

4 March 2022

South Waikato District Council

Torphin Crescent,

Tokoroa.

Re: Submission for South Waikato District Council's Gambling Class 4 and TAB Venue Policy (Gambling Policy) 2022

Asian Family Services (AFS) has been providing support to Asian communities living in Aotearoa New Zealand since 1998. Our organisation is a charitable trust.

AFS is New Zealand's only service provider for people of Asian backgrounds who are affected by mental health issues and gambling harm. Our gambling harm minimisation services are delivered under a Ministry of Health contract and funded from the gambling levy. The service operates in three areas: the Asian Helpline, clinical intervention, and public health work.

AFS supports South Waikato District's proposed continuation of the Sinking Lid policy. A sinking lid policy is one of the best policies available to reduce gambling harm and losses from gambling. However, allowing for relocations or mergers – for any reason – undermines the efficacy of a sinking lid. We strongly urge the Council to amend the proposed policy document and remove Section 2 (Clubs and Ministerial Discretion) and Section 6 (Relocation of existing class 4 venues and TAB venues).

Asian Family Services endorses and supports the submission made by PGF Group on South Waikato District Council's Gambling Class 4 and TAB Venue Policy (Gambling Policy), especially the following three recommendations:

- **No relocations:** If a venue with EGMs is forced to close or voluntarily closes, the council will not permit the EGMs to be relocated to any venue within the council area.
- **No club mergers:** There will be no club mergers under any circumstances.
- **A ban on any new venues:** No permit will be given to operate any new venue or club in the council area if that venue proposes having EGMs, including TAB venues.

Asian Population in South Waikato District

According to the 2018 Census data, the Asian population in South Waikato District ranked 6th among the districts in the Waikato region.

Table 1: Asian population ranking in the Waikato region

Rank	Area	Total	Percentage of	Asian Population
1	Hamilton City	160911	18.50%	26768
2	Waikato District	75618	5.80%	4386
3	Waipa District	53241	4.30%	2289
4	Matamata-Piako District	34404	5.70%	1961
5	Taupo District	37203	4.90%	1823
6	South Waikato District	24042	4.20%	1100
7	Thames-Coromandel District	29895	3.40%	1016
8	Hauraki District	20022	3.60%	721
9	Ōtorohanga District	10104	4%	404
10	Waitomo District	9303	3.70%	344

(Data resource: Stats NZ, <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-place-summaries>)

The table below also shows that the Asian population in South Waikato District has grown approximately 1.6% at every Census cycle.

Table 2: Ethnic groups for people in the South Waikato District, 2006, 2013, and 2018 Census

	2006 (%)	2013 (%)	2018 (%)
Asian population	2.1	3.1	4.2

(Data resource: Stats NZ: <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-place-summaries/south-waikato-district>)

As the Asian population in South Waikato District is growing steadily, we recommend that the Council consider Asians' perspectives at the policy level and further strengthen the sinking lid policy to protect Asians from gambling-related harm.

Asian Gambling Behaviour

Sobrun-Maharaj, Rossen, and Wong (2012) identified that one of the contributing factors for mental health issues for Asian peoples is problem gambling.

Analysis of data from the Health and Lifestyles Survey over several years shows that, after adjusting for a range of socio-economic factors and gambling predictors, when compared to European/Other, Asian people's risk for individual gambling harm was 9.5 times higher. Furthermore, pokies players were more than twice as likely to be at risk of some level of gambling-related harm compared to other gamblers.

Over the past 12 months, we've provided 4664 counseling sessions to more than 1,447 gambling clients around Aotearoa. Our problem-gambling clients were afflicted with co-existing issues such as suicidal ideation, financial hardship, domestic violence and severe depressive and anxiety symptoms due to problem gambling.

According to the New Zealand Asian Responsible Gambling Report (2021) conducted by Asian Family Services, 74.7% of Asians engaged in some forms of gambling activity in the last 12 months. Unfortunately, due to being either new to the country, or unfamiliar with the health system and services in New Zealand, many who experienced gambling harm did not seek early intervention. The delay in seeking help was partially due to a lack of understanding of behavioural addiction concepts. Often addiction is only understood as a substance abuse issue. The report also indicated that 78.7% of Asian gamblers identified stigma as one of the reasons that prevented them from early help-seeking.

The main Asian groups who are most vulnerable to the harm of pokies

During the past 23 years, AFS has seen many Asian clients who were addicted to pokies. We particularly find that the groups below are most vulnerable to gambling harm from pokies:

- Restaurant workers (chefs, kitchen hand, barista, etc.);
- Cleaners;
- Builders/construction workers;
- Older people;
- International students;
- Work visa holders.

