the seclusion and comfort of home (Palmer, undated; Gainsbury, 2015). The observations of one gambler are illustrative: "Whenever I'm bored, my finger automatically opens the app." (Silva, 2020).

Rapid, Continuous Gambling: In the wake of these technological developments, online betting allows outcomes to be determined swiftly, providing rapid reinforcement, while live betting, cash-out, instant depositing (enabling gamblers to bet their winnings), coupled the opportunity to repeatedly gamble on a succession of minor events, have all supplied gamblers with access to an intensive, continuous and impulsive experience (Parke and Parke, 2019). In addition, convenient electronic means to expend funds on gambling may temporarily obscure the financial implications of gambling losses for some gamblers (Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2023; Gainsbury, 2015). Such circumstances, commentators warn, elevate the risk of gambling harm (Winders and Derevensky, 2019).

Promotion of Sport and other Online Gambling

Further contributing to the rise of sport and other online gambling is its relentless and widespread promotion through free-to-air broadcasts, streaming services and social media, program content, product placements and other means (Kim et al, 2017; Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2023).

Exposure to this and other gambling promotion is almost inescapable: in 2021, 346,000 gambling adverts were broadcast on free-to-air TV, representing 39 ads per hour (Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2023). Moreover, its intensity has escalated in recent years, with expenditure on gambling promotion in Australia rising from \$90 million in 2011, to \$287 m in 2021. Of the latter sum, three-quarters was spent by wagering providers and corporate bookmakers; with TV adverts accounting for 54% (Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2023).

Commentators observe that gambling advertising has a particular impact upon those most susceptible to, or already experiencing, gambling problems (Guillou-Landreat et al, 2021). Young males are a primary target for sports and online gambling (Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2023) since they display the highest rates of participation in such activities (Winders and Derevensky, 2019; Miller, 2017). Notably they are also the most vulnerable to gambling problems. The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Study found that males were 2.5 times more likely to be problem gamblers than women, and young adults twice as likely than those in their late middle age.

Exposure of children and young people to gambling advertising is a subject of acute concern for some commentators. The 2017 Australian Secondary Students Alcohol and Drugs Survey found that 73% of its youthful respondents had seen gambling ads in the previous month (Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2023). Another investigation, featuring interviews with 54 Australian 11-17-year-olds found that most perceived that gambling advertising was prominent in sport (Pitt et al, 2022). Such advertising appears to exert an influence upon younger people: interviews with 48 Australian 8-16-year-olds determined that their interest in sports betting was largely shaped by marketing of gambling products (Pitt et al, 2017).

Gambling operators often link gambling with sport in their promotions, identifying their products with popular sporting values of loyalty and mateship, and seeking to foster sensations of excitement, victory and power (Deans et al, 2017; Miller, 2017). As Guillou-Landreat et al (2021) explain, the gambling industry has crafted ingenious ways of "controlling and capturing human emotions...through the creative use of touch, hearing and sight". In online gambling, inducements such as free credit or games, are frequently offered by gambling providers to lure people into online activity (Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2023).

In light of these circumstances, commentators caution that the ready availability of gambling products, their aggressive promotion, efforts to promote their link to sporting attributes, and the proliferation of gambling among peer groups for some young people, has made online gambling and its promotion a routine and unexceptional part of everyday life (Macniven et al, 2011; Siegff, 2017; Palmer, undated; Parke and Parke, 2019), thereby increasing the ease with which young people may be lured into such activities.

Similarly, the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (2023) contends that gambling advertising may contribute to notions that frequent gambling is normal, prompt people to gamble increasing amounts of money, persuade people from some overseas backgrounds that gambling is a means to fit themselves into the Australian culture, and lure others to gamble as a way to foster a sense of belonging.

Exposure to Online Gambling among Children and Adolescents

Another circumstance which may accentuate the participation of young people in gambling is their experience of online 'gambling-like' activities during their childhood and adolescence. Commentators observe that sports betting often begins in adolescence or early adulthood (Winders and Derevensky, 2019; Dundie et al, 2011; Miller, 2017). Some therefore express concern at the impact of online poker and casino games where no money changes hands but which may introduce young people to the idea of online gambling (Palmer, undated).

Others caution that some adventure or role-playing games incorporate features where a player may trade non-monetary resources for an advantage (such as a weapon or special power) which is unseen until purchased – a form of gambling (Zendle et al, 2019). Such features of online games, directed to children and young people, may have the effect of fostering the impression that gambling is a normal and acceptable feature of life, while also generating fanciful expectations of the probability of winning (Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2023).

Accordingly, some commentators propose that the Commonwealth Government further place restrictions upon the exposure of children and adolescents to such online activities (Pitt et al, 2017), while others urge that parents set an example of restraint in their gambling behavior and take steps to obstruct children's access to such sites (Co-As-It, undated).

Sports and Online Gambling-related Problems

Sports and other online gambling activities are associated with a relatively high prevalence of gambling problems (Hakansson, 2020; Winders and Derevensky, 2019). The 2013 Population Gambling and Health Study assigned 6.7% of sports betters to the 'problem gambling' category.

In an investigation of broader gambling problems, Armstrong and Carroll (2017) report that 41% of regular sports betters experienced one or more gambling problems in 2015, noting that, at 23%, their prevalence of moderate to severe problems was nearly three times greater than that among other gamblers, of 8%. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs (2023) recounts the findings of an investigation which concluded that about half (46%) of Australians who gambled in 2022 were at some risk of gambling harm in the past 12 months, with sports, racing and pokies gambling associated with the highest prevalence of risk.

In relation to online gambling, Gainsbury (2015) cites findings of a population survey which determined that the prevalence of problem gambling (that is, severe gambling problems) was 0.9% among non-internet gamblers and 2.7% among those who participated in online gambling.

As with gambling problems in general, behavioral patterns associated with harmful sports and online gambling include preoccupations with gambling, gambling increasing amounts of money, efforts to cease gambling, 'chasing' gambling losses, concealing losses from family and friends (Rasker, undated), with impacts which include personal distresses, financial difficulties, family conflict and violence, homelessness, crime and deceptive behaviour, work problems and others (Armstrong and Carroll, 2017).

Regulation of Online Gambling

Section 51 (v) of the Australian constitution states that the Commonwealth Government may make laws relating to "postal, telegraphic, telephonic, and other like services". As a result, issues concerning access to online gambling opportunities fall chiefly within the jurisdiction of the Federal Government (Jackson, 2001; Horne, 2021).

One major effort to regulate online gambling was the *Interactive Gambling Act 2001*. In 2000, the Federal Government received a report from the National Office for the Information Economy, which determined that the government could legislate to ban domestic interactive gambling service providers which failed to adhere to prescribed standards (Jackson, 2001). The following year, the Government passed the *Interactive Gambling Act 2001*, which prohibited online casinos, in-play sports betting, sports betting services with no Australian license, the advertising of banned services and provision of credit for online sports betting (Australian Communications and Media authority, undatedA; Palmer, undated). Subsequent amendments tightened restrictions on non-Australian services and added a self-exclusion register. However, a 2012 Federal review of the Act concluded that its impact was limited, and that a rising number of Australians were accessing any of over 2,000 online gambling providers illegally operating in this country, attracting expenditure then estimated at \$1 billion p.a. (Dept. Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, 2012). Authors of the review instead proposed that some currently banned online gambling providers be permitted to operate in Australia on condition that they promote lower-risk activities such as card games rather than slot machines and adhere to harm minimization and consumer protection measures.

By 2015, the federal government established the National Consumer Protection framework for Online Wagering in Australia, with collaboration from state governments, which prohibited credit being offered for online wagering, placed restrict tins on some inducements, established a voluntary opt out precommitment scheme, provided staff training in responsible service of online gambling and other measures.

In late 2024, the Federal Government amended the classification of computer games to impose a minim of an M (Mature, not recommended for children under 15 years of age) classification to games incorporating paid loot boxes and other elements of chance, and a classification of R for computer games which simulate gambling environments, such as casinos.

Proposals to Limit the Harm Associated with Online and Sports Gambling

Limiting Sports Gambling Advertising

Current rules about the promotion of sports gambling on TV and radio, published and enforced by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (undatedB), prohibit gambling advertisements during children's viewing hours (6-8:30 am and 4-7 pm) and in the course of play in broadcasts of sporting events on TV or radio, and forbid promotion of odds during, as well as 30 minutes prior to and after, a sports broadcast.

Some commentators propose that the Federal Government impose more stringent restraints upon advertising of sports betting during sports broadcasts (Macniven et al, 2011) and remove gambling advertisements from SBS (Alliance for Gambling Reform, 2021). Among the recommendations presented to the federal parliamentary inquiry into online gambling was a proposal to restrict advertising of online gambling, with a goal of its complete prohibition within a few years (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, 2023). The committee though, instead recommended the

development of a strategy and framework, research, data collection, public education, multi-lateral agreements and improved gambling treatment services.

In addition, the Australian Medical Association (2022) proposes steps to prohibit sponsorship – itself a form of advertising - of sports by gambling industry.

Others focus their attention upon measures to reduce the exposure of children to gambling advertising -a goal which receives strong support among the wider community, with one opinion poll finding that 71% of Australians favored a ban on gambling advertising (The Australia Institute, 2022). Lending its support to such measures, the Australian Medical Association (2022) affirms that: "Advertising and marketing which targets children, young people and vulnerable people experiencing harm from gambling is absolutely unacceptable".

Aspects of the Conduct of Online Gambling

Policing of Overseas Gambling Sites: In contrast to Australian government-regulated sites, many unregulated, overseas operators are disguised to look Australian and sometimes fail to pay winnings, disappear and retain customers' money, or continue withdrawing funds from customer's bank accounts without permission (NSW Responsible Gambling, undated). Accordingly, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs (2023) endorsed measures to block overseas sites, accompanied by stronger sanctions for those who contravene gambling laws and strengthened international cooperation to police such laws.

Speed of Play in Online Gambling: Measures to curtail continuous betting in sports (Parke and Parke, 2019) or to reduce the speed of online gambling (Sewell, 2022).

Children and Gambling: Assignment of an R18+ rating to games which reproduce the experience of gambling, such as loot boxes (The Australia Institute, 2022), with R ratings introduced for gambling simulation in online games, and an M rating for loot boxes and other in-game purchases, in late 2024.

Online Gambling Inducements: Prohibition of online gambling inducements altogether is recommended by some (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, 2023) while others propose the banning of inducements directed to gamblers who may be at risk or who have not used their account for a significant period (Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2023).

Pre-commitment Scheme: Consideration of the possibility of instituting a scheme where online gamblers could set a binding limit upon their losses, for a specified amount of time, thereby imposing restraints upon their gambling expenditure (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, 2023).

Access to Credit for Online Gambling: A ban on use of credit cards and digital wallets for online gambling in Australia (Australian Finance Industry Association, cited in Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2023).

Public Education Campaigns

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs (2023) proposed that the Federal government should establish a media campaign about online gambling directed to vulnerable segments of the community, including children and young people, CALD and Aboriginal people, featuring information about the risks of gambling, consumer protection tools and sources of assistance.

20

Programs to Address Sports and Online Gambling Among Young People

The Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation conducts awareness-raising activities, community engagement and media campaigns to curtail the normalization of sports gambling among young people. Such programs, instructing people about the probability of winning when gambling, and dispelling popular misunderstandings about chance, are designed to instill a more realistic understanding of the likelihood of winning and thereby encourage people to moderate their gambling behavior.

Some research about the effectiveness of such programs indicates that most have little or no effect upon gambling behavior (Williams et al, 2007), the authors suggesting that, as with programs designed to moderate smoking or excessive alcohol consumption, knowledge of potentially harmful effects may be a necessary but not sufficient, condition to change harmful behavior. Williams et al (2007) also examined a range of evaluations of school programs, finding that in the relatively few instances where impact has been evaluated there has been little if any effect upon gambling behavior. They cite the example of a school-based program in Canada, where 1,600 students from several schools participated and 400 served as a comparison. Six months after the program, participants exhibited a clearer understanding of gambling, a resistance to such activities, and an actual decline in frequency of gambling behavior. However, no differences in problem gambling were recorded.

Similarly, a review commissioned by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation though determined that such efforts essentially raised awareness among young people, which subsided over time and was "...not effective at changing attitudes and behaviors in the long run" (cited in Victorian Auditor General's Office, 2021).

These results are paralleled by the findings of investigations of the impact of other programs which provide well-intended advice to young people. For example, in a review of the outcomes of safer driver education programs directed to young adults, Mayhew and Simpson (2019) reported little evidence that such efforts were effective in changing driving behavior. Lloyd et al (2009) documented similarly unfavorable outcomes among school-based drug education programs, which either lacked any longer-term evaluation of their impacts upon young people, or yielded few or no discernible benefits - with the exception of sustained, intensive, and comprehensive programs, whose attributes are not likely to be matched by any program in the field of gambling.

III: NATURE AND CAUSES OF GAMBLING PROBLEMS

Defining Gambling-related Problems

The term 'pathological gambling' was once widely used in the literature to characterizes severe gambling problems as persistent or chronic mental disorders, featuring a preoccupation with gambling, loss of control and persistence with gambling despite adverse consequences (Unnamed, 2005; AllPsych Online, 2008). The diagnosis of 'pathological gambling' was first introduced into the 3rd edition of the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual [DSM III] in 1980, then revised in the mid-1990s. 'Pathological gambling', according to DSM IV, was considered to be present when 5 or more of its ten diagnostic criteria are present⁵ (American Psychiatric Association, 2008; AllPsych Online, 2009).

Lately though, attention has shifted from the state of the individual, to the effects of gambling upon the person, their family and broader community, with gambling-related problems viewed as a public health issue. With such considerations in mind, commentators often label severe gambling-related problems as 'problem gambling'.

Such an approach has several advantages, in not relying upon the proposition that gambling problems are a medical condition; in encompassing the larger group of people who experience gambling-related problems and their social context, rather than upon a lesser number deemed to be afflicted with a clinical addiction; and in focusing upon the effects of gambling problems rather than the individual, acknowledging the destructive implications of gambling-related problems and repudiating a victim-blaming approach.

A major shortcoming in the focus upon 'problem gambling' adopted by some researchers though, is its narrow emphasis on personal and behavioral impacts of gambling, as distinct from the wider conception of the personal, financial and material effects which ensue when a gambler persistently losses more money than they can comfortably afford, often termed 'gambling problems'.

Causes of Gambling-related Problems

Causes of gambling problems are often complex and may involve individual factors, the nature of the gambling experience, and the accessibility and types of gambling opportunities.

Misconceptions and Deceptive Gambling Machine Design

Individual gambling behavior is also known to be influenced by irrational or superstitious conceptions about the probability of winning or the role of skill in gambling - notions that cause some gamblers to entertain unrealistic expectations of winning - as well as ineffective approaches to decision-making (Joukhador et al, cited in Moodie, 2007; Talbot, 2008). Such ideas may be fostered by aspects of gambling machine design, such as those which display the required symbols just above or below the pay line to convey the misleading

⁵ The ten DSM IV criteria for 'pathological gambling' are as follows:

⁻ Is preoccupied with gambling (e.g. preoccupied with reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, or thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble). - Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement

⁻ Has repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back or stop gambling. - Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling.

⁻ Gambles as a way of escaping from problems or relieving a dysphonic mood (e.g. feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety, depression).

⁻ After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even (chasing losses). - Lies to family members, therapists or others to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling.

<sup>Has committed illegal acts such as forgery, fraud, theft or embezzlement to finance gambling.
Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job or educational career opportunity because of gambling.</sup>

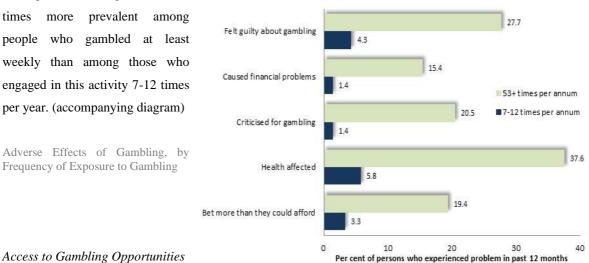
⁻ Relies on others to provide money to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by gambling.

impression of a near win (Select Committee of the Legislative Council on Gambling Licensing, 2008; Harrigan, 2007). As one interview respondent remarked in research conducted by AC Nielsen "Every machine comes so close to winning a major jackpot and you think, I'm just one off..." (2003: 45). Livingston explains that: "...poker machines are conditioning machines..." which employ principles of operant conditioning to teach people "...that if they keep playing the machine they will get a series of intermittent rewards" (2008: CA5). The Responsible Gambling Foundation (2015) cites the Productivity Commission, which in its 2010 report on the gambling industry asserted that "...problems experienced by gamblers are as much a consequence of the technology of the games and their accessibility, and the nature and conduct of venues, as they are a consequence of the traits of gamblers themselves."

Frequency of Gambling

consequences was up to fourteen

The 2008 Victorian Prevalence Survey compared the proportion of gamblers who experienced each of a selection of adverse effects of gambling, by frequency of EGM gambling. The prevalence of these



Access to Gambling Opportunities

Evidence attests that accessibility to gambling - including gaming machine density - is associated with higher levels of gambling losses and problems. Some of these studies relate specifically to the density of gaming machines.

Storer, Abbott and Stubs (2009) examined findings of 34 gambling prevalence surveys, concluding that the number of problem gamblers rose with increased EGM density by between 0.6 and 1 per gambling machine, concluding that "The prevalence of problem gambling increases with increasing density of EGMs" (2009: 238). In addition, they observed that the prevalence of problem gambling reached its plateau only when gaming machine density attained a level well in excess of the existing densities. Rintoul et al (2012) examined the association between EGM gambling losses per adult and socioeconomic disadvantage (measured by the SEIFA Index) across Melbourne suburbs and EGM density, contending that "40% of the apparent effect of disadvantage was explained by the density of EGMs." (2012: 1).

Other research relates to more general levels of gambling opportunity or access to gambling venues. The report 'Risk Factors for Problem Gambling' (2015) cites work by Valiliadis et al (2013) who determined that accessibility of gambling opportunities is associated with increasing gambling problems. Further research, recounted in 'Problem Gambling in New Zealand: preliminary results from the New Zealand Health Survey' (2012), found that people living close to gambling venues were more likely to experience gambling problems than others. 'Risk Factors for Problem Gambling' (2015) adduced the findings of Barratt (2014) who inquired into health-seeking patterns, reporting that increased access to gambling opportunities was accompanied by elevated levels of gambling-related harm.

Welte et al (2006) similarly concluded that proximity to gambling outlets was associated with an increased prevalence of problem gambling. Such a relationship between accessibility of gambling opportunities and the prevalence of gambling-related problems is affirmed and explained by various researchers and commentators. The Productivity Commission (2010: 14.6) found that "Accessibility stimulates demand, with the result that some gamblers are exposed to risk that were originally muted or absent". In its earlier investigation of the gambling industry, the Productivity Commission observed that high densities of EGMs in disadvantaged areas "…can serve to concentrate the social costs in communities that are less able to bear them" (p: 30), a condition aggravated by the outflow of incomes from these communities as tax on gambling receipts.

The report 'Destination Gambling' (2008: 6) found that high accessibility makes "...gambling tempting for emotionally vulnerable problem gamblers" adding that "Where the presence of...gaming venues is increased, impulse behaviour will be more frequent". Similarly, Lam and Mizarski (2009) contended that "Increasing opportunities to gamble would result in more individuals picking up the habit of gambling and potentially increase the incidence of problem gambling." (pp. 273-4).

Harris and Griffiths (2017) recount evidence that increased gambling accessibility raises levels of participation and gambling-related problems, as "...those gambling at a level below or just below the limit for heavy or excessive gambling" increase their gambling intensity, thereby shifting "...those at risk into the problem gambling category, as well as converting those who gamble recreationally, problem-free, to at-risk gamblers."

An illustration of the influence of gambling machines upon gambling-related problems has been provided by circumstances where EGMs have been removed or shut down. Williams et al (2007) cite the example of South Dakota where during the 1990s, its gambling machines were closed for three months due to a legal dispute. During this period, the number of gambling-related inquiries and clients at four treatment agencies declined from 79 each month, to 4 in three months. Similarly, the removal of EGMs in South Carolina in 2000 was followed by a halving of the number of gamblers anonymous groups within 90 days, with many remaining support groups reporting a marked decline in attendance.

As it would appear, a persuasive accumulation of research signifies that accessibility to gambling may increase the prevalence of gambling-related harm.

Considering the impact of high numbers of gambling machines, the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (2023) recommended in its report on gambling regulation, that "The Victorian Government consider the impact of reducing the total number of electronic gaming machines."

Venue Characteristics and Gambling-related Problems

Some industry advocates maintain that venue practices, including display of signage and brochures about responsible gambling and sources of assistance, staff training and other measures, may substantially alleviate the harm caused by gambling. Available evidence however, casts doubt upon this proposition. Rather, the general appeal, number and range of gaming machines, and long opening hours of many gaming venues may a far greater influence in attracting individuals who are susceptible to gambling-related problems.

Pleasant staff: The report 'Problem Gambling from a Public Health Perspective' (2009), found that proximity to home and 'nice venue staff' are among features of venues that hold appeal for some people with gambling problems. Klaus (2018) found that welcoming environment was designed to encourage gaming patrons to remain gambling as long as possible. Friendly and welcoming staff, a warm and comfortable environment, and a non-threatening atmosphere are alluring features of venues to many gamblers (Rintoul and Deblaquiere, 2019).

High numbers and choice of gaming machines hold attraction for some people with gambling-related problems. Hing and Haw (2010) report that both problem and regular gamblers who participated in their survey found access to their favorite gaming machines to be an attraction of gaming venues.

Bells and Whistles: Gambling machines are difficult to overlook, with Rintoul and Deblaquiere (2019) finding their 'bells and whistles' often reminded patrons of the gaming machines and prompted some to proceed to the gaming room. Lights and sounds are reported to be attractive to some gamblers under the influence of ice, heroin or other drugs, with the colors and sounds stimulating for some, or congenial to the trans-like state experienced by others (Rintoul and Deblaquiere, 2019). Neilsen (2003) concluded that the music and lights which accompany the operations of the gambling machines appear to exert an hypnotic impact upon some gamblers – particularly those with gambling-related problems. One gambler interviewed by AC Neilsen commented that "...I want to get in an air-conditioned room and have somebody bring me a drink and play pokies and look at the bells and whistles and lights, all the glamour of that sort of thing." (2003: 45). Indeed, music, lights and other features of gaming machines were "...highly influential in encouraging gamblers to play longer" according to the authors of the report, with many beguiled by the experience of gambling losing track of time and events.

In addition, linked jackpots and bonus gaming machine features were found to be attractive to people experiencing gambling problems in a survey study conducted by Hing and Haw (2010).

