8. *Adoption of Policy Review Statement of Proposal for – Draft Gambling Policy and Draft Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy*

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Summary

- The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval of the combined Policy Review for the draft Gambling Venue Policy and Draft Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy for public consultation.
- Officers have undertaken a review of both policies, including a Social Impact Assessment for the Gambling Policy to consider both the positive and negative impacts of class 4 gambling in the Ashburton District.
- **Gambling Policy** - Under the Gambling Act 2003 and Racing Industry Act 2020, Council is legislatively required to conduct a review of the policy every 3 years. As the last review was carried out in 2022, the review is now due. Based on the legal review, social impact report findings, and discussion during the public workshop on the 31st of July, officers are recommending a series of changes to the Gambling Venue policy.
- **Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy** - The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requested Council to update the Dangerous & Insanitary Buildings Policy to meet the requirements of the Building Act 2004, by referencing 'Affected buildings' in the policy. Officers have undertaken a full review of the policy, including other recommendations from the Ministry, and have identified some additional amendments to the policy.
- Council has the following options:
  - Rollover the current policies.
  - Adopt the Draft Policy Review Statement of Proposal for public consultation.

- Adopt an amended version for the Draft Policy Review Statement of Proposal for public consultation.

- Consultation for both policies requires use of the Special Consultative Procedure under Section 87 of the Local Government Act 2002. The Act also enables Council to combine the consultations which Officers are recommending to save doing a separate consultation.

Recommendation

1. **That** Council receives the 2025 Class 4 Gambling Social Impact Assessment Report.

2. **That** Council approves the Policy Review Statement of Proposal for public consultation on the draft Gambling Venue policy and draft Dangerous & Insanitary Buildings policy.

Attachment2

Appendix 1 Draft Policy Review Statement of Proposal – Gambling Venue Policy and Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings policy

Appendix 2 Class 4 Gambling Social Impact Report 2025

SECTION A – Gambling Venue Policy

Background

1. The Gambling Act 2003 requires Council to have a policy on class 4 gambling venues. The Racing Industry Act 2020 also requires Council to have a policy on TAB venues. Council's Gambling Venue Policy covers the requirements of both of these Acts, noting that the district does not currently have any stand-alone TAB venues.

2. Both Acts require that the policy be reviewed within three years of adoption, and every three years thereafter. The last review of the Gambling Venue Policy was carried out in 2022 and is now due again.

3. The purpose of the policy is to guide Council decisions on the issuing of new gambling venue consents. The policy can prescribe a number of controls including the location of venues, number of venues, the number of gaming machines permitted at each venue within the district, and whether venues are permitted to relocate. It also states whether new TAB venues can be established and their location.

4. Officers have undertaken a social impact assessment, as attached in appendix 2. The report takes into account statistics such as participation rates, venue and machine numbers, gambling expenditure (losses), grant distribution within the district, and problem gambling intervention statistics.

5. The report also takes into consideration feedback provided by industry stakeholders such as corporate societies, class 4 venues, harm minimisation services and other interested parties.

6. This information has been collated to assess the effectiveness of the policy in regulating the activity.

The current situation

Stakeholder Pre-engagement

7. From 14 May 2025 to 16 June 2025, officers engaged with gambling industry stakeholders to seek feedback on the effectiveness of the current policy in achieving its intended objectives.

8. As part of the survey, officers also sought feedback on specific policy inclusions such as the number of venues and machines allowed under the policy and the approach to relocations. Stakeholders also had the opportunity to provide feedback on both the negative and positive social impacts of class 4 gambling in the Ashburton District.

9. Seven responses were received from the survey as well as one late submission. Overall, responding stakeholders felt the current policy was effective, or somewhat effective in achieving its intended objectives, noting that the policy balances all purposes of the Gambling Act. Some stakeholders noted that the district doesn't need more venues.

10. The majority of responding stakeholders indicated that Council should continue to consider new venue applications. However, some stakeholders noted that there are already sufficient venues in the district, and they would not be opposed to a slightly more restrictive policy (i.e. some form of capping).

11. Over half of the respondents' indicated that Council should allow relocations for existing venues for specific reasons. Stakeholders noted that venue relocations can be utilised as a harm minimisation tool where venues are proposing to relocate from high deprivation areas to lower deprivation areas.

Non-compliance with the Gambling Act 2003

12. In 2013, the High Court's "Waikiwi decision" ruled that a class 4 venue could relocate without Council consent if the change was considered minor. The High Court's decision was based on the following criteria:
    a) The change in venue is minor (e.g. is very close to the existing site);
    b) The name of the premises would remain the same;
    c) The ownership and management of the venue wouldn't change; and
    d) Patrons and the public would regard the tavern as being the same venue.

13. Following this decision, the Gambling (Gambling Harm Reduction) Amendment Act 2013 amended sections 101 and 102 of the Gambling Act 2003, introducing the requirement for Councils to consider whether to include a relocation policy in their class 4 venue policies.

14. A relocation policy allows an existing venue to move to a new venue location while retaining its original consent conditions—such as the number of gaming machines.

15. Ashburton District Council adopted a relocation policy as part of the 2012/13 policy review. The relocation policy was later updated in 2022 to reflect the Waikiwi criteria on the basis that the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) continued to apply this interpretation to minor relocations (and therefore minor venue changes could proceed without Council consent).

16. However, in 2024, the High Court ruled that Waikiwi-style relocations were no longer lawful based on Court's interpretation of the updated Gambling Act. This decision was upheld by the Court of Appeal in 2025, confirming that Council consent is required for all relocations, even if deemed minor.

17. As a result, Council's current relocation policy is non-compliant with the Gambling Act 2003, as it does not require consent for minor venue changes. Section 6 of the current policy must now be amended to reflect the updated legal position.

Findings of the social impact assessment

18. The social impact assessment report 2025 provides an overview of gambling in New Zealand and the Ashburton District, with particular reference to Class 4 gambling. It focusses on the social effects of "pokie" machine gambling, including an assessment of problem gambling in the district, changes in the industry and participation, and expenditure trends.

19. The key findings of the report included:
    - Nationally, pokie machine gambling participation rates has increased by 2.3% since the last social impact report (2020/21).
    - $6.884m was lost to pokie machines in the Ashburton District in 2024, representing a 6.6% increase since the last social impact report in 2022.
    - The size of the industry has remained relatively stable in the Ashburton District. At the time of the report, there were 11 venues and 131 pokie machines, representing a net decrease of 1 venue and 3 machines since the last social impact report. Officers note that a new venue has recently been consented (after the social impact report was completed) which adds an additional 5 machines to the district.
    - The community received $1.5m in grant funding generated by pokie machine proceeds in 2024, this was distributed across 64 community groups.
    - Studies have found that those living in high deprivation areas are more likely to be at risk of experiencing gambling harm or developing problem gambling behaviours. Currently, 47% of the districts gaming machines are located in higher deprivation areas within the community.
    - Five people from the Ashburton District sought intervention for problem gambling in 2023. While this number is considered low, on a population basis, the Ashburton District has a slightly higher intervention rate of 1.1 clients per 10,000 people compared to the national average of 0.87.
20. Overall, while there have been some fluctuations in participation and expenditure trends, there were no significant indications that the industry is causing considerable harm within the district. Based on the findings of the report, the policy appears to be largely effective in regulating gambling activity in the Ashburton District.

Previous Council direction

21. Ashburton District Council has held a Gambling Venue Policy since the commencement of the Gambling Act in 2004.

22. The policy has been reviewed every 3 years, as required under the relevant legislation, but has not been changed (beyond minor changes) for the last four review periods.

23. Each review has included a social impact assessment, all of which determined that the policy remained effective in regulating the activity and mitigating the negative impacts of gambling related harm in the community.

24. As the policy has been rolled over for four consecutive review periods, the community have not been consulted with in relation to the Gambling Venue Policy for over 12 years.

Why consult now?

25. As discussed, section 6 of the current policy is not compliant with the Gambling Act 2003. At a minimum, the policy will need to be amended to explicitly state whether or not Council will permit venue relocations going forward.

26. As this is a change in the current policy, Council is legislatively required under section 102 of the Gambling Act 2003 to undertake a special consultative procedure (as defined in section 83 of the Local Government Act 2002) to consult with the community on any proposed changes to the policy.

27. Given the legislative need to address the relocation policy, and the amount of time since consultation was last carried out, Council now has an opportunity to undertake public consultation to evaluate the effectiveness of the entire policy.

28. Officers have drafted the proposed changes based on the feedback received during the public workshop held on 31st July 2025.

29. Consultation for this policy is proposed to be run as a joint process alongside the Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy consultation.