The main reasons that Asian peoples play pokies

The most common reasons why Asian people play pokies are because:

- Low-barrier game: No English requirement, easy to go and play solo;
- Emotional escape (release stress, run away from conflict with others, etc.);
- Combatting loneliness;
- Making easy money;
- Addiction-driven playing: to win back lost money.

Sinking Lid Policy

We often hear from our clients that, “I don’t want to be hooked on the pokie machines. I want to take back control.” However, the outcome is the exact opposite. It is important to realise that pokie machines are specifically designed to lure people to keep playing and betting more money.

An increase in pokie machines and venues will expose Asian people, migrants and the refugee community to more harm from Class 4 gambling. We support the Council’s proposal for continuation of the Sinking Lid policy. However, we submit that amendments be made to remove Section 2 (Clubs and Ministerial Discretion) and Section 6 (Relocation of existing class 4 venues and TAB venues) of the proposed policy document.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit.

Ngā mihi nui,



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Reference

1. Asian Family Services & Trace Research Ltd. (2021). New Zealand Asian Responsible Gambling Report 2021. Auckland, New Zealand. Asian Family Services.
<https://www.asianfamilyservices.nz/resources/resource-items/new-zealand-asian-responsible-gambling-report-2021/>
2. Health Promotion Agency. (2018). 2018 New Zealand Mental Health Monitor: Questionnaire. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency.
3. Sobrun – Maharaj, A., Rossen, F., & Wong, A, S, K. (2012) The Impact of Gambling and Problem Gambling on Asian Families and Communities in New Zealand. Centre for Asian & Ethnic Minority Health Research, University of Auckland.
<https://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/assets/fmhs/soph/sch/cahre/docs/Final%20IGAF%20report%202012.pdf>
4. Stats NZ (2018). Retrieved October 29, 2021, from <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census>.

Appendix One: New Zealand Asian Responsible Gambling Report 2021


Gambling activities in the last 12 months

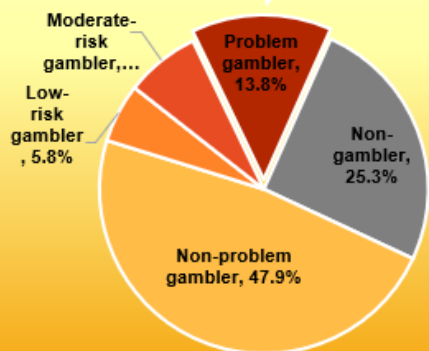
Bought lotto or instant scratch tickets	67.8%
Private games with friends for money	27.7%
Played gaming machines, or pokies	27.6%
Played Casino table games	25.2%
Placed a bet with the TAB	23.9%
Online gambling and gaming	19.7%

According to New Zealand's "The Gambling Act 2003", lotteries, prize competitions and instant games are also classified as parts of gambling. Are you aware of this classification?

Yes 53.5% No 46.5%

Problem Gambling Severity Classification within NZ's Asian Population

Approximately **71,736** NZ Asians are problem gamblers 



Distribution of Problem Gamblers (13.8%) by Ethnicity (>3%)

Indian	54.4% 
Chinese	15.5%
Filipino	8.7%

Asians perceive that Asian (76.5%) or Maori/Pacific Island (74.1%) gamblers are stigmatised by society to a slightly greater level compared to a European gambler (65.7%).

Expressions of Self-Stigma about Gambling by Asian Gamblers

Disappointed in yourself	35.5%
Guilty	27.8%
That you lack willpower/self...	27.0%
Ashamed	26.2%
Weak	21.3%

New Zealand Asian Responsible Gambling Survey

2021


Asian Family Services
Together enriching lives

Top 5 Perceived Factors for Developing Gambling Addiction

Lack of financial budgeting/plan	58.6%
Loneliness	49.9%
Job-related stress	48.0%
Certain personality characteristics: being competitive, or...	47.8%
Environmental factors, such as family or friend...	47.3%

Expressions of Public Stigma about Gamblers with Addiction

Agree	
Have unrealistic beliefs about winning at gambling	65.9%
Have an addictive personality	61.4%
Are irresponsible with money	57.9%
Are always in debt	51.8%
Are in denial about having a gambling problem	51.7%

Top 3 Channels for Seeking Gambling Support

From family or friends	51.3%
Through self-help strategies	34.9%
From a face-to-face support group	27.8%

Top 3 Help Seeking Barriers

Lack of awareness regarding the...	49.3%
Limited knowledge of available...	46.7%
Harmful gambling is hidden due to...	45.5%