Anonymity in larger venues: The Productivity Commission (2010) explored the attributes of larger venues, expressing the view that it may be easier for staff in small venues to identify people with problems and help them – with the implication that larger gaming venues diminish this prospect. Other research has presented testimony of people with gambling problems, of whom some have observed that they favour venues whose size or other features such as location away from their local neighborhood – may afford them some degree of anonymity (Neilsen, 2003). Hing and Haw (2010) report that some evidence indicates that more frequent and heavy gamblers tend to seek out privacy.

Size and Level of Activity in the Venue: Rockloff concluded that venues of larger size and high numbers of patrons contributed to increased levels of gambling activity and losses, as patrons were spurred by relatively high frequencies of wins 'broadcast' across the gaming room through the lights and sounds generated by gaming machines.

Meals and Free Tea and Coffee: Interviews with gamblers conducted by Rintoul and Deblaquiere (2019) revealed that free tea and coffee or snacks, meals and the bar, often lured patrons who then remain to participate in the gaming activities offered by the venue, some stating that they came to eat, then found themselves gambling unintentionally. Gaming venues, the authors concluded, provide a wide range of facilities to entice a 'broad demographic'.

Late-night Operation of Gambling Venues

The long opening hours of some venues may contribute to the accessibility of gambling, especially to people at risk of gambling-related problems.

The report 'Destination Gambling' (2008) found that extended opening hours increase accessibility and that higher-risk gamblers often play at night – echoing a view offered by the Productivity Commission (2010) and Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation report 'Behavioral Indicators of Responsible Gambling Consumption (2016).

Rintoul and Deblaquiere (2019) report that some gamblers report that gaming venues were the only place open late at night, when they left their home. Research by Hing and Haw (2010) found that extended venue opening hours were appealing to people experiencing gambling problems.

Other research however, presents evidence which, while indicating that a high proportion of gaming room patrons in the early hours of the morning have gambling problems (Neilsen, 2003), does not show that most problem gambling occurs during these hours, particularly as levels of gaming patronage at early hours of the morning are generally far lower than at other times.

Other Venue Characteristics

Rockloff et al also recount findings from other investigators which indicate that machines with linked jackpots, free spins and double-or-nothing features are popular with problem gamblers. Their own research showed that attributes of venues that are appealing to problem gamblers include 'close to home' (82% of high PGSI gamblers), the opportunity for social contact (56%) and availability of other activities (59%). Of gaming machines in particular their findings indicated that features such as a free spins or extra games (71%), jackpots (65%), and improved perceived chance of winning (76%) were among the attributes most alluring to problem gamblers.

Rockloff et al (2015) conducted an investigation in which 59 respondents were invited to rate various features of venues, as well as other EGM gambling platforms. Features attractive to gamblers including potential problem gamblers included close to home (82%), quality of service (82%), general atmosphere (56%), availability of other activities (59%), physical layout of the venue (53%), amount of EGMs (53%), clientele (53%), social (56%), availability of cheap food and drink (47%) with 'size' attracting 35% of the high PGSI segment of the sample (numbering 34 respondents). Overall, 'size' attracted the fourth lowest

rating for importance in selection of a gaming environment out of 17 factors related to the characteristics of a venue. It is not made clear what characteristics 'size' encompasses, though based on general comments in the report about other gambling and venue attributes, some respondents who identified this as an important feature may have favored larger venues and others smaller or medium-sized venues.

Overall authors of the study concluded that "...the ideal environment for the average gambler consists of gambling at a club near home, with a group of friends, in a relatively quiet place with pleasant air-conditioning, with cheap food available and a safe place to play in, on a classic game with quality animations and small bet sizes, where you feel safe and secure and there is a wide variety of other games to play when you are done." (Rockloff, 2015: 35)

Hing and Haw (2010) conducted interviews with gamblers to ascertain the characteristics of gaming venues which were most attractive to them. These appealing features included:

- Easy access
- Easy access to ATMs
- Allowing uninterrupted gambling
- Extended opening hours
- Glitzy venue
- Service good
- Safe environment
- Seating comfortable
- Low denomination machines and bonus features

Many of these features are present at most gaming venues.

Staff Responses to Gambling Problems

Improved training for venue staff in the recognition of behavior suggestive of gambling problems, and in steps to intervene to offer support or deter such people from gambling, has been proposed as a means to reduce problem gambling. (Delfabbro et al, 2007).

However, staff interaction with gamblers maybe sparse and have limited effect, according to Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation report 'Behavioral Indicators of Responsible Gambling Consumption. Its authors found that signs of problem gambling in patrons are "...often ignored unless a patron is aggressive or disturbing other patrons" (Rintoul: 35).

Similar findings emerged from an investigation featuring discussions with gamblers and gambling venue staff and management, coupled with unannounced observations of EGM venues, found "...only isolated evidence of supportive interactions between staff and gamblers to address gambling harm". Its authors added that "...venues often fail to respond to signs of gambling problems and instead encourage continued gambling in contradiction of their CoC [gambling codes of conduct] responsibilities" (Rintoul et al, 2017).

A further Australian study, involving interviews with 48 venue staff, reported wide variation in signs construed as evidence of gambling problems. Its authors reported that "...most contemplated intervening only if patrons' behaviour is seen as a threat to themselves or others" (Hing et l, 2013: 1). None of the staff interviewed stated that they would intervene if they observed gaming patrons 'trying inappropriate means to borrow money', "being anti-social", "irrational verbalizations or talking to a machine", making multiple ATM withdrawals, telling staff that money intended for bills or food had been gambled, gambling a big win

away, being inordinately attracted to a particular EGM, gambling large sums of money or waiting for venues to open. Only a small minority of the staff interviewed stated that they would intercede if a patron appeared distressed or crying, changed a large amount of money, heard friends or family telling them to stop gambling, or complained that a win had not covered their losses. Aggressive behaviour was the single indicator which most staff stated would prompt them to intervene in a patron's gambling (Hing et 1, 2013)

According to the female participants in a 2020 Australian investigation, venue staff overlooked patterns of behavior or gambling which pointed to gambling problems, such as their partners gambling a large sum, every day of the week, or making frequent cash withdrawals at the venue, and did not respond constructively even when they visited the venue to express concern about their partner's gambling losses. The report notes that: "None of these participants reported that they or their partner were offered any assistance from a venue for the gambling problem, even when they or their partners visited the venue in distress about the gambling" (Hing et al, 2020: 9).

In a survey of 230 gamblers who were familiar with venue staff, 22 of them classified as problem gamblers, only one was identified as having 'some problems' by venue staff. Venue staff also identified 15 others as having 'some problems' of whom the gambling screen classified them as having no risk or a low risk (Ladoucier et al, 2017). The findings of the New South Wales Independent Gambling Authority show that venues may encourage prolific gamblers who lose substantial amounts of money.

Conversely, similar findings emerged from in-depth interviews, conducted in Melbourne by Rintoul et al (2017a) with gaming patrons with experience of gambling problems. Of the 36 gamblers who were asked about venue staff speaking with them in relation to their gambling, 32 had never experienced such an approach. This research was coupled with unannounced observations on 2-5 occasions, within each of 11 venues. In 34 hours of such observations, the investigators recorded numerous signs of probable gambling problems, including betting intensively, multiple cash withdrawals, gambling through mealtime and others. However, on no occasion were staff seen to approach to gaming patrons to encourage them to suspend their activities. Overall, the researchers reported "…an overall lack of staff interaction in the context of apparent gambling problems, staff encouraging gambling, a lack of intervention when gamblers were accessing cash, gamblers using multiple machines…", observing "…only isolated evidence of supportive interactions between staff and gamblers to address gambling harm."

Indeed, the 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Study found that 1.9% of Victorian gamblers had been asked to take a break from their gambling, by venue staff, a figure which rose to 5.9% among people who gambled for 3 hours or more and 6.9% among problem gamblers. This finding appears to discredit the often-repeated claim by EGM venue operators that their staff closely scrutinize patrons for signs of problematic gambling and diligently intervene to curtail such behavior.

In addition to these specific considerations, the Victorian Auditor General's Office (2021) found that venue staff training conducted by the VRGF, including training to recognition and intervention in instances of gambling problems, have not been evaluated to determine "...if the program is reducing harm" (p. 31).

Notably, ACNeilsen (2002) found that many gamblers are averse to interruption by staff in any case, responding with irritation if disturbed by staff, feeling that such interruptions were an intrusion on their privacy, broke their concentration, might bring them bad luck or disrupted their pattern of play.

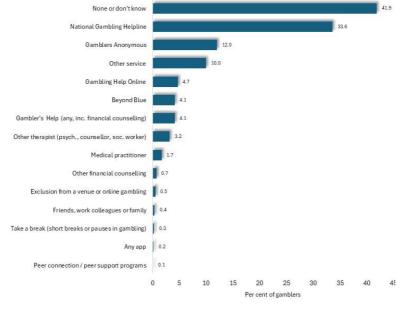
Knowledge of Services which Address Gambling Harm

Few gaming patrons avail themselves of professional services to which staff may seek to refer in any case. The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Survey found that nearly half (49%) of Victorian adults overall, and 42% of gamblers, did not know of any gambling support services. Among gamblers, those services most widely cited were the national Gambling Helpline, known to 34% of them, and Gamblers Anonymous, known to 12%.

Per cent of gamblers who were aware of support services, by type of service: Victoria, 2023

Help had been sought for gambling problems in the previous 12 months by 23% of people classified as problem gamblers and 2.8% categorized as moderate risk gamblers.

The Victorian Longitudinal Community Attitudes Survey found that, of regular gamblers in Victoria, just 2.4% had sought



help with their gambling in the previous year. Among the 2.4% of regular gamblers:

- 2.4% had talked to someone in the venue about support services representing approximately 1 in 2,000 regular gamblers, and
- 12% sought assistance from Gambler's Help, Gamblers Anonymous or Gambler's Help lines in the previous year equivalent to approximately 1 in 500 gamblers.

Moreover, among people who phone Gambler's Help, few eventually engage with a local service, according to Gamblers Help data, with 368 of 3,909 people (or about 1%) who called the helpline actually engaging with a local service (cited in Victorian Auditor General, 2017).

Psychological Influences

The experience of individuals who are attracted to gambling as a way to alleviate boredom, social isolation, depression and other personal distresses, is well documented (Moodie, 2007; Ballon, 2006). Writing of homeless people in Australia, Talbot (2008) notes that for many, EGM gambling provides something to occupy their minds, while for others, the venue is a place to be among people. Echoing this finding, some gamblers interviewed in one study mentioned the role of gambling venues in "…providing contacts and a form of social connectedness." (Thomas and Lewis, 2012: 10). Rintoul and Deblaquiere too remark that

many problem gamblers are socially isolated and gamble to alleviate loneliness (2019). Similarly, ACNielsen (2003) found that some gamblers played when they felt down, to alleviate loneliness or to escape difficulties in their social, home or work lives.

Accordingly, many people experiencing mental health or drug-related problems may be susceptible to gambling problems (McCready et al, 2008), with a Melbourne study finding that people with gambling-related problems were far more likely than others to be depressed or to use alcohol or other drugs to excess (Science Alert, 2008).

Howe et al (2018) report that frequent gambling is associated with depression and people suffering from problems with gambling report higher levels of depression. In addition, Giovanni et al (2017) found that people with post-traumatic stress disorder are at an elevated risk of gambling problems. Similarly, a 2017 study commissioned by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation found that 41% of people seeking treatment for mental illness gamble and 6% had a problem with their gambling – eight times higher than among the general population (Lubman et al, 2017).

Psychological conditions which predispose to impulsivity may exert an influence upon gambling behaviour, with one inquiry finding that 25% of gamblers who sought counselling for gambling problems had attention deficit disorder - nearly twice the corresponding prevalence in the general community of 14%. (Waluk et al, 2015). Other researchers have reported conditions such as a lesser tendency than others to delay gratification among people with gambling-related problems (Navos et al, 2017), personality disorders (Rucevic, 2016), and high levels of impulsivity and prevalence of ADHD (Black 2013). Echoing these findings, a longitudinal survey of 6,145 young adults found that those who experienced signs of ADHD, or higher than average impulsivity in childhood, were more likely than others to report gambling problems, high levels of gambling losses and multiple types of gambling activity, than others (Clark et al, 2013). Studies also indicate that many people with gambling related problems gamble to alleviate depression, loneliness, boredom or anxiety, often seeking to distract themselves from their concerns or to escape reality altogether at a gaming venue (Neilsen, 2003).

An investigation conducted by Pitt et al (2020) documented increased susceptibility among people with intellectual disabilities to gambling harm, owing to their limited employment opportunities, lower incomes, social isolation, limited understanding of risk and probability, among other factors. The researchers found that some people with intellectual disability are attracted to gambling either in hopes of winning money, as a means to alleviate loneliness, and for a feeling of independence and participation in an adult activity.

Some researchers observe that many women are attracted to gambling as a means to escape isolation or seek relief from serious personal problems, such as domestic violence (Healthy, Wealthy and Wise Women, undated). A 2020 inquiry into links between gambling problems and family violence, found that gambling venues were attractive, 'safe spaces' for women who participated in the study, owing to their long opening hours, accessibility, security, free food, courteous staff, child-minding facilities, opportunity for social contact with the staff and congenial atmosphere (Hing et al, 2020).

Adolescence itself may predispose some people to gambling related problems. Thomas and Lewis (2012) found that many enjoyed the excitement associated with the risk of gambling and the possibility of winning

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money, often as part of a social experience. Indeed, research reveals a higher prevalence of problem gambling among adolescents in Australia – in the range 2.4% to 16% (Miller, 2015), and the 2023 Population Gambling and Health Study, recorded a prevalence of problem gamblers, of 2.8% among 18-24-year-olds, compared with 1.7% among the general adult population.

Self-control and 'Responsible Gambling'

Some people with severe gambling-related problems report a loss of awareness and control as they become immersed in the experience of gambling. Commonly, the result is a state of mind described as trance-like, in which perception of events, time and consequences become confused (Pinkerton, 2005). As a witness to a recent Senate inquiry from a problem gambling service told it: problem gamblers "...go into blackouts, they loose time and cannot remember their actions" (Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs, 2008: 20).

Similarly, the Productivity Commission (2010) found that EGMs were the form of gambling most often associated with the psychological state of dissociation – where an individual 'loses track of reality', 'played in a trance', 'lost track of time' or 'felt someone else was controlling their actions', concluding that such states impair the ability of gamblers to "...reassess whether they wish to continue to gamble..." (2010: 4.14) a proposition which seemingly discounts the notion of 'responsible gambling, which postulates that gamblers should marshal sufficient responsibility to exert rational control over their behavior, when gambling. As Dickerson observed: "...the data we collected showed the virtual impossibility of regular...EGM players gambling responsibly..." (cited in Breakeven Tasmania, 2008).

Cultural Factors

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Study determined that people who speak languages other than English at home, showed lower rates of participation in gambling than those who speak English only, yet were more likely to be problem gamblers (at 2.4%) than those who speak English only (1.5%), and more often experienced gambling problems - at 19.3%, compared with 11.2% among those who spoke English only. A variety of circumstances relating to the cultural backgrounds of many migrants as well as the stresses and social isolation often associated with settlement may predispose some individuals to gambling problems.

Dickins, M. and Thomas A (2012) concluded that while, in general, CALD people appear less likely to gamble, those who do participate in such activities are more likely to experience gambling problems. Australian research, largely focused upon ethnic Chinese Australians, has identified some factors which may predispose some CALD groups to gambling problems, pointing to the popularity and acceptance of gambling as a cultural norm in Chinese culture (Feldman et al, 2014). Religious or spiritual beliefs in the influence of luck and its interaction with character exert a wide influence in Chinese culture, with a display of good luck purporting to demonstrate good character. Such notions are often coupled with unrealistic beliefs in personal ability to control outcomes of gambling (Dickins and Thomas, 2012; Feldman et al, 2014).

The appealing environment offered by casinos, in the relative absence of alternative, culturally appropriate entertainment may also contribute to the prevalence of gambling among people of some cultures. For people of Chinese ethnicity in particular, casinos offer culturally sensitive and familiar entertainment –

including Chinese New Year celebrations, evening activity reminiscent of their homeland and staff who speak non-English languages. In addition, some commentators maintain that the Casino provides inexpensive meals and drink in a safe environment with a glamorous and appealing décor, making it an attractive and prestigious location, particularly for recent settlers and those who have not adapted to Australian culture (Dickins and Thomas, 2012). Interviewees in a study by Feldman et al (2014) observed that for some Chinese, showing guests around the Casino is a way of affirming their affluence and garnering respect.

For some migrants with limited English fluency, an additional appeal of casinos and other gambling venues, may be the presence of bilingual staff or the opportunity to be among people without having to participate in conversation (Feldman et al, 2014).

For isolated migrants, including many older people, the Casino appeals as a place that is safe, accessible after dark, where they can be around other people and feel less lonely. In addition, those organizing excursions for older senior's clubs are often unfamiliar with the range of alternative venues available, and may be attracted to the cheap meals offered by venues (Feldman et al, 2014)

Many international students, including those of Chinese ethnicity, experience high levels of stress, depression and social isolation, often coupled with prevalent irrational beliefs about gambling, which may foster an attraction to gambling and to venues such as the Casino (Feldman et al, 2014). It is reported that, in addition, freed from parental and other constraints, some international students tend to lose control of their finances (Feldman et al, 2014).

Gambling machines may also be a captivating novelty for some recent settlers, who may perceive them as a means to acquire more money (Rintoul and Deblaquiere, 2019). Abrupt exposure to various gambling opportunities may pique curiosity and trigger excessive involvement in gambling (Dickins and Thomas, 2012). In addition, stressors relating to settlement or experience in their country of origin may cause some migrants to be vulnerable to gambling problems (Dickins and Thomas, 2012). Feldman et al (2014) note that refuges and asylum seekers often experience stress relating to challenges of adapting to Australian life, including social isolation, poverty and boredom, prompting some look to gambling to improve their financial position.

The stigma associated with gambling problems may induce some migrants to conceal issues from family and friends. In addition, professional counseling is unfamiliar to many, with most migrants preferring to deal with personal problems within their family (Dickins and Thomas, 2012)

The research findings recounted here are echoed in the conclusions reached by the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV). In December 2017, it published findings arising from its consultations with representatives of a variety of cultural communities, which concluded that recent settlers and some cultural communities were at heightened risk of gambling related harm, due to limited prior exposure to, and understanding of, gambling products; increased access to gambling in Australia; and lack of culturally sensitive support for people with gambling problems. The ECCV added that women, older people and students were most at risk of gambling-related problems.

IV: THE PREVALENCE OF GAMBLING PROBLEMS

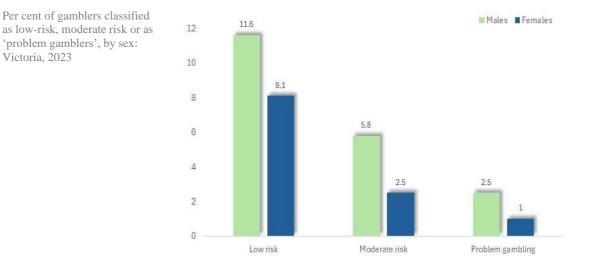
Many people who gamble regularly experience difficulties in their personal, family or working lives as a result of financial stress caused by their gambling losses, or by the time spent gambling. Efforts to determine what proportion of the community experience gambling-related problems is discussed below.

Prevalence of 'Problem Gambling'

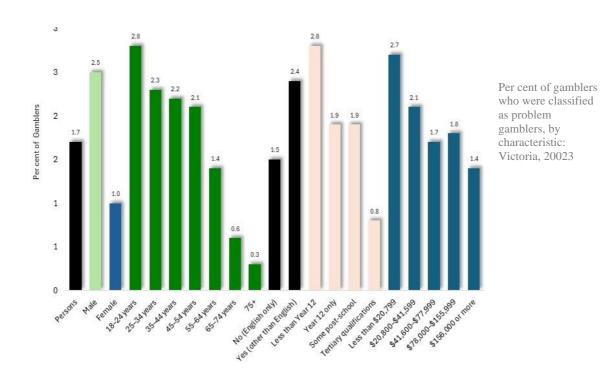
Over the past few decades, surveys have been conducted to determine how widespread gambling-related problems are in the community, to document differences in prevalence among various segments of the community, and to trace any changes in the extent of gambling problems over time. With few exceptions, such estimates have been reached in the basis of the findings of random surveys of the adult population, which focus upon the identification of moderate and severe gambling-related problems.

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Survey documented gambling problems, and the risk of problems, with the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI), featuring nine questions about feelings concerning gambling, financial problems stemming from gambling losses, and responses of friends of family to their gambling. The 2023 study found that 8.5% of *all Victorian adults*, including 11.2% of males and 5.9% of females, reported patterns of behaviour or consequences of gambling which placed them in the categories of low risk (5.3%), moderate risk (2.3%) or problem gambling (0.9%).

Among the *gambling population* (that is, the 10.7% of Victorian adults who gamble in a 12 month period) 15.8% fell into this range, with 9.9% deemed at low risk of gambling problems, 4.2% at moderate risk and 1.7% classified as problem gamblers - the latter including 2.5% of males and 1% of females. (accompanying chart).



The prevalence of problem gambling was also highest among people who spoke languages other than English, those of lesser formal educational levels and people on lower incomes.



Similarly, an earlier, 2018/19 survey of over 10,000 Victorian adults, reported by Rockloff et al, (2020) determined that 9.8% of the population experienced gambling-related risk or problems, including 6.7% low-risk, 2.4% moderate-risk and 0.7% as problem gamblers. Among people who used EGMs in the previous year, 3.6% were identified as problem gamblers and 8.9% as moderate-risk gamblers.

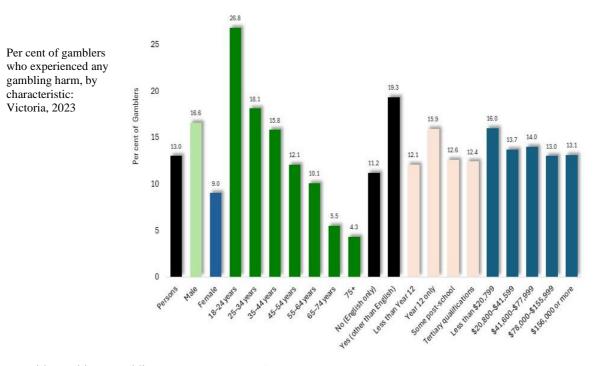
The 2014 Victorian Gambling Prevalence Study found that approximately 0.81% of Victorian adults were problem gamblers, and that a total of 3.6% were either problem or moderate risk gamblers, and a 2011 survey of 1,500 Victorian adults, employing the Gambling Severity Index, concluded that 0.7% were problem gamblers and 2.4% 'moderate-risk' gamblers (Hare, 2011). Hare (2015) found that 8.9% of Victorian adults were low-risk and 3% moderate-risk gamblers, compared with 0.8% of adults who were identified in the survey as 'problem gamblers' (cited in Miller, 2017).