Key focus of the review / proposed changes

TAB Venues (section 4 of the draft policy)

30. There are currently no stand-alone TAB venues in the Ashburton District. However, the current policy does permit TAB gambling venues to be established subject to certain conditions.

31. The draft policy proposes to keep this section of the policy the same, allowing stand-alone TAB venues to establish in the district given they meet the conditions of the policy.

Class 4 venues and machine caps (section 5.2 of the draft policy)

32. Under the Gambling Act 2003, any new class 4 venue licenced after the commencement of the Act may operate up to 9 machines. However, section 102 of the Act permits Councils to set their own machine limit for new venues if it is within the limit specified in the Act.

33. Ashburton District Council's current policy has set a limit of five machines for new venues, four less than the permitted number of nine allowed under the Gambling Act 2003.

34. The draft policy proposes to retain the lower cap of 5 machines as a way to control the growth of machine numbers within the district.

35. In addition to this control, the draft policy is proposing to set a district wide venue cap of 20 venues as an additional mechanism to control industry growth in the district.

36. This allows for 8 new potential venues to be consented beyond the existing 12. Once the cap has been reached, no new venues will be consented unless an existing venue closes or they revoked their class 4 venue licence and consent.

Location Controls (section 5.1 of the draft policy)

37. Under section 4 of the current policy, venues are permitted to establish provided they meet the location requirements of the policy.

38. The current policy requires the primary activity of the venue to be for the sale of liquor or liquor and food, and the location of gaming machines within the venue being in an area where under 18-year-olds do not have access to.

39. The venue must also be located within a Business Zone of the Ashburton District Plan or be otherwise permitted by way of resource consent and must not be one where the primary activity is associated with family or children's activities.

40. The draft policy proposes to keep these location controls the same but introduces an additional control which prohibits venues from establishing in, or existing venues from locating to areas that have a socio-economic deprivation score of 8 or more (indicating high levels of deprivation).

41. There is extensive evidence that indicates that gambling harm is disproportionately experienced by individuals living in areas of high socio-economic deprivation. In recognition of this, the Gambling Act 2003 requires councils to specifically consider the impact of gambling on these communities when reviewing their gambling venue policies.

42. Currently, a third of the gaming machines in the Ashburton District are located in areas with a deprivation score of 8 or more (indicating high deprivation).

43. By introducing an additional location control, Council can more effectively regulate the number of machines and venues within high-risk areas of the community.

Relocations of existing venues (section 5.3 of the draft policy)

44. The draft policy proposes to update the policy to permit existing venues to relocate to alternative sites while retaining the same consent conditions.

45. Under the draft policy, relocations could be permitted for the following reasons:

    - There are unforeseen circumstances that prohibit continued operation at the current location, including but not limited to:
        a) Acquisition of the property under the Public Works Act 1981;
        b) The corporate society is a tenant in a premises and the landlord is either selling the premises, or the tenant's lease expires and obtaining a new lease is not possible;
        c) Closure due to natural disaster, fire, or other unforeseen events.

- The venue proposes to relocate to a lower deprivation area within the district, as defined by the latest NZ Deprivation Index.
- The venue seeks to move to a newly developed or more economically viable premises.
- In circumstances not specifically outlined in this policy, delegated officers may exercise discretion to approve a venue relocation consent application, provided that the application aligns with the overall intent of the policy and the objectives of the Gambling Act 2003.

Other Changes

46. A number of other minor changes are proposed; these are detailed on page 11 of the draft statement of proposal as attached in appendix 2.

SECTION B – Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy

Background

47. The Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings policy was adopted in 2017 and last reviewed in 2022. A policy review is required every five years, or earlier if required.

48. Following an assessment by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) Council has been informed it needs to amend its current Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings policy to take into account affected buildings as defined by s121A in the Building Act 2004 (the Act). This policy amendment is required because section 132A of the Building Act requires Council's Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy to take into account affected buildings.

49. The Ministry (MBIE) also recommended further changes to the policy. Officers have reviewed these changes and where considered relevant and appropriate have incorporated these as proposed changes in the draft policy.

50. Officers have also undertaken their own full review of the policy and identified some additional changes to improve clarity. All changes to the policy are highlighted with track changes in the draft (see Appendix 1).

51. The proposed changes from both MBIE and the internal review include (but are not limited to):
    - Adding 'Affected' throughout the policy where applicable (this is not an option but a requirement in accordance with section 132A Building Act).

