

DORSET GARDENS HOTEL

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

CONTENTS

Introduction & Key Findings	3
Venue Location & Operation	4
Patronage of the Venue	15
Municipal Profile	19
EGM Provision & Expenditure	26
Problem Gambling Policies, Procedures & Impact	31
Social & Economic Impact Summary	40
Appendix A: Survey Results & Detailed Demographics	45
Appendix B: Definitions, Sources & Abbreviations	48

INTRODUCTION & KEY FINDINGS

This report has been prepared in accordance with instructions from the Dorset Gardens Hotel (the "Applicant") as the operator of the Dorset Gardens Hotel at 335 Dorset Road, Croydon (the "Venue"). The Venue is currently licensed to operate 97 Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs). The Applicant is seeking to add 8 EGMs to its gaming operation, which would bring the total number of machines at the Dorset Gardens to 105.

The purpose of this report is to assess the social and economic impacts of the proposed addition of 8 EGMs at the Venue to complement a significant redevelopment of the broader entertainment facilities. This report considers how the impact of the proposed gaming machine addition will affect the well-being of the Croydon and surrounding communities, as well as the broader City of Maroondah.

- The applicant is seeking approval for 8 additional gaming machines as part of a significant redevelopment of the Dorset Gardens Hotel.
- The venue offers a wide range of facilities and entertainment options, making it popular with patrons of all ages including families through to young and older adults. Gaming is offered as just one use as part of the wider entertainment facility.
- The demographic profile of the City of Maroondah does not present an elevated risk of problem gambling behaviour or harm from that behaviour. The area of most relevance to Dorset Gardens, being the being the immediate 2.5 and 5km radii catchment presents generally as an area home to residents of with a positive demographic profile, experiencing low levels of disadvantage.
- The current distribution of gaming venues and machines results in a higher-than-average provision of gaming opportunities relative to the resident population, noting that population is growing at a steady and stable rate. This is in part a factor of some large venues towards the edge of the municipality which draw trade from outside the local government area. If the application is approved, the gaming density in the municipality relative to population will remain similar, with a modest increase in gaming expenditure.
- Potential for increased problem behaviour or other consequences as a direct result of this application is limited. In addition to a positive demographic profile, moderate gaming access/usage and responsible venue operations, the EGM addition is a modest incremental increase from the 97 EGMs already in operation. The machines will only increase access to gaming opportunities in limited peak times.
- The benefits of the application include providing access to machines for those who wish to play in a responsible manner; economic and social effects of the proposed redevelopment, in particular the addition of the new café, expanded bistro; general refurbishment improvements to other areas; improved disability access to meet modern standards; employment generation through the broadening of capacity and facilities; and improvements to the financial return from the venue which will help fund and support the venue operator's plan to increase community contributions.
- With negligible effects on other individual businesses (gaming and non-gaming), the main dis-benefit of the application relates to the potential for harm deriving from the addition of 8 EGMs. However, the potential for an increase in problem gambling or other harm as a direct result of this application is very low given the small incremental change.
- Consequently, it is considered the benefits of this application in a social and economic sense will at least meet, or more likely exceed the dis-benefits.
- **On the balance of the evidence and analysis of the application, it is my opinion that granting approval for a license for an additional 8 EGMs to operate at the Dorset Gardens Hotel would not result in a net detriment to the community.**

01

VENUE LOCATION & OPERATION

This section presents an overview of the operation of the venue, including the local context, venue facilities, activities and community contributions, along with future plans for redevelopment and community support.

SITE LOCATION & CONTEXT

Dorset Gardens Hotel is located on Dorset Road in Croydon, approximately 30km east of Melbourne's Central Business District (CBD). It sits within the City of Maroondah.

The Hotel is immediately south of the Carrum-Warburton rail trail, with the surrounding area being largely residential areas.

The Hotel is surrounded by a very large car park with other uses sharing that parking including the Dorset Gardens Motel (part of the subject venue) and the Fawcner Bingo Centre to the south-east of the main hotel building. Other uses of note nearby include:

- A 7-Eleven service station adjacent to the venue on Dorset Road.
- Bowens Building Supplies and United Petroleum on the opposite side of Dorset Road.
- The Dorset Recreational Reserve and Golf Club to the south-east.
- Swinburne University Croydon TAFE Campus, specializing in specialist trades TAFE courses, 300m west
- Dorset Lodge Aged Care 200m to the south-west
- Dorset Village, a block of units at the corner of Dorset and Mt Dandenong Roads which is occupied predominantly by retired residents.

Major retail or other commercial facilities are at least 1km from the venue. Given the surrounding uses are primarily residential and limited high activity generating uses within the 1km radius, Dorset Gardens Hotel should be considered a destination style venue, generally associated with less problem gambling risk*. This is reflected in the patronage surveys later in the report showing the accessible location on Dorset Road and the range of activities, attracts visitors from a wide area.

* See Section 5 for further explanation and discussion of destination versus convenience gambling venues.

Venue Location & Context



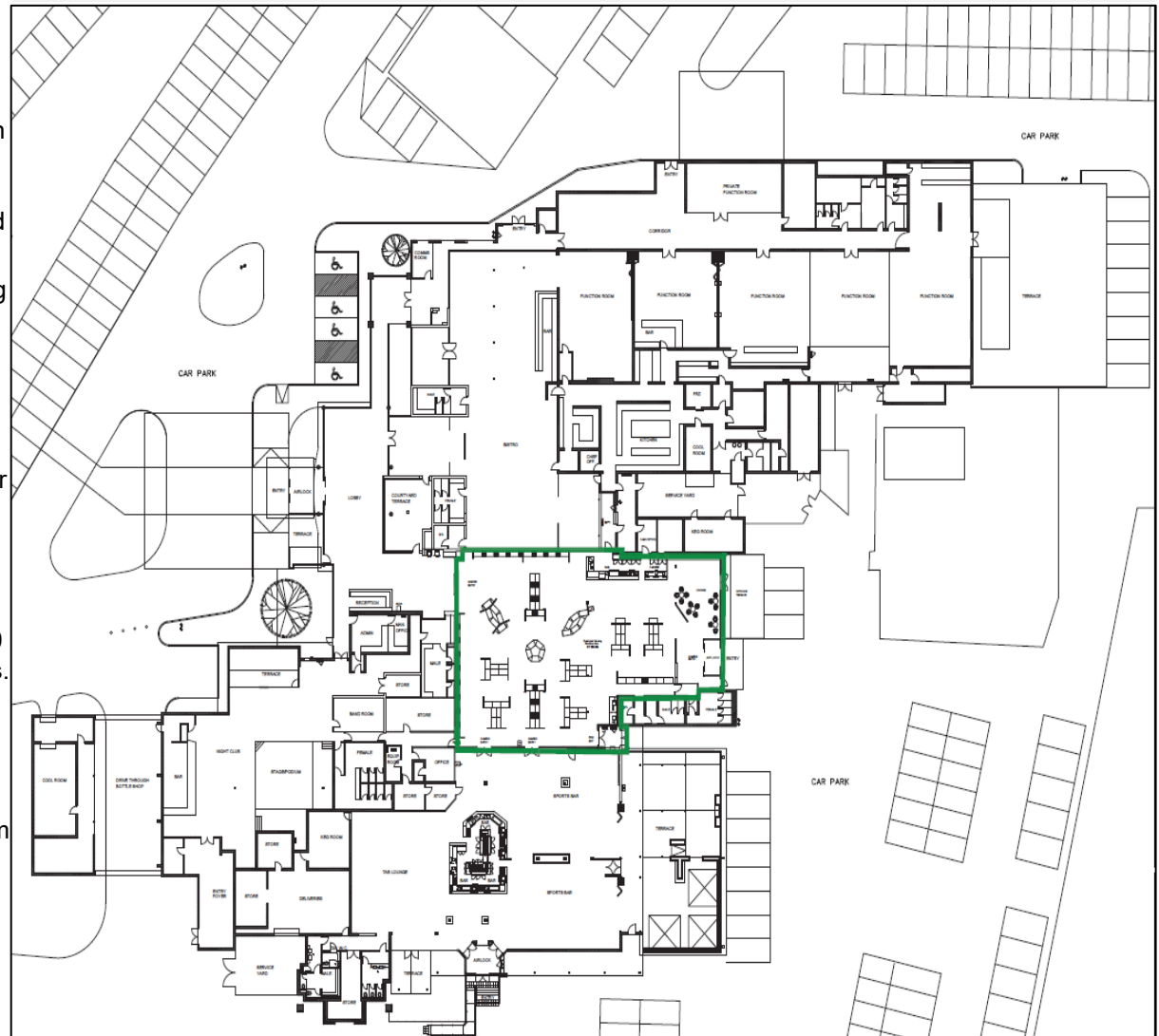
FACILITIES

The Dorset Gardens Hotel currently provides local residents and visitors with a broad range of entertainment options. It is one of the largest entertainment venues of its type under one roof in Victoria with a maximum capacity of 888 patrons. Key facilities are shown adjacent and summarised below.

- **Bistro:** the largest catering area within the venue (capacity for 350 patrons) and open 7 days and serves lunch and dinner. With a modest children's play space adjacent, the bistro attracts a broad cross-section of the community, including local families, although this market could be better served as the bistro is dated and is often reaching capacity.
- **Sports Lounge:** providing sports-related entertainment including providing beverages, meals, live sport viewing, TAB, etc. This is a very large space with a dedicated bar and adjacent external terrace, with capacity for 650 patrons.
- **Gaming Room:** the gaming room sits central relative to the rest of the venue and currently accommodates 97 EGMs and has capacity to accommodate the additional machines without further expansion. A more detailed floorplan for this space is shown overleaf.
- **Function Spaces:** With flexibility to divide the space into up to 5 rooms and with an adjacent terrace, the total function room/conference rooms collectively can accommodate up to 200 guests for birthdays, weddings, community and corporate events. This is one of the largest function centres in the region.
- **Entertainment Area:** The Dorset Gardens is a well-known entertainment venue in the eastern suburbs, with this space attracting a younger demographic to the venue. It is open every Friday and Saturday night and nights prior to public holidays from 9pm to 4am-5am.
- **Accommodation:** Providing visitors with 45 3.5-star units and self-contained apartments. The motel units are popular with function guests. Guests are also provided with a room service option.
- **Bottle Shop:** the venue features a drive-thru Thirsty Camel Bottle Shop adjacent to the entertainment area.

The venue draws from a broad range of visitors beyond just gaming patrons, provided the variety of entertainment options coupled with strong accessibility.

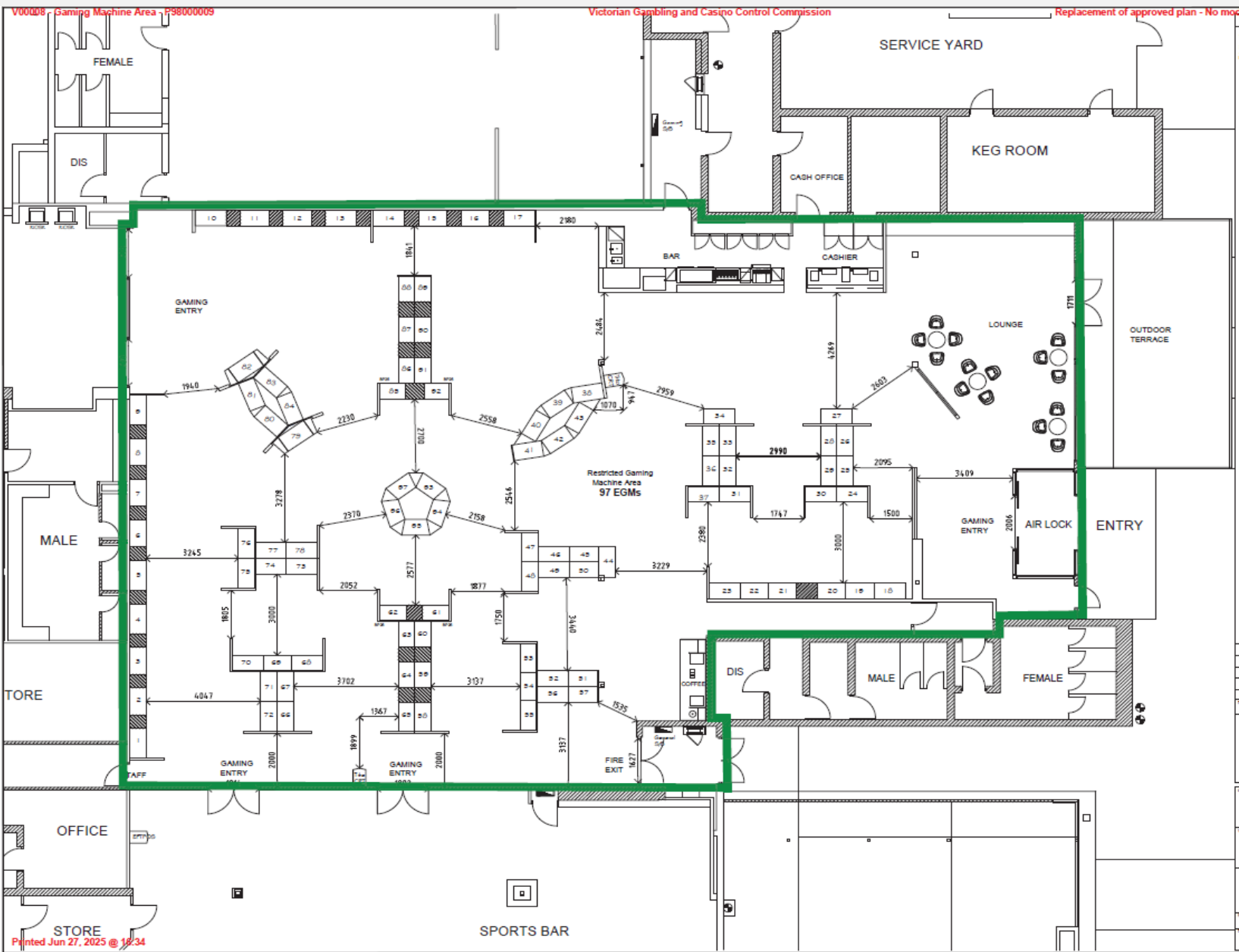
Existing Floorplan of Subject Venue



Source: Dorset Gardens Hotel

FACILITIES

Existing Gaming Lounge Floorplan



VENUE IMAGES

VENUE ENTRANCE LOUNGE



OUTDOOR TERRACE OFF SPORTS BAR



GAMING LOUNGE



KIDS PLAYGROUND



SPORTS BAR



ENTERTAINMENT AREA



BISTRO



FUNCTION ROOM



MOTEL UNITS



VENUE OPERATION

Hours of Operation

Operating hours for venue are:

- Accommodation Reception
 - Monday – Sunday 8am - 4am
- Gaming Room:
 - Monday – Sunday – 10am - 4am
- Bistro:
 - Monday – Sunday – 11am - 11pm
- Sports Bar:
 - Monday – Sunday – 11am - 1am
- Bottle Shop:
 - Monday – Sunday – 9am – 12midnight
- Entertainment Area:
 - Friday – 9pm - 4am
 - Saturday – 9pm - 5am

The hotel's reception lounge is also open when the gaming room is in operation.

- Good Friday:
 - 12noon – 11pm.
- Anzac Day:
 - 12midnight – 1am and 12noon – 12midnight.
- On any other day:
 - 10am – 4am.

Activities & Promotions

The venue offers various promotions and activities over the course of a week including:

- **Morning Melodies:** Local musicians, bands or tribute shows play monthly in the venue with morning tea provided for older patrons to socialize on a regular basis.
- **Poker and Pool Nights:** Hosted on various nights throughout the week in the sports bar.
- **Quiz Nights:** Interactive quizzes are hosted every Tuesday evening and are promoted as family friendly entertainment.
- **Live Entertainment:** The Dorset Gardens is renowned as a key entertainment venue in the eastern suburbs with live shows each Friday in the entertainment area including tribute bands (e.g. Queen, AC/DC, 80's). Due to the nature of most of these shows, the patrons attracted are typically more mature. Saturday nights attract a younger patronage with the entertainment area operating with more traditional DJ.
- **Festive Gatherings:** The bistro hosts a wide range of themed meals for key events throughout the year such as Mother's/Father's Day, Christmas, New Years Eve etc. These gatherings seem to garner strong attendance throughout the venue, at times exceeding 400 patrons.
- **Bingo:** The Bingo Centre is a separate building connected to the Hotel by a walkway. This is leased to an operator, although community groups associated with the hotel will host bingo sessions there.

Groups Accessing Facilities

The venue's facilities are used by a range of community groups on a regular basis:

- **Probus & RSL:** the hotel provides access to function or bistro spaces for meetings or social gatherings, providing opportunities for active retirees to get together.
- **Lions Club & events with Other Charities:** Working with charity groups for functions and events to help increase awareness of key issues.
- **Aged Care and Disability Groups:** Visitors with additional care needs regularly come and meet at the venue, often using the function rooms free of charge. Some of the younger disabled patrons who visit on a regular basis find the hotel provides an outing more aligned to their age and interest.

The Hotel operates a courtesy bus which will pick up and return patrons from/to home.

Several of the proposed changes to the venue discussed later in this report are intended to improve access to spaces within the venue for the variety of groups visiting, including improved disability access.

FUNCTION ROOM USAGE

For the year to 30 June 2024, a total of 437 events were held within the function rooms at Dorset Gardens Hotel, with approximately 25,000 guests attending. Key activities held at the venue primarily consist of the following:

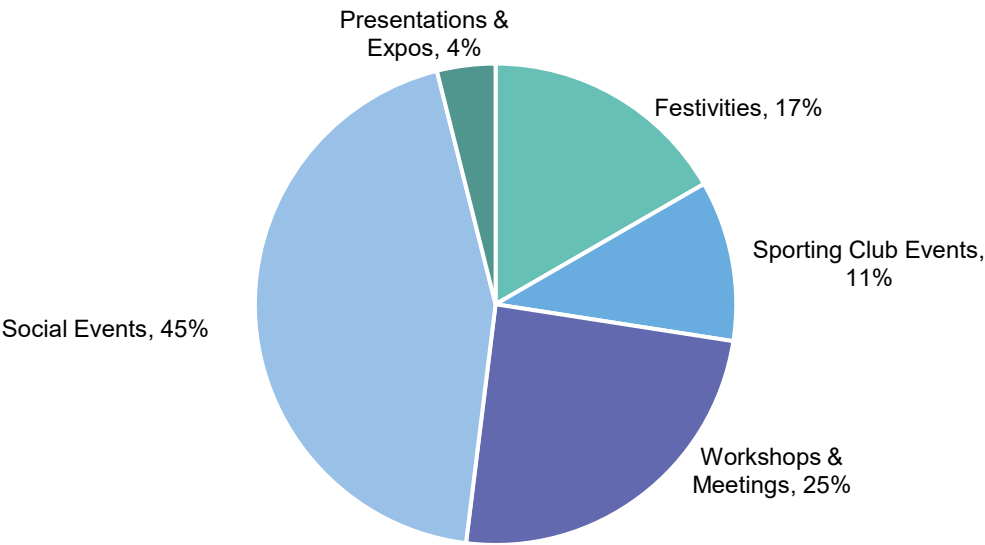
- Social Events (birthdays, reunions, graduations, group bookings for lunch/dinner buffet etc.)
- Festivities (e.g. Christmas related parties)
- Sporting Club Events
- Presentations & Expos
- Workshops & Meetings

Some of the recently held events within the function room included various workshops & meetings, presentations and Christmas related celebrations.

A breakdown of the main types of functions held at the venue are shown in the chart adjacent.

The usage of the function room is reflective of the broad customer base that frequents the venue, ranging from local businesses/organisations hosting corporate events to families & groups celebrating birthdays, graduations and anniversaries. This strong and diverse usage furthers the venue's position as a multifaceted entertainment offer within the locality that attracts a broad variety of groups to host events.

Function Room Activities Breakdown



Source: Dorset Gardens Hotel; Urbis

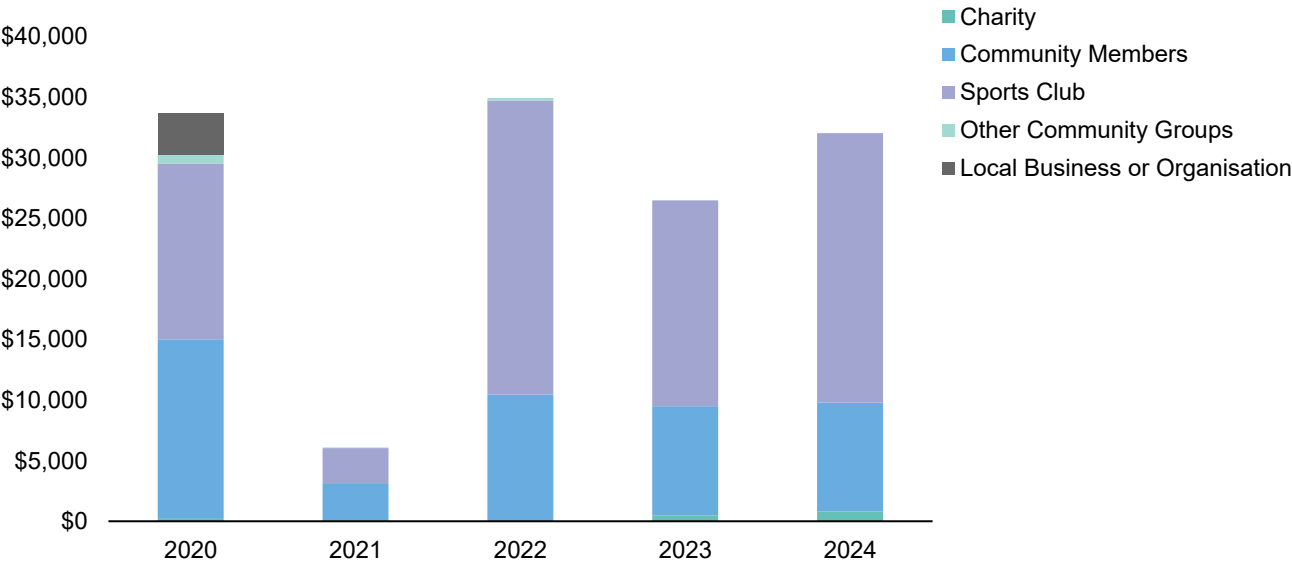
CURRENT & FUTURE COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

Based on community contributions data provided by venue management between 2020-2024, a total of \$133,255 in cash donations have been made by the venue.

Excluding 2021 due to COVID restrictions, Dorset Gardens Hotel donated some \$31,700 annually on average to local charities, sports clubs and other community groups over the last five years or so.

Going forward, the venue aims to enshrine their support to the wider community by guaranteeing by way of condition their annual donation amount of \$20,000, along with a further \$10,000 of in-kind donations.

Breakdown of Cash Donations to Community Groups (2020-2024)



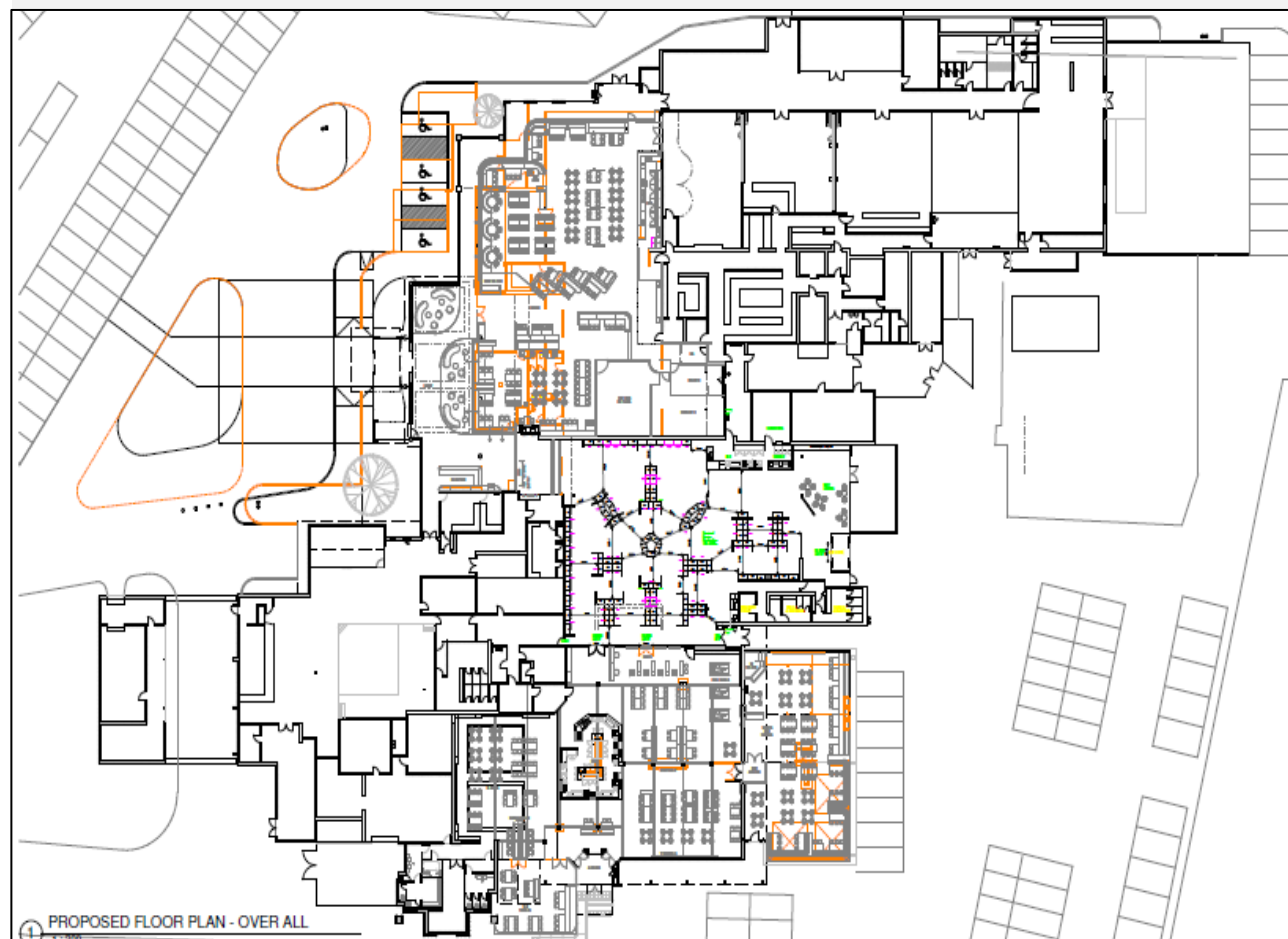
Note- "Other Community Groups" denotes groups such as schools and other community organisations that are unspecified in nature.
Source: Dorset Gardens Hotel

FUTURE PLANS – REASONS FOR ADDITIONAL EGMs

The subject venue is seeking approval for an additional 8 EGMs as part of a wider refurbishment of the venue to improve the offer to patrons, which is estimated to require an investment of \$6.7 million excluding GST:

- **Improved Facilities & Services:** The hotel has been constrained in the ability to respond to the needs of patrons brought upon by the changing demographic. The poor quality of the bistro relative to more updated parts of the venue has limited its ability to provide a dedicated and attractive space for families and the broader community. This reduces the ability of the venue to compete locally. The current space occupied by the bistro is insufficient, lacks modern amenity and does not integrate with wider venue as well. Improved accessibility for patrons, especially those with mobility issues, is proposed to be enhanced through reserved parking and pick up zones. The additional revenue generated by the EGMs will enable expansion plans detailed in this section to be delivered.
- **Choice for Patrons:** The current offer of 97 EGMs can create limitations in machine availability for patrons at certain times. Given the vast size of the venue and the range of entertainment options, the gaming room can struggle to meet demand, with the machines often occupied. Patrons may also have preferences toward a certain type of machine which cannot be met. The proposed addition of 8 EGMs will allow for greater choice and capacity to be offered to patrons. Although this would take the venue to the State maximum of 105 EGMs, this would be consistent with the vast scale of the venue across a full range of services.
- **Protect against competition:** With the presence of large venues including Croydon Hotel and Club Kilsyth being within the 5km radius, management recognises the need to maintain quality services through continuous improvement to the offer at Dorset Gardens to remain competitive and better service the community.

Proposed Refurbishment of the Dorset Gardens Hotel



Source: Suu Studio, Dorset Gardens Hotel.

FUTURE PLANS – PHASING

A major redevelopment is proposed at Dorset Gardens Hotel, with plans to rework the venue to take on a modern décor and be more integrated throughout. Total capital expenditure of the planned works amounts to \$6.7 million excluding GST to be delivered across two phases. Proposed site plan and renders are shown below and on the following page respectively. The completion of the two phases will require around 12-18 months from the date of all approvals being in place. The works across the venue are estimated to require an additional 8-10 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff.

Stage 1 – Alterations to Terrace

- Adjacent to the Sports Bar, the current terrace layout is set to undergo the addition of a large screen TV, segmenting the area into zones and a revamp to the existing décor.

Stage 2 - Café, Bistro & Other Upgrades

Significant changes to the main dining area are planned as the current area is small, somewhat dated, and doesn't integrate well with the rest of the venue. Currently the bistro is fully booked for around 7,400 (average) meal services per week. The seating capacity is consequently proposed to be increased from 350 to 450.

- **New Café Area:** To be placed at the entry to the bistro as a transition from the entry foyer to more formal dining areas. This will help the venue coming together more cohesively, with the café area open for food service across all hours.
- **Revamped Bistro:** Upgrading the bistro/dining areas inside and outside by segmenting it into different zones and upgrading the interior to reflect a more modern theme. The connection to the function room around the bistro will also be greatly enhanced. The children's play area will be relocated and enhanced.
- **Other Upgrades:** An upgrade to the foyer and external drop-off/pick-up areas, along with improved accessibility through designated disabled-only parking spots. Other upgrades includes LED installations, installation of sound insulation and perforated fluted metal sheets to modernise the venue.