The proportion of gamblers who were classed as problem gamblers in the findings of the 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and health Survey, also varied with gambling activity, with problem gambling identified among 7.1% of EGM gamblers, 7.3% of those who gamble at the casino, 6.7% of sports betters and 3.7% of participants in racing gambling.

The Prevalence of Gambling Harm

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and health Survey also found that 6.9% of Victorian adults, or 13% of gamblers, had experienced at least one form of gambling harm during the previous 12 months, such as financial difficulties, personal distress, or relationship conflict. This represents a broader conception of the adverse impacts of gambling than the focus on psychological distresses used to define 'problem gambling'.

The proportion of gamblers who had experienced such harm was highest among males, young adults, those who spoke languages other than English at home and people with year 12-only education. Little difference in the prevalence of gambling harm was observed by income level (accompanying chart).



As with 'problem gambling', the prevalence of gambling harm varied widely among gambling activities, ranging from 36% of people who gambled at the Casino, 35% of sports gamblers, 29% of those who gambled on EGMs, and 20% of racing gamblers.

EGM Losses and Problem Gambling

Gambling on EGMs is strongly associated with problem gambling (South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, 2005). The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Study found that 7.1% of Victorians who participated in EGM gambling were problem gamblers, and a further 12% were at moderate risk of such severe problems. An earlier study concluded that 28% of *regular* EGM gamblers experienced severe gambling-related problems – compared with 13% of regular Casino patrons, and 3% of those who regularly gamble on racing (McMillen and Marshall, 2004). Regarding the same issue, but focusing upon gambling losses, the Productivity Commission (2010: 5.1) concluded that problem gamblers account for 22-60% of total EGM losses, while moderate and problem gamblers in total account for between 42% and 75% of EGM losses – representing a mid-range of 58%.

Conversely, EGM gamblers represent a substantial proportion of people with gambling problems. The Victorian Longitudinal Community Attitudes Survey, found that EGMs are the favored form of gambling among 84% of problem gamblers, with horse racing preferred by just 8% (McMillen and Marshall, 2004). Indeed, Practical experience shows that EGMs are associated with relatively high rates of gambling harm, with EGM gamblers accounting for most people seeking assistance with gambling problems in Australia, the UK and New Zealand (Delfabbrio et al, 2020; Dowling et al, 2004; Abbott, 2006).

Further research indicates that EGMs have made the largest contribution to gambling problems in nearly all Western nations (Williams et al, 2007).

People who are experiencing gambling-related problems tend to exhibit different patterns of gambling activity on EGMs, to those with few or no such problems. A 2018/19 survey of over 10,000 Victorian adults, conducted by Rockloff et al, (2020) found that people experiencing gambling problem used EGMs more frequently, played for longer periods and accessed EFTPOS facilities at gaming venues more often. Overall, 9% of all EGM users played the pokies 25 times or more in a year, compared with 69% of problem gamblers. Moreover, 18.2% of Victorian non-problem gamblers spent 1 hour or more in a typical session, compared with 60.9% of problem gamblers. (non-problem gambler is one who is not a problem gambler, or low or moderate risk). Rockloff et al (2020) also found that 80% of problem gamblers used EFTPOS at least once in a typical session, compared with 10% of non-problem gamblers. And 57% of problem gamblers used EFTPOS at least 3 times in a typical session, compared with 2% of non-problem gamblers. Finally, the amount withdrawn in a typical session was \$227 among problem gamblers and \$70 among non-problem gamblers.

* * * *

As it may be seen, a variety of research shows that patterns of gambling behavior and losses vary across a broad continuum, from those who do not gamble at all, or do so infrequently, to others who gamble often, and may therefore sustain persistent and substantial losses, relative to their means. About one in ten adults gamble on EGMs, with at least 10.7% of the Victorian public gambling on EGMs annually, with the consequence that losses are distributed among a relatively small proportion of gamblers. This in turn leads to adverse consequences for the gambler and any dependents.

Limitations of Surveys of the Prevalence of Gambling Harm

While community surveys and other evidence furnish some suggestions about the prevalence and characteristics of problem gamblers, their findings should be interpreted with caution. Three major limitations of such surveys include:

- the apparent inaccuracy with which problem gamblers are distinguished from others
- inconsistency in measurement due to differences in questionnaires
- the criteria used for defining problem gambling and survey methods; and
- imprecise measurement arising from the difficulty of reaching conclusions about a small proportion of the population from the results of a sample survey.

Low Response Rates

Authors of the 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Study observed that declining response rates, typically lower than 5% in Australian phone surveys, may reduce the representativeness through "...non-response errors, which refers to differences between those who are selected into a particular sample and those who end up completing the survey" (Suomi et al, 2024).

Inaccurate Responses

Researchers have long noted with concern, that many people with gambling-related problems are inclined to conceal their difficulties, abstaining from participation in surveys or giving answers which minimize their problems (Walker, 2008). As a result, the proportion of respondents with gambling problems may be underreported.

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Study acknowledged the tendency for survey participants to under-report "...expenditure, frequency and negative consequences of gambling" due to a selective failure to recall such experiences or a reluctance to candidly report them (Suomi et al, 2024).

For example, in one of the early trials of a gambling questionnaire, among 384 students, 28 were interviewed and found to have gambling problems. Yet of this number, 13, or 45%, were not detected by the survey (Cullerton, 1989; Lesieur and Blume, 1993). It follows that the true rate of prevalence of gambling-related problems among this sample was nearly twice that recorded by the questionnaire. The most likely reason was that some individuals chose to conceal the extent of their gambling problems in their responses to a survey.

Relevantly, when the Productivity Commission asked 409 problem gamblers how they would have answered a phone survey on gambling, prior to seeking treatment, just 29% replied that they would have responded and given candid replies. If these results reflected the actual level of detection of severe gambling difficulties in sample surveys, then the proportion of Australian adults with gambling-related problems would be not 2.1%, as the authors of that report found, but three times higher, at over 6%.

A further reflection of the under-reporting of gambling losses may be seen in the findings of the 2003/4 Household Expenditure Survey, where Victorian respondents reported, on average, EGM losses of 64c per household (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008A) – equal to \$63 million in total across Victoria - just 2.8% of actual EGM gambling losses, of \$2,290 million that year (Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority, 2004) Not surprisingly, this source has been characterised as "notoriously unreliable" (South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, 2005: 197) as a source of gambling expenditure data.

With some respondents mistakenly identified as problem gamblers, and as many as two-thirds of those with severe gambling-related problems, and nine-tenths of losses, overlooked in sample surveys of the general population, the accuracy of the findings of such prevalence surveys may not be relied upon with confidence.

Inconsistent Survey Methods

The results of prevalence surveys may be further compromised by differences in the questionnaires used, the survey methods, the type of sample selected, and the cut-off point used to identify problem gamblers (Select Committee of the Legislative Council on Gambling Licensing, 2008; Doughney, 2007; Jonsson, 2007; Xenophon and the Australian Greens, 2008; Livingston, 2008). Such inconsistencies in the conduct and interpretation of surveys make it difficult to compare the findings of surveys conducted at varying times or among different communities. McMillen and Wenzel (2006) note that it would be preferable if governments settled upon a single, consistent method for measuring the prevalence of gambling-related problems.

Imprecise Measurement

A further limitation of prevalence surveys stems from the fact that, in selecting a sample of the population, chance alone may decide whether or not the sample actually contains the same proportion of people with severe gambling-related problems as the overall community which the sample is intended to represent. Typically, 5 to 20 out of every 1,000 people who participate in a community survey indicate that they have severe gambling problems. However, among samples drawn from the same population, such numbers are subject to chance variation - much as the number of heads in of a sequence of coin tosses may vary. When the prevalence of the characteristics being investigated is relatively low - as it is for gambling problems – chance exerts a relatively large influence upon the final result. Moreover, where many individuals selected to participate actually decline to do so - as in most population surveys - the range increases substantially, rendering the final result so imprecise as to be almost valueless.

A Narrow Focus

A further criticism of some surveys may be based not upon the way in which they measure gambling related problems but on what they measure. Surveys which focus upon the individual characteristics of 'pathological' or 'problem' gamblers, may overlook others who may experience gambling-related problems of a lesser intensity, as well as those adversely affected by the gambling of others. Addressing the shortcomings of such prevalence studies, Young observes that this research is conceptually and methodologically defective but tends to be supportive of, and favored by, the gambling industry (Young, 2012).

The narrow focus upon severe and addictive patters of gambling behaviour, coupled with the lack of precision, evident inaccuracy, and inconsistency of such surveys, raises questions about their validity. Speaking of efforts to measure the prevalence of gambling-related problems in Australia, Gary Banks, Chairman of the Productivity Commission lamented that "...despite all the surveys, we remain quite uncertain as to whether problem gambling has diminished in recent years." (2007: 22).

Gambler's Help Data as an Indicator of the Prevalence of Gambling Problems

Information concerning the number clients of Gambler's Help provides little indication of the actual underlying levels of gambling-related problems in a community, since few people with severe gambling problems seek formal assistance in a given year.

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Study concluded that help had been sought for gambling problems in the previous 12 months by 23% of people classified as problem gamblers and 2.8% categorised as moderate risk gamblers – with the result that differences in levels of attendance over time, or among municipalities, may not be interpreted with confidence.

An earlier inquiry by the Productivity Commission estimated that 10% of problem gamblers sought formal assistance in one year, while the 2010 Productivity Commission report on the gambling industry put the figure in the range 8-17%. Research indicates that most people with serious gambling-related problems only accept professional counselling when they have 'hit rock bottom' or a pressed to do so by family members or others (Neilsen, 2003).

In the course of its review of gambling regulation in Victoria, the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (2023) determined that only 1–2% of those experiencing gambling harm have sought treatment from VRGF funded services, the only public services in Victoria.

Such small samples of problem gamblers may fluctuate due to changes in Gambler's Help resources or the publicity given to their services, without reflecting any real change in the underlying prevalence of gambling problems. Therefore, one cannot prudently rely on such information for tracing changes in the prevalence of gambling-related problems over time or measuring differences in their prevalence from one area to another.

The Importance of Low and Moderate-risk Gambling

The Productivity Commission cited with endorsement a selection of definitions of 'problem gambling' which each emphasise the presence of harm to the player, their family and/or the wider community, adding that such gambling problems form a continuum of harm, rather than being confined to the extreme end of the scale where 'problem gambling' is characterised. This perspective was echoed in a subsequent report by the Commission (2010), which concluded that harm caused by gambling affects not only problem gamblers, but those less severely affected by gambling. Authors of the report affirmed a preference for a 'population health' approach, in which all levels and types of harm are appraised in assessing the impact of gambling, rather than attention being confined to the "...the arbitrary group of harms that are clustered together in particular individuals." (p. 5.7) – those labelled as 'problem gambling'. Indeed, in examining the occurrence of the psychological condition of dissociation for example, the Commission concluded that people characterised as non-problem gamblers accounted for the majority of those who experienced this condition while gambling, noting that "...harm is experienced by many non-problem gamblers, with this group accounting for a greater share of the aggregated harm than problem gamblers" (2010: 4.24).

Rockloff et al, (2020) maintain that emphasis upon the small percentage (0.81% according to Hare, 2015) not only diverts attention from people who experience gambling harm but do not fit the clinical criteria for problem gambling, but also focuses attention upon the personal characteristics of the gambler rather than the noxious features of the gambling environment and products, while directing programs towards individuals instead of reform to the conduct and regulation of gambling. They concluded that of all gambling-related harm, problem gambling accounts for 20%, non-problem gambling for 22%, moderate-risk for 26% and low-risk gambling for 21%.

Like-minded, Browne et al (2016) investigated gambling-related harm from a public health viewpoint, gauging all harms caused by gambling, rather than focusing upon "...causes or symptoms of problem gambling" (2016: 36). They provided an estimate of the relative proportion of gambling-related harm, experienced by people of different gambling risk categories, with low-risk gamblers accounting for 50% of total harm from gambling – owing to their preponderance among gamblers - moderate risk gamblers for 34% of gambling harm, and problem gamblers for 15%. Similarly, the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (2017) cites research funded by the VRGF which found that about half of gambling harm is related to low risk gambling and about 15% to problem gambling.

The publication 'Using a Public Health Approach to the prevention of Gambling-related Harm' (2015) concluded that "While the rate of harm is much lower among non-problem gamblers than those who meet the

criteria for problem gambling, the absolute number of people experiencing some form of harm is significant." (p. 10). Accordingly, the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation report 'Social Costs of Gambling in Victoria' ascribes a higher cost to low- and moderate-risk gambling, of \$4.6 billion, than to the problem gambling, of \$2.4 billion (Browne et al, 2017). A similar outlook is reflected in the findings of the report 'Responsible Gambling Past, Present and Future' (2016).

Other research indicates that low- to high-risk gamblers account for a substantial proportion of EGM gamblers, which increases with rising gambling frequency. In Victorian Gambling Study: a longitudinal study of gambling and health in Victoria, Billi et al (2014), concluded that persons with mild to severe gambling risk accounted for 27% of people who used EGMs less often than once a month, a figure which rose to 38% of those who gambled 1-3 times each month and 61% of those who gambled at least once a week.

Impact of Gambling Problems vs. the Prevalence of Problem Gambling

A range of studies affirm that the proportion of the adult population who meet the criteria for 'problem gamblers' is in the order of 0.7% to 2%. The impression conveyed by these findings is that the extent of gambling-related problems is relatively modest. However, the findings of population surveys, which seek to determine the proportion of the population who conform to the formal definition of problem gamblers, tend to depreciate the extent of either gambling-related harm in the community and the proportion of the population and of gaming patrons, which are affected. Three points are recounted here to set this matter in its due perspective.

First, problem gamblers account for a significant proportion of gambling *patrons*. The Productivity Commission (2010: 5.25) stated that "While problem gamblers may account for only 0.7% of the population, they may account for 10 to 40 times this among venue patrons at any one time". Referring to the findings of a Victorian survey, the Commission concluded that between 27% and 76% of regular EGM players were problem gamblers or moderate-risk gamblers.

Second, even moderate-risk and problem gamblers account for a substantial proportion of gaming *revenue*. The Productivity Commission (2010: 5.1) concluded that problem gamblers account for 22-60% of total EGM losses, while moderate and problem gamblers in total account for between 42% and 75% of EGM losses – representing a mid-range of 58%.

Finally, as evidence recounted in the previous section shows, gambling problems do not relate only to problem gamblers in any case but affect a wide range of gamblers to varying degrees, thereby further increasing the prevalence of problems among gambling patrons. The report 'Using a Public Health Approach to the prevention of Gambling-related Harm' (2015) concluded that "While the rate of harm is much lower among non-problem gamblers than those who meet the criteria for problem gambling, the absolute number of people experiencing some form of harm is significant." (p. 10). The Productivity Commission was like-minded, recognizing that "...harm is experienced by many non-problem gamblers, with this group accounting for a greater share of the aggregated harm than problem gamblers" (2010: 4.24). These views are echoed in the report 'Responsible Gambling Past, Present and Future' (2016). This issue is discussed further on, under the heading 'Low and moderate-risk gambling'.

V: CHARACTERISTICS OF PEOPLE WITH GAMBLING PROBLEMS

Surveys of the apparent level of gambling problems in the community have also provided some insight into some of the characteristics of people with gambling problems.

Sex

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Survey found that similar proportion of women and men participate in gambling, including EGM gambling, and similar proportions participate in gambling online.

Men, however, were five times more likely to participate in sports gambling and more often engage in online-only gambling-like activities. Moreover, levels of gambling losses acknowledged by male gamblers are nearly five times higher than for women and their EGM losses are over twice those for women.

Gambling problems were found to be twice as common among male gamblers, is about twice that among women: 2.5% of men being classified as problem gamblers, compared with 1% of women; and 17% of men, compared with 9% of women, experience gambling problems.

	Males	Females	Males: % higher or lower than females
Participation in gambling	56.6	51	11
Participation in EGMs (odds ratio)	1.0	0.9	11
Participation in sports g. (odds ratio)	1.0	0.2	400
Participation in online gambling	48.2	40	21
Participation in online-only	4.8	0.7	586
Ave. G expenditure (gamblers)	\$4,191	\$706	494
Ave. G expenditure (EGMs)	\$3,799	\$1,429	166
Problem gambling - % gamblers	2.5	1	150
Gambling problems - % gamblers	16.6	9	84

Further investigations also indicate that gambling-related problems are more prevalent among men. The 2014 Victorian Gambling Prevalence Study found that 1% of males and 0.6% of females were problem gamblers and that 5.3% of males and 2.1% of females were problem or moderate risk gamblers (Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2015).

The 2011 survey of Victorians, commissioned by the Department of Justice also concluded that problem gambling was more prevalent among males (accounting for 0.95%) than among females (0.47%).

Similarly, the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) population survey, conducted among 17,000 Australian adults by the Australian Gambling Research Centre, found that both gambling expenditure and the prevalence of gambling-related problems were higher among males than females (Armstrong and Carroll, 2017). A study of the prevalence of gambling problems in South Australia found that 4.1% of men experienced severe or moderate gambling harm, compared with 1.8% of women (Woods et al, 2018). Rockloff et al, (2020) concluded that the prevalence of moderate risk or problem gambling was 4.4% among males and 2.9% among females.

Age

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Survey found that while 18-24-year-olds were less likely to participate in gambling than older people (here, 55-64-year-olds), they were more likely to engage in EGM, sports, online and online-only gambling.

In relation to EGM gambling, Hare (2015) similarly found that their use was more widespread among older people, with 23% of Victorians of retirement age using gaming machines in the past 12 months, compared with 13% of those aged 25-54.

Though losses to gambling overall, and to EGMs, were lower among young gamblers, the 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Survey found that the prevalence of problem gambling declined steeply with age, from 2.8% of 18-24-year-olds, to 0.3% of people aged 75 years or more. Similarly, gambling problems were experienced by 27% of young adults, aged 18-24, and by 44.3% of those aged 75 or more.

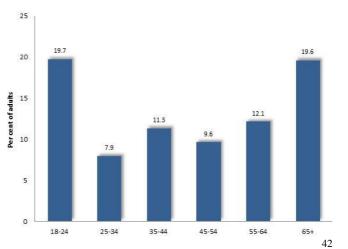
	18-24	55-64	18-24 y.o.: % higher or lower than 55-64 y.o.
Participation in gambling	40.0	62	-35
Participation in EGMs (odds ratio)	1.0	0.6	67
Participation in sports g. (odds ratio)	1.0	0.2	400
Participation in online gambling	54.0	39	38
Participation in online-only	9.7	0.5	1840
Ave. G expenditure (gamblers)	\$3,646	\$4,891	-25
Ave. G expenditure (EGMs)	\$1,390	\$4,286	-68
Problem gambling - % gamblers	2.8	1.4	100
Gambling problems - % gamblers	27.0	5.5	391

A 2018/19 survey, of over 10,000 Victorian adults, conducted by Rockloff et al (2020) found a prevalence of moderate risk or problem gambling of 5.9% among 18-24 year-olds compared with 2.1% among people aged 55-65. Based on a Victorian survey conducted at about the same time, Howe et al (2018) concluded that, while the proportion of people who were low and moderate risk gamblers was relatively uniform cross the age range, the proportion of people who were *high-risk* gamblers reached its peak among those aged 18–34-year-old before declining with increasing age.

In relation to problem gambling, Hare's 2014 investigation - 'Study of Health and Gambling in Victoria' - found that the proportion of Victorian adults who were problem, moderate-risk or mild-risk gamblers ranged

from nearly 20% among both the youngest and oldest adults, to approximately 8% among those aged 25-34 years (Hare, 2015). Overall, 12.5% of Victorian adults fell within the range of problem to mild-risk gamblers, compared with 20% of people aged 65 years or more.

Percent of Adults who are at Risk of Gambling Harm, by Age: 2014 (Hare)



AGENDA Council Meeting 250610

Social Disadvantage and Gaming Problems

Socioeconomic disadvantage is associated with a relatively higher propensity to gamble and susceptibility to gambling-related problems. At the same time, the gambling industry, responding to the opportunities which such conditions present, has tended to install more gaming machines in disadvantaged areas – which in turn, raises gaming losses in such localities. In this way, socioeconomic disadvantage and gaming machine accessibility interact to contribute to elevated gaming losses in disadvantaged areas.

The association between overall socioeconomic disadvantage and prevalence of gambling-related problems on the other is supported by two lines of reasoning, each corroborated by substantial evidence.

First, population surveys disclose that people in disadvantaged circumstances – as for instance, lower incomes, lesser educational attainments or joblessness – are more likely to experience gambling problems or be at risk of such difficulties, than others. Evidence of these links is reviewed further on. Accordingly, it follows that that socio-economically disadvantaged areas, where such individuals are represented in higher proportions than elsewhere, would experience a relatively high prevalence of gambling-related problems.

Second, further evidence directly establishes that disadvantaged areas experience higher rates of gaming expenditure than others. Indeed, gaming losses per adult in 2020/21 in Greater Dandenong – the least affluent municipality in Melbourne - were approximately seven times greater than those recorded in Boroondara – among the wealthiest localities in Melbourne (at \$801 per adult, compared with \$994 per adult in Boroondara). Similarly, an Australian study found that suburbs that were most disadvantaged exhibited the highest average EGM losses per adult – with losses in the most disadvantaged fifth of suburbs at \$849 per adult, nearly three times higher than the corresponding rate of losses in the least disadvantaged fifth of suburbs, of \$298. (Rintoul et al, 2017b).

Such high levels of gambling expenditure are, in turn, associated with an elevated prevalence of gambling problems. The document 'Risk Factors for Problem Gambling' (2015) cites research by Markham, Young and Doran who report that rates of gambling expenditure are positively associated with prevalence of gambling related harm, with a rise in expenditure per adult from \$10 to 150 associated with an increase in prevalence of gambling harm from 9 to 18%. The 'Report to Municipal Association of Victoria' (2014) examined trends across regions, finding that high rates of gambling problems are associated with increased EGMs density and high expenditure. It follows that localities of socio-economic disadvantage, where levels of EGM expenditure are highest, would therefore also experience elevated rates of gambling-related problems.