- Adding 'dangerous dam' to the definition of affected building to match the definition in the Act.
- Clarifying Council's approach to the identification of dangerous, affected and insanitary buildings as partially re-active, meaning it will not actively inspect but will act following complaints from the community, advice from Council officers or from other agencies (e.g. local health providers, NZ Police, NZ Fire Service, tradespersons etc).
- Added reference to consult with owners on buildings that are identified as affected on the appropriate risk management of the building.

52. Consultation on this policy is scheduled from 29 September till 27 October and is proposed to be run as a joint process alongside the Gambling Venue Policy consultation.

Options analysis

Option one – Roll over the current policies (Status Quo)

53. Under this option, Council would rollover the current policies as they stand for the respective legislative period.

54. This option is not recommended.

Advantages:	***Disadvantages:***
No further officer resource would be required.	Council would miss the opportunity to seek community feedback. The policies would continue to be non-compliant with legislation. Council may miss early indicators of gambling-related harm and opportunities to strengthen harm minimisation measures within the policy.
Risks: **Legal –** As the policies are not compliant with the respective legislation, any future decisions made by delegated officers under the perspective policy could be legally challenged. Also, Council's decision to roll-over the policy could also be legally challenged, given the policy is not legislatively compliant. **Reputational –** Council could be perceived as not doing enough to regulate the gambling industry in the district. **Community Safety –** The current policy may contribute to increased levels of gambling related harm in the community due to a reduced level of local regulation. **Operational –** In the absence of a clear and compliant policy, delegated officers may spend more time assessing venue consent applications leading to reduced operational efficiency.	

Option Two– Adopt the Policy Review Draft Statement of Proposal for consultation on the Gambling Venue policy and Dangerous & Insanitary Buildings policy (recommended option)

55. Under this option, Council would adopt the Policy Review Statement of Proposal for the Gambling Venue Policy and Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy for public consultation from 29 September to 27 October 2025.

56. This is the recommended option.

Advantages:	***Disadvantages:***
Council would have the opportunity to update the policies to ensure they are compliant with relevant legislation. Council could ensure the policies accurately reflects the local needs and emerging issues identified by the community and industry stakeholders. There will be more clarity on Councils approach to identify Dangerous, Affected and Insanitary buildings. The policies will be improved in readability and clarity. The community has an opportunity to provide feedback.	Consultation may attract strong and conflicting views which could be socially sensitive.
Risks: There is a risk that consultation may not attract meaningful or balanced participation, limiting the value of the feedback.	

Option three – Adopt an amended version of the Draft Policy Statement of Proposal for consultation on the Gambling Venue policy and Dangerous & Insanitary Buildings policy

57. It is acknowledged that Council may feel further changes are necessary. Therefore, Council could decide to adopt an amended version of the draft policy statement of proposal for public consultation.

58. This option is not recommended.

Advantages:	***Disadvantages:***
Council could incorporate additional considerations or perspectives that may have been missed during the initial drafting process. Council could consider any further changes to the policy. Policy will be updated to meet legislative requirements	Consultation would likely be delayed so that any additional changes could be legally reviewed to ensure compliance with relevant legislation. Additional officer resource would be required to revise and draft the changes. Depending on the significance of the changes additional time is required to prepare the draft for consultation and the proposed timeframe might need to get updated.
Risks: **Legal –** Suggested changes may not be congruent with relevant legislation. **Community Safety –** Suggested changes may inadvertently lead to increases in gambling related harm in the community. **Operational –** Suggested changes may unintentionally inhibit delegated officers' ability to carry out venue consenting processes efficiently.	

Legal/policy implications

Gambling Act Policy

Gambling Act 2003 and Racing Industry Act 2020

59. Under section 101 of the Gambling Act 2003, Councils are required to have a class 4 venue policy.

60. Under section 96 of the Racing Industry Act 2020, Councils are required to have a policy on TAB venues.

61. Under both these Acts, the policy must specify whether or not venues may be established in the territorial authority district and if so, where they may be located.

62. The Gambling Act further specifies that the policy:

    - may specify any restrictions on the maximum number of gaming machines that may be operated at a class 4 venue; and
    - may include a relocation policy.

63. In adopting a policy, Council must have regard to the social impact of gambling within the district.

64. Both Acts state that a policy must be reviewed every three years and may only be amended or replaced in accordance with the special consultative procedure.