FUTURE PLANS – CONCEPT IMAGES

Stage 1 – Alterations to Terrace



Stage 2 - Café, Bistro & Other Upgrades



02

PATRONAGE OF THE VENUE

This section presents results of surveys undertaken at the venue identifying where patrons in the bistro and gaming room live, and at what times is the gaming room at capacity.

RESIDENTIAL LOCATION OF GAMING ROOM PATRONS

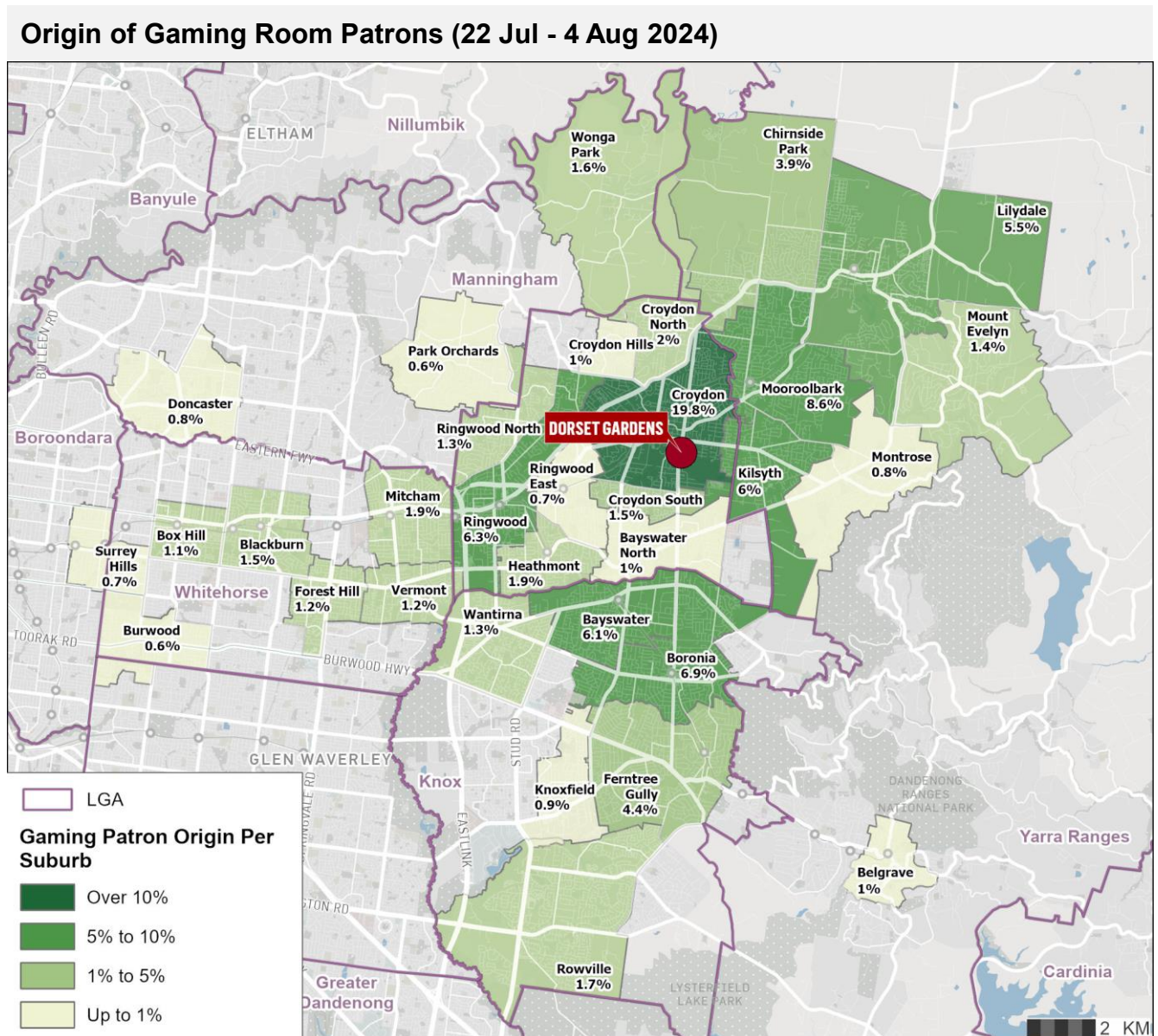
Dorset Gardens conducted surveys for both gaming room and bistro patrons between 22/07/24 and 04/08/24.

The distribution of gaming room patrons is shown on the adjacent map, based on more than 8,340 respondents recorded during the survey.

Key points to note:

- Gaming patrons visiting Dorset Gardens Hotel travel from a broad area within and beyond the municipality.
- Around 40% of patrons reside within the local municipality, with 20% of total surveyed patrons coming from the local suburb of Croydon. The venue draws strongly from the neighbouring municipalities of Yarra Ranges and Knox, as well as Manningham and Whitehorse.
- The proportion of gaming patrons from the local area is very low in my experience, reflecting the broad draw of the venue with multiple entertainment options.
- Most patrons are driving past several other hotels and clubs with gaming machines. This would appear to reflect the superior entertainment offer and range of facilities at the subject venue that is attracting patrons from a wide area. It indicates that use of the gaming machines is likely undertaken in conjunction with other activities in the venue. If gaming is the primary purpose of visit, players typically access the closest gaming venue, with research indicating most EGM users travel less than 5km to play (Dept of Justice 2009). Gaming patrons at this venue are travelling significantly further, highlighting that it operates more as a “destination venue” as discussed in Section 5 of this report. In my experience, any more than 30% of patronage from beyond a municipality is high for a suburban gaming venue.

Further details are provided in Appendix A.



Source: Dorset Gardens Hotel; Urbis

RESIDENTIAL LOCATION OF BISTRO PATRONS

The bistro survey recorded responses from 1,410 patrons.

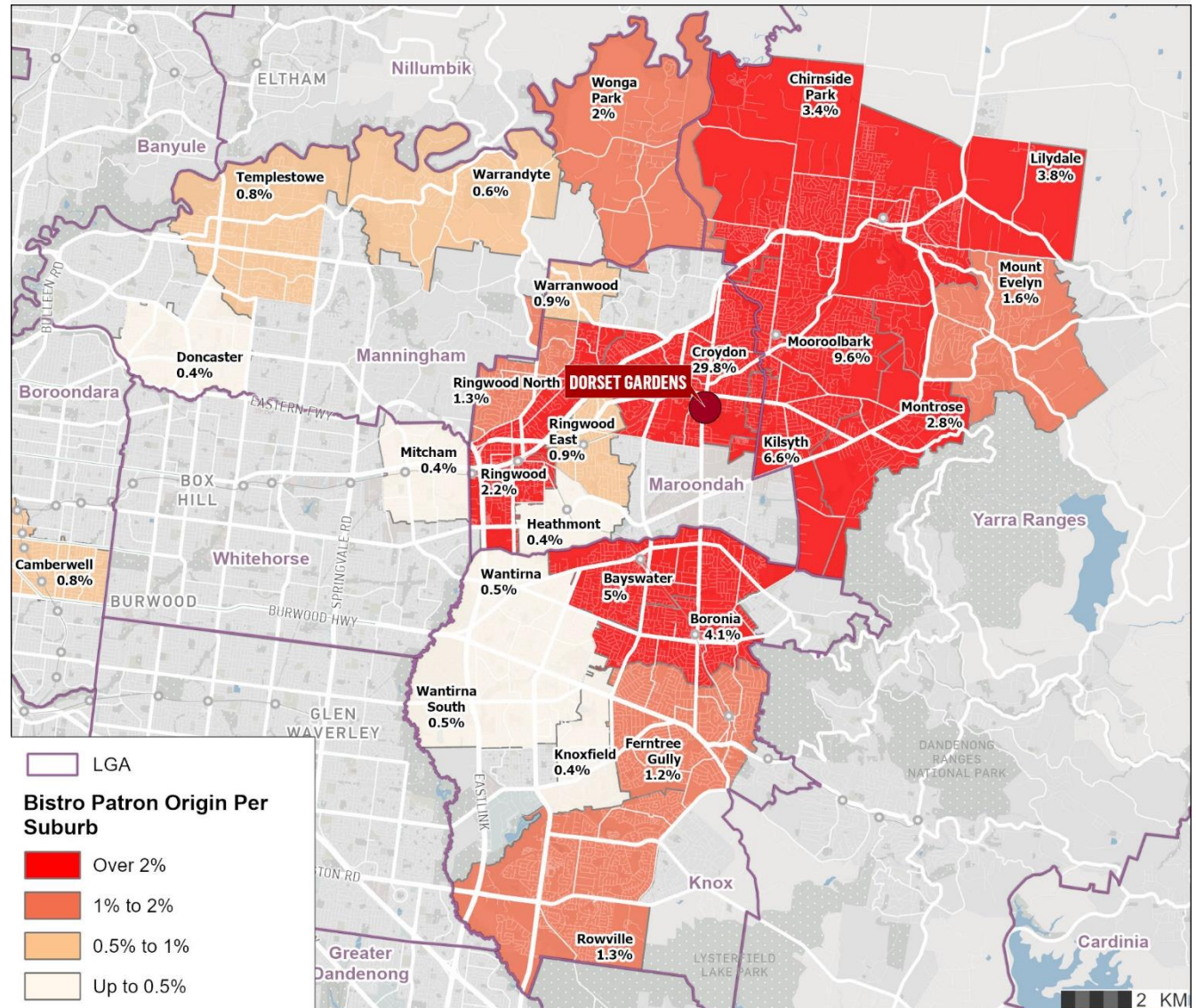
Similarly, the map adjacent shows the distribution of the place of residence of those patrons surveyed within the Bistro.

Key points to note:

- The survey shows a similar broad draw in the bistro to the gaming room, although unusually, the extent of the catchment for the bistro is slightly less. This is thought to reflect the modest bistro offer relative to the rest of the venue.
- A large proportion of bistro customers came from Croydon (30%). Other key suburbs including neighbouring areas outside Maroondah such as Mooroolbark and Kilsyth.
- A significant proportion (59%) of bistro patrons are travelling from areas beyond the municipality.
- The bistro has some appeal from suburbs further south including Boronia and Bayswater and northeast including Lilydale and Chirnside Park.

Further details are provided in Appendix A.

Origin of Bistro Patrons (22 Jul - 4 Aug 2024)



Source: Dorset Gardens Hotel; Urbis

GAMING ROOM USAGE

The gaming room at Dorset Gardens is open Monday – Sunday, 10:00am – 4:00am.

In addition to the patron location surveys, the Hotel also conducted a survey of patrons playing EGMs and the total number of people in the gaming room.

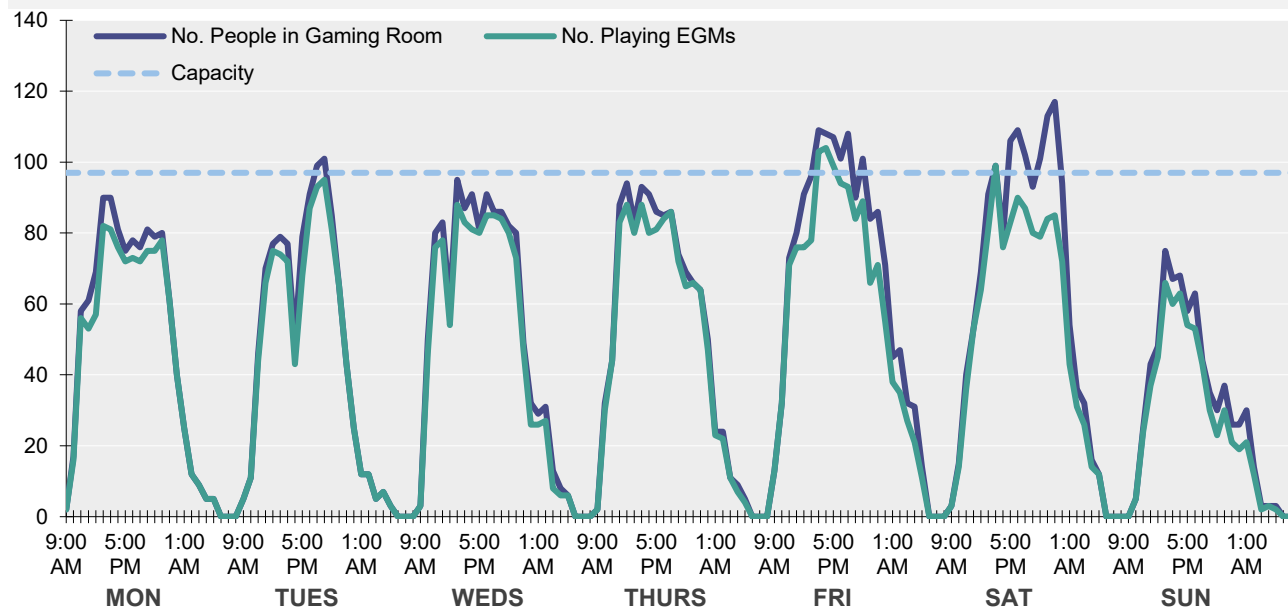
Over the survey period, the number of people in the gaming room approached or even exceeded the number of machines in the room (more than one person can at times be playing a machine). There were extended periods where more than 80 people were playing machines at one time. At these times accessing a machine can become more difficult given players preferences for certain machines or for not sitting immediately next to other players.

The peak times were Friday and Saturday afternoons and evenings, although most days had a least one or two hours of very high usage. In my experience, very few venues maintain capacity usage across such long periods.

The high patronage observed generally coincided with either lunch or dinner peaks throughout the week, noting the timing of these peaks can also depend on other activities in the venue at the time. The gaming room peaks highlight that the EGMs are used in conjunction with the rest of the venue, rather than in isolation.

This data supports the view that the gaming room with 97 EGMs, although large compared to many venues, is nevertheless ‘undersized’ when compared with the balance of the venue. The need for additional capacity in the gaming room is one reason for seeking an increase to 105 EGMs.

Hourly Usage of Gaming Room (29 Jul - 4 Aug 2024)



*Taken hourly by venue management in the gaming room over the survey date.
Source: Dorset Gardens Hotel; Urbis*

MUNICIPAL PROFILE

This section presents the socio-economic profile of residents of City of Maroondah in considering the impact of the grant of the application on that community. Attention is also given to the areas from which residents most frequently visit venue, the 2.5km and 5km radii catchments are considered. In built-up areas, most EGM players come from within a 2.5 km radius around a gaming venue, up to 5km in areas where residential development is less dense.

However, in reviewing this section, the broad draw of the venue across a wide area should be noted.

POPULATION

The population change between 2019 and 2024 for the 2.5km and 5km radii surrounding the subject site, the Maroondah LGA and Greater Melbourne is highlighted adjacent. This data is based on the Estimated Resident Population (ERP) for the analysed periods.

- As at the 2024, the population within the City of Maroondah was estimated to be around 119,350. This represents an annual average increase of 0.3% between 2019 and 2023.
- The 2.5km radius experienced relatively higher growth at 0.5% per annum during the same period, whilst the 5km radius catchment grew at modest rates, increasing by 0.2% on average per annum.
- The lower grow was largely influenced by resident movements during COVID, compared to previous period (2014-2019), where growth was relatively stronger.
- Going forward, population growth across the 2.5km and the 5km radii catchments is likely to be moderate but higher than the historical period (2019-2024).

Population growth is anticipated to continue to recover in the medium term as local and interstate migration resumes in the region, further supported by a residential focus in activity centres in the municipality.

Historical & Forecast Resident Population for Study Areas (year ending June)

	Historical			Forecast	
	2014	2019	2024	2029	2034
2.5km Radius	43,770	47,880	48,980	50,510	51,700
5Km Radius	136,890	144,820	146,450	151,740	156,410
Maroondah (C)	111,420	117,850	119,350	124,870	131,050
Annual Population Growth (no.)		2014-19	2019-24	2024-29	2029-34
2.5km Radius		820	220	310	240
5Km Radius		1,590	330	1,060	930
Maroondah (C)		1,290	300	1,100	1,240
Annual Population Growth (%)		2014-19	2019-24	2024-29	2029-34
2.5km Radius		1.8%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%
5Km Radius		1.1%	0.2%	0.7%	0.6%
Maroondah (C)		1.1%	0.3%	0.9%	1.0%
Greater Melbourne		2.3%	1.3%	1.8%	1.6%





Source: ABS ERP (2024), Centre for Population Forecast (2024); Urbis

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS - HOUSEHOLD MIX & AGE

Key demographic characteristics of residents within the defined study areas are as follows:

- The household mix in the municipality and the 5km radius is typical of the metropolitan area with predominantly families with children. There are more lone person households in the 2.5km radius, reflecting the presence of some unit development nearby.
- Comparable age profile of residents across the study areas with the benchmark, reflecting an established municipality with a mix of families, although with a greater share of older residents and fewer 15-39 year olds.
- Relative lower education levels, measured by the proportion of those who have completed Year 12 being below the metropolitan average. The share of blue-collar workers in the area is slightly higher than average.

Demographic Summary Table (2021) – Variation of 5km Radius from Greater Melb.

	2.5KM RADIUS	5KM RADIUS	MAROONDAH (C)	GREATER MELBOURNE	5KM RADIUS VAR. FROM GREATER MELB.
 Estimated Resident Population 2024	48,980	146,450	119,350	5,350,710	-
 Household Characteristics					
Couples with children	30%	35%	35%	35%	+0.8%pts
Couples, no children	25%	26%	25%	24%	+1.1%pts
One parent family	13%	12%	11%	11%	+1.1%pts
Lone person households	28%	24%	25%	25%	-0.6%pts
Average Household Size	2.4	2.6	2.5	2.6	-1.0%
 Age					
0-14	18%	19%	18%	18%	+0.4%pts
15-24	10%	11%	11%	12%	-1.0%pts
25-39	23%	21%	21%	24%	-3.0%pts
40-54	19%	20%	20%	20%	+0.1%pts
55-64	11%	12%	12%	11%	+1.0%pts
65+	19%	18%	18%	15%	+2.5%pts
Average Age	38	40	38	38	+4.2%
 Educational Background					
Completed Year 12 or Equivalent	61%	63%	67%	71%	-7.7%pts

Source: ABS, Urbis





KEY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS – INCOME, HOUSING COSTS & CULTURE

Other key characteristics of note include:

- Significantly lower proportion of renter population, typical of an outer suburban area.
- Larger presence of households purchasing or owning outright, suggesting while some are still paying off their loans, more have managed to pay off their mortgage.
- Slightly higher average rental payments but lower mortgage payments, suggesting housing remains relatively affordable across the municipality.
- Household incomes are slightly below the municipal or metropolitan benchmark levels across the 2.5km and 5km radii catchments.
- Significantly lower proportion of overseas born residents within the 2.5km and 5km radii but higher across the municipality.

In general, the demographic profile of the study areas is largely comparable with the Greater Melbourne average. It is reflective of a relatively established middle/outer suburban area with a mix of families and older residents.

Demographic Summary Table (2021) – Variation of 5km Radius from Greater Melb.

	2.5KM RADIUS	5KM RADIUS	MAROONDAH (C)	GREATER MELBOURNE	5KM RADIUS VAR. FROM GREATER MELB.
 Housing Tenure					
Owners	32%	34%	34%	31%	+3.1%pts
Purchasers	42%	43%	41%	38%	+5.2%pts
Renters	27%	23%	25%	31%	-8.3%pts
Monthly Mortgage Repayments (\$)	\$2,100	\$2,170	\$2,200	\$2,310	-6.1%
Weekly Rental Payments (\$)	\$380	\$390	\$390	\$370	+5.4%
 Household Income					
<\$52,000	30%	26%	27%	26%	+0.5%pts
\$42,000-\$104,000	28%	27%	26%	26%	+0.1%pts
\$104,000-\$156,000	22%	22%	21%	21%	+1.2%pts
>\$156,000	20%	25%	26%	27%	-1.9%pts
 Average Household Income	\$110,400	\$121,700	\$124,100	\$127,500	-4.5%
Background					
 Overseas Born	24.1%	23.4%	26.0%	37.3%	-14.0%pts

Source: ABS, Urbis

UNEMPLOYMENT & HOUSING STRESS

The unemployment rate for the City of Maroondah is slightly below the Melbourne average. In Croydon East, where the venue is located, the rate has seen an uptick in the latest period and is higher compared to most surrounding suburbs and the metropolitan benchmark.

Unemployment for the study area and the metropolitan region has risen in recent years as to curb inflation which increased following the COVID-19 pandemic.

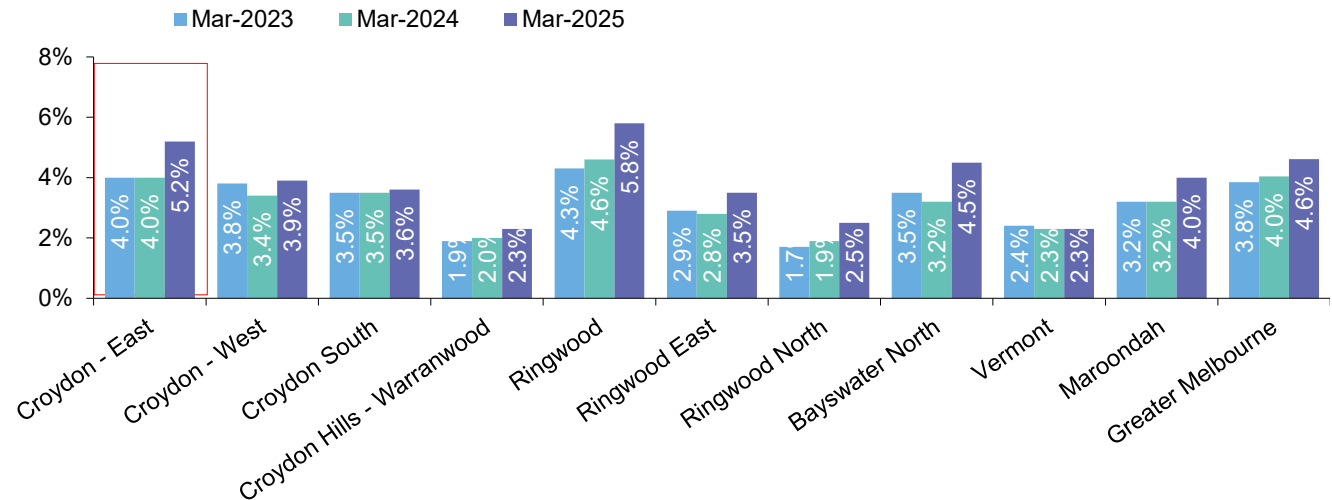
Housing stress is a measure of the proportion of households who are in the **lowest 40% of income earners** and **paying more than 30% of their income for rent or mortgage payments**.

Both rental and mortgage stress levels in the City of Maroondah in general are below the Greater Melbourne averages. This is largely supported by a smaller proportion of renters and lower average mortgage payments.

Within certain pockets of the municipality, stress levels can be slightly higher, in particular around the Ringwood activity centre, including Croydon-East where the subject venue is located. This is driven by a higher proportion of renters, whereas mortgage stress is consistently lower.

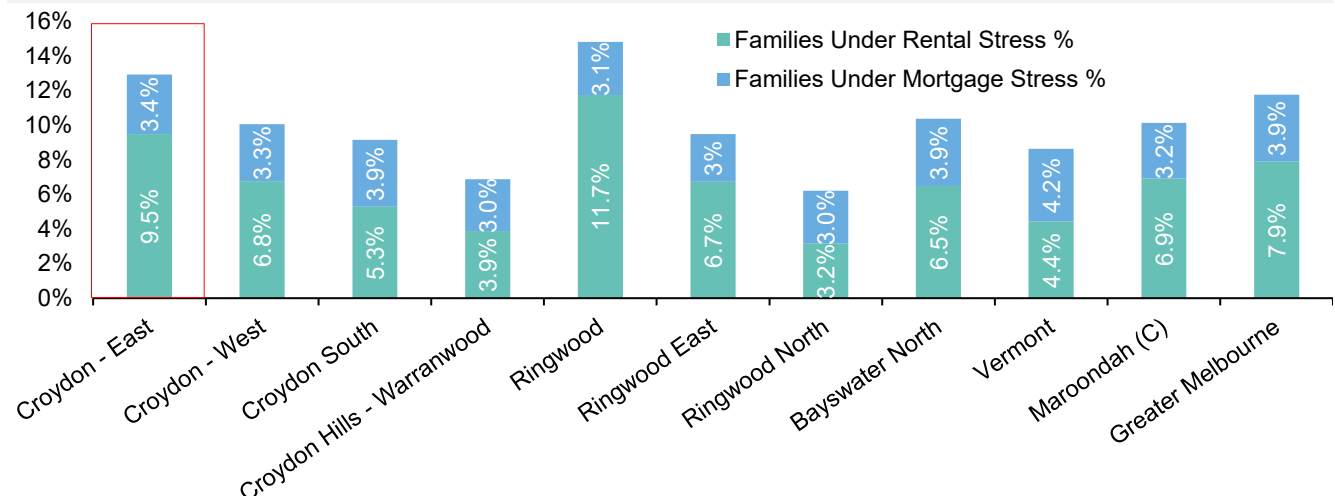
However, it is important to note that housing stress levels across Croydon-East and the Maroondah municipality have declined by around 3% and 1% points respectively since 2016. This is supported by solid income growth over the past 5 years or so.

Estimated Unemployment Rates (Maroondah and corresponding SA2s)



Source: ABS; Department of Education, Skills & Employment; Urbis

Estimated Housing Stress (2021)



1. Data excludes 'Partially stated', 'Not stated' and 'Not applicable'.
Source: ABS, Urbis

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC INDEX OF DISADVANTAGE (SEIFA)

The ABS produce the Social Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) which ranks areas in Australia according to their relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage.

It is a general measure of the demographic profile of residents in an area and is used to identify specific pockets of disadvantage. It is an amalgam of several measures derived from the Census, as detailed in the Appendix A to this report. The latest SEIFA data available is from the 2021 Census, published in April 2023 as a subset of the Census.

The 2021 SEIFA Index Score for the City of Maroondah is 1,041, ranking the LGA at 63 amongst all LGAs within Victoria for disadvantage, where 1 is the most disadvantaged and 80 the least disadvantaged.

This means that the LGA is one of the 22% least disadvantaged municipalities in the state.

At the local level, all SA2s within the municipality received a score above 1,000 (the national median), including the immediate SA2s surrounding Dorset Garden's Hotel. In fact, these immediate areas of Croydon East, Croydon West and Croydon South recorded a slight decline in disadvantage since 2016.

The chart adjacent presents the proportion of residents living in SA1s categorised into their SEIFA decile ranking, calculated for each of the study areas. The results show that only a very small proportion of local residents are within the two lowest deciles (i.e. most disadvantaged), indicating a low level of disadvantage across the community.

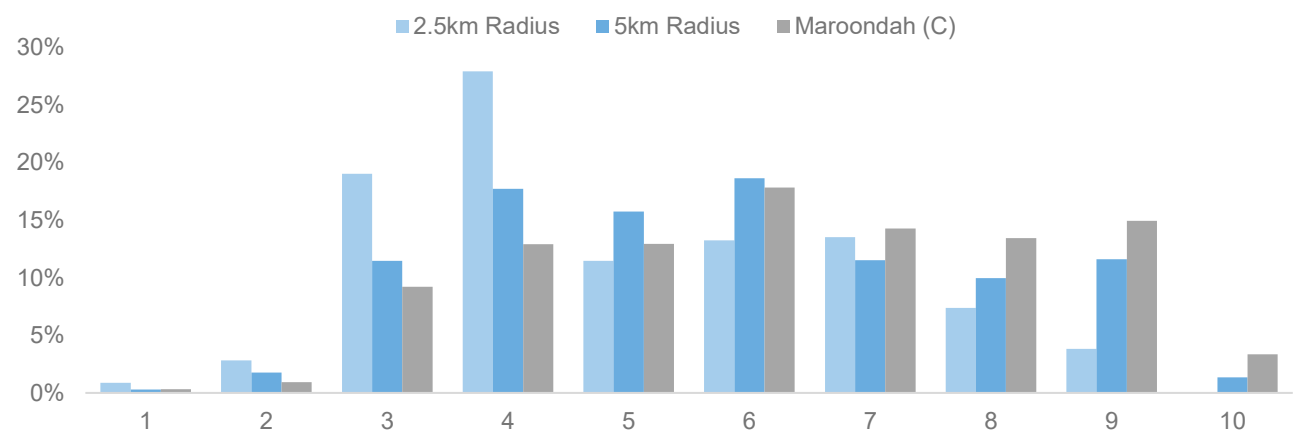
SEIFA Disadvantage Score & Ranking for SA2s within City of Maroondah (2021)

Surrounding SA2s	State Rank (of 513)	Index Score
Bayswater North	273	1,029
Croydon Hills – Warranwood	471	1,085
Ringwood	236	1,014
Ringwood East	352	1,048
Ringwood North	473	1,085
Croydon - East	208	1,004
Croydon - West	283	1,032
Croydon South	2316	1,040
Vermont	394	1,063

Local Government Area	State Rank (of 80)	Index Score
Maroondah (C)	63	1,041

Source: ABS, Urbis

Distribution of Study Area Population by SEIFA Disadvantage Decile (2021)



Source: ABS, Urbis

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC INDEX OF DISADVANTAGE (SEIFA)

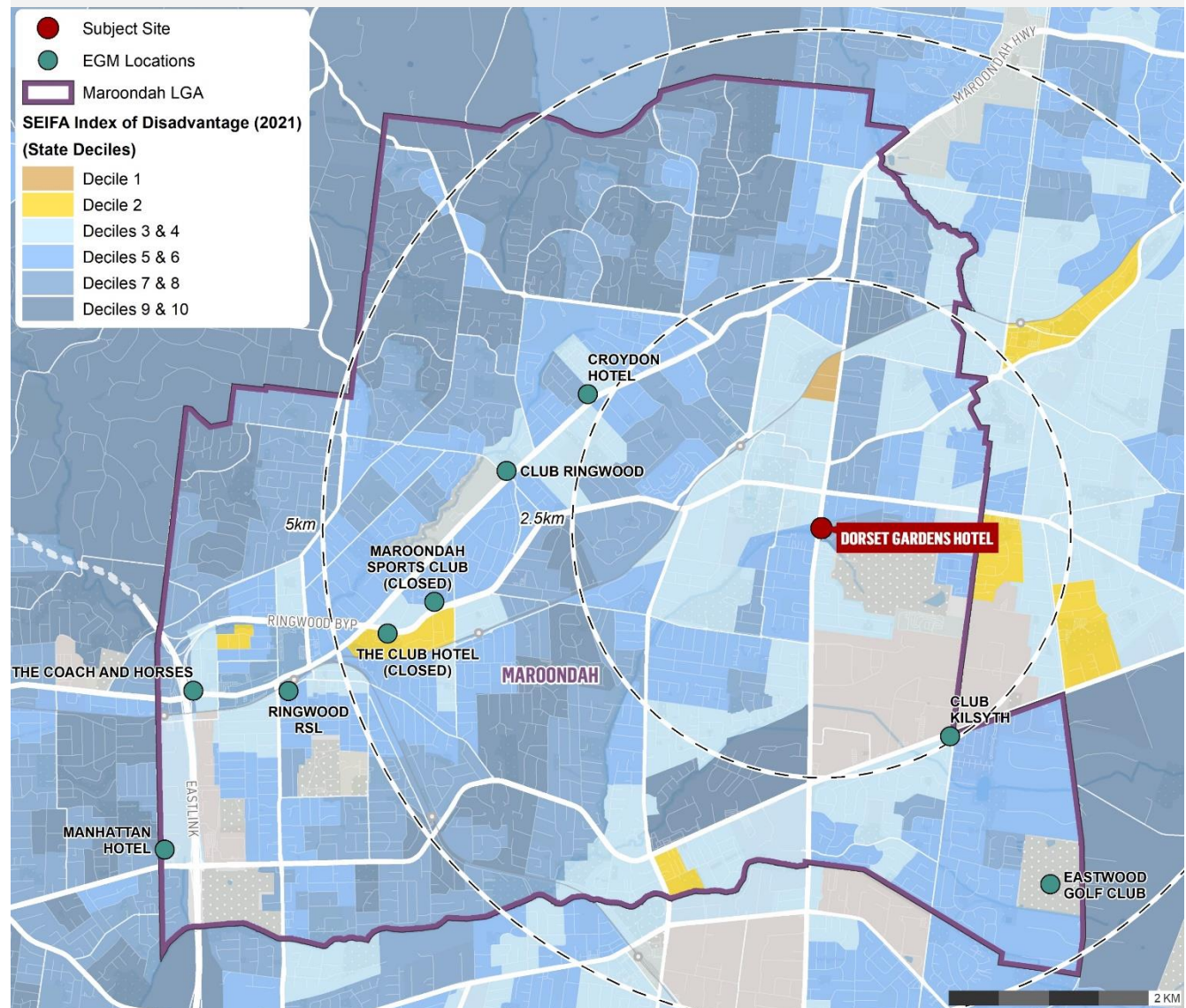
The distribution of SA1s and their respective SEIFA Index of Disadvantage decile ranking are shown on the adjacent map. This highlights the areas that are considered relatively more disadvantaged, in deciles 1 and 2, coloured orange and yellow, respectively.

Reflective of the SEIFA data presented earlier, most of the City of Maroondah including our immediate catchment demonstrates low levels of disadvantage.

- Existing pockets of relative disadvantage within the municipality are mostly beyond the 2.5km radius, with areas of higher relative disadvantage around Ringwood being removed from the venue.
- Only two such pockets are in the vicinity of the venue, representing just 2% of the population within the 2.5km radius (2021). These are the areas along Dorset Road and to the east of the venue. The latter is thought to have a lower SEIFA score due to the presence of the older Dorset Village residential units which are home to several older residents.
- There is only one other gaming venue within the 2.5km radius (Club Kilsyth) towards the south eastern edge the catchment.

In general, the demographic profile and modest level of disadvantage evident in this area indicates the risk of harm should problem gambling exist is likely lower than average.

SEIFA Disadvantage Index by SA1 – City of Maroondah (2021)



Source: ABS, Urbis

EGM PROVISION & EXPENDITURE

In this section, an analysis of the current provision of electronic gaming machines within the City of Maroondah is presented, comparing expenditure at Dorset Gardens Hotel with other venues currently available. Data analysed here draws primarily from the VGCCC, supplemented by other sources of information including the ABS.

EGM VENUE DISTRIBUTION

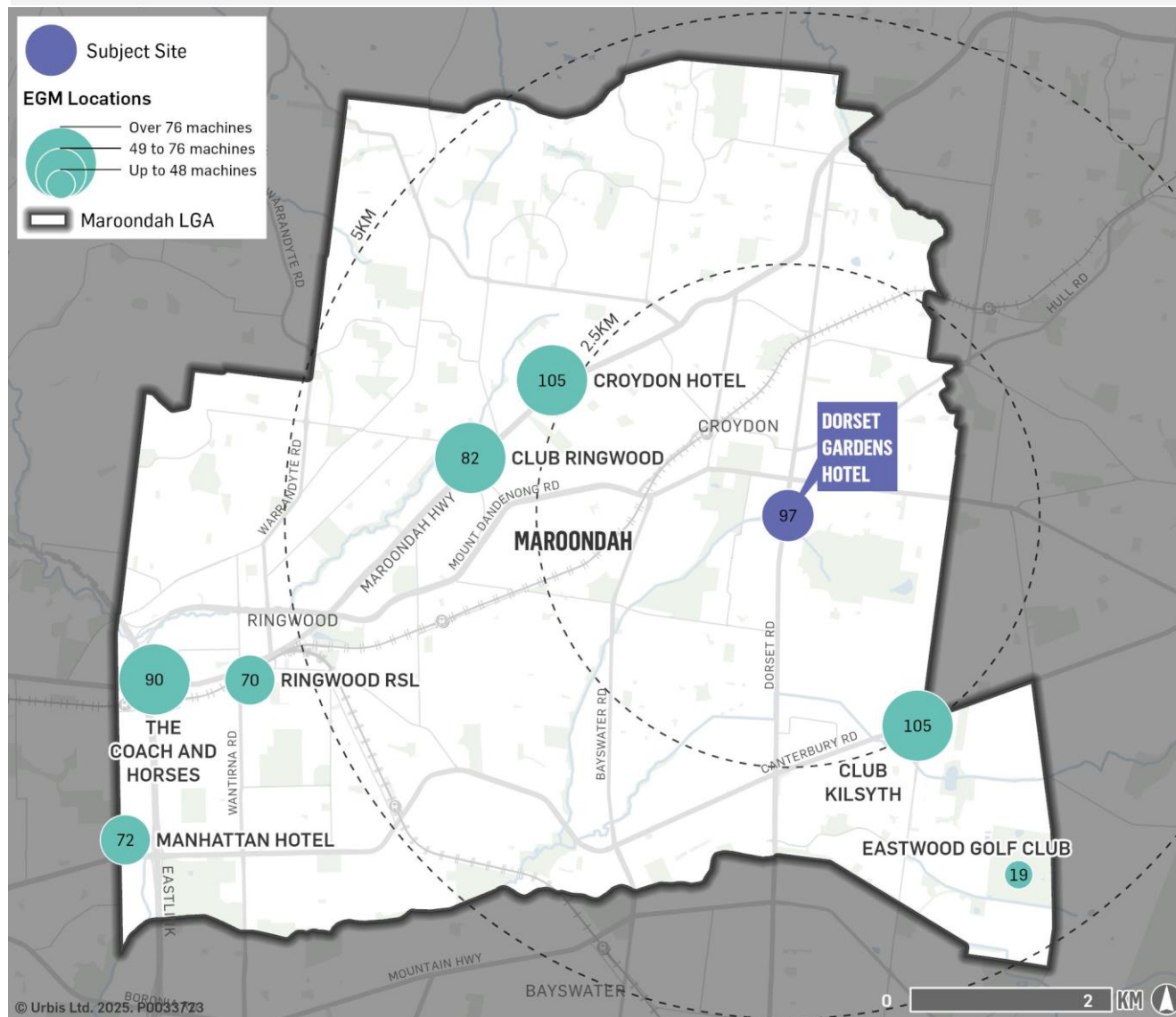
In 2012, the Minister for Gaming specified the maximum permissible number of gaming machine entitlements under which gaming may be conducted in each municipal district in Victoria. A Ministerial Order in late 2017 revised the regional caps across the State.

Under this, the City of Maroondah has been assessed to have a maximum permissible gaming machine entitlement of 759 – an increase from the previous limit of 718 entitlements in 2012. As at June 2025, there were a total of 640 EGMs operating across 8 venues within the municipality.

The municipality has witnessed some major changes to machines since 2019 that reduced the total number of EGMs from 759 in December 2019 to 640 currently, including:

- Club Hotel (Daisy's): -75 machines (75 to 0, ceased operating)
- Maroondah Sports Club: -44 machines (44 to 0, ceased operating).

Distribution of EGMs within the City of Maroondah (2025)



Source : VGCCC; Urbis

CURRENT PROVISION OF EGMS & EXPENDITURE

Detailed venue information is presented in the table adjacent. It is noted:

- As mentioned, there are 640 EGMs in operation across 8 venues. This is well below the municipal cap of 759 EGMs.
- Should this application be approved, the number of EGMs within Maroondah would be increased to 648 (+ 8 EGMs), remaining well below the permissible level of 759.
- In the 2025 financial year, just over \$64 million was spent on EGMs across the municipality, equating to an expenditure figure per EGM of approximately \$100,000.
- The expenditure per EGM at Dorset Gardens in 2025 was \$209,000, the highest of any venue in Maroondah.
- This high EGM expenditure is reflective of the nature of the Hotel as a very large destination venue with a broad range of entertainment and dining offers, and consequently the high utilisation of machines as shown in Section 2.

Statistics of Existing Gaming Venues within the City of Maroondah

Name of Venue	Address	Venue Type	Attached Entitlements	EGMs at 2025	2025 EGM Expenditure ¹	
					Total	Per EGM
Club Kilsyth	Cnr Canterbury And Colchester Roads Bayswater North, 3143	Club	105	105	\$8,094,976	\$77,095
Club Ringwood	523-531 Maroondah Highway Ringwood, 3134	Club	82	82	\$5,103,606	\$62,239
Croydon Hotel	47 Maroondah Highway Croydon Vic, 3136	Hotel	105	105	\$10,209,886	\$97,237
Dorset Gardens Hotel	335 Dorset Road Croydon, 3136	Hotel	97	97	\$20,309,248	\$209,374
Eastwood Golf Club	Liverpool Road Kilsyth Vic, 3137	Club	19	19	\$147,172	\$7,746
Manhattan Hotel	Cnr Canterbury & Heatherdale Roads Ringwood Vic, 3134	Hotel	72	72	\$9,051,055	\$125,709
Ringwood RSL	16 Station Street Ringwood Vic, 3134	Club	70	70	\$5,019,476	\$71,707
The Coach And Horses	33 Whitehorse Road Ringwood, 3134	Club	90	90	\$6,265,335	\$69,615

Ceased Operations:

Club Hotel	6 Mt Dandenong Road East Ringwood Vic, 3135	Hotel	75	0	N/A	N/A
Maroondah Sports Club	Cnr Mt Dandenong Road And Dublin Road Ringwood East Vic, 3135	Club	44	0	N/A	N/A
Total			759	640	\$64,200,756	\$100,314

1. Full year ending 30 June.

Source: VGCCC; Urbis

RELATIVE EGM PROVISION & EXPENDITURE

As at 30 June 2025:

- The number of EGMs per 1,000 adults (persons aged over 18 years) across the City of Maroondah was **6.9, higher than the metropolitan average of 4.5.**
- Net expenditure per adult for the 2025 financial year within the municipality was around **\$696, higher than the metropolitan average of \$584.**
- Expenditure per EGM** was consequently quite modest in the municipality, around **23% below the metropolitan average** (\$100k vs \$130k).

It is not uncommon for more established areas to have above average gaming density and EGM spend per adult, as these facilities act as entertainment destinations for patrons of higher socio-economic status with higher income levels.

Furthermore, as Maroondah is surrounded by other built-up areas, the venues serve residents from outside the municipality as well. This is the case with Dorset Gardens which draws close to 60% of its patronage from outside the municipality. There are also other venues on the border of the municipality capturing trade from elsewhere.

The closure of two gaming venues in the City of Maroondah in the past has had a substantial impact on the gaming landscape. As of 2025, the EGM density has fallen to 6.9 EGMs per 1,000 adults, reducing from 8.1 in 2019 due to the reduction in machine numbers.

If the application for 8 additional EGMs at the venue were approved and they were to become operational by 2026, the density per 1,000 adults would remain at the 2025 level of 6.9.

Summary of EGM Provision (2025)

	Maroondah (C)	Greater Melbourne
Adult Population (+18 years) ¹	92,200	4,141,500
No. of Venues ²	8	299
Adult Population (+18) Per Venue	11,525	13,851
Electronic Gaming Machines		
No. of EGMs ²	640	18,505
EGMs Per 1,000 (18+)	6.9	4.5
Expenditure		
Net Expenditure 2025 (\$M)	64.2	2,420.0
Net Expenditure per EGM	\$100,300	\$130,750
Net Expenditure per Adult (18+)	\$696	\$584

1. Latest adult population figures based on the 2024 ERP.

2. Venue and EGM totals for year ending 30 June 2025 as published on VGCCC website.

Source: ABS; VGCCC; Urbis

Proposed EGM Provision

	EGM Venues	EGM No.	Adult Pop'n (18+) ¹	EGM Density (Per 1,000 Adults)
FY2025				
Maroondah (C)	8	640	93,000	6.9
FY2026 - Post Dorset Gardens Hotel Increase				
Maroondah (C)	8	640	93,600	6.8
+8 EGMs at Dorset Gardens	8	648	93,600	6.9

1. Adult population figures based on the 2021 ABS Census and derived from forecast.id projection. Adult population for 2025 and 2026 is based on VIF-23 projections.

Source: ABS; Urbis

EGM EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS

The estimated impact of this application on EGM expenditure has been assessed by SW Accountants & Advisors in a separate report.

The estimated increase to EGM revenue following the addition of the 8 EGMs is just under \$1 million in a low estimate scenario and up to almost \$1.3 million in a high spend scenario (FY2025 estimate).

The analysis estimates that 40% of the increase in gaming revenue will be transferred from other venues within the LGA (i.e. expenditure shifting from other municipal venues). Therefore, of the \$0.9m-\$1.3m in net increase gaming revenue following the addition of 8 EGMs at Dorset Gardens, between \$596k and \$807k will be new expenditure. The net increase in gaming expenditure equates to between around 1.5% and 2.1% of current gaming expenditure within the municipality.

Such low levels of additional expenditure highlight the negligible impact of the additional 8 EGMs on the local gaming landscape.

Projected Increase in Gaming Revenue

		Total EGM Expenditure	
Pre Application (FY 2025) ¹		Current	
Dorset Garden		\$20,309,248	
Maroondah (C)		\$64,200,756	
		Estimated Revenue of Venue	
Additional EGM Revenue on Current Levels		Low Est.	High Est.
First 12 Months Post Installation of 8 EGMs		\$993,771	- \$1,344,514
Transferred Expenditure @40%		\$397,508	- \$537,806
Net Increase of NMR		\$596,263	- \$806,708
Maroondah (C) Council Percentage Change Relative to 2025 EGM Spend		% of Net Increase in EGM Revenue	
First 12 Months Post Installation of 8 EGMs		1.5%	2.1%

1. Full year ending 30 June 2025.
Source : VGCCC; SW Accountants & Advisors; Urbis

PROBLEM GAMBLING POLICIES, PROCEDURES & IMPACT

This section considers Maroondah Council's EGM policy, the Maroondah Gaming Policy 2018, and the Gaming Premises Policy outlined in the Maroondah Planning Scheme, the policies and procedures of the venue, and an assessment of the potential impact of this application on problem gambling.

CITY OF MAROONDAH PLANNING AND GAMING POLICIES

In 2018, the Maroondah City Council developed the *Maroondah Gambling Policy 2018* as a 'whole of Council' approach to preventing and minimising gambling-related harm in the community. It replaced the *Gaming Policy & Statement of Practice* published in 2017 and describes Council's policy position on gambling in the municipality.

The Policy sits within the statutory and strategic framework that aims to 'promote and facilitate safer cultures relating to issues of alcohol, drugs, tobacco gambling, child abuse and family violence'. Of relevance,

The Maroondah Gambling Policy 2018 supports the mission and values by enabling Council to demonstrate best practice in managing gambling activities on Council owned land, implementing measures to promote and facilitate safer cultures relating to issues of gambling, advocating for necessary reforms in the legislative process and fulfilling its statutory role in effectively managing gambling-related activities.

Pg. 7, Maroondah Gambling Policy 2018

Specifically, the Policy describes three key priorities relating to service provision, advocacy and Council's statutory, strategic and regulatory roles, summarised as follows:

- Priority 1: Partnership
 - Objective: To work in partnership with relevant agencies and stakeholders to protect those at risk of gambling-related harms
- Priority 2: Advocacy
 - Objective: To advocate on behalf of the community on issues relating to the safety of the gambling environment
- Priority 3: Planning, regulation and enforcement
 - Objective: To effectively manage gambling in the municipality through relevant provisions in the statutory, strategic and regulatory framework.

In addition to this policy, the Council also released, as a part of the 2009 Maroondah Planning Scheme updated in July 2014, a Gaming Premises Policy, which outlines the following objectives:

- To discourage increases in the ratio of gaming machines per adult, number of venues or gaming losses per adult in the municipality.
- To ensure that gaming premises minimise the harmful effects of problem gambling.
- To ensure that applications deliver a net community benefit.
- To encourage gaming premises to offer a range of non-gaming entertainment and recreation activities rather than be standalone gaming premises.
- To ensure that the operation, location and design of gaming premises does not have a negative impact on the amenity, character, community values and safety of the area.
- To avoid concentration of gaming premises.

The addition of 8 EGMs in the existing venue at Dorset Gardens is consistent with the Council's policy objectives outlined above. Of note:

- The venue is a 'destination' venue with a number of different functions and zones where there is a low chance of 'convenience gambling'. This is primarily due to the lack of major uses surrounding venue which would generate a large amount of activity.
- The venue offers a range of non-gaming related activities and community contributions which meet the planning scheme's objective of achieving a net community benefit.
- The application involves significant improvements to other facilities offered at the Hotel, again enhancing community benefit.
- The amenity, character and safety around the venue will not be threatened by an additional 8 EGM's, particularly given the separation of the venue from other uses and the fact that there will be no increase in accessibility and convenience from the additional EGM's.

Some of these issues are considered further over following pages.

OPERATORS COMMITMENT TO RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING

Responsible Gambling Code of Conduct

Through the operation of this existing venue, the operator has demonstrated ongoing commitment to ensuring high standards of customer care.

The venue adopts a comprehensive Responsible Gambling Code of Conduct through Leigh Barrett and Associates Pty Ltd, a Code approved by the VGCCC in June 2012. Amongst all standard RSG procedures, the venue adheres to the provision of Gambler's Help displays and information, signage, staff training and the Australian Hotels Association (AHA) Self-Exclusion Program, also approved by the VGCCC.

The Code is now available in 10 different languages and can be downloaded directly from the venue website.

The operator of Dorset Gardens has an ongoing commitment towards their Responsible Service of Gaming (RSG) practices, ensuring all staff members employed in the gaming lounge have undertaken RSG training or approved by the VGCCC.

The venue has also installed and maintained a closed-circuit television (CCTV) system on its premises as an added security measure to deal with any instances of unacceptable behavior including denying entry to the venue.

Behaviors monitored through technology and by staff include but are not limited to:

- Aggression
 - Hitting an EGM/ buttons with due force;
 - Shouting at the EGM or other people anywhere in venue;
- Emotion
 - Crying anywhere in the venue including at an EGM;
 - Appearing agitated in the venue;
- Asking for money to gamble
 - Asking staff for the loan of money;
 - Asking other customers for the loan of money.

To further its commitment towards adhering to this policy, the venue has kept account of daily account activity along with Anti Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Funding transaction monitoring being a prime focus for gaming staff to observe gaming room activity and step in where needed.

Venue staff, are expected to interact with a customer that:

- Has been asked to take a break and refuses to take a break from the gaming room.
- Plays multiple gaming machines simultaneously, or:
- Reserves a gaming machine in order to play another gaming machine.

The Operator also engaged Onyx Gaming to do a review of the RSG management processes and staff training programs for Dorset Gardens including compliance and level of staff knowledge in 2024. The key findings are noted below:

- **Responsible Gambling Code of Conduct Management** – Beyond Leigh Barrett & Associates' Code of Conduct and Responsible Gambling Code of Conduct policy, the Hotel has developed its own range of management processes to complement services provided by Leigh Barrett & Associates. The hotel ensures the staff are well trained and aware of its commitment to RSG, with copies of RSG material available to review, physically and online.
- **Customer Engagement** – The Hotel promotes an “interact-assess-act” policy which includes interaction with customers throughout their visit, to monitor behaviour and any signs of problem gambling to prioritise wellbeing of its patrons. Providing specific staff on gaming duty and ensuring all staff are trained via an interview process indicated an excellent level of knowledge across Code of Conduct, RSG compliance along with other policies and procedures.
- **Proposed Hotel Renovations** – The review found sufficient separation of gaming and non-gaming related areas, with the inclusion of panels, doors further restricting view of the gaming room. A dedicated courtyard ensures a break in play for refreshment and central location of the reception provides good surveillance on patrons entering the gaming room.

The review highlighted the exceptional level of staff knowledge, dedication to responsible gambling through continued staff training and adherence to RSG Code of Conduct to conclude there will be no increase in the likelihood for impulse gambling and the staff have a range of skill and experience to manage at issues arising from the addition of 8 EGMs, to ensure gambling at the Hotel is conducted in a safe and responsible manner.

OPERATORS COMMITMENT TO RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING

Harm Minimisation Policy and Procedures

The Dorset Gardens Hotel recognises that EGM gambling operations are strongly associated with gambling-related harms affecting individuals, their families, and the community.

The Hotel is committed to mitigating this harm through the implementation of the Harm Minimisation Policy and Procedures Manual created through Leigh Barrett & Associates as of September 2024. The policy and procedures are designed to reduce the likelihood of distress and harm among patrons, ensuring a safer and more supportive environment for all individuals who engage in gambling at our venue.

The Manual provides a policy and procedures framework for management and staff at the Hotel to:

- Ensure compliance with all relevant gaming and liquor legislation and regulation; and
- Outline the Hotel's harm minimisation measures, including those consistent with the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation Venue Best Practice Guide and Venue Better Practice Checklist.

The Hotel acknowledges that compliance with this policy is a condition of the venue operator's licence.

The purpose of this Manual is to provide a practical guide for all staff to discharge their duties in accordance with the Hotel's commitment to the highest standards of the government expectations regarding Patron care and responsible gambling. Some key policies are listed below:

- **Commitment to Responsible Gambling/Patron Care** - A strong commitment to caring for its patrons, including maintaining strong responsible alcohol and responsible gambling policies and practices.
- **Responsible Gambling Coordinator and Officers** – Appointment of key personnel as Responsible Gambling Officers that maintain compliance and ensure staff are aware of relevant responsible gambling policies.
- **Responsible Gambling/Gambling Harm Information** – provide information to assist patrons to make informed and responsible decisions about their gambling activity and about support services that are available for patrons who may experience harm from gambling.
- **Self-exclusion Program** - The Hotel has an EGM gaming self-exclusion program that is operated by AHA Victoria and ensures all front of house staff view the list of self-excluded patrons before each shift and are trained on how to appropriately interact with and support patrons under self-exclusion.
- **Pre-commitment Strategy** - Responsible gambling signage and brochures in the gaming room encourage patrons to make a pre-commitment decision in setting a limit and not exceeding that limit.
- **Interaction with Patrons** - Interaction between staff and patrons is regarded by the Hotel as an essential and integral element in the promotion of patron service, responsible gambling, harm minimisation and patron care.
- **Interaction with Hotel Staff** – This includes the Hotel's responsibility to ensure safety and training of all employees and to maintain the integrity of the gambling products provided at the Hotel.
- **Responsible Advertising and Promotions** - All gambling-related signage displayed at the Hotel is consistent with the Gambling Regulations (Signage) Regulations 2012.
- **Review of Harm Minimisation Policy and Procedures Manual** - The venue will ensure the Harm Minimisation Policy is reviewed annually by a suitably qualified gambling harm advisor, to identify any improvements and changes in industry and gambling help practices.

PROBLEM GAMBLING RISK & CONSEQUENCES IN CONTEXT OF THE APPLICATION

Problem gambling and its related effects are the major potential negative social consequence of gaming that needs to be weighed up against any positive factors of this application. It is recognised that gambling, including on EGMs, does cause harm to some who participate and others they have contact with.

There has been extensive research into the causes and effects of problem gambling over recent decades, some of which are cited in this report. In Victoria, a study has recently been released titled “*Victorian population gambling and health study 2023*” (Final report released September 2024). It is based on a survey of 11,000 Victorian adults conducted in early 2023. This study, although by no means a comprehensive review of the causes, risks and consequences of gambling, problem gambling and health impacts, provides a contemporary overview of the scale of the issue amongst the Victorian population. Some of the key findings of the study include the following:

- Participation in gambling is continuing to decline, now at 53%, down from 69% in 2019.
- Only one-quarter of people who gamble do so weekly or more frequently
- Most Victorians spend a small amount on gambling each year (median of \$213) with the average inflated by a smaller group of larger spenders
- People tend to gamble either online or in physical venues, not both
- Rates of problem gambling remain stable, despite declining gambling participation, with 8.5% of the Victorian population being at some risk of experiencing problem gambling
- The proportion of people experiencing harm from gambling has remained stable, although with fewer gamblers, harm amongst those who do gamble has increased
- Just over 5% of the Victorian adult population reported being personally impacted by someone else’s gambling
- Increased risk of problem gambling is associated with lower wellbeing and other health issues, although not necessarily causal.

While it is important to acknowledge the risks and consequences of gambling, including EGMs, the analysis in this report has to consider the effects of the application specifically. This is a separate consideration to the effects of EGM use in general. With EGMs being permitted in Victoria with a cap on total numbers, the analysis in this report focusses on considering the consequences of an addition of machines in this venue, effectively in comparison to those machines being employed in other locations. The alternative here is not prohibition of machines in Victoria or even the venue. There are 97 EGMs in operation already, with the application to increase that number by 8 EGMs (8%). Machines are and will remain available in the venue.

Noting the nature of the test before the Commission to consider the effects of the application on the well-being of the community, the analysis over the following pages and the final section considers the incremental effects of the addition of EGMs and the broader redevelopment of the hotel, both positive and negative.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

In my view, the impact on problem gambling in the City of Maroondah (or problem behaviour of any kind) as a result of an increase from 97 to 105 EGMs at the venue is expected to be limited. All of these factors need to be considered in the context that this is a small increase in machines where there is already access to machines in the venue and elsewhere in the municipality. The incremental impact on problem gambling is the relevant consideration here.

Risk Type	Description	Assessment of Risk from this Application
Regional Demographic Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While problem gambling can be found across demographic cohorts, a more robust/positive demographic profile means patrons are less likely to experience severe financial consequences should they have a problem with their gambling. The SEIFA index of disadvantage is a summary indicator of the demographic profile, with those with elevated levels of disadvantage (i.e. deciles 1 and 2 of SEIFA) thought to be more at risk should they develop problem gambling behaviour. 	<p>Low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The socio-economic profile of residents in the established areas of Croydon and surrounding exhibit a low level of disadvantage in general. Areas which show a higher level of disadvantage around central Ringwood are removed from the subject venue. Positive changes in key SEIFA indicators 2016-21 suggest potentially a further reduction in disadvantage.
Location and Context of Venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venues in a high traffic location where people go about daily activities or pass on foot (e.g. co-located with retail facilities) are thought to be more likely to induce “convenience gambling” which is linked to greater problem gambling. Conversely, “destination venues” where patrons must make a conscious decision to visit, usually by car, are seen as less problematic. Further discussion of these concepts is provided at the end of this section. Policy often seeks to ensure gaming venues are separated from “sensitive uses” (e.g. schools, childcare, community support facilities) although there is no evidence of higher problem gambling risk, and it is noted children have no exposure to gaming given restrictions on minors in gaming rooms. 	<p>Low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dorset Gardens Hotel is almost the archetypal destination venue, as considered further at the end of this section. The venue is well-removed from any shopping or activity centre, with the surrounding area being largely residential with limited commercial activity. Almost all patrons arrive at the venue by car, making a clear conscious decision to visit. There are schools in the area, but not close. In any event, minors cannot enter the gaming room and there is no evidence this presents a greater risk of problem behaviour.
Gaming Access and Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is generally thought a higher level of access to EGMs in a municipality, measured by EGMs per 1,000 adults, increases the risk of problem gambling existing in that area. However, it is noted that a high level of access can reduce the incremental impact of a small increase in machine numbers, with the Productivity Commission finding suggesting once a threshold of exposure to gaming opportunities is reached, the increase in problem gambling harm will not be in line with the increase in machine numbers. Higher intensity of gaming machine use, measured by expenditure per adult and expenditure per EGM, is linked to greater risk of problem gambling. Again, the incremental effect of additional EGMs may be lessened if expenditure is high. 	<p>Low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EGM density and expenditure is higher than average in the municipality but has declined substantially with the closure of two venues. Provided that only 8 machines are being proposed, it is anticipated that there will be a minimal change to EGM density going forward (just a 1.3% increase in municipal machine numbers in 2025, a maximum 2.1% increase in expenditure based on 2025 EGM expenditure). The Dorset Gardens has a higher expenditure per EGM than the municipal average, reflecting the size and visitation of the venue. The addition of 8 EGMs has the potential to spread that spend across more machines, reducing the per EGM usage.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON PROBLEM GAMBLING (CONT'D)

Problem gambling and its related effects are the major potential negative social consequence of gaming that needs to be weighed up against any positive factors of this application. In our view, the impact on problem gambling in the City of Maroondah as a result of an increase from 97 to 105 EGMS at the venue is expected to be limited.

Risk Type	Description	Assessment of Risk from this Application
Gaming Access and Use (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility within the venue to EGMs is also a consideration. The addition of EGMs into a 'new' venue where gaming has not previously been offered presents greater risk than where EGMs are already offered (i.e. a top up application). The incremental increase in gaming expenditure in a municipality as a direct result of the application is an important consideration. Although expenditure at the subject venue may increase, the effect of that increase may be reduced if the majority of spending is simply transferred from other venues in the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is already access to 97 EGMs within the venue, with machines available throughout the week. The addition of 8 EGMs at the venue will not materially increase the exposure to gaming opportunities. The installation of an additional 8 machines will have a negligible effect on accessibility in a physical sense as this is an existing gaming with the same dimensions. Therefore, most people will be unaware of the increase in machines, particularly from outside the venue. The increase of gaming expenditure in the municipality is estimated to be just 2.1% at most, based on 2025 EGM expenditure.
Venue Operation and Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lower level of problem gambling risk is associated with venues where gaming is provided as part of a wider range of entertainment and dining options, rather than being the sole or key focus activity available. Venues with close to the maximum number of machines (105) are thought to present a greater risk of problem gambling due to the potential for patrons to access machines more anonymously as they are less likely to be noticed in a large gaming room which is harder to monitor. Small venues are consequently seen as presently a lower risk in this regard. Club venues are generally thought to present a lower risk than hotels due to nature of facilities and other procedures such as the need to sign in (although this is of course venue specific). Venues where gaming is accessible well into the early hours of the morning are thought to present a greater risk of problem gambling. The Blue Moon research found increased risk of problem gambling behaviour beyond 2am. The layout of the venue and gaming room can influence the extent to which patrons can play EGMs without being noticed or be enticed to play as the machines are easily visible or audible. 	<p>Low - Moderate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The premises will continue to offer gaming as only a part of a very wide range of entertainment and dining offers. There are alternative entertainment options available to patrons and will be further enhanced through the addition of a café, expanded bistro area, upgraded terrace and other facilities, with the EGM additions comprising a small part of the redevelopment. The venue is clearly focused on more than just gaming. The large scale of venue is commensurate with the proposed 105 EGMs (noting it already offers 97 EGMs). Despite the gaming room being open until 4am, the usage of machines is low in the early hours and as such, there are already machines available at these times. Primary access to the gaming room is via the main entrance. The reconfiguration of the entrance associated with the bistro works will ensure gaming patrons move past a staffed reception area to access the gaming room. This is the case currently, although this will be enhanced. Although this is a hotel venue, it targets a mid to high end positioning with a quality fit-out and offer, along with high levels of security. It is a safe and welcoming environment.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON PROBLEM GAMBLING (CONT'D)

Risk Type	Description	Assessment of Risk from this Application
Venue Responsible Gambling Policy and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation and continuous monitoring of the Responsible Gambling Policy minimises the risk of problem gambling. Venues which adhere to approved responsible gambling policies maximise benefit and and mitigate negative impacts of gambling. The actions of the staff and higher levels of interaction with patrons are thought to reduce the risk of problem gambling. 	<p>Low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The actions taken by the applicant to help prevent problem gambling are critical in minimising the risk of harm. As experienced operator of implementing RSG policy, the Dorset Gardens Hotel staff is well positioned to minimise harm. Dorset Gardens Hotel already provides a responsible gaming environment, adhering to all Government legislation and industry codes of practice. The implementation of the Harm Minimisation Policy and Procedures further informs on the Hotel's commitment to reduce the likelihood of distress and harm among patrons.
Overall Risk		<p>Low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the risk of increased problem gambling as a direct result of this application is likely to be immaterial. Although there are higher levels of expenditure on gaming in the municipality and this venue, the critical consideration here, given this context, is whether or not the application will increase problem gambling other other harms. As such, an increase of just 8 EGMs into a venue with 97 currently where there is access to several other venues in the area, the incremental change is minor. There limited risk of an increase in problem behaviour as a direct result of this application.

CONCEPT OF DESTINATION VERSUS CONVENIENCE VENUES

The concept of “destination gaming” has existed in the field of research in relation to problem gambling behaviour for several decades. Although interpreted or applied in policy in various ways, the concept emerged from evidence that the less accessible gaming machines are, the lower the risk of problem gambling behaviour. It is associated with reduced risk of problem gambling behaviour due to the need for EGM players to make a conscious decision to visit a venue or access machines. It is a link discussed at length in the Productivity Commission report into gambling from 2009.

Applied to the extreme, it has been used to argue a preference for single, centralised gaming location such as a casino, over dispersed hotel and club locations (*Department of Justice, Destination Gaming – Evaluating the benefits for Victoria, 2008*).

However, in states where gaming is more widely accessible in hotels and clubs, there is a preference expressed for venues that are considered greater “destinations” rather than “convenience venues”. Convenience gaming is available in a location that is frequented by large numbers of people who are visiting that location for a purpose other than gaming. The suggestion is that if gaming is accessible and convenient, there is a risk those with a propensity towards problem gambling behaviour could be easily enticed to divert their time or money into gaming machines, rather than their original purpose of visiting a location (e.g. grocery shopping).

A submission to a Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform in 2011 used this definition to distinguish destination and convenience venues:

“Destination venues involve a premeditated decision to travel to the venue, often over a significant distance. Convenience venues on the other hand provide facilities a consumer may encounter during their daily activities, leading to an impulse decision to gamble. These venues often have a high accessibility to consumers and few barriers to consumption.” (Submission to Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform Inquiry into Pre-Commitment, Australasian Casino Association, 31 January 2011).

The concept of reducing accessibility by limiting the addition of EGMs into convenience venues was fundamental to the revisions to Clause 52.28 (Gaming) of Victorian Planning Schemes in 2006, backed by gambling research. The purpose of the Clause relates to ensuring gaming machines are situated in appropriate locations and premises. In particular, additional gaming machines are prohibited from designated shopping centres and strip shopping centres. This reflected the view that proximity to locations where people conducted everyday activities increased the risk of “convenience gambling” leading to problematic behaviours.

The Dorset Gardens Hotel is considered an archetypal example of a suburban “destination venue”. As shown in the images to the right and on maps earlier in the report, it is well separated from areas of high activity such as shopping facilities. There is significant separation (open space, car parking) from what are largely residential areas surrounding. It is not a particularly walkable environment. While it may be convenient to a small number of people who live proximate, for most people, this venue is not a convenient place to walk to, and it is not access as part of trips to undertake other everyday activities. Patrons are making a conscious decision to visit, often travelling significant distances.

VIEW WEST HOTEL ENTRANCE ACROSS DORSET ROAD



VIEW SOUTH FROM RAIL TRAIL TO VENUE



VIEW SOUTH FROM VENUE TO 7ELEVEN & OPEN SPACE



SOCIAL & ECONOMIC IMPACT SUMMARY

This section summarises the preceding analysis by considering the likely economic and social benefits and dis-benefits, with a conclusion as to likely net economic and social impact arising from the application for additional EGMs in this venue.

When considering the points in this section, it is important to recognise not all benefits and dis-benefits are of equal significance. It is also not possible to apply a dollar value to each benefit or cost. Therefore, the net effect cannot be derived from an arithmetic calculation. Ultimately a level of judgement is required.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Effect	Description	Weight Given
Value of development works	The addition of the café along with the upgrades and expansion of the bistro, terrace and other upgrades is estimated to cost \$6.7 million excluding GST. This will generate economic benefit through the construction period as well as during operations. While these works may proceed in time, without the additional profitability generated by the extra EGMs, the investment will be delayed.	Moderate The total dollar value of the works is considerable, with local employment opportunities generated during the construction period and daily operations are considered beneficial to the community.
Community contributions	The economic benefit of community contributions can be measured as the dollar increase in contributions as a direct result of the application.	Low As the venue is planning to enshrine future community contributions of \$20,000 per annum cash, and a further \$10,000 in-kind.
Ongoing effects due to development works and increased activity	Typically increases to supply contracts can occur from a venue's investment works due to an increase in demand for food and beverage products. This is the case when significant upgrades are undertaken.	Moderate Changes to the broader facility will increase demand, particularly with the addition of a café, expanded bistro, improved terrace and accessibility for patrons.
Employment creation	It is estimated that around an extra 8-10 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees will be required across the venue. The additional employment need will be the result of the need to service additional demand throughout the venue, based on information provided by the Hotel. Most of these jobs are likely to be filled by local residents.	Moderate The intended capital works program, in particular the new café and significant upgrades to the other areas, is expected to create some employment opportunities in the community which must be considered a positive outcome.
Gaming expenditure as an economic benefit	Expenditure by gamers who play for recreation is an economic benefit just as any other entertainment spending choice is a benefit. This expenditure is also associated with additional social benefits. It is not offset by the negative consequences linked to problem gambling behaviours, as these social and economic costs are considered separately.	Low The increase in gaming expenditure is relatively modest. Any expenditure on gaming by those who are not problem gamblers is considered a benefit to those players. The community benefit is low as this benefit accrues only a small share of the population.

ECONOMIC DIS-BENEFITS

Effect	Description	Weight Given
Economic costs associated with problem gambling	Problem gambling does have an economic cost relating to the provision of services. For example, the financial losses of the gamblers themselves and other support services which deal with the problems of gamblers and their families and friends. While problem gambling undoubtedly exists in the City of Maroondah, the important consideration here is how the grant of this application will affect problem gambling. As discussed, the impact of this application on problem gambling change within this community will be very small.	Low While the impact of problem gambling is significant on those affected and their families, the problem gambling change will be very low in the City of Maroondah as a result of this application (see section 5 assessment) given the minimal addition in EGMs. Subsequently the economic cost will also be very low.
Diversion of trade from other gaming venues	A share of the new gaming expenditure at the venue, and other trade, will be transferred from other gaming venues in the area. However, in a competitive market, and noting competition is a purpose of the Gaming Regulation Act, transference of trade between venues is to be expected and accepted. A loss of trade will also only generate a disbenefit should the impact be to an extent to reduce the facilities or service other venues offer. Reduced financial performance of a competitive venue is not a community disbenefit.	Low The level of increased expenditure will not affect the ability of other venues to deliver their current facilities or level of service as the additional EGMs are not expected to generate new competition with other venues which does not already exist.
Potential diversion of trade from retail facilities, or other businesses	New gaming expenditure generated at venue that is not transferred from other gaming venues has the potential to be diverted from retailers or other businesses locally. Again, a loss of trade will only generate a disbenefit should the impact be to an extent to reduce the facilities or services available to the community.	Low The new gaming expenditure to be generated is modest at up to some \$0.8m based on 2025 EGM expenditure. This is not sufficient to impact on the operations of any one business as the increased expenditure on gaming will be diverted from countless sources within and beyond the municipality. Hence there is likely to be no business closures or in turn, loss of jobs to generate a disbenefit.

SOCIAL BENEFITS & DIS-BENEFITS

Social Benefits

Effect	Description	Weight Given
Enhanced access to EGM facilities for residents and visitors	For those who play gaming machines in a responsible manner, introducing an additional 8 EGMs at Dorset Gardens creates a social benefit by increasing the entertainment offer available at the venue.	Low For most people who play, gambling is a recreational activity. The proposed application improves accessibility to EGMs in peak times, providing better quality services and greater choice to patrons. This benefit is given low weight though as the number of additions is only marginal.
Improved facilities enhancing social interaction	The expansion of the facilities and services available at a venue have positive associated social effects, including enhanced opportunities for people to meet, celebrate and otherwise enjoy the company of others. These benefits can be of elevated significance where alternative opportunities to socialize are more limited.	Moderate Improvements will provide members, local residents, and visitors with greater access to facilities along with an improved general experience. In particular, the addition of a café and upgraded bistro provides a greater opportunity for local residents or community groups to hold a variety of celebrations and increased visitation in the early hours of the day. The redevelopment is intended particularly to appeal to families in the area.
Social benefit derived from community contributions	Approval of the EGMs will allow the venue to continue its sponsorship programs and other forms of contributions to the community, potentially growing the contributions in line with improved financial returns to venue. While there is an economic value of those activities, the social value created by continued investment in community activities exceeds a dollar value. The ability of the venue to contribute to the local municipality and the region, promoting social interaction and general well-being represents a very important social benefit.	Low The direct impact that community contributions can have on local social groups is significant. This is an important role played by Dorset Gardens, and the maintenance and growth of these contributions, whether in kind or cash is of social value. The value is to be enshrined by way of condition, although not increased from current levels.

Social Dis-benefits

Effect	Description	Weight Given
The increase in problem gambling and associated social impacts.	As with any gaming application, the key potential social disbenefit flows from the impact on problem gambling. Excessive gambling can have adverse impacts on people's health, jobs, finances, emotional state and relationships. The Productivity Commission Inquiry Report into Gambling detailed potential measures of harm caused by gambling across a range of social and economic indicators.	Low As discussed under the economic disbenefit section earlier, problem gambling is the most serious consequence of gaming machines. However, my assessment indicates the potential for increased problem gambling or other undesirable behaviour is very limited in this case. Hence the weight given to this disbenefit is low.

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC IMPACT SUMMARY

	Description
Key contextual considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hotel is a family-friendly venue offering a range of facilities and entertainment options, while ensuring gaming is offered in a responsible manner with a high level of monitoring of patrons by staff. The demographic profile of the City of Maroondah does not present an elevated risk of problem gambling behaviour or harm from that behaviour. The area of most relevance to Dorset Gardens, being the Croydon East and surrounds presents as an area home to residents with a typical demographic profile for metropolitan areas, experiencing low levels of disadvantage. The current distribution of gaming venues and machines results in a higher-than-average provision of gaming opportunities relative to the resident population which is growing at a stable and steady rate. However, the gaming density will not change by much through an additional 8 EGMs at the Dorset Gardens (in fact, with population growth, it will not increase at all). Gaming machines in the municipality are used more intensively than Greater Melbourne on average. However, this is in part a reflection of the broader draw beyond the municipal boundary of several venues, including the Dorset Gardens. Potential for increased problem gambling or other undesirable behaviour as a direct result of this application is limited. In addition to the venue context summarised above, including a positive demographic profile, modest gaming access/usage and venue operations, the addition is a small incremental increase from the 97 EGMs already in operation. Those machines only increase access to gaming opportunities in peak times.
Benefits vs Dis-Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The benefits of the application include providing access to machines for those who wish to play in a responsible manner; economic and social effects of the proposed redevelopment, in particular the addition of the café along with extensive upgrades to existing offerings which continues to broaden the role of the venue; employment generation through the broadening of capacity and facilities; and improvements to the financial position of venue which will help fund and maintain the significant community contributions. With negligible effects on other individual businesses (gaming and non-gaming), the main dis-benefit of the application relates to the potential for harm deriving from the addition of 8 EGMs. As summarised above though, the potential for an increase in problem gambling or other harm as a direct result of this application is very low. Consequently, it is considered the benefits of this application in a social and economic sense will at least meet, or more likely exceed the dis-benefits.
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the balance of the evidence and analysis of the application, it is my opinion that granting approval for a license for an additional 8 EGMs to operate at Dorset Gardens would not result in a net detriment to the community.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY RESULTS & DETAILED DEMOGRAPHICS

RESIDENTIAL LOCATION OF GAMING & BISTRO PATRONS

Origin of Gaming Room Patrons (22 Jul - 4 Aug 2024)

Suburb/Town	Survey Respondents	
	no.	%
Croydon (Vic.)	1652	20%
Mooroolbark	714	9%
Boronia	572	7%
Ringwood (Vic.)	522	6%
Bayswater (Vic.)	505	6%
Kilsyth	504	6%
Lilydale (Vic.)	455	5%
Ferntree Gully	368	4%
Chirnside Park	324	4%
Other Suburbs	3417	41%
Respondents from City of Maroondah	3,367	40%
Total Respondents	8,341	100%

Source: Dorset Gardens Hotel; Urbis

Origin of Bistro Patrons (22 Jul - 4 Aug 2024)

Suburb	Survey Respondents	
	no.	%
Croydon	420	30%
Mooroolbark	135	10%
Kilsyth	93	7%
Bayswater	71	5%
Boronia	58	4%
Lilydale (Vic.)	53	4%
Chirnside Park	48	3%
Montrose (Vic.)	39	3%
Ringwood (Vic.)	31	2%
Other Suburbs	462	33%
Respondents from City of Maroondah	578	41%
Total Respondents	1410	100%

Source: Dorset Gardens Hotel; Urbis

DETAILED RESIDENT DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Demographic Profile Summary									
Characteristics	2.5km Radius	5km Radius	Maroondah (C)	Melbourne	Dwelling Structure	2.5km Radius	5km Radius	Maroondah (C)	Melbourne
Estimated Resident Population (2021)	47,253	141,278	115,043	4,917,750	Separate House (%)	79%	84%	82%	61%
Income	Average Household Income	\$110,400	\$121,700	\$124,100	\$127,500	Semi-detached (%)	12%	9%	8%
						Flat, Unit or apartment (%)	3%	3%	4%
						Other dwelling (%)	0%	0%	0%
						Housing Costs			
						Loan Mortgage Repayments (monthly \$)	\$2,100	\$2,170	\$2,200
<i>Var'n from Non-Metro Victoria Avg.</i>	-13.4%	-4.5%	-2.7%	+0.0%		% Households in Mortgage Stress ¹	3.3%	3.3%	3.2%
Avg. Per Cap. Income (aged 15-64)	\$60,700	\$61,800	\$63,400	\$63,000	Rent Payments (weekly \$)	\$380	\$390	\$390	\$370
<i>Var'n from Non-Metro Victoria Avg.</i>	-3.7%	-1.9%	+0.6%	+0.0%	% Households in Rental Stress ¹	0.2%	6.9%	6.9%	7.9%
Household & Age Profile					Households Owned Outright (% of Hholds)	32%	34%	34%	31%
Average Household Size	2.4	2.6	2.5	2.6	Households Under Mortgage (% of Hholds)	42%	43%	41%	38%
Average Age	38.3	38.3	38.3	38.3	Renter Occupied Households (% of Hholds)	27%	23%	25%	31%
Aged 60+ (% of Population)	24%	23%	23%	20%	Car Ownership (% of Households)	95%	96%	95%	91%
Family Household (% of Total Hholds)	69%	74%	73%	71%	Labour Force				
Families with Young Children	39%	39%	38%	39%	Labour Force Participation	67%	68%	68%	67%
<i>Couple families with children<15</i>	31%	32%	32%	33%	% Unemployed	3%	3%	3%	4%
<i>One parent families with children<15</i>	8%	7%	6%	7%	White Collar Workforce	71%	72%	74%	74%
Families with No Children Under 15	60%	60%	60%	59%	Blue Collar Workforce	29%	28%	26%	26%
<i>Couple families with no children</i>	37%	36%	36%	35%	Birthplace				
<i>Couple families with no children<15</i>	13%	15%	15%	15%	Australia	76%	77%	74%	63%
<i>One parent families with no children<15</i>	10%	9%	9%	8%	Asia	12%	11%	13%	19%
Other Family Household	1%	1%	1%	2%	Europe	7%	7%	7%	8%
Group Household	3%	2%	3%	4%	Other Region	5%	5%	6%	10%
Lone Person	28%	24%	25%	25%					

1. The Affordable Housing Taskforce has defined people as having difficulty in accessing affordable housing if they are in the lowest two quintiles (lowest 40%) of income distribution and pay 30% or more of their gross household income in housing costs. This group is referred to as being in housing stress.

Source: ABS, Urbis

APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS, SOURCES & ABBREVIATIONS

DEFINITION FOR SOCIAL & ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VGCCC) has the following definition for social and economic impact, which has been published in the “Economic and Social Impact Submission” form for Local Authorities published August 2012:

Term	Explanation
Economic Impact of the Proposal	Economic Impact is the sum of the effects on the viability and development of the economy (of the municipal district) in the short or medium-term, and how this is likely to affect the well-being of the community.
Social Impact of the Proposal	Social Impact is the sum of the effects on the social infrastructure, social opportunities and social interactions (of the municipal district) in the short or medium-term, and how this is likely to affect the well-being of the community.
Well-Being of the Community of the Municipal District	Economic prosperity and social robustness or health of the overall community of the municipal district.
Will Not be Detrimental to the Well-Being of the Community of the Municipal District	When the net economic and social impact of the proposal (i.e. the sum of the incremental effects) is considered neutral or positive).
Housing Stress	Research by the ACT Taskforce on Affordable Housing titled “Strategies for Action” in December 2002 defined “housing stress” in the following manner: “The Taskforce has defined people as having difficulty in accessing affordable housing if they are in the lowest two quintiles (lowest 40 percent of income distribution) and pay 30 percent or more of their gross household income in housing costs. This group is referred to as being in housing stress.”

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC INDEX OF DISADVANTAGE (SEIFA)

The SEIFA “Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage” is derived from the 2021 Census of Population and Housing and measures aspects of social and economic conditions in the area. The index ascribes values to a number of social and economic attributes to generate a comprehensive measure of advantage and disadvantage. The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage covers the indicators as taken from the ABS technical paper below.

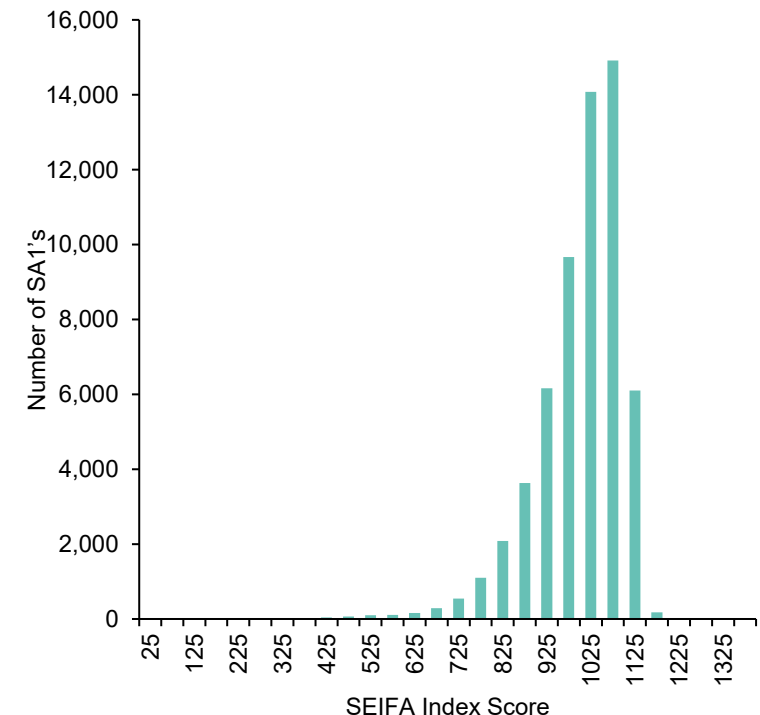
The index value is used to order or rank regions in terms of disadvantage. A higher index score means an area is relatively less disadvantaged, while a lower score indicates the area is disadvantaged relative to other areas. The decile markings along the top axis show that there is not much difference in the scores of SA1s in the middle deciles. This means that SA1s in the middle deciles do not vary much in terms of indicators of disadvantage used. The discriminating power of this index lies in the lower end of the distribution, i.e. for identifying relatively disadvantaged SA1s. The index cannot be used to measure the size of the difference in socio-economic disadvantage between areas, rather, it represents an ordinal rank not a cardinal value.

Final Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) Variables & Loadings

Variable name	Variable description	Variable loading
INC_LOW	% of people living in households with stated annual household equivalised income between \$1 and \$25,999 (approx. 1st and 2nd deciles)	-0.87
CHILDJOBLESS	% of families with children under 15 years of age who live with jobless parents	-0.78
NOYR12ORHIGHER	% of people aged 15 years and over whose highest level of education is Year 11 or lower. Includes Certificate I and II	-0.75
LOWRENT	% of occupied private dwellings paying rent less than \$250 per week (excluding \$0 per week)	-0.71
UNEMPLOYED	% of people (in the labour force) unemployed	-0.68
OCC_LABOUR	% of employed people classified as 'labourers'	-0.68
DISABILITYU70	% of people aged under 70 who need assistance with core activities due to a long-term health condition, disability or old age	-0.63
ONEPARENT	% of one parent families with dependent offspring only	-0.58
OVERCROWD	% of occupied private dwellings requiring one or more extra bedrooms (based on the Canadian National Occupancy Standard)	-0.51
OCC_DRIVERS	% of employed people classified as Machinery Operators and Drivers	-0.51
SEPDIVORCED	% of people aged 15 and over who are separated or divorced	-0.51
NOEDU	% of people aged 15 years and over who have no educational attainment	-0.47
OCC_SERVICE_L	% of employed people classified as Low Skill Community and Personal Service Workers	-0.45
NOCAR	% of occupied private dwellings with no cars	-0.43
ENGLISHPOOR	% of people who do not speak English well	-0.35

Source: ABS Construction of the indexes 2021; Urbis

Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) score distribution



Source: ABS Construction of the indexes 2021; Urbis

KEY SOURCES OF INFORMATION & ABBREVIATIONS

Key Sources of Information

This report draws on a variety of information and sources provided to this office, the most important of which are:

- Australian Hotels Association, Self Exclusion Program 1997
- Blue Moon Research, “Evaluation of the six hour shutdown of electronic gaming machines in NSW”, April 2008
- Department of Transport & Planning (DTP), Victoria in the Future 2023, Population Projections
- Department of Justice Report “A Study of Gambling in Victoria – Problem Gambling from a Public Health Perspective”, September 2009
- Department of Justice, “Destination Gaming – Evaluating the benefits for Victoria, May 2008”
- Department of Justice and Community Safety, “Victorian population gambling and health study 2023 – Final Report”, September 2024
- Estimated Resident Population (ERP) figures as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)
- Gambling – Productivity Commission Inquiry Report, 2010
- Hing & Haw, “Influence of Venue Characteristics on a Player’s Decision to Attend a Gambling Venue”, 2010
- City of Maroondah’s Responsible Gambling Policy 2018
- Leigh Barrett & Associates, Gamesure, “Harm Minimisation Policy & Procedures Manual, September 2024
- Statistical information provided by the ABS, including the 2011, 2016 and 2021 Censuses of Population and Housing and Socio-Economic Indices for Areas (SEIFA).
- Victorian Competition & Efficiency Commission Inquiry into the Social and Economic Costs of Problem Gambling, VGCCC, 10 September 2012

Abbreviations

ABS	Australia Bureau of Statistics
CBD	Central Business District
EGM	Electronic Gaming Machine
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
LGA	Local Government Area
VIF-23	Victoria in Future 2023
RSG	Responsible Service of Gambling
SA1	Statistical Area Level 1
SA2	Statistical Area Level 2
SEIFA	Social Economic Index for Areas
VGCCC	Victoria Gambling and Casino Control Commission
VGCLR	Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation

This report is dated **September 2025** and incorporates information and events up to that date only and excludes any information arising, or event occurring, after that date which may affect the validity of Urbis Pty Ltd's (Urbis) opinion in this report. Urbis prepared this report on the instructions, and for the benefit only, of the **Dorset Gardens Hotel** (Instructing Party) for the purpose of a **Social and Economic Impact Assessment** (Purpose) and not for any other purpose or use. Urbis expressly disclaims any liability to the Instructing Party who relies or purports to rely on this report for any purpose other than the Purpose and to any party other than the Instructing Party who relies or purports to rely on this report for any purpose whatsoever (including the Purpose).

In preparing this report, Urbis was required to make judgements which may be affected by unforeseen future events including wars, civil unrest, economic disruption, financial market disruption, business cycles, industrial disputes, labour difficulties, political action and changes of government or law, the likelihood and effects of which are not capable of precise assessment.

All surveys, forecasts, projections and recommendations contained in or made in relation to or associated with this report are made in good faith and on the basis of information supplied to Urbis at the date of this report. Achievement of the projections and budgets set out in this report will depend, among other things, on the actions of others over which Urbis has no control.

Urbis acknowledges the important contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make in creating a strong and vibrant Australian society.

We acknowledge, in each of our offices, the Traditional Owners on whose land we stand.

Urbis has made all reasonable inquiries that it believes is necessary in preparing this report but it cannot be certain that all information material to the preparation of this report has been provided to it as there may be information that is not publicly available at the time of its inquiry.

In preparing this report, Urbis may rely on or refer to documents in a language other than English which Urbis will procure the translation of into English. Urbis is not responsible for the accuracy or completeness of such translations and to the extent that the inaccurate or incomplete translation of any document results in any statement or opinion made in this report being inaccurate or incomplete, Urbis expressly disclaims any liability for that inaccuracy or incompleteness.

This report has been prepared with due care and diligence by Urbis and the statements and opinions given by Urbis in this report are given in good faith and in the belief on reasonable grounds that such statements and opinions are correct and not misleading bearing in mind the necessary limitations noted in the previous paragraphs. Further, no responsibility is accepted by Urbis or any of its officers or employees for any errors, including errors in data which is either supplied by the Instructing Party, supplied by a third party to Urbis, or which Urbis is required to estimate, or omissions howsoever arising in the preparation of this report, provided that this will not absolve Urbis from liability arising from an opinion expressed recklessly or in bad faith.

Urbis staff responsible for this report were:

Director	Rhys Quick
Associate Director	Mike Zhang
Senior Consultant	Kanwal Singh
Consultant	Sophie McMillan
Project code	P0037179
Report number	Final