Incomes

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Survey found that people on the highest range of incomes (>\$156,000) are more likely than those on lower incomes (<\$12,600) to participate in gambling, including EGMs, sports and online, though less likely to engage in online-only activities.

	lowest income	highest income	Low income: % higher or lower than highest
Participation in gambling	45.0	59	-24
Participation in EGMs (odds ratio)	1.0	1.5	-33
Participation in sports g. (odds ratio)	1.0	3.5	-71
Participation in online gambling	35.0	59	-41
Participation in online-only	3.6	2.1	71
Ave. G expenditure (gamblers)	\$1,617	\$5,003	-68
Ave. G expenditure (EGMs)	\$2,972	\$8,745	-66
Problem gambling - % gamblers	2.7	1.4	93
Gambling problems - % gamblers	16.0	13	23

Though gambling losses overall, and on EGMs, are greater among higher income gamblers, the study found that the prevalence of problem gambling declined with increasing income, from 2.7\$% of people in receipt of incomes less than \$20,800 per annum, to 1.4% of people in on annual incomes exceeding \$156,000. The prevalence of gambling problems though, was fairly uniform among people of different incomes.

A 2018/19 survey of over 10,000 Victorian adults, conducted by Rockloff et al, (2020) recorded a similar relationship between the prevalence of gambling problems and income levels, documenting a prevalence of moderate risk or problem gambling of 2.5% among people in receipt of annual incomes of \$20,800 to \$41,600, compared with 1.8% among those with an income exceeding \$166,000.

The 2014 Victorian Gambling Prevalence Study also found that problem gambling was most widespread among people in receipt of low incomes – as well as among unemployed adults and other segments of the community (Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2015).

The report 'Gambling Prevalence in South Australia 2012', also found high rates of problem gambling among people with low annual personal incomes. Similarly, in a review of contemporary research, Miller (2015) concluded that low incomes and lower socio-economic status are associated with a higher prevalence of gambling. In its earlier study of gambling patterns in Australia, the National Institute of Economic Research concluded that losses were largely sustained by those who could least afford them: those on lower incomes or manual employment (NIER, 2000).

The authors of the report 'Destination gambling' (2008) offer a common-sense explanation of this pattern, observing that people in disadvantaged areas may experience greater harm from gambling than others due to their limited financial means, sources of financial support and employability, to compensate for any gambling losses.

Education

The prevalence of gambling and gambling-related problems is also higher among people with limited educational attainments, than others. The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Survey found that people with limited formal education (less than year 12) were most likely to participate in gambling overall and on EGMs, through less often engaged in online gambling; and they have a similar level of participation

in sports gambling and in online-only gambling. Losses among gamblers of limited education are about half of those for people with a tertiary education - though higher for EGM gambling.

	less than yr 12	Tertiary	< Yr 12: % higher or lower than tertiary
Participation in gambling	61.0	46	33
Participation in EGMs (odds ratio)	1.0	0.3	233
Participation in sports g. (odds ratio)	1.0	1	0
Participation in online gambling	30.0	51	-41
Participation in online-only	1.7	2	-15
Ave. G expenditure (gamblers)	\$1,698	\$4,119	-59
Ave. G expenditure (EGMs)	\$3,754	\$2,814	33
Problem gambling - % gamblers	2.8	0.8	250
Gambling problems - % gamblers	12.1	12.4	-2

The 2023 study documented a pronounced decline in the prevalence of problem gambling with increasing formal education, from 2.8% of people with less than year 12 education, to 0.8% of those with tertiary qualifications. The prevalence of gambling problems however, differed little with educational attainment.

A similar trend was documented in an investigation into gambling prevalence in South Australia (Office for Problem Gambling, 2013) which recorded a prevalence of problem gambling of 0.2% among those with university degrees and 0.9% - or over four times higher – among people with secondary education only.

The report 'Risk Factors for Problem Gambling' (2015) cites investigations by Wardle et al (2010), Young et al (2006) and Sporston et al (2012), all of which recorded relatively high rates of problem gambling among people of limited educational attainments. In addition, overseas surveys have concluded that people with gambling problems tend to be less well educated than those without gambling problems (Cunha, 2017; McCready et al, 2008).

Unemployment and Joblessness

Some research points to a higher prevalence of gambling problems among people who are unemployed, with the 2013 report 'Gambling Prevalence in South Australia 2012' ascertained that 11.2% of unemployed people were moderate-risk or problem gamblers, compared with 4% of those in full-time employment, 2.3% in part-time employment, 1.4% of people in home duties, 1.8% of retirees and 2.1% of students.

The HILDA survey also documented an association between joblessness and the prevalence of gambling problems, with unemployed Australians accounting for 3.1% of the sample, but 12% of problem gamblers. (Armstrong and Carroll, 2017). The survey also found that respondents whose main income was derived from welfare payments, were over-represented among those with severe gambling problems.

A South Australian population survey found that the prevalence of problem and moderate-risk gamblers was 5.4% among unemployed survey respondents, compared with 3.3% among those in full-time employment and 2.4% among those in part-time work (Woods et al, 2018).

Occupations

Other evidence indicates that people on lower incomes or in less skilled occupations tend to experience higher gambling losses (Wardle et al, 2007; Williams et al, 2007). The later report 'Victorian Gambling Study: a longitudinal study of gambling and health in Victoria, 2008-2012, found that sales workers, machinery operators and drivers and labourers were substantially over-represented among problem gamblers in a population sample, while those employed as professionals, technicians and trades workers and clerical or administrative workers, were under-represented among those with serious gambling problems (Billi et al, 2014).

Prevalence of Problem	Gambling by Occupational (Category: Victoria, 2012
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	Per cent of Problem Gamblers	Per cent of Victorian Adults		
Over-represented among problem ga	Imblers			
Sales workers	30.9	6.1		
Machinery operators and drivers	14.9	4		
Laborers	18.3	5.4		
Under-represented among problem gamblers				
Professionals	12.4	32.3		
Technicians and trades	2.8	17		
Clerical and administrative	1	12.3		

Indigenous People

Research findings concerning the prevalence of gambling problems, indicates that their prevalence is substantially higher among Aboriginal people than the general population.

The 2014 Victorian Gambling Prevalence Study resulted found that approximately 8.7% of Indigenous people were problem gamblers, compared with 0.7% of the overall adult population. And 30% of Indigenous people were either at low or moderate risk of gambling problems, or problem gamblers, compared with 11% of other Victorian adults.

A 2018/19 Victorian survey featuring 10,600 Victorian respondents, found that people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent were over four times more likely to have experienced 'pathological' gambling during their lifetimes, as the general population (at 5.8%, compared with 1.3%) (Rockloff et al, 2020).

Personal and Health Problems

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Study found that problem gamblers tended to have poorer self-assessed heath, higher levels of psychological distress and risky drinking, and more often smoked, than non-gamblers. In particular, 34% of non-gamblers were ranked among the lowest quartile of general self-assessed wellbeing, compared with 86% of problem gamblers; 5.2% of non-gamblers were rated as experiencing psychological distress, compared with 43% of problem gamblers; 31% of non-gamblers were classified as risky drinkers, in contrast to 55% of problem gamblers, and 9.8% of non-gamblers smoke weekly, compared with 47% of problem gamblers.

Higher than average rates of personal distress and excessive alcohol or other drug use are reported among people with gambling-related problems (McMillen and Marshall, 2004). A 2008 survey of Tasmanian residents found that, among regular gamblers, the prevalence of heavy smoking (100+ per week) was 15%, compared with 6% among others, while 18% of regular gamblers engaged in heavy drinking compared with 7% of others (SA Centre for Economic Studies, 2008). A Melbourne study of 2,000 adults, conducted by the Problem Gambling Research and Treatment Centre at Monash and Melbourne Universities, determined that problem gamblers were 19 times more likely than non-problem gamblers to experience psychological difficulties; 4 times more likely to exhibit hazardous alcohol use; 2.4 times more often depressed; 6 times more likely to be divorced, and less inclined to feel valued as members of the community or able to call upon friends for assistance (Science Alert, 2008).

Cultural Influences

Cultural factors, as well as stresses related to settlement in Australia, may exert an influence upon gambling behaviour, and in some instances, predispose to gambling-related problems. It may be cautioned though, that existing difficulties in measuring the prevalence of gambling-related problems are accentuated when considering a segment of the community, defined by birthplace or cultural identity, who may account for a small fraction of population survey respondents. Moreover, it is difficult to form sound conclusions about a segment of the community as diverse as those born overseas – who, aside from this single characteristic are as diverse as those born in Australia. As a consequence, the prevalence of gambling-related problems among people of different birthplaces, language groups or ethnic identities, has never been determined with finality.

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Survey found that people who speak English only have slightly higher rates of participation in gambling, EGMs and sports gambling than those who speak languages other than English at home. The level of engagement in online gambling and online-only activities is similar among the two groups.

	English	LOTE	English only: % higher or lower than LOTE
Participation in gambling	59.0	40	48
Participation in EGMs (odds ratio)	1.0	0.7	43
Participation in sports g. (odds ratio)	1.0	0.6	67
Participation in online gambling	44.0	44	0
Participation in online-only	2.7	2.7	0
Ave. G expenditure (gamblers)	\$2,619	\$1,838	42
Ave. G expenditure (EGMs)	\$1,902	\$5,798	-67
Problem gambling - % gamblers	1.5	2.4	-38
Gambling problems - % gamblers	11.2	19.3	-42

Gamblers who speak languages other than English had lower rates of annual gambling losses - though they experienced higher rates of losses to EGM gambling (\$5,798 vs \$1,902). However, the study found that 2.4% of people who spoke languages other than English at home were problem gamblers, compared with 1.5% of those who spoke English only. Similarly, 19% of non-English speakers and 11% of those who spoke English only were experiencing gambling problems.

The 2014 Victorian Gambling Prevalence Study documented a similar trend, finding that 0.95% of non-English language speakers and 0.77% of English speakers were problem gamblers.

Similarly, Hare (2015), in her report 'Study of Gambling and Health in Victoria' determined that 5% of adults who spoke languages other than English in their homes were problem or moderate-risk gamblers, compared with 3.2% of English speakers.

Dickins and Thomas (2012) concluded that while CALD people overall appear less likely to gamble, those who do participate in such activities are more likely to experience gambling problems. CALD communities were also identified as among those at risk of gambling-related problems in the VRGF report Victorian Population Gambling and Health Study 2018-2019.

Other inquiries have shown that regardless of cultural background, for isolated migrants, or those with limited English fluency, the Casino and other gambling venues hold appeal as places that are safe, accessible after dark, and alleviate loneliness (Feldman et al, 2014). Further research indicates that stressors relating to settlement or experience in their country of origin expose some migrants to vulnerability to gambling problems (Dickins and Thomas, 2012; Feldman et al, 2014).

VI: EFFECTS OF GAMBLING PROBLEMS

Gambling losses are largely funded by reductions in expenditure on essential household goods, such as food and clothing, resulting in a diminished standard of living for the children and other dependents of many regular gamblers. While for some gamblers, accumulated losses may be significant, for others, on low or fixed incomes (Harrigan, 2007), even the sustained loss of modest amounts of money may have a substantial financial impact. Indeed, aside from those people who experience more severe financial problems as a result of gambling losses, a greater number of regular gamblers may persistently loose more money than they can comfortably afford, with the result that they and their families live less decently than otherwise.

Financial Difficulties

The South Australian Centre for Economic Studies (2005) found that, as the highest levels of gambling losses were incurred among people in the least affluent localities, most losses were funded not by savings, but by reduced spending on other goods. When asked how they would spend their extra funds if they did not gamble, 23% of a sample of people with gambling-related problems identified groceries and small household goods, and a similar proportion specified clothing and footwear. Just 20% stated that they would save these funds (South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, 2005). In a related investigation, financial harm experienced by all gamblers interviewed, with some going without meals or struggling to pay rent or mortgage (Rintoul and Deblaquiere, 2019).

Personal Stress

Investigations report a higher prevalence of personal distress, including depression and suicidal thoughts, and excessive alcohol or other drug use, among people with gambling-related problems (South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, 2005; Healthy, Wealthy and Wise Women, undated; SA Centre for Economic Studies, 2008).

A 2018 Swedish study found that the rate of suicide among people with gambling disorders was 15 times that of the general population. During the decade encompassed by this research, 19% of the approximately 2,000 gamblers under investigation had attempted suicide, 51% suffered from depression, 60% anxiety disorders and 41% substance-use disorders (Karlsson and Hakansson, 2018).

In its 2023 report, 'Gambling and liquor regulation in Victoria', the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee reported that the Coroners' Court of Victoria had identified 184 gambling-related suicides between 2009 and 2016, the Committee adding that '...For many more Victorians, gambling would have been a contributing factor to their suicide.'

Family Stress and Violence

Available evidence indicates that the prevalence of family violence is higher in families which are experiencing gambling problems, than among others. Citing the findings of a review of international studies exploring the link between family violence and gambling, Dowling (2014) remarked: "…over half of people with gambling problems (56%) report perpetrating physical violence against their children. Dowling et al (2006) found high to low risk gamblers experienced a higher prevalence of family violence perpetration and victimization than others, thereby establishing an association between these two circumstances. An

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Australian study by Suomi et al (2014a) of people seeking treatment for gambling problems, found that 34% were experiencing family violence, either as a perpetrator and/or victim, while further research also disclosed that family violence was more prevalent in families where problem gambling was occurring (Suomi, 2014b). In a review of a selection of other Australian studies, Dowling found that one-third to one-half (34-53%) of people with gambling problems, or their family members, report some form of family violence in the previous 12 months." (Dowling, 2014).

Moreover, further investigations point to a causal link between gambling and family violence, with family violence sometimes contributing to gambling problems, and gambling in other instances contributing to family violence. For example, women's health in the South-east (undated) concluded that family violence may contribute to gambling problems, citing a range of research which attests that some victims of family violence, largely women, may seek solace in the relative safety and comfort of gambling venues and in the experience of gambling itself, with gambling problems representing a consequence of family violence in such instances.

Further evidence affirms that gambling-related problems can lead to family dysfunction, conflict and violence (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2014; Costello, 2008; Ferland et al, 2008), pointing to a direct causal relationship between gambling and family violence. Crane (2015) cites the CEO of a major Victorian welfare agency, who observed that "Problem gambling places great stress on relationships" with "family violence part of the mix with some problem gambling clients" adding that children often grievously affected by such aggression.

Commenting upon such family conditions, one investigator explained: "The family environments of people with gambling problems are characterized by high levels of anger and conflict as well as low levels of clear and effective communication, less independence, less engagement in intellectual and cultural activities, a lack of commitment and support, little direct expression of feelings, and less participation in social and recreational activities...Moreover, the children of people with gambling problems are exposed to a range of family stressors, including financial and emotional deprivation, physical isolation, inconsistent discipline, parental neglect/abuse and rejection, poor role modelling, family conflict, and reduced security and stability." (Australian Gambling Research Centre, 2014).

Survey findings also shed light upon the role which gambling problems may play in causing and aggravating family violence. Muellemar et al (2012) investigated women admitted to emergency departments, finding that of those experiencing violence from their intimate partner and whose partner also had gambling problems, 64% perceived a connection between these two conditions (Suomi et al, 2013). Authors of the report noted that "...of the participants who were interviewed in depth, most reported that problematic gambling generally preceded the family violence (p. 1). The authors of the study concluded that gambling often leads to financial stress and mistrust, resulting in conflict and family violence.

Similarly, a New Zealand study of 254 people attending gambling treatment services, found that 50% had experienced physical, psychological, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse in the previous 12 months. Notably, among the 208 participants who took part in a further survey in the course of this research, 46% of those who

had been victims of family violence expressed that view that the violence was a *consequence* of their partner's gambling. (Bellringer et al, 2017).

Such findings are echoed by the results of research conducted by Suomi et al (2013) of 120 people seeking assistance as members of families with problem gamblers, which found that 53% reported family violence in the past 12 months, with 44% having been victims of such violence. Among a smaller sample of 32 of these survey participants who were interviewed as part of this investigation, most related that the family violence had followed the onset of gambling-related problems, Suomi et al reporting that "...problematic gambling generally preceded the family violence" (2013: 1). The authors of the study concluded that gambling often leads to financial stress and mistrust, resulting in conflict and family violence. Commenting on this study, Dowling remarked that while "...a commonly held view is that some people gamble as a mechanism to cope with being a victim of family violence..." the findings of this inquiry "...suggest that gambling problems precede both victimization and perpetration of family violence." (Dowling, 2014: 4).

Dowling herself conducted a phone survey of 3,628 randomly selected Australian adults, finding that, after controlling for social variables as well as drug use, that "Problem gambling was associated with increased odds of becoming a victim of family violence", adding "...but the reverse was so ...with family violence increasing the odds of experiencing problem gambling." (Dowling et al, undated). Reflecting upon this and other research, Prof. Dowling concluded that the causal relationship between family violence and gambling operates in both directions, depending upon the particular circumstances of each family - a finding consistent with the evidence reviewed here. In the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation report 'Social Costs of Gambling in Victoria' Browne et al (2017) similarly concluded that family violence may be caused by gambling.

In interviews with gamblers and effected family members conducted by (Rintoul and Deblaquiere, 2019) some reported that financial stress linked to gambling triggered conflict which occasionally resulted in family violence.

In light of the abundance of available evidence about this subject, the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (2023) concluded that "A relationship between gambling and family violence has been established. Gambling can be both the impetus and the outcome of family violence.", adding that "Gambling can "...precede and increase the chance of violence" and "...exacerbate the frequency and severity of violence."

Work-related Difficulties

Distracted by a preoccupation with gambling, many people with gambling-related problems experience difficulties associated with their employment, leaving work early to gamble or missing work altogether, and sometimes ultimately losing their employment as a result of gambling (Dowling, 2004; Australian Medical Association, 2013)

The New South Wales Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing reports that 25% of people with gambling problems report that gambling detracts from their paid employment (Wieczorek and Zhou, 2014). Loss of

employment was among the adverse consequences mentioned by gamblers in research conducted by AC Nielsen (2003)

Crime and Deception

Deceptive or criminal actions carried out in response to gambling problems, are widely reported (Livingston, 2008; Commonwealth of Australia, 2008; Sakurai and Smith, 2003; Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice, 2000; Crofts, 2002) with a survey of 8,000 randomly-selected New Zealand residents found that 0.3% had committed crimes in response to gambling difficulties during the previous 12 months (Lin et al, 2008).

In an inquiry consisting of interviews of gamblers, high levels of crime were reported at venues, including drug dealing, loan sharking, stolen goods, while some gamblers themselves, resorted to crime including theft, fraud, robbery unregulated sex work, and drug dealing, to make money (Rintoul and Deblaquiere, 2019). Similarly, in its 2023 review of gambling regulation in Victoria, the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee recounted evidence from the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association that gambling problems may contribute to crime "…when a person who develops gambling problems commits a crime such as thievery and/or drug trafficking to repay the accumulated financial debt."

VII: BENEFITS ATTRIBUTED TO GAMBLING

While the creation of employment by the gambling industry is often claimed as a benefit of EGM gambling, it would appear that gambling merely diverts expenditure and jobs from other sectors of employment. A further purported benefit of gambling – the expenditure of funds upon community projects from the Community Support Fund and by venues directly – represents a small return of funds lost to EGM gambling.

* * * *

Economic Effects of EGM Gambling

One of the benefits ascribed to EGM gambling is the employment generated in gambling venues (Select Committee of the Legislative Council on Gambling Licensing, 2008; Tabcorp, 2009), with the State Government observing that EGM gambling provides employment for thousands of people across Victoria (Department of Justice, 2006B, 2009). The VGCCC reports that in 2020/21, 23,483 people were employed in the gambling industry. However, much of the employment associated with gambling comes at an even greater cost to other sectors of the economy.

Investigations of the spending patterns of gambling show that funds lost to gambling machines are largely diverted from expenditure on goods and services, such as household items (South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, 2005), with the consequence that growth in the retail sector is lower than it would have been if EGMS had not been introduced. For example, gaming venues often detect from expenditure at local businesses as they divert expenditure from other goods and services (Rintoul and Deblaquiere, 2019).

Moreover, evidence indicates that expenditure on EGM gambling creates fewer jobs in gambling venues than those lost from other sectors of the economy. A 2006 study of Victorian and Western Australian gambling concluded that 3.2 jobs were created for every million of EGM gambling expenditure, compared with 8.3 jobs per million services from sales of beverage and 20.3 jobs for every million spent on meals and food (South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, 2005)..

Weighing the evidence concerning the economic effects of gambling, the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission cited with endorsement the conclusions of the Productivity Commission in its 2010 review of the gambling industry, that "... the long-run economy-wide impact of an expansion in gambling activity is likely to be neutral." (2012: 77).

Community support Fund

Under Section 3.6.6 (2)(c) and 3.6.12(1)&(1A) of the Gambling Regulation Act (2003), a 8.33% tax is imposed upon gambling revenue from hotels, in addition to the 24% levied upon all hotel and club venues. The 8.33% tax passes to the Community Support Fund which is allocated to problem gambling programs; drug education and treatment; youth programs; community advancement; sport and recreation; arts and tourism; veterans support; and other purposes.

The manner in which Community Support Funds are distributed to communities has been challenged, with the 2006 Report on the Consultations for the Gambling Licenses Review remarking on a "lack of

transparency" in allocation of funds to local communities (Kirby, 2006). Such considerations hold particular relevance for some in local government and community organizations who see the Community Support Fund as a means by which the burden of gambling losses upon local communities may be partially redressed through grants for community projects. Some commentators from local government and the community sector have therefore urged that local communities be afforded greater influence upon the choice of local projects to be supported, and that those communities which incur the higher losses to gambling be given preference in the allocation of those funds.

However, it lends perspective to note that, at best, the benefits of the Community Support Fund may only partially redress the effects of gambling upon communities, since the entire fund represents only 4% of all EGM gambling losses.

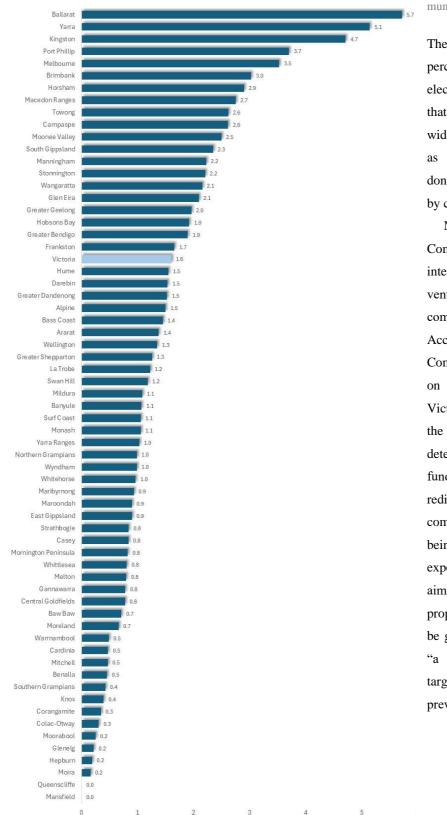
Community Benefit Statements

The Gambling Regulation Act requires that clubs which are EGM gambling venues provide an annual audited 'Community Benefit Statement', of the funds which they have directed to "philanthropic... benevolent...sporting or recreational purposes" (Gazette S124 26 June 2003). This obligation is intended to show that clubs direct 8.3% of their gambling revenue to activities which benefit to the community. Clubs which are late in submitting Community Benefit Statements are required to pay 8.3% of their gambling revenue to the Community Support Fund until they do so; and where a shortfall is found to exist, the balance must be paid into that fund.

The requirement for these statements stems from the difference in the level of tax levied upon hotels and clubs. While hotels pay 33% of their gambling revenue to the state government - of which 8.3% is deducted to the Community Support Fund - clubs pay only 24.3% of their gambling revenue as tax, as it is expected that they will direct 8.3% of their gambling funds at least, to activities of benefit to the community. Community Benefits Statements are intended to verify that such funds have indeed been contributed to community projects.

However, the types of expenditure which may be claimed as community benefits have included running costs, such as employment expenses; fixed assets, such as furniture, TVs and fridges; and subsidized goods and services. A comparatively small amount of funds is directed to community support by club gambling venues. In 2022/23, Victorian clubs expended \$16 million upon donations, gifts, sponsorships to the wider community, and to the support of ex-service personnel and their families – a sum representing only 1.6% of total club revenue from electronic gambling machines. The balance included employment costs, capital expenditure and subsidized services.

In addition, RSL venues across Victoria typically provide less than 2% of their EGM gambling revenue on support for veterans and their families. In her investigation of RSL clubs and gambling, Louise Francis found that over the three years, from 1016-17 to 1018-19, Victorian RSL gambling venues contributed an average of 1.6% of gambling revenue to the support of veterans and their families (Francis, 2017).



Per cent of losses/gambling revenue distributed by club gambling venues as Gifts, Donations, Sponsorships and Veteran's Support: Victor

Veteran's Support: Victorian municipalities, 2022/23

The chart at left illustrates the percentage of revenue from electronic gambling machines that was distributed to the wider community in 2022/3, as gifts, sponsorships, donations or veterans support, by clubs in each municipality.

Noting that the Community Benefits fund is intended to support each club venue's wider local Public community', the and Estimates Accounts Committee, in its 2023 report on gambling regulation in Victoria, recommended that the fund be audited to determine the actual level of funds which "…is being redirected into the community, as opposed to being spent on operational expenses and expenditure aimed at increasing clientele", proposing that consideration be given to the establishment "a publicly-managed fund targeted towards reducing and preventing gambling harm."

% gambling revenue passed to the community as gifts, donations, sponsorships or veteran's support t

Selected Sections of the <u>Gambling Regulation Act (2003)</u>, relevant to Approvals Submissions

1. Application for Approval of Premises

Application for approval of premises requires a planning permit be obtained, or applied for 3.3.4

(1) The owner of premises or a person authorized by the owner may apply to the Commission for the approval of the premises as suitable for gaming.

(3) The application must contain or be accompanied by-

(i) a copy of a permit issued under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 permitting the premises to be used for gaming on gaming machines; or

(iii) a copy of an application that has been made in accordance with the Planning and Environment Act 1987 for a permit that, if granted, would permit the premises to be used for gaming on gaming machines.

3.3.5 Notification of responsible authority

Within 14 days after applying, the applicant must send a copy of the application to the relevant responsible authority within the meaning of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

(The 'relevant responsibility is usually, though not invariably, the local council)

3.3.6 Responsible authority may make submission

(1) The relevant responsible authority may make a submission to the Commission on an application for approval of premises—

(a) addressing the economic and social impact of the proposal for approval on the wellbeing of the community of the municipal district in which the premises are located; and

(b) taking into account the impact of the proposal on surrounding municipal districts.

(2) A submission must be in the form approved by the Commission and must include the information specified in the form.

(3) A submission must be made within 60 days (or the longer period allowed by the Commission) after the responsible authority receives a copy of the application.

3.3.7 Matters to be considered in determining applications

(1) The Commission must not grant an application for approval of premises as suitable for gaming unless satisfied that—

(c) the net economic and social impact of approval will not be detrimental to the wellbeing of the community of the municipal district in which the premises are located.

(3) The Commission must also consider any submission made by the relevant responsible authority under section 3.3.6.

Responsible Authority may appeal decision on application for approval of premises, to VCAT 3.3.14 Tribunal review of approval

(1) An applicant for approval of premises may apply to the Tribunal for review of a decision of the Commission on the application.

(2) A responsible authority that made a submission under section 3.3.6 on an application for approval of premises may apply to the Tribunal for review of a decision of the Commission granting the approval.

(3) An application for review must be made within 28 days after the later of—

(a) the day on which the decision is made;

(b) if, under the **Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998**, the applicant or responsible authority requests a statement of reasons for the decision, the day on which the statement of reasons is given to the applicant or responsible authority or the applicant or responsible authority is informed under section 46(5) of that Act that a statement of reasons will not be given.

2. Application to Vary Existing License Conditions (number of machines, 24 hour opening etc.)

Application for more machines, 24-hour gaming, or specification/variation of days & dates of 24-hour gambling, must include a social impact assessment

3.3.4

(4) If an application for approval of premises as suitable for gaming includes an application for approval of 24 hour gaming on the premises, the application must also be accompanied by a submission—

(a) on the net economic and social benefit that will accrue to the community of the municipal district in which the premises are located as a result of the premises being open for gaming for 24 hours; and

(b) taking into account the impact of the proposal for approval on surrounding municipal districts.

3.4.17

(1) The conditions of a venue operator's license, including—

(d) variation of the days or dates on which 24 hour gaming is permitted in an approved venue under the license - may be amended in accordance with this Division.

(2) A venue operator's license may be amended in accordance with this Division to add a condition specifying days or dates on which 24 hour gaming is permitted in an approved venue, when none currently takes place.

3.4.18

(1) A request by a venue operator for an amendment of license conditions-

(c) in the case of an amendment referred to in section 3.4.17(1)(d) or (2) or an amendment to increase the number of gaming machines permitted in an approved venue, must be accompanied by a submission—

(i) on the net economic and social benefit that will accrue to the community of the municipal district in which the approved venue is located as a result of the proposed amendment; and

(ii) taking into account the impact of the proposed amendment on surrounding municipal districts.

Local council must be notified of an application for more machines

(2) If an amendment proposed by a venue operator is to increase the number of gaming machines permitted in an approved venue, the venue operator must send to the municipal council of the municipal district in which the approved venue is located a copy of the proposed amendment within 14 days after the proposal is made.

Local council may make a submission to VCGLR on application for more machines

3.4.19 Submissions in response to proposed amendments

(1) Within 60 days (or the longer time allowed by the Commission) after receiving a copy of a request for an amendment referred to in section 3.4.18(2) a council may make a submission to the Commission—

(a) addressing the economic and social impact of the proposed amendment on the wellbeing of the community of the municipal district in which the approved venue is located; and

(b) taking into account the impact of the proposed amendment on surrounding municipal districts.

3. Caps on Gambling Machine Numbers

3.2.4 Regional limits on gaming machines

(1) The Minister may from time to time, by order published in the Government Gazette-

(a) determine regions in the State for the purposes of this Chapter; and

(b) in respect of each region, specify the criteria which the Commission must use to determine the maximum permissible number of gaming machines available for gaming in the region.

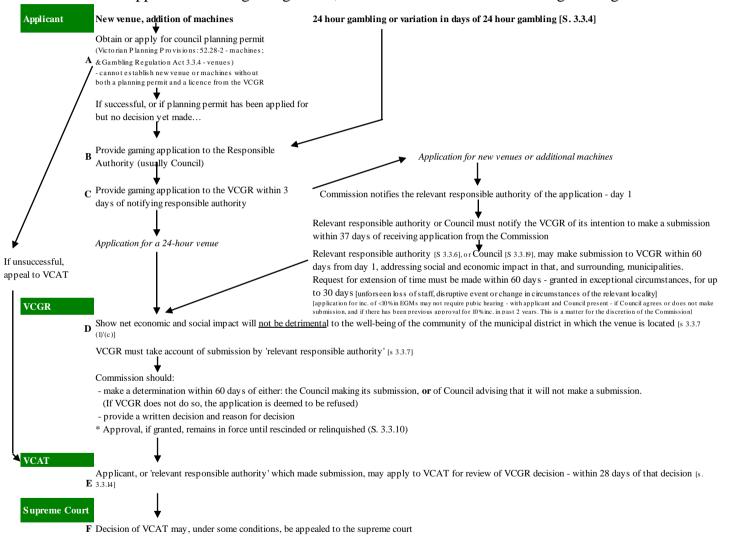
(2) Within 60 days after an order under subsection (1) is published in the Government Gazette, the Commission must, by instrument published in the Government Gazette, and in accordance with the specified criteria, determine the maximum permissible number of gaming machines available for gaming in a region determined and in force under sub-section (1)(a) but so that the total for the State does not exceed the State limit.

(7) Not later than 5 years after the publication of a determination under sub-section (2) and thereafter at intervals not exceeding 5 years, the

Commission must-

(a) review the regional limits; and

b) if a regional limit is no longer appropriate, determine, by instrument published in the Government Gazette, a new regional limit in accordance with the criteria specified under sub-section (1)(b) but so that the total for the State does not exceed the State limit.



Application for a gaming venue, additional Machines or 24-hour gambling

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3.1.4 Future Use of Robert Booth Reserve

Responsible Officer:	Exec	utive Director Community Strengthening
Attachments:	1.	Council Meeting Minutes 190408 - Athletics Development Plan 2019 [3.1.4.1 - 55 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. NOTES the ongoing implementation of the Athletics Development Plan 2019 and associated activities delivered to date;
- 2. APPROVES the development of a masterplan, for Robert Booth Reserve to guide the long-term strategic direction and use of its facilities;
- 3. ACKNOWLEDGES the Dandenong Little Athletics Centre as a key stakeholder in the masterplan development process;
- 4. APPROVES the continued use of the Robert Booth Reservice Athletics facility by the Dandenong Little Athletics Centre, subject to special conditions; and
- 5. APPROVES 2025/2026 capital funds allocated for site decommissioning to be reallocated to fund the master plan development and site maintenance. (subject to endorsement of the 2025/2026 Capital Improvement budget)

Executive Summary

- 1. On 8 April 2019, Council endorsed the 'Athletics Development Plan 2019' to guide the future provision of athletics in the City of Greater Dandenong (CGD). (Refer Appendix A).
- 2. Since its adoption in 2019, Council has taken significant steps to implement the recommendations of the Plan by upgrading and redeveloping Ross Reservice to a World Athletics Certificate II facility in 2023/24.
- 3. Following the redevelopment works, it was intended that Ross Reserve would serve as the primary athletics facility maintained by Council, with Robert Booth Athletics to be evaluated for alternative use.
- 4. It was also the intention that Dandenong Little Athletics Centre (DLAC) transition to operate form the new, fit for purpose athletics facility at Ross Reserve.
- 5. DLAC have since requested Council reconsider its decision to relocate them to the new venue at Ross Reserve, as this will create barriers for their members who live locally to Robert Booth.
- 6. As a result, Council has worked collaboratively with the Club and Little Athletics Victoria (the state sporting body that represents Little Athletics in Victoria) to establish modified activity plans and safety assessments to allow for the safe and ongoing use of the facility while Council affirms its position on the ongoing use of Robert Booth Reserve.
- 7. This report recommends that a masterplan for Robert Booth Reserve be developed as per the Athletics Development Plan to inform future investment and long-term decision making.
- 8. The Dandenong Little Athletics Centre would be considered a key stakeholder in the masterplan development process.

9. While the masterplan process is underway, the ongoing use of the facility by the Dandenong Little Athletics Club is also recommended under restricted conditions and the continuation of modified activity plans and safety assessments.

Background

- 10. On 8 April 2019, Council endorsed the 'Athletics Development Plan 2019' to guide the future provision of athletics in the City of Greater Dandenong (CGD).
- 11. The Plan includes 29 recommendations across a range of categories, including club sustainability, infrastructure improvements, programming and events.
- 12. All CGD Athletic Clubs were consulted to inform the development of the Plan, including Dandenong Little Athletics Centre.
- 13. A key recommendation was to designate Ross Reserve as the main athletics facility for the municipality. Additionally, it recommended a masterplan was developed for the Robert Booth Reserve Athletics facility to better understand its long-term use and strategic direction.
- 14. This recommendation was informed by several factors, including levels of participation, utilisation by residents, aging assets and compliance with relevant national sporting guidelines.
- 15. Since its adoption in 2019, Council has taken significant steps to implement the recommendations of the Plan by upgrading and redeveloping Ross Reservice to a World Athletics Certificate II facility in 2023/24.
- 16. Following the upgrade and redevelopment works, it was proposed that Ross Reserve would be the only athletics facility retained by Council and Robert Booth would be considered for alternative use.
- 17. The recent condition assessment carried out by SPORTENG in 2024, following an internal risk assessment, identified substantial deficiencies, requiring remedial actions and upgrades to ensure the facility meets minimum standards, including:
 - a. Compliance with relevant national sporting guidelines,
 - b. Facility user safety, and
 - c. Usability/functionality.
- 18. The Robert Booth Reserve Athletics Facility is currently tenanted by the Dandenong Little Athletics Centre who utilise the facility on a seasonal allocation arrangement. The centre comprises of three clubs, Doveton-Endeavour Hills, Hampton Park and Narre Warren.
- 19. Little Athletics Victoria participation data shows DLAC have doubled their participants in 2022/23 from 32 to 66 in 2023/24. Thirty percent (30%) of these participants reside within the municipality, noting that the facility is located on the border with the City of Casey.
- 20. DLAC utilise the facility over the summer season (October to March), two nights a week for training and on Saturday mornings for competition
- 21. In consideration of the recommendations, Council has reviewed different options with the Dandenong Little Athletics Centre, including relocation to Ross Reserve. However, the preferred option for the Dandenong Little Athletics Centre is to remain at the Robert Booth Reserve facility.
- 22. As a result, Council has worked collaboratively with Dandenong Little Athletics Centre and Little Athletics Victoria to establish modified activity plans and safety assessments to allow for the safe and ongoing use of the facility in the interim.
- 23. The modified activity plans and safety assessments have been implemented to minimise the risk to users, restricting access and levels of activity to certain areas of the facility deemed as high-risk.



Key Issues and Discussion

- 24. There has been no significant capital investment or preventative maintenance undertaken at the Robert Booth Athletics facility since 2019, which has been guided by the Athletics Development Plan 2019.
- 25. Independent assessments conducted by SportsTurf Consultants Pty Ltd and SPORTENG have identified substantial risks, deficiencies, and necessary upgrades should the facility continue to operate as an athletics venue.
- 26. The SPORTENG condition assessment provides a list of remedial works required, however, the implementation of these recommendations has not been costed. What is known is that required drainage works are significant.
- 27. The Robert Booth Athletics facility has been traditionally used by local primary schools for school carnivals, with coordination and administration of athletic activities being handled in conjunction with the Dandenong Little Athletics Centre.
- 28. Two schools have opted out of using the facility this year, given the conditions and alternative arrangements have been made by Council to provide Ross Reserve as a secondary option.
- 29. Due to the risks identified in the condition assessment, no future school bookings are permitted at Robert Booth Reserve until a decision is made on the future investment of the facility.
- 30. The modified activity plans and safety assessments were developed as an interim solution and attempt to support the club until a long-term solution could be identified.
- 31. A long-term decision on the future capital investment and strategic direction of the Robert Booth Reserve facility is required to understand future use and mitigate financial, environmental and reputational risks to Council.
- 32. It is recommended that a masterplan for Robert Booth Reserve is developed as per the Athletics Development Plan to inform future investment and long-term decision making.
- 33. While the masterplan process is underway, ongoing restricted use of the facility by the Dandenong Little Athletics Centre is recommended under the following **special conditions**:
 - a. That the club continues to modify how they utilise the facility and provide annual modified activity plans and safety assessments for the infrastructure elements / areas identified as being the highest risk to users.
 - b. That the club continues to obtain written approval and sign off by the state sporting governing body, LAV on any modified use for the areas to ensure any ongoing athletic sanctioned activities that continue at the facility is covered by LAV affiliated club liability insurance.
 - c. That the facility is not to be used for any other organisations or groups other than the Dandenong Little Athletics Centre until the completion of the masterplan and a future direction of the reserve is confirmed.
 - d. That the facility is not to be used for any school carnival activities, until funding becomes available to complete the required remedial works.
- 34. Other options considered include:
 - a. Discontinuing the use of the facility and incentivised relocation of the Club to Ross Reserve.
 - b. Returning the land to open space for the benefit of the local community in line with the Open Space Strategy 2020-2030.
 - c. Discontinuing the facility until the remedial repair works identified in the SPORTENG condition assessment are completed and incentivised relocation of the Club to Ross Reserve while works are underway.
- 35. The masterplan will allow for more robust community consultation and a more considered longterm view of the financial, environmental and reputational risks for Council.



Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

36. This item does not have an impact on existing human resources.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

- 37. The financial implications and costs would need to be scoped in more detail depending on the option selected however, some high-level considerations are provided below.
- 38. The cost to develop and complete a masterplan for the facilities at Robert Booth Reserve is approximately \$100,000.
- 39. There is no additional cost to council for the immediate ongoing operational use of the facility in the short to medium term.
- 40. A submission to decommission the Robert Booth Reserve athletics facility has been submitted for Council consideration as part of the FY 2025/26 Capital Improvement Project (CIP) bid. This project includes costs associated with the removal of the existing athletics infrastructure and the return of the site to open space (\$240,900).
- 41. It is recommended that this funding is re-allocated to fund the Robert Booth Reserve Masterplan (\$100,000), with the remainder of funds held (\$140,900) for maintenance and/or masterplan implementation.
- 42. The costs associated with alternative options are provided below:
 - a. Discontinue all use of the facility (approximately \$20k operational savings per year)
 - i. Decrease in operational costs associated with labour and material to maintain the outdoor facility. Currently costs Council \$14,300 per annum.
 - ii. Decrease in water usage from irrigation to Council by approximately \$3,420 per annum.
 - iii. Decrease in operational costs for the use of the pavilion and future renewal costs.
 - b. Discontinue all use of the facility until the completion of the remedial/ repair works identified in the SPORTENG condition assessment
 - i. Detailed site investigation work is approximately \$80,000-\$100,000 to understand the true costs of the remedial/ repair works.
 - ii. A high-level cost estimate for the remedial works / repairs to address the highrisk areas outlined in condition assessment is approximately \$416,650 including contingency funds.
 - iii. The cost to fix the sub-surface drainage was over \$250,000 in 2018. The recommended full reconstruction required as part of the assessment was estimated at over \$2 million in 2018, pending detailed design and investigation.

Asset Implications

43. As outlined above and within the Athletics Development Plan 2019.



Legal/Risk Implications

- 44. Two independent reports and an internal risk assessment have identified significant financial, safety and reputational risks with the ongoing use of the Robert Booth Reserve facility in its current state.
- 45. Council must ensure public facilities are safe and functional. Failure to address these risks could lead to significant litigation due to possible injuries and reputational damage.

Environmental Implications

46. Environmental implications will be considered subject to the selected option.

Community Consultation

- 47. Extensive community and stakeholder consultation was conducted as part of the development of the Athletics Development Plan 2019, including workshops conducted with all CGD Athletics Clubs.
- 48. Ongoing consultation has occurred with Dandenong Little Athletics Centre as part of the implementation of the Plan and its recommendations, including the option of relocating clubs to the Ross Reserve facility.
- 49. Council has worked collaboratively with Dandenong Little Athletics Centre and Little Athletics Victoria to establish modified activity plans and safety assessments to allow for the safe and ongoing use of the facility in the interim.
- 50. A full community consultation process would occur as part of the recommended Masterplan process, inclusive od DLAC as a key stakeholder.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

- 51. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:
 - Sustainable environment.
 - Mind, body and spirit.
- 52. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2021-25:
 - A socially connected, safe and healthy city.
 - A green city committed to a sustainable future.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

- 53. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
 - Climate Change and Sustainability.
 - Related Council Policies, Strategies or Frameworks.

2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019

File Id:

Responsible Officer:

Attachments:

Director Community Services Athletics Development Plan 2019

Report Summary

The Athletics Development Plan 2019 has been established to determine the appropriate support required for current and future provision of athletics within the City of Greater Dandenong (CGD).

Recommendation Summary

This report recommends that the Athletics Development Plan 2019 be adopted by Council.

2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

Background

As athletics has a relatively low participation rate within CGD, the Athletics Development Plan has been established to determine the appropriate support required for current and future provision of athletics within our municipality.

The development of the plan involved an analysis of athletics facilities, school activities, non-structured/casual activities and clubs within CGD. It also benchmarked participation statistics and membership data against the Sate Sporting Bodies and regional populations.

Proposal

The report proposes 29 recommendations across the categories of:

- Club Sustainability
- Sports Development
- Programming and Events
- Infrastructure Improvements
- School Participation
- Cross-Country and School Athletics Programming

These recommendations aim to provide sustainability and growth in Athletics as a sport within the municipality. Council Officers will work with relevant stakeholders to implement these recommendations.

Any Infrastructure improvements will be subject to the annual Council Capital Improvement Program (CIP) approval process.

Community Plan 'Imagine 2030' and Council Plan 2017-2021 – Strategic Objectives, Strategies and Plans

After consultation with the Greater Dandenong community on what kind of future they wanted to see for themselves and the City in 2030, the result was the Greater Dandenong Community Plan 'Imagine 2030'. This report is consistent with the following community visions:

Community Plan 'Imagine 2030'

People

- Pride Best place best people
- Outdoor Activity and Sports Recreation for everyone
- Lifecycle and Social Support The generations supported

Place

• Appearance of Places – Places and buildings

2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

Opportunity

• *Tourism and visitors* – Diverse and interesting experiences

Council Plan 2017-2021

The Council Plan describes the kind of future the Council is working for, and how Council will do this over four years. This report is consistent with the following goals:

<u>People</u>

• A vibrant, connected and safe community

<u>Place</u>

- A healthy, liveable and sustainable city
- A city planned for the future

The strategies and plans that contribute to these outcomes are as follows:

- Community Wellbeing Plan 2017-21
- Asset Management Strategy 2015-22
- Activate Sport & Active Recreation Strategy 2014-2019
- Sports Facilities Plan Implementation Plan 2018

Related Council Policies

- Sports Pavilion Management Policy
- Sports Ground Floodlighting Policy
- Sustainable Building Policy
- Multipurpose Use of Community Facilities Policy

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities has been considered in the preparation of this report but is not relevant to its contents.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Consultation

Workshops were conducted with all CGD Athletics Clubs to understand how they operate and to identify challenges or barriers faced.

All primary and secondary schools within the municipality were invited to contribute their thoughts to the Plan and describe how they could be better supported, via a survey.

2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

Consultation was also conducted with the following:

- Sport and Recreation Victoria
- Little Athletics Victoria
- Athletics Victoria
- Special Olympics Victoria Branch
- School Sport Victoria
- CGD Sport and Recreation department
- CGD Parks department
- CGD Asset Management department

The draft plan was put out for public exhibition from Monday 4 February to Wednesday

6 March 2019. During this period four responses were received which have been considered and modifications made to the plan as deemed appropriate.

Conclusion

Athletics teaches fundamental movement skills that are critical for many sports such as Australian Rules Football, Soccer, Rugby, Basketball, Hockey, Baseball, Cricket, Tennis, in fact almost every sport requiring running, jumping and throwing.

The sport provides significant benefit to participants, schools and other users and is important to retain and build upon.

Recommendation

That the Athletics Development Plan 2019 be endorsed by Council.

MINUTE 1019

Moved by: Cr Tim Dark Seconded by: Cr Sean O'Reilly

That the Athletics Development Plan 2019 be endorsed by Council.

CARRIED

MONDAY 8 APRIL 2019

2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

OTHER

ATHLETICS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2019

ATTACHMENT 1

ATHLETICS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2019 (DRAFT)

PAGES 51 (including cover)

If the details of the attachment are unclear please contact Governance on 8571 5235.

MONDAY 8 APRIL 2019

2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)



MONDAY 8 APRIL 2019

2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

MONDAY 8 APRIL 2019

1. Introduction

Athletics teaches fundamental movement skills that are critical for many sports such as Australian Rules Football, Soccer, Rugby, Basketball, Hockey, Baseball, Cricket, Tennis, in fact almost every sport requiring running, jumping and throwing.

Athletics has a low participation rate within City of Greater Dandenong (CGD). To remedy this an Athletics Development Plan has been established to determine the appropriate support required for current and future provision of athletics within our municipality.

Methodology 2.

This Athletics Development Plan involved an analysis of athletics facilities, school activities, non-structured/casual activities and clubs within CGD. Tasks undertaken included:

- Site visits to both athletics clubs and facilities within CGD and a visual walk-through audit of facilities. ٠
- Face-to-face interviews with all athletics clubs within CGD.
- Consultation with Athletics Victoria, Little Athletics Victoria, Special Olympics and School Sport Victoria.
- Online survey sent to all Primary and Secondary Schools within CGD. Analysis of membership and demand for the sport of athletics.
- Identification of key issues and development of proposed actions. Preparation of a draft plan including prioritised recommendations.

3. Strategic Context

Active Victoria – A Strategic Framework for Sport and Recreation in Victoria 2017-2021: Vision for sport and active recreation is: "A strong and connected sport and active recreation system that helps make Victorians healthier, creates economic growth and jobs, builds community cohesion and contributes to our liveability.

Sport and active recreation in Victoria will be:

- More active
- More diverse and inclusive
- Robust, flexible, sustainable and affordable
- Broad-based and connected Collaborative

2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

MONDAY 8 APRIL 2019

Athletics Victoria Strategic Plan 2014-2017

Athletics Victoria's mission is "for athletics to be the premier recreational and competitive participation sport in Victoria." Their five strategic functions are:

- Community engagement
- Excellence of deliveryThought leadership & learning
- Brand & Innovation
- Sustainable business model.

<u>City of Greater Dandenong Imagine 2030 Project</u> was designed to find out what people have in common, what opinions and aspirations they share about the future and what topics people might work on together. It laid the groundwork for integrating Council's own four-year strategic Council Plan 2017-21 with the Community Plan, and the review processes thereafter. The relevant aspirations are:

- Sport and recreation opportunities will be affordable, diverse and accessible to all, especially for young people, families and those less well off than others. There will be opportunities for people of all backgrounds and ages to take part.
- Local sports and recreation clubs will be thriving centres of social activity and gathering across all cultures and generations.

<u>City of Greater Dandenong Council Plan 2017-2021</u> is based on what Council understands to be most important in people's lives, their hopes and aspirations and what kind of City of Greater Dandenong is desired for the future.

Strategic objectives:

- A vibrant, connected and safe community
- · A creative city that respects and embraces its diversity
- A healthy, liveable and sustainable city
- A city planned for the future
- A diverse and growing economy
- An open and effective Council.

The Community Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021 outlines Council's key actions and initiatives to improve health and wellbeing across the municipality. The relevant objectives and actions are:

- 1.1 Create places for people to enjoy and actively participate in their local community including open space and recreational opportunities.
 1.1.3 Provide facilities and programs that are accessible for all age
- groups. • 3.1 Improve the health and wellbeing of all residents through collaborative
- planning and enhancing health promoting services and opportunities.3.1.2 Identify opportunities to increase participation in sport and recreation
- activities for under-represented members of the community.

<u>Activate – Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2014-2019</u>: The strategy has been developed to guide Council in the provision of facilities, services and programs designed to increase participation in sport and active recreation in the City of Greater Dandenong.



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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

4. Demographics of the City of
Greater Dandenong
The current population of City of Greater Dandenong is estimated at 170,900 and projected to increase to 205,000 by 2028 (as of Feb 2018).
One in five residents have limited fluency in spoken English – highest level in Victoria. Seventy per cent of 12 to 24 year-olds speak languages other than English at home and 1,500 young people have limited fluency in the use of spoken English. Languages other than English spoken by over two-thirds (70%) of residents –highest in the state.
Nearly one in three (31%) families with children have no parent in paid work –highest Melbourne.
30% of residents participated in 30 minutes or more of physical activity on four or more days each week - the second lowest proportion in the State.
Refer to Appendix 7 for a full listing of demographics.
5. Demographic Influences on Sports Participation
 Age, gender, income, ethnicity and education are key determinants of participation in sport. The demographic profile within City of Greater Dandenong suggests a low propensity to play organised sports based on a number of characteristics: 64% of residents are born overseas 70% speak languages other than English A relatively high unemployment rate (10.2% in mid-2017, compared with 5.9% across Melbourne) 30% of residents participated in 30 minutes or more of physical activity on four or more days each week - the second lowest proportion in the State. The second most disadvantaged municipality in Victoria based on the SEIFA index of disadvantage.
The implications of the demographic profile means there will be significant benefits to the population if sports participation can be increased among residents born overseas of non-English speaking countries living in an area with high unemployment rates and low incomes.
However, significant interventions may be required to achieve potential increases in participation in these areas.
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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

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Note: This report was unable to source Masters Athletics Victoria data.



2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

7 1	thlatic	s Facilities in th	o City of
		Dandenong	e only of
These are l	wo athletics f ocated in Dan	IEW acilities on Council land in the City o denong North and Noble Park. ubs at Athletics Facilities	of Greater Dandenong.
Suburb	Reserve	Club/s	Features
Dandenong North	Reserve	Dandenong Little Athletics Centre Narre Warren Little Athletics Club Doveton Park Little Athletics Club Endeavour Hills Little Athletics Club Hampton Park Little Athletics Club 	400m grass running track incl. 100m grass sprint track. 3 long jump sand pits with run- ups. High Jump pad. 7 shot put and discus pads. Pavilion and storage areas.
Noble Park	Ross Reserve	Springvale Little Athletics Club Dandenong Springvale Athletics Club Dandenong Masters Athletics Club	 400m synthetic running track (9 lane) incl. 100m spirint track 2 long jump sand pits with run- ups. High Jump pad. 3 shot put and discus pads. Pavilion and storage areas. Floodlighting.

events.

We currently have two athletics facilities for 170,900 members of City of Greater Dandenong community (Feb 2018 data), which is a provision ratio of 1: 85,495. Athletics Victoria and Athletics Australia have not undertaken a Facility Plan at this time. However, by way of comparison the Hume City Council's Athletic Sports Plan (2015), based off 2014 population data provided an athletics track provision ratio of 1: 61,852. Table 5 details the level of provision of facilities per person, based upon 2014 population data.

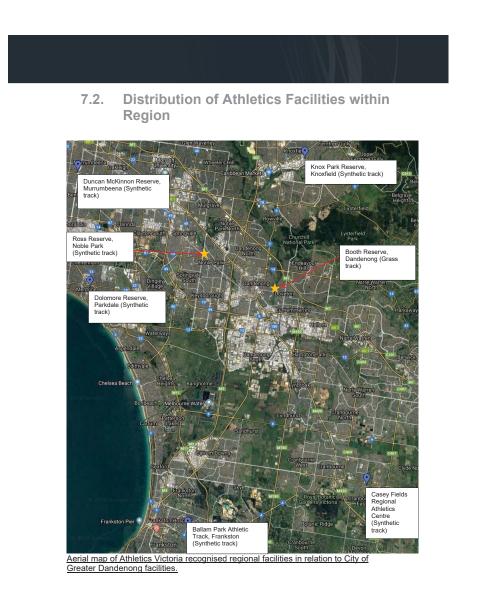
MONDAY 8 APRIL 2019

2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

ele 5: Hume City Counc ios	il Athletic Sport	s Plan (201	5): Athletic	s Facilities Provis
LGA	Number of known athletics faciliies	Synthetic / Grass	2014 Population	Current athletics track provision ratio
Mitchell Shire Council	2	2 grass	39,079	1: 19,540
Macedon Ranges Shire Council	2	2 grass	41,860	1: 20,930
Hume City Council	3	3 grass	185,555	1: 61,852
Brimbank City Council	3	2 grass 1 synthetic	192,844	1: 64,281
City of Whitehorse	2	2 synthetic	164,766	1: 82,383
City of Casey	3	2 grass 1 syntheic	281,229	1: 93,743
Moonee Valley City Council	1	1 synthetic	118,340	1: 118,340
Melton City Council	1	1 grass	126,440	1: 126,440
Moreland City Council	1	1 synthetic	163,217	1: 163,217
Whittlesea City Council	1	1 synthetic	186,368	1: 186,368
Wyndham City Council	1	1 synthetic	192,337	1: 192,337

0

2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)





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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

			X	
Following analysis of all facilities located in the				
Melbourne, the Ross Reserve Athletics venue				
to above aerial map). The Ross Reserve Athl in the City of Greater Dandenong, with the				
regional facilities located at:	CIUSESI AIIIE		riecognised	1
 Duncan McKinnon Reserve, Murrumbe 	ena			
Dolomore Reserve, Parkdale				
 Knox Park Reserve, Knoxfield 				
Casey Fields Athletics Centre, Cranbo	urne Fast			
 Ballam Park Athletics Track. Frankston 				
9 Club Bookgroup				
8. Club Backgroun	u			
_				
The current health of the clubs is mixed across				
Dandenong (CGD) currently has four clubs inc		Little Athlet	ics Clubs,	
one Senior Athletics Club and a Victorian Mas	ters Group.			
Table 6: 2017/18 CGD Athletic Clubs Member	shin Figures			
	Male	Female	Total	
Dandenong Little Athletics Centre	42	33	75	
Dandenong Springvale Athletics Club				
Dandeneng ophingvale Athletics Olub	10	10	20	
Springvale Little Athletics Club	91	78	169	
Springvale Little Athletics Club Victorian Masters Athletics	91 42	78 12	169 54	
Springvale Little Athletics Club Victorian Masters Athletics The Dandenong Little Athletics Centre, aligne	91 42 d with Little Atl	78 12	169 54	1
Springvale Little Athletics Club Victorian Masters Athletics	91 42 d with Little Atl	78 12	169 54	ł
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Springvale Little Athletics Club Victorian Masters Athletics The Dandenong Little Athletics Centre, aligne at Booth Reserve and consists of the following o Doveton Endeavour Hills LAC	91 42 d with Little Atl	78 12	169 54	ł
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Springvale Little Athletics Club Victorian Masters Athletics The Dandenong Little Athletics Centre, aligne at Booth Reserve and consists of the following o Doveton Endeavour Hills LAC o Hampton Park LAC o Narre Warren LAC All of these clubs are theoretically from the following	91 42 d with Little Att clubs: City of Casey	78 12 hletics Victo municipality	169 54 ria, is based as Booth is	6
Springvale Little Athletics Club Victorian Masters Athletics The Dandenong Little Athletics Centre, aligne at Booth Reserve and consists of the following o Doveton Endeavour Hills LAC Hampton Park LAC o Narre Warren LAC All of these clubs are theoretically from the located on the border between the two m	91 42 d with Little Att clubs: City of Casey	78 12 hletics Victo municipality	169 54 ria, is based as Booth is	6
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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

The Springvale Little Athletics Club continues to have strong membership. The club is well managed with a large competent management committee. Recruitment and promotion are the main challenges for the club.

Victorian Masters Athletics at Ross Reserve, Noble Park is one of approximately 14 venues which are under the control of the state body, Victoria Master Athletics. As membership and collection of subscriptions is handled by the state body, technically there is no specific club. However when members register they usually elect to show a venue as their "home venue". It is important to note that members can choose to attend any venue for training.

Based on 2017 membership data, 68.5% of members were from municipalities outside the City of Greater Dandenong, including Casey, Monash and Kingston.

None of the clubs currently provide specific all abilities programming. The Casey-Dandenong Special Olympics operate predominantly within the City of Casey, however as a regional all abilities program they service the Dandenong local government area community. Opportunities may exist for existing clubs to create partnerships to increase participation from people with disabilities.

8.1.	Club	Programming	

Day/Time	Program/ Activity	Age Category	Gender	Hours	Registered Participants
Monday 4-7pm	Springvale Little Athletics (Training)	U6-U16	Both	3	169
Monday 4-6.30pm	Dandenong Springvale Athletics Club (Training)	U14-Open	Both	2.5	20
Tuesday 4-7pm	Springvale Little Athletics (Training)	U6-U16	Both	3	169
Tuesday 4-6.30pm	Dandenong Springvale Athletics Club (Training)	U14-Open	Both	2.5	20
Wednesday 4-7pm	Springvale Little Athletics (Training)	U6-U16	Both	3	169
Wednesday 6.30-8.30pm	Victorian Masters Athletics (Training)	30yrs+	Both	2	14
Thursday 4-6.30pm	Dandenong Springvale Athletics Club (Training)	U14-Open	Both	2.5	20
Friday 3-9pm	Springvale Little Athletics (Competition)	U6-U16	Both	6	169
Saturday 3-9pm	Springvale Little Athletics (Competition)	U6-U16	Both	6	169
Sunday 10-12pm	Dandenong Springvale Athletics Club (Training)	U14-Open	Both	2	20
			Total	32.5	939

Note: Based on 2017/18 data.

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

Day/Time	Program/ Activity	Age Category	Gender	Hours	Registered Participants
Tuesday 4-8pm	Dandenong Little Athletics Centre (Training)	U6-U16	Both	4	75
Wednesday 4-8pm	Dandenong Little Athletics Centre (Training)	U6-U16	Both	4	75
Thursday 4-8pm	Dandenong Little Athletics Centre (Training)	U6-U16	Both	4	75
Friday 4-8pm	Dandenong Little Athletics Centre (Training)	U6-U16	Both	4	75
Saturday 7am-1pm	Dandenong Little Athletics Centre (Competition)	U6-U16	Both	6	75
Sunday 7am-1pm	Dandenong Little Athletics Centre (Competition)	U6-U16	Both	6	75
			Total	28	450

Note: Based on 2017/18 data.

9. Casual and Event Usage

Currently over 50 bookings are received by schools and associations to conduct athletic training programs and athletics carnivals at Ross Reserve, as per the below table. Schools using the facility are from City of Greater Dandenong and surrounding municipalities.

Table 9: Athletics Carnivals at Ross Reserve

	CGD Group	os/Schools	Non-CGD	Groups/ Schools		
	Number of	Number of	Number of	Number of	Total	
	Bookings	Participants	Bookings	Participants	Participants	
2018	18	6,510	2	700	7,210	
2017	14	5,931	3	750	6,681	
2016	16	8,340	1	300	8,640	
Total	48	20,781	6	1,750	22,531	
Note: 20	Note: 2018 as of 1/9/18					

Table 10: Athletics Programs at Ross Reserve

	CGD Group	os/Schools	Non-CGD	Groups/ Schools	
	Number of Bookings	Number of Participants	Number of Bookings	Number of Participants	Total Participants
2018	18	1,280	11	330	1,610
2017	30	1,830	3	90	1,920
2016	14	595	10	724	1,319
Total	62	3,705	24	1,144	4,849
Noto: C	019 og of 1/0/	10			

Note: 2018 as of 1/9/18

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

The Booth Athletics venue has limited casual and event bookings for athletics programs and carnivals, as per the below table. Schools using the facility are primarily from surrounding municipalities.

Table 11: Athletics Carnivals at Booth Reserve

	CGD Group	s/Schools	Non-CGD	Groups/ Schools	
	Number of	Number of	Number of	Number of	Total
	Bookings	Participants	Bookings	Participants	Participants
2018	1	180	4	860	1,040
2017	0	0	3	530	530
2016	1	160	5	980	1,140
Total	2	340	12	2,370	2,710

Note: 2018 as of 1/9/18

Table 12: Athletics Programs at Booth Reserve

	CGD Group	s/Schools	Non-CGD	Groups/ Schools	
	Number of Bookings	Number of Participants	Number of Bookings	Number of Participants	Total Participants
2018	0	0	0	0	0
2017	0	0	0	0	0
2016	5	90	0	0	90
Total	5	90	0	0	90

Note: 2018 as of 1/9/18

10. School Athletics Participation

45 primary and secondary schools located within the municipality were invited to participate in an online survey to provide their insights into the current level of participation by their schools and the level of support required in the future. 30% of schools responded to the survey, all of which conducted an athletics carnival and/or program at their school.

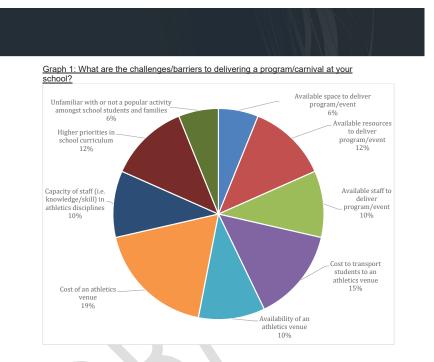
This is a summary of the findings:

- Only two of the respondents ran their program and/or carnival at Ross Reserve Athletics venue with the majority conducting events at their own school. 71% of respondents took part in School Sport Victoria athletics events.
- The majority of schools conduct their programs in March (28.5%) or August (28.5%).
- 92% of schools conduct an athletics program as part of the school's curriculum.
- The major challenges/barriers to delivering a program/carnival was the cost of the venue as detailed in graph 1 by 19% of respondents. The cost of transport to athletics venues is the second major barrier at 15%.



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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)



11. Discussion

11.1. Club Development Opportunities and Growing Participation

Little Athletics Victoria, Athletics Victoria and Masters Athletics Victoria provide little to no support to clubs in regard to growing participation based upon feedback from the CGD clubs. Little Athletics and Athletics Victoria's priorities are about increasing participation in school athletics programs, however, these programs are only trial programs at this stage, with limited reach and no plans (at the time of writing the report) to create linkages with clubs.

The main challenge facing all clubs is the recruitment and retention of members. The following opportunities and ideas could be considered: • Linkages with Schools: Numerous schools within the municipality conduct an

Linkages with Schools: Numerous schools within the municipality conduct an athletics carnival or program. This could provide an opportunity for clubs to partner with these schools to assist in the delivery of these programs/events.



2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

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<text><section-header><text><text><text></text></text></text></section-header></text>	<text><section-header><text><text><text></text></text></text></section-header></text>	o o There i could a groups avenue wellbeii prograr requirin affectin A signi prograr requirin affectin Athletic support	worthwhile participating in and the health and wellbeing benefits it can provide for a given community. There is significant choice for people in regard to sport and recreational pursuits. What appeals to different audiences such as women or young people? Understand your membership: What do they want? What do they need? How satisfied are they? What could be improved? Is it value for money? What are the barriers/challenges? How do you address these to assist in recruiting and retaining members? Are there other sports/clubs that may consider athletics in their off-season? The benefit of this approach is that they are a captured audience who are already interested in sport. Taking part in sport is a choice and making it easy, convenient, flexible and non-committal is the key. Consider location, facility type, timing and cost which are all important considerations for making sport accessible. Clubs working together to promote the sport rather than individual clubs. is a large number of cultural groups in the City of Greater Dandenong. Council assist clubs to work closely with organisations that support specific cultural to develop athletics related programs and activities, use the sport as a social e for creating a sense of 'community' within cultural groups to aid its members ing and to increase promotion of the sport among their members. ificant gap within clubs is the ability to provide opportunities for all abilities ming to increase inclusiveness of people with disabilities and any person ng support or assistance. Education and awareness are the main barriers g clubs and the community from providing and accessing opportunities. s Victoria and Little Athletics Victoria have resources available to educate and t clubs on how to be more inclusive whilst also how to promote/encourage
Associations The level of support from Athletics Victoria and Little Athletics Victoria is fairly limited based on the feedback from the athletics clubs within the municipality. Both organisations are under-resourced and have limited ability to provide direct support to the clubs. Masters Athletics Victoria is managed by volunteers who work closely with Athletics Victoria, however due to the non-club structure there is no support provided for venue members. Each state sporting association appears to focus on club and elite level structured competition, rather than the future of the entire sport and how to develop athletics outside of the traditional model. In addition there is no support provided to club development and ensuring clubs are sustainable.	Associations The level of support from Athletics Victoria and Little Athletics Victoria is fairly limited based on the feedback from the athletics clubs within the municipality. Both organisations are under-resourced and have limited ability to provide direct support to the clubs. Masters Athletics Victoria is managed by volunteers who work closely with Athletics Victoria, however due to the non-club structure there is no support provided for venue members. Each state sporting association appears to focus on club and elite level structured competition, rather than the future of the entire sport and how to develop athletics outside of the traditional model. In addition there is no support provided to club development and ensuring clubs are sustainable.	the day	y when they are normally idle, combined with the prospect of promoting the
based on the feedback from the athletics clubs within the municipality. Both organisations are under-resourced and have limited ability to provide direct support to the clubs. Masters Athletics Victoria is managed by volunteers who work closely with Athletics Victoria, however due to the non-club structure there is no support provided for venue members. Each state sporting association appears to focus on club and elite level structured competition, rather than the future of the entire sport and how to develop athletics outside of the traditional model. In addition there is no support provided to club development and ensuring clubs are sustainable.	based on the feedback from the athletics clubs within the municipality. Both organisations are under-resourced and have limited ability to provide direct support to the clubs. Masters Athletics Victoria is managed by volunteers who work closely with Athletics Victoria, however due to the non-club structure there is no support provided for venue members. Each state sporting association appears to focus on club and elite level structured competition, rather than the future of the entire sport and how to develop athletics outside of the traditional model. In addition there is no support provided to club development and ensuring clubs are sustainable.	11	
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17	17	compet outside	tition, rather than the future of the entire sport and how to develop athletics of the traditional model. In addition there is no support provided to club
17	17		
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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

11.3. Partnerships with Other Community Facilities and Clubs

There are a number of opportunities for athletics clubs to engage and partner with groups, organisations and other clubs within their communities. These partnerships have the potential to grow memberships, gain sponsorship and to offer athletics to those within the community that have not or would not normally get this opportunity. This may include partnering with leisure facilities, other sporting clubs, schools and community groups.

Rather than wait for the people at these other clubs to contact the athletics club, there is opportunity to develop specific 'come and try' or special days, competitions and social events targeted to these club environments.

11.4. Amalgamation of Athletics Clubs

One option is to amalgamate all of the Athletics Clubs into one umbrella club with multiple activities and catering to various needs. This approach may allow for greater participation as it would cater for athletes of all ages, with the entity to be affiliated with both Little Athletics Victoria and Athletics Victoria.

A similar approach was adopted by the Yarra Ranges Athletics Club who was incorporated in 2012 when the former Little Athletics Club, known as Lilydale and Yarra Ranges Littles Athletics, affiliated with both Little Athletics Victoria and Athletics Victoria Little Athletics caters for athletes from 5 to 15 years, while Athletics Victoria caters for athletes 12 years and up. This has created a very inclusive and family orientated environment, where the over-riding emphasis is on participation. The club has since grown from strength to strength experiencing strong performances at events state-wide.

This option would provide the larger club an opportunity to offer athletics competition and training year-round with the ability for all members of a family to participate in athletics, either as an athlete or official. It would also provide an opportunity for the resources and management structures to be centralised thus reducing the burden on individual club volunteer management. It is important to note that any amalgamation would need to be carefully managed in order to be successful.

11.5. Venue Management and Equipment

Athletics requires specialist athletics equipment to conduct programs and events, including hurdles, high jump equipment and throwing equipment. This is generally brought in from other locations or hired from the clubs and as such the quality of the equipment can vary. Bench marking undertaken of similar regional venues shows other municipalities provide equipment available for hire by users and clubs. This process allows better management and efficient use of these assets and would provide greater ease of access to clubs, casual and event users. Clubs currently hire there equipment to third party users as a fundraising opportunity. It is important to note that clubs currently own and are thus responsible for the maintenance and capital replacement costs associated with the management of their equipment. If the



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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

equipment was centralised and owned by Council, Council would be responsible for the maintenance and capital replacements costs, saving the clubs this cost. Clubs' and third party hirers would pay a levy or fee for use of the equipment. This levylfee would be a significant saving to clubs compared to the capital replacement costs incurred by clubs under the current equipment management model in the long term. Thus allowing clubs to redirect equipment management costs savings elsewhere.

When schools hire the Ross Reserve Athletics venue a member of one of the clubs is required to assist with set up, access to equipment and troubleshoot any issues. Whilst this provides an opportunity for clubs to charge a fee for service and/or create a link between the school and the club, the reliance on volunteers can be challenging. Other municipalities benchmarked provide a Council event staff member to assist with these tasks and ensure that the event is conducted safely and effectively. This additional service is provided through a user pays process.

There is a need to move away from seasonal tenancy arrangements for athletics tenants. The benefit of this is to allow all-year round participation and activation of athletics. One option to be considered is providing the potential amalgamated club with a long-term lease which could have a clause requiring the club to facilitate opportunities to increase participation in athletics disciplines to the broader community. The other benefit of this approach is that it fosters the tenant club/s to look after the facility to a higher standard than seasonal tenants.

11.6. Priority Facility Improvements

It is critical for the long term sustainability of athletics that the Ross Reserve Athletics venue be developed to meet IAAF standards (Category two). To achieve these standards the following upgrades are required:

o Reconstruction of the Athletics Track

The track is currently uneven due to the foundation sub-grade being inadequate to support the synthetic surface.

o Athletics Only Venue

Currently soccer is played on the grass field in the centre of the athletics track. This prevents the development of the venue to IAAF standards as a hammer throw cage and javelin pad cannot be installed.

As per the Ross Reserve Master Plan a synthetic soccer pitch is proposed to be built next to the Athletics Track, alongside the creek. This will be serviced by a new pavilion, pictured in Appendix 1. The intent would be to move this tenanted soccer club to this adjacent new venue.

A survey and concept plan of the venue needs to be completed to ensure that all athletics features can be accommodated for effectively.



2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

0	Pavilion Upgrade
	The current facilities have a number of issues which need to be addressed including:
	 change rooms do not meet female and junior friendly standards lack of storage space
	 social rooms and change rooms are situated in independent buildings which are adjacent to each other
	 there is no first aid room inadequate kitchen/canteen space.
0	Venue Surrounds
	The surrounds of the athletics track need works to improve usability of the space. Currently there is tiered standing space which presents a hazard to users deeming it inaccessible. There is a significant lack of seating and shade around the track and the interior track fence needs upgrading.
	There is a need for a reliable public address system which services the entire venue for event purposes.
0	Signage and Wayfinding Improvements
	 Signage and wayfinding are essential to increase awareness, usage of facilities and membership of clubs. Well designed and located signage and wayfinding offers: the potential for the general public to know the club or facility is available for use who to contact regarding athletics opportunities information about what each club/facility offers and specialises in the types of programs and services the club offers.
	A review of all athletic facility signage is required, both at the club sites and in the reserve near the club and from adjacent streets directing people to the club/facility. Signage should ensure that clubs and facilities are easy to find and provide good quality, accurate information regarding the services offered.
	Signage should be supplemented with offsite information including the nature, surface and accessibility of all facilities, programs offered and target groups.
1	1.7. Future of Booth Reserve Athletics
	Venue
City of difficul 80% o venue histori	to the level of participation in athletics across the municipality and the lack of Greater Dandenong residents utilising the Booth Reserve Athletics venue, it is to justify having two athletics venues within the municipality, particularly when f Dandenong Little Athletics Centre participants (using Booth Reserve Athletics) reside within the City of Casey. Alternatively Council acknowledges the cal value this athletics site has provided the surrounding CGD residents and itability the site offers to little athletics.
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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

The venue consists of a grass track with ageing infrastructure which is near the end of its service life. The pavilion does not meet female and junior friendly standards and requires significant redevelopment to allow it to be used by other community groups.

Due to these factors and the level of participation it is difficult to justify capital improvement of the pavilion and athletics facilities. Ideally it would be preferable to consider amalgamation with the clubs at Ross Reserve or move to this venue. Ross Reserve is located 6.1 kilometres from the athletics facility at Booth Reserve.

A master plan for Booth Reserve is recommended to be completed to understand the potential use of the athletics facility site if the athletics club is relocated. As part of this process the community would be consulted.

11.8. School Participation

It would be reasonable to state that the majority of schools conduct an athletics program or event for their students. All schools who responded to the survey confirmed that they conduct a program, however the major barriers/challenges faced are related to cost (64% of respondents). Often these costs cannot be absorbed by the schools and are passed on to families.

Athletics venues in other municipalities do not charge schools within their municipality to use their venues. The current fees for schools located within City of Greater Dandenong are \$41 per hour and \$61.50 per hour for schools located outside this municipality.

Available resources to deliver programs and/or events in schools was also a concern, along with the competing demands of higher priorities within the school curriculum. Athletic State Sporting Associations have a role to play in providing schools with resources, education and support to deliver programs within schools, similar to other key Victorian sporting associations.

11.9. Cross-Country and Social Athletics Programming

City of Greater Dandenong Participation Study 2015 identified that Running/Jogging was the third most popular sport and active recreation activity in City of Greater Dandenong with a participation rate of 15%. With casual/social participation at this level provides a significant base for programming opportunities to engage with this population.

Currently none of the athletics clubs participate in the cross-country discipline, however School Sport Victoria conduct cross-country competitions for schools located within the City of Greater Dandenong.

As part of the capital improvement works being conducted at Ross Reserve over the coming years a 'tan' style running/walking track will be constructed within the reserve. This will provide a safe and accessible running track for use for casual and organised events. Council also needs to consider whether other locations located within the municipality would be suitable for these events also.



2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

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There is currently no 'Park-Run' sites located in the municipality and no known trial running groups. City of Greater Dandenong could look to host or alternatively attract Community 'Fun Run' events to the municipality to encourage participation in casual/social athletic pursuits. These events may create a pathway into formal structured athletic clubs. Annually the YMCA deliver a twilight fun run, however this is reliant on successfully receiving grant funding to deliver.

2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

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12. Recommendations

12.1. Club Sustainability

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority
12.1.1	To work with all Athletics Clubs located within the City of Greater Dandenong to consider amalgamation, and the retention of both Ross and Booth Reserve facilities with support from Council Officers. Increase the term of tenancy (long term lease) for a potential amalgamated club to provide increased activation and participation at the facility year-round.	Sport & Recreation Team; Clubs	High
12.1.2	Provide guidance to clubs to increase participation in Athletics.	Sport & Recreation Team	High
12.1.3	The development of linkages with schools to provide a mutually beneficial relationship.	Clubs; State Bodies	High
12.1.4	The development of linkages with other sporting clubs to provide cross-training opportunities in athletics during the off-season.	Clubs	High
12.1.5	To develop improved understanding and engagement of club volunteers to all people and abilities.	Sport & Recreation Team; State Bodies	High
12.1.6	Provide guidance on ways to promote athletic sport participation opportunities to residents.	Sport & Recreation Team	High
12.1.7	Provide guidance on ways to manage clubs more effectively.	Sport & Recreation Team; State Bodies	High
12.1.8	Provide information regarding fundraising opportunities to assist financially.	Sport & Recreation Team; State Bodies	High
12.1.9	Provide guidance on ways to ensure the club culture is inviting and inclusive.	Sport & Recreation Team; State Bodies	High
12.1.10	Advocate to State bodies to assist with the provision of club improvement programs and leadership training.	Sport & Recreation Team	High
12.1.11	Advocate to State bodies to assist with promotion of clubs to the broader community.	Sport & Recreation Team	High

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)



12.2. Sports Development

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority
12.2.1	Assist clubs develop a structure for all athletics (track and field) coaching activities across all participation levels.	Sport & Recreation Team; State Bodies	Medium
12.2.2	Facilitate increased opportunities for people to become accredited officials.	Sport & Recreation Team; Clubs; State Bodies	High
12.2.3	Facilitate increased opportunities for people to become accredited coaches.	Sport & Recreation Team; Clubs; State Bodies	High
12.2.4	Advocate State bodies to provide increased development opportunities to clubs and schools.	Sport & Recreation Team	Medium
12.2.5	Investigate opportunities with the Special Olympics for increased participation and engagement.	Sport & Recreation Team	Medium

12.3. Programming and Events

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority
12.3.1	To allow the athletics events to be conducted and both track and field disciplines to be accommodated, the Ross Reserve Athletics facility needs to only cater for athletics. The soccer pitch needs to be removed and the tenant club moved to play on a alternative pitch. This will allow for additional field equipment, including the hammer throw cage and javelin throw pad to be installed along with throw cages for the shot put and discus disciplines. This is a minimum requirement to enable the facility to meet IAAF standards (Class 2 Certificate).	Sport & Recreation Team	High
12.3.2	Number of athletics venues: Due to the declining number of participants, particularly from the City of Greater Dandenong, it is difficult to justify keeping two athletics venues in the municipality. It is recommended that the Ross Reserve be the primary municipality venue. The Booth Reserve venue could be redeveloped for different sports that lack available grounds.	Sport & Recreation Team	Medium
12.3.3	Modification of program/event formats: More sports are looking for shorter and more accessible formats that are convenient and efficient to maximise retention whilst providing an attractive option for new participants. Clubs need to develop initiatives to orovide new avenues for recruitment and retention.	Clubs; State Bodies	Medium

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

12.3.4	Purchase of specialised athletics equipment for event/club hire (refer to appendix 5).	Sport & Recreation Team	Medium
12.3.5	Implement an Events Officer Council position to assist with set up, access to equipment and troubleshoot any issues with events. Role could also manage bookings for this site.	Sport & Recreation Team	Medium

12.4. Infrastructure Improvements:

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority
12.4.1	Reconstruction of Athletics Track (Ross Reserve): The athletics track at Ross Reserve is the only synthetic surfaced track in City of Greater Dandenong and would be considered as a regional facility considering its proximity from other regional athletics venues. The surface of the track is uneven as a result of the sub-grade found underneath the synthetic surface. An initial geotechnical investigation has been completed and has guided the level of works required for reconstruction. The uneven track has resulted in a surface which is undulating making it inadequate for competition. In addition the maintenance cost to council is significant at \$40,000 per annum. The reconstruction will bring the facility up to IAAF standards (Class 2 Certificate) and will include additional track equipment for field sports, allowing the facility to be fully utilised for track and field events.	Sport & Recreation Team	High
12.4.2	 Pavilion and Venue Surrounds Redevelopment (Ross Reserve): The existing pavilion at Ross Reserve does not meet female and junior friendly standards and DDA requirements. The pavilion needs to be redeveloped to include, as a minimum: Unisex Change rooms with adjoining amenities Accessible Change room and amenity (with hoist and change bed) Increased storage space Commercial kitchen space First Aid Room Modern social space. It is recommended the tiered seating area be removed and the installation of new shade and seating around the athletics track be introduced. Ramp access from the pavilion to the track is required to provide ease of access to the venue. Currently there are no shade structures. 	Sport & Recreation Team	High

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

12.4.3	Signage and Wayfinding Improvements (Ross Reserve): Signage and wayfinding improvements are required to assist with directing the community and visitors to the Ross Reserve venue. Signage should ensure that clubs and facilities are easy to locate and provide good quality, accurate information regarding the services available at the club/facility.		Medium
12.4.4	Floodlighting Upgrade (Ross Reserve): Upgrade of the floodlighting at the venue to 200 lux levels is required to enable events to be conducted in the evenings.	Recreation	Medium

Capital Works	Projected Cost
Reconstruction of Athletics Track (Ross Reserve)	\$2.2 million
Pavilion Redevelopment & Surrounds (Ross Reserve)	\$6 million
Signage and Wayfinding Improvements (Ross Reserve)	\$100,000
Floodlighting Upgrade (Ross Reserve)	\$800,000

12.5. School Participation

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority
12.5.1	Remove the hire fee for schools within City of Greater Dandenong for Ross Reserve Athletics venue (excluding any additional equipment hire, club room cleaning requirements and CGD event staffing). This will promote usage of the venue by CGD schools and could lead to greater participation.	Sport & Recreation Team	High
12.5.2	Advocate to state sporting bodies to assist with programming, education and resourcing of schools to assist in the delivery of programs and events.	Sport & Recreation Team	Medium

12.6. Cross-Country and Social Athletics Programming

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority
12.6.1	Investigate strategies to increase participation in	Sport &	Medium
	cross-country.	Recreation	
		Team	
12.6.2	Investigate strategies to increase casual/social	Sport &	Medium
	athletics pursuits such as minor and major events.	Recreation	
		Team	



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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)



2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)





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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

۸n	pondix 2 Club Workshop Notos
Ah	pendix 2 – Club Workshop Notes
	enong Little Athletics Centre shop held Thursday 19 April 2018 at Booth Reserve, Athletics Pavilion.
Streng	<u>iths</u>
0	Number of shot put / discus – design for number of kids
0	Storage
0	Facility
0	
	Passionate / strive for excellence – management Increase representation in state competitions
0	Friendly environment / inclusive / culture
	Foster performance / participation focus
0	Social / all abilities / multicultural
0	Streamlining processes
romo	otion
0	Lack of profile
0	Signage on Clow Street
0	Schools – leaflets (with 3 clubs)
	Website
	Facebook
0	School newsletter is hit and miss Signage
	E-Newsletters from schools
	Word of mouth
0	Offer – 2 x trials
0	Query LA – clinics in schools
0	
0	Invitation to kids
acilit	ies
0	Viewing
0	Shelter
	Drainage – drain full Grass track
	Pavilion upgrade – (LED, facelift)
0	Seating
	Tower (leaning) Seating

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

Council Help o Links to multicultural groups o Promotion Programming funding support o Liaison / communication (consistently) o Understanding casual booking expectations o Open communications / sharing o Winter application for pavilion only Challenges / Areas for Improvement o Retentions/turn over, potential for amalgamation with other CGD clubs discussed. Cost - \$150 per year – disadvantaged groups o Parent involvement - education o Parents working weekends o Saturday school for multicultural groups/ESL o Split families o Officials / tech training / recruitment - cost o Centre coach - looking to pay coach o Other sports Spread of management 0 o Schools use in March - so out of sync with clubs o Grass track o Shelter o Links / partnerships with winter clubs Cross country • Equipment replacement – lack of funds o Grants are difficult Attract parents – get kids (multicultural considerations) o Breaking down barriers o Connect with multicultural department Media and Communications o Team app o Facebook o Website o LA email Masters Athletics - Ross Reserve Home Venue Members Meeting held on Thursday 3 May 2018 at Ross Reserve, Athletics Pavilion. Facilities o Most venues are just track • Not the infrastructure for throwing • Multilingual signage needed

2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

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	Track and flooding / drainage issues present Track surface needs improvement Facilities need to be improved
0	<u>vements</u> Recruitment Promotion Promotion that it is a Safe environment (social / physical activity)
0 0 0	tion Flyers at festivals Word of mouth Query policy change in Council promotion (i.e. Council able to promote Clubs individually to the community) Advertising with other sports Multilingual Further Involvement in CGD festivals
0	I Athletics Park runs (increase female participation) • Timing • Safe environment • Social • Flexible Social running groups
0 0 0	ership Predominantly Anglo (90%) membership via state (home venue nominated) 12-14 venues 60 registered home venue members (mainly track) Recruitment slow 30-35 per session every Wednesday night all year round Some events combined Existing competitors from Australia • Masters remain at both
<u>Club</u> o o	Coach not priority Financially viable

o User pays

- Low cost
 \$4/night club
 \$35/year state fee

2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

Sprin	gvale Little Athletics Club
	ig held Thursday 24 May 2018 at Ross Reserve, Athletics Pavilion.
What	Norks Well?
0	 Friday competition program - 2-2 ½ hour session Each child has 3-5 events with 20-30 minutes individual activity
	Good committee structure and base
	Financial
	Governance structure
	Support
	Liaison CO/LAU Inclusiveness/participatory based
Curre	nt Provision
0	October-March (3 week break over Christmas) competition Friday night (Non-compulsory training Monday. First three months relay training in addition)
0	One-off season cost to cover local carnivals
	 All regional/state user pays South Metro Region
	 Track and Field Regionals (not able at RR)
	 Relays – can be hosted Regionals
0	Cross-Country
	 April-August
	 Affiliated with Bayside CC - still under club
	 Can't be hosted at RR as no ability for 3km loop off road
	• U6-8: 1km
	• U9-11: 1.5km
	 U12-14: 2km U15+: 3km
	o to to that
Facilit	<u>/ Improvements</u>
	Advertising of facility/signage
	DDA – Track and Field and Pavilion
	Functionality pavilion
	Speakers/PA system for right around the track
	Enough storage and ramps to track
	Water fountains Shade structures
	Track surrounds
	ESD
0	
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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

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Areas of Improvement • Lack of coaching with more child activity • Lack of volunteers Workload across committee roles Old athletes to return to mentor/coach Community demands Timing o Retention Pathways Incentive Self-conscious/peer pressure $\circ \quad \text{Pathways to senior/transition} \\$ o Engagement schools Participation **Participation** Schools • Mainly Primary Schools 15+ schools carnivals Cost factor . Equipment • Travel Members present to assist • Benefit to club Finance **Disabled-Physical** • Lack of programming o Knowledge Promotion • Community events Some schools • Some social media (communications internally) o Some web Some word of mouth 0 • Name of pavilion/facility would be ideal Naming conversation Springvale Dandenong Athletics Club Meeting held Thursday 26 April 2018 at Civic Centre (Dandenong) Two years ago the club separated from the Haileybury Athletics Club (part of the Old Haileybury Athletics Club). Currently have three coaches. 0 0

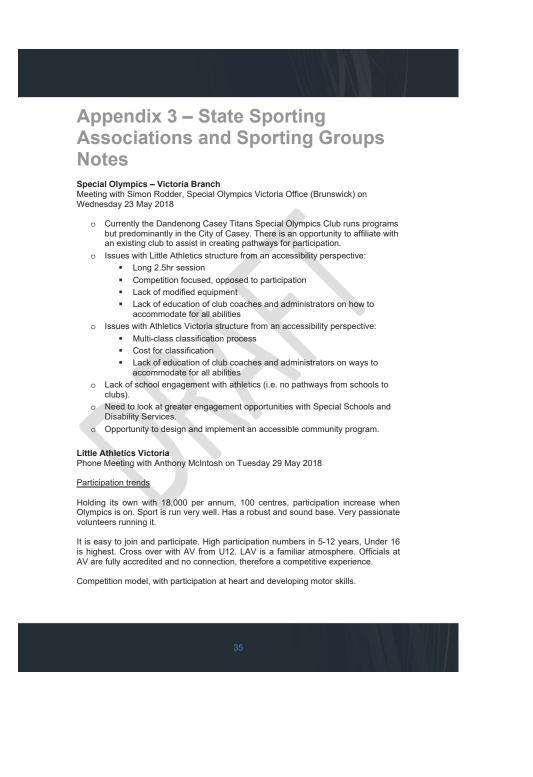
2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

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	 imited committee membership with essentially only the President active. Main Issues: Recruitment/Promotion (lacking resources & funding) Administration Structure/Engagement – members do not want to contribute at this level or do not have the capacity to assist. Financial viability Future of the club. Options are: Status Quo Amalgamation with Little Athletics Club Cease to operate
A	Clease to operate Server facility does not meet needs. "Strong Clubs have AV/IAAF accredited facilities." Throwing areas are needed. Previous recruitment strategies: Little Athletics Club (limited) Word of mouth Limited school engagement Limited social media Letter-box drop Newspaper advertisements

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)



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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)



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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

Doesn	t have the need to go through the traditional club structure.
resourc	aches, curriculum, and resources. Can be run anywhere with no specific .es. Weekly basis for an hour. Emerson School trial. Also about increasing al participation. Program to develop fundamental motor skills.
Lookin	g for opportunities to run the program with other disability schools.
Comm	unity has changed, opposed to LAV program.
	reness in Centres Modified equipment (not generally needed, centre by centre depending on need), grass track is an issue. Role model/ambassador for multi-class programs. Generally parent of child can deliver and educate officials/club leaders. Develop a support network. State champs have multi-class program. Promoting multi-class opportunity. Steer away from mutii-class at centre level and join in with everyone so as to not pigeon hole them. Sport can be tailored.
CALD/ o	ndigenous Don't do enough; don't have anything in foreign languages. From a marketing perspective. Need momentum and need to come as a cohort.
Yarra F	Ranges have a combined junior and seniors (LAV & AV).
attracti o o o	rception of some Little Athletes and families of senior athletes is that it is not ////////////////////////////////////
0 0 0	s Victoria and Little Athletics Victoria: Duplication of championship events Transition processes b/w bodies Joint board meetings National leadership challenge Scheduling of LA and AV events.
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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

Athle	tics Victoria (AV)
Meetii	ng with Kirby Ellis, Civic Centre (Dandenong) on Tuesday 29 May 2018
0	Participation is trending downwards.
0	AV is currently surveying their membership to get a better understanding of needs.
0	Recreational running is on the increase.
0	There is a perception that competitive athletics is too elitist.
0	Clubs are opposed to the 'Park Run' concept as they see it as a competitor.
0	There is no current support or funding available from Athletics Victoria for clubs.
	AV deliver a coaching course, however this is not subsidised and is user pays.
0	Concern about the attitude of AV staff and willingness to understand issues and improve the sport.
0	Dual membership option available between Little Athletics Victoria and Athletics Victoria.
0	AV are not currently delivering any school-based programs or support to schools.
0	AV are supportive of amalgamation of athletics clubs for long-term club sustainability.
0	Limited promotion of sport to the community - only via websites, social media and newsletters.
0	Have seen growth in para-athletes, despite lack of awareness in para opportunities.
Meetii	o l Sports Victoria (SSV) Ig with Jude Maquire, Ian Landy and Ricky Thompson, School Sport Victoria rg) on Wednesday 30 May 2018
0	Elitist model, focused on identifying the top athletes.
	They see the role of schools to provide the participatory/education focus.
	Appropriate modern facilities are critical to venues hosting regional and above athletics carnivals.
	 Venues also need to be able to accommodate both track and field events. Shade structures around the venue are critical as well as access to drinking fountains and adequate numbers of toilets.
	 A venue representative is critical at all SSV events to be able to provide equipment and trouble shoot issues.
	 An operational canteen also needs to be provided.

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

Question 1: Name of School The following schools completed the survey: Dandenong South Primary School Emerson – Junior/Senior School Campus Haileybury College Heatherhill Primary School Keysborough Primary School Keysborough College – Acacia Campus Keysborough College – Acacia Campus Keysborough College – Banksia Campus Mt Hira College P-12 Noble Park English Language School		
 Silverton Primary School St Elizabeth's Parish School St John's Regional College Yarraman Oaks Primary School 		
 St Elizabeth's Parish School St John's Regional College Yarraman Oaks Primary School Question 2: Do you run an athletics carnival		r school?
St Elizabeth's Parish School St John's Regional College Yarraman Oaks Primary School Question 2: Do you run an athletics carnival ANSWER CHOICES	and/or program at you RESPONSES 100.00%	r school?
St Elizabeth's Parish School St John's Regional College Yarraman Oaks Primary School Question 2: Do you run an athletics carnival ANSWER CHOICES Yes	RESPONSES	
St Elizabeth's Parish School St John's Regional College Yarraman Oaks Primary School Question 2: Do you run an athletics carnival ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES 100.00%	14

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
January	0.00%	0
February	0.00%	0
March	28.57%	4
April	0.00%	0
Мау	0.00%	0
June	0.00%	0
July	7.14%	1
August	28.57%	4
September	14.29%	2
October	0.00%	0
November	0.00%	0
December	7.14%	1
Multiple	0.00%	0
N/A - we do not run a program/carnival	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	14.29%	2
TOTAL		14

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

Question 4: Which school	ears participate in this program/ca	rnival?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Prep	35.71%	5
Grade 1	35.71%	5
Grade 2	42.86%	6
Grade 3	64.29%	9
Grade 4	64.29%	9
Grade 5	64.29%	9
Grade 6	64.29%	9
Year 7	28.57%	4
Year 8	28.57%	4
Year 9	21.43%	3
Year 10	21.43%	3
Year 11	21.43%	3
Year 12	21.43%	3
Junior School Only (Prep-grade 6)	21.43%	3
Senior School Only (Year 7-12)	28.57%	4
N/A	0.00%	C
Total Respondents: 14		

Question 5: Do you conduct an athletics program as part of the school's curriculum?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	92.86%	13
No	7.14%	1
TOTAL		14

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

Question 6: If you answered Yes to Q5 – Where do you conduct your program/carnival?

Response Type	No. of
	responses
At School	11
Ross Reserve Athletics Venue	1
Casey Fields Athletics Venue	1

Question 7: If you are conducting a program/carnival how is this made inclusive for all?

No.	Responses
1	Program design makes it inclusive - no standing still is goal - especially with junior school.
2	Standards based program, every child joins in across the school.
3	We use the older students to help out the younger.
4	Every member of every class competes at every athletics discipline. PP-G2 compete in modified athletics (egg/spoon, under/over hurdles etc.), whereas G3-6 complete the disciplines as they are meant to be completed. e.g. discus, long jump, hurdles, shot put etc.
5	All students are expected to join in PE classes in the athletics unit and it is targeted to various abilities. Students are encouraged to participate in events at the Athletics carnival
6	The types of activities and events are individualised for each student's needs. The expectation of the learning outcome for each student is different.
7	We plan to separate the students into junior, middle and senior so students can get tailored coaching. The challenge we have is finding coaches who have experience in working with children with special needs.
\leq	We have formed a relationship with Glenhuntly Athletic Club with the aim of transitioning students into mainstream athletics and cross country.
8	I run it in my PE lessons.
9	It is a compulsory event.
10	Modify activities and distances.
11	Everyone is included in their age event and children rotate through the activities. They score points for their house in each activity.
12	We have a range of events that cater to all abilities and use a range of different equipment that is inclusive to all.
13	House carnival and practice for SIS carnival in August.

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

Question 8: Does your school take part in Sc events (district or regional)?	chool Sport Victoria athl	etics	
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES		
Yes	71.43%		10
No, (please specific why)	28.57%		4
TOTAL			14
 a) ELS, hence not aligned to SSV, nor do I associated to being a member of SSV. S months maximum and their time for SSV environment. b) These events are on the weekend, making the event. Many of our students do not her the event. 	Students are only with us f begins in their mainstreating it hard for the students	or 12 m to get to	
	vents.		
	vents.		I
 c) Lack of commitment. Question 9: What are the challenges/barriers at your school? (Main issues only) 	vents.	n/carniva	I
 c) Lack of commitment. Question 9: What are the challenges/barriers at your school? (Main issues only) ANSWER CHOICES 	vents.	n/carniva	II SES
c) Lack of commitment. Question 9: What are the challenges/barriers at your school? (Main issues only) ANSWER CHOICES Available space to deliver program/event	vents.	n/carniva RESPONS 21.43%	II SES 3
c) Lack of commitment. Question 9: What are the challenges/barriers at your school? (Main issues only) ANSWER CHOICES Available space to deliver program/event Available resources to deliver program/event	vents.	/carniva RESPONS 21.43% 42.86%	ES 3 6
c) Lack of commitment. Question 9: What are the challenges/barriers at your school? (Main issues only) ANSWER CHOICES Available space to deliver program/event Available resources to deliver program/event Available staff to deliver program/event	vents.	/carniva RESPONS 21.43% 42.86% 35.71%	BES 3 6 5
c) Lack of commitment. Question 9: What are the challenges/barriers at your school? (Main issues only) ANSWER CHOICES Available space to deliver program/event Available resources to deliver program/event Available staff to deliver program/event Cost to transport students to an athletics venue	vents.	/carniva RESPONS 21.43% 42.86% 35.71% 50.00%	ES 3 6 5 7
c) Lack of commitment. Question 9: What are the challenges/barriers at your school? (Main issues only) ANSWER CHOICES Available space to deliver program/event Available resources to deliver program/event Available staff to deliver program/event Cost to transport students to an athletics venue Availability of an athletics venue	vents.	/carniva RESPONS 21.43% 42.86% 35.71% 50.00% 35.71%	BES 3 6 5 7 5
c) Lack of commitment. Question 9: What are the challenges/barriers at your school? (Main issues only) ANSWER CHOICES Available space to deliver program/event Available resources to deliver program/event Available staff to deliver program/event Cost to transport students to an athletics venue Availability of an athletics venue Cost of an athletics venue	ito delivering a program	/carniva RESPONS 21.43% 42.86% 35.71% 50.00% 35.71% 64.29%	ES 3 6 5 7 5 9
c) Lack of commitment. Question 9: What are the challenges/barriers at your school? (Main issues only) ANSWER CHOICES Available space to deliver program/event Available resources to deliver program/event Available staff to deliver program/event Cost to transport students to an athletics venue Availability of an athletics venue Cost of an athletics venue Cost of an athletics venue	i to delivering a program	A/Carniva RESPONS 21.43% 42.86% 35.71% 50.00% 35.71% 64.29% 35.71%	ES 3 6 5 7 5 9 5

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

Question 10: Any other comments on how we may be able to support athletics in schools?

No.	Responses
1	Support cost of school staff or coaches to be qualified through Athletics Australia courses.
2	Regular clinics interaction/communication between Little Athletics and the school to create smooth pathway.
3	No.
4	I will be looking at potentially including athletics in our term 4 after school sport program should we be successful in a grant.
5	Allow access to the Athletics tracks at no cost.
6	It would be great to access facilities in the Dandenong area.
7	Free clinics in school.
8	Free teacher PD. Someone to run free athletics lesson sequences during PE sessions to assist teachers.
	We currently do this with AFL and basketball and feel very supported.
9	Please don't offer a canteen loaded with junk food which is so contrary to our curriculum which promotes nutritious foods.
10	I did the Athletics coaching course online last year and it was fantastic, as it gave you practical fun games and activities to teach different athletic events.



2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

Equipment

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Appendix 5 – Specialist Athletics

The following equipment is recommended to be purchased by Council and hired out to Clubs and facility users. Indicative costs are included based on 2018/19 pricing:

Item	Quantity	Unit Cost	Sub Total
High Jump mat (6 x 4 x 0.7m)	1	\$9,197.60	\$9,197.60
High Jump stands	1 pair	\$848.07	\$848.07
High Jump crossbars	1	\$131.56	\$131.56
High Jump measuring device	1	\$382.54	\$382.54
High Jump Slatted frame (24 sqm)	1	\$3,254.65	\$3,254.65
High Jump moveable mat protection	1	\$16,116.99	\$16,116.99
welded cover (24 sqm)			
Hurdles	60	\$315.75	\$18,944.99
Hurdle trolleys	2	\$2,038.16	\$4,076.32
Starting Blocks	8	\$291.46	\$2,331.69
Starting Block racks	1	\$671.98	\$671.98
Lap counter with bell	1	\$663.88	\$663.88
Finish line post and ground socket	1	\$107.27	\$107.27
Timekeepers stand (for 12 people)	1	\$4,588.49	\$4,588.49
Winner stand (for 12 people)	1	\$2,185.96	\$2,185.96
Discus throw cage (mobile)	1	\$9,658.71	\$9,658.71
Discus set (0.75/1.25/1.5/1.75/2kg)	1	\$459.72	\$459.72
Hammer Throw cage and ground sockets	1	\$15,684.26	\$15,684.26
Shot put set (1/2/3/4/5/6/7kg)	1	\$313.80	\$313.80
Javelins set (400/500/600/700/800/900g)	1	\$693.51	\$693.51
Throw markers (set of 25 markers)	1	\$607.12	\$607.12
Distance markers	10	\$196.33	\$1,963.32
Team bench mobile roofed	1	\$5,424.42	\$5,424.42
Distance measuring panel	1	\$793.42	\$793.42
Steel measuring tapes	1	\$54.65	\$54.65
Rakes with handles	1	\$44.53	\$44.53
Broom for running track (100cm width)	1	\$60.72	\$60.72
Steeplechase barrier	1	\$935.11	\$935.11
		Total Cost	\$100 238 81

 Total Cost
 \$100,238.81

 Note: Costs based upon quote received from Helo Sports (August 2018, Also note that items and quantities listed may change subject to discussion with clubs and event organisers needs prior to purchase.
 \$100,238.81

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

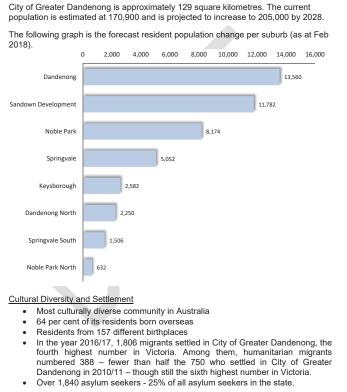
Appendix 6 – References

Year in Review 2016/2017, Little Athletics Victoria Year in Review 2015/2016, Little Athletics Victoria Annual Report 2014/2015, Little Athletics Victoria Annual Report 2013/2014, Little Athletics Victoria 2016-2017 Annual Report, Athletics Victoria



2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

Appendix 7 - City of Greater Dandenong Demographics Population





2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

•	<u>cy and Literacy in English</u> Languages other than English spoken by over two-thirds (70%) of residents – highest in the state. One in five residents have limited fluency in spoken English – highest level in Victoria. Estimated 26% of residents have very limited English literacy.
•	tion 28% of local prep. pupils were vulnerable on one or more aspects of development – highest in Victoria. 83% of prep. pupils participated in a pre-school program - third lowest in Melbourne. In 2016, 13% of 20 to 24 year-olds left school before year 11, compared with 8.3% across Melbourne. 18% per cent of 20 to 24 year-olds neither in paid employment nor enrolled in education - second highest level in Melbourne.
•	 ployment & Incomes Unemployment rate: 10.2% in June 2017 - highest in Victoria and twice metropolitan level. 8,839 residents are unemployed - a rise of 1,375 people, or 21%, since mid-2011. Individual incomes of \$476 - 71% of metropolitan level and lowest in Melbourne. Nearly one in three (31%) families with children have no parent in paid work – highest Melbourne.
	In 30 years to 2017, local housing purchase costs trebled in real terms. Local housing prices rose from 3.2 years of average household income in 1996, to 8.1 years in 2016. Proportion of rental properties affordable to Centrelink recipients fell from 97% in 2001, to 5% in 2018. Nearly two-thirds (68%) of renters in City of Greater Dandenong faced financial stress after paying their rent - the second highest level in Melbourne and substantially higher than the corresponding metropolitan level of 53%.
<u>Famili</u> • •	 ES In 2016, the teenage birth rate in City of Greater Dandenong was twice the metropolitan level, at nine births per 1,000 women aged 15-19, compared with five per 1,000 across Melbourne. 82% of residents who gave birth in 2014/15 were born overseas. One-parent households account for 28% of families with dependent children, compared with 24% across Victoria.

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2.4.2 Athletics Development Plan 2019 (Cont.)

.4.2 Admetics Development I fan 2015 (Oor

<u>Health</u>

- Adjusted disability rate is 7.2% seventh highest in the state.
- 15% of City of Greater Dandenong residents consumed take-away meals at least once per week the third highest in Victoria.
 30% of residents participated in 30 minutes or more of physical activity on
- 30% of residents participated in 30 minutes or more of physical activity on four or more days each week - the second lowest proportion in the State.

Gender Equity

- Women in City of Greater Dandenong experience higher rates of limited English fluency, are less often in paid work and receive decisively lower incomes in employment than men. They account for six in seven sole parents, experience higher rates of mental illness, are more often assaulted in the home than males, and are twice more likely to feel concerned for their personal safety at night than men.
 36% of residents expressed opposition to gender equity in a VicHealth survey
- 36% of residents expressed opposition to gender equity in a VicHealth survey

 highest in Victoria.
- In 2016/7, the rate of incidents of violence within families, recorded by police in City of Greater Dandenong, was 65% higher than the metropolitan level and the highest rate in Melbourne.

Youth

- Seventy per cent of 12 to 24 year-olds speak languages other than English at home,
- 1,500 young people have limited fluency in the use of spoken English.
- 13% of 20 to 24 year-olds in City of Greater Dandenong had left school before completing year 11 ('left school early') - compared with 8.3% across Melbourne.
- 2,516 15-24 year-olds are neither employed nor enrolled in education a rise of 535 or 27% on the number of disengaged young people in City of Greater Dandenong five years earlier. Local disengagement rates rise with age, from 7% among 15-19 year-olds, to 18% among those aged 20-24 years.
- In 2016, 40 births were recorded among women aged 15-19 years in City of Greater Dandenong, representing a rate of 9 births per 1,000 women of that age – almost double the corresponding metropolitan level of 5 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19.

Older Residents

- 17,000 aged 70 years or more. In the decade to 2028, this number may increase by 4,600.
- 73% of residents aged 70 or more were born overseas –the largest proportion in Victoria.
- Over half of residents aged 70 or more speak languages other than English at home.
- Over one-quarter (29%) of residents aged 70 or more has limited fluency in the use of spoken English.



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2.4.2	Athletics	Development	Plan	2019	(Cont.)
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•	At \$554, the median income among City of Greater Dandenong residents aged 55-59, and therefore approaching retirement, was the lowest in Melbourne in 2016.
•	The ratio of Aged Pension recipients to persons aged 65 years or more in City of Greater Dandenong was 78% - the second highest in Melbourne. By contrast the ratio of Aged Pension recipients to older persons in metropolitan Melbourne was 64%, reflecting a lower dependency upon the pension for income support among these residents.
Indige	nous Residents
•	Indigenous residents are half as likely to own or be purchasing their homes (33%) as the general population (61%). 63% of indigenous families with children in City of Greater Dandenong were one-parent families –more than twice the level of 27% among the general
•	population. Early birth rates were relatively high among young indigenous women, with 7.7% of 15-24 year-old indigenous women in City of Greater Dandenong having borne a child, compared with 3% of non-indigenous women of that
•	age. Among young adults, aged 20 to 24 years, 43% had left school early – over three times the corresponding level of 13% among non-indigenous young adults.
•	4% of indigenous residents aged 25 to 44 years hold a degree or higher qualification in 2016, compared with 33% of people within the same age range. Unemployment rates are 22% among indigenous residents - compared with
	10% among the general population.
<u>Overa</u>	<u>Il Disadvantage</u> The 2016 Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage, based on the findings of the 2016 Census, ranked City of Greater Dandenong as the second most disadvantaged municipality in Victoria, after Central Goldfields. This is the same ranking as for 1996, 20 years ago.
	50



3.1.5 List of Registered Correspondence to Mayor and Councillors

Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance, Legal & Risk			
Attachments:	 List of Registered Correspondence to Mayor and Councillors [3.1.5.1 - 2 pages] 			

Officer Recommendation

That the listed items for the period 19 May to 30 May 2025 provided in Attachment 1 to this report be received and noted.

Executive Summary

1. Subsequent to past Council resolutions in relation to the listing of registered incoming correspondence addressed to the Mayor and Councillors, Attachment 1 to this report provides a list of this correspondence for the period 19 May to 30 May 2025.

ATT 3.1.5.1 List of Registered Correspondence to Mayor and Councillors



Correspondences addressed to the Mayor and Councillors received between 19/05/25 & 30/05/25 - for officer action - total = 0

Correspondence Name

Correspondence Dated Date Record Created User Currently Assigned

Objective ID

Nil.

NB: Users assigned may have changed by the time of the Council Meeting. Correct at time of report production only.

Objective

CONNECTED. COLLABORATIVE. COMMUNITY.

Correspondences addressed to the Mayor and Councillors received between 19/05/25 & 30/05/25 - for information only - total = 6

Correspondence Name	Correspondence Dated	Date Record Created	Objective ID	User Currently Assigned
An email from a resident requesting confirmation of contact details of a Councillor.	16-May-25	16-May-25	A12038264	Mayor & Councillors Office
An email from a resident requesting replacement of a damaged guardrail/safety barrier on Jones Road, Dandenong.	18-May-25	19-May-25	A12039101	Mayor & Councillors Office
An email from the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons Australia inviting Council to commemorate the 80th anniversaries of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.	19-May-25	19-May-25	A12040287	Mayor & Councillors Office
An invitation from Blue Light Victoria for the Mayor to visit current programs at Noble Park Language School.	23-May-25	23-May-25	A12054808	Mayor & Councillors Office
An invitation from the Whirlybird Day Club for the Mayor to attend its 21st Birthday Celebration.	27-May-25	27-May-25	A12065709	Mayor & Councillors Office
A complaint from a Keysborough resident regarding bamboo planted at a neighbouring property.	28-May-25	28-May-25	A12074991	Mayor & Councillors Office

NB: Users assigned may have changed by the time of the Council Meeting. Correct at time of report production only.

4 NOTICES OF MOTION

A Notice of Motion is a notice setting out the text of a motion proposed to be moved at the next relevant meeting. It must be in writing, signed by a Councillor, and be lodged with the Chief Executive Officer in sufficient time for them to give each Councillor at least 72-hours notice of such notice.

The guidelines for submitting a notice of motion to a Council meeting are included in the current Governance Rules.

5 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/DELEGATED MEMBERS AND COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

The principal purpose of this item in the Council Meeting Agenda is for Councillors to report on their attendance, observations or important matters arising from their liaison or representation with groups for which the Councillor has been formally appointed by Council. In accordance with the documented 'protocol' that applies to either liaisons or representatives, Councillors should raise matters of importance during this item. Other matters may also be reported.

If a Councillor chooses to speak, the name of the conference/event and the Councillor will be noted in the Minutes for that meeting. If a Councillor requires additional information on the conference/event to be listed in the Minutes, they must submit it in writing to a Governance staff member by 12.00pm the day following this Council Meeting.

Question time is provided to enable Councillors to address questions to members of Council staff. The guidelines for asking questions at a Council meeting are included in the current Governance Rules.

Councillors have a total of 15 minutes each to report on their attendances at meetings, conferences or events and to ask questions of Council staff.

6 URGENT BUSINESS

No business may be admitted as urgent business unless it:

- a) relates to or arises out of a matter which has arisen since distribution of the Agenda; and
- b) cannot safely or conveniently be deferred until the next ordinary meeting and unless agreed to by a majority of those Councillors present at the meeting.

7 CLOSE OF BUSINESS