Waikiwi Case Law – Court of Appeal Decision

65. The Court of Appeal ruling in 2025 upheld the 2024 High Court ruling that "Waikiwi" relocations of class 4 venues are no longer permitted within the Court's interpretation of the Gambling Act.

66. This determination means that the Department of Internal Affairs cannot grant relocations in accordance with the Waikiwi precedent without Council consent.

67. Council's Gambling Venue Policy must explicitly specify whether venue relocations will be permitted and may specify circumstances for which relocations are considered.

Local Government Act 2002

68. Any amendment, or replacement of the Gambling Venue policy must follow the Special Consultative Procedure (SCP) under section 83 and 87.

Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy

Building Act 2004

69. Section 131 of the Building Act 2004 requires Councils to have a policy on dangerous and insanitary buildings. The policy is required to state:

- the approach that the territorial authority will take in performing its functions under this part; and
- the territorial authority's priorities in performing those functions; and
- how the policy will apply to heritage buildings.

70. Section 132 of the Building Act 2004 states that a policy may be amended or replaced only in accordance with the special consultative procedure in section 83 of the Local Government Act 2002.

71. The policy is also required (under section 132A) to take into account affected buildings. Affected buildings are defined in section 121A of the Building Act as "a building that is adjacent to, adjoining, or nearby a dangerous building or a dangerous dam."

Local Government Act (LGA) 2002

72. Section 83 and 87 of the LGA sets out the requirements of the special consultative procedure. This includes the preparation and adoption of a statement of proposal, a consultation period of at least one month, and hearings and deliberations.

Climate change

73. This report has no implications for climate change.

74. There is no link in the policy to climate change, apart from a potential higher pressure on dams ('see definition of affected building) due to predicted changes in the weather, like more frequent and heavier rainfall or longer period of draught. Consultation on the draft policy does not have an impact on the climate and sustainability is considered by printing few paper copies of the consultation document.

Review of legal / policy implications	
Reviewed by In-house Counsel	Tania Paddock, General Counsel

Strategic alignment

75. The recommendation relates to Council's community outcomes of 'a district of great spaces and places'.

76. The recommended outcome ensures Councils Gambling Venue Policy takes a balanced approach in considering the positive and negative social impacts of class 4 and TAB gambling in the district.

Wellbeing		Reasons why the recommended outcome has an effect on this wellbeing
Economic	✓	The recommended outcome balances the potential negative financial impact of gambling harm and problem gambling with the positive economic benefits of grant funding generated by class 4 machine proceeds. The recommended outcome also ensures venues have the opportunity to diversify their income by hosting gaming machines. Required remedial work will have an economic impact on building owners.
Environmental	✓	The Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy helps Council to ensure that the built environment within the Ashburton District is safe and healthy.
Cultural	✓	Research suggest that Pasifika, Māori and Asian communities can be more at risk of gambling harm. The recommended outcome helps mitigate gambling related harm amongst at risk communities. There are a number of heritage and historic buildings throughout the district that are a vital part of the district's cultural identity.
Social	✓	Class 4 gambling impacts on the social wellbeing of the district. Problem gambling can have a negative impact individuals and their whānau. Grants have a positive impact on volunteer groups such as sports and arts. The proposed outcome works to balance both the positive and negative social impacts. Policy principles reflect the concern with the health and safety of the public in buildings.

Financial implications

Requirement	Explanation
What is the cost?	The policy review and cost of consultation will be carried out within existing budgets. Standard costs for community consultation on the policy review. Effort made to reduce costs by combining consultation with Gambling Policy review for advertising and printing.
Is there budget available in LTP / AP?	N/A
Where is the funding coming from?	Strategy & policy / Communications
Are there any future budget implications?	No
Reviewed by Finance	Erin Register; Finance Manager.

Significance and engagement assessment

77. The recommended option has been assessed against Council's Community engagement Policy and does not trigger high significance.

Requirement	Explanation
Is the matter considered significant?	No
Level of significance	Medium – Gambling Policy Low – Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings
Rationale for selecting level of significance	Overall, the Gambling Venue Policy has some impact on the wider community where the policy works to mitigate gambling related harm within the district. Certain parts of the community such as venue owners and community groups who receive grant funding are likely to experience a higher degree of impact, particularly where the draft policy proposes additional restrictions. Overall, it's expected that there will be a medium level of community interest, with stronger interest from corporate societies, venues, industry bodies and harm minimisation groups. For the Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy, community will have the opportunity to have its say. Proposