

DECISION-MAKING GUIDELINES

Pursuant to Section 5 of the

Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation Act 2011

Approval of premises as suitable for gaming

I, Marlene Kairouz, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation and the Minister responsible for the **Gambling Regulation Act 2003** (the Act), publish these guidelines representing the policy of the Victorian Government concerning the approval of premises as suitable for gaming by the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (the Commission).

The main objectives of the Act include to foster responsible gambling in order to minimise harm caused by problem gambling, to accommodate those who gamble without harming themselves or others, and to ensure that minors are neither encouraged to gamble nor allowed to do so.

One way the Act seeks to achieve these objectives is by regulating the location of gaming machines. Gaming machines may only be located on premises approved as suitable for gaming by the Commission. The Act's objectives are relevant to the Commission's decision as to whether or not approval should be granted.

Section 3.3.7 of the Act provides that the Commission must not grant an application for approval of premises as suitable for gaming unless satisfied that, among other matters, the premises are, or on the completion of building works will be, suitable for the management and operation of gaming machines.

Where a building includes permanent residential accommodation, locating gaming machines in that building can increase exposure to gambling for residents. This exposure may increase the risk that some of those residents will be enticed to gamble on impulse. It also reduces the capacity of residents to avoid exposure to gaming machines and other forms of gambling available in a venue. This may be particularly problematic for children and people at risk of problem gambling.

A number of responsible gambling measures in Victoria are aimed at ensuring the wellbeing of minors, including the prohibition on minors gambling and the prohibition on minors entering a licensed gaming machine area or casino. The Victorian Government is concerned to ensure that provisions for the wellbeing of minors in relation to gaming venues remain adequate and support the adoption of measures to ensure that children are not exposed to the sights and sounds of gaming machines.

Research indicates that frequent exposure to gambling can leave people particularly vulnerable to developing problems with their gambling. Research examining the effect of exposure to gambling on Victorian gaming venue staff indicated that 5.6 per cent of staff were problem gamblers which is nearly six times higher than the rate for the Victorian general population. A further 13.7 per cent were in the moderate risk category which is around 15 times higher than the rate for the general population. Research also indicates that easy access to a gaming venue is a potential risk factor for problem gamblers in treatment.

Locating gaming machines in a building with permanent residential accommodation is inconsistent with the Act's responsible gambling objectives. When considering applications for the approval of premises as suitable for gaming, the Commission must have regard to the Victorian Government's policy that any building that includes (or is planned to include) permanent residential accommodation should not be approved as premises suitable for gaming.

These guidelines apply to all applications for approval of premises decided after the date of the guidelines' gazettal.

Dated 13/2/17

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop at the top followed by several horizontal strokes and a small flourish at the end.

HON MARLENE KAIROUZ MP
Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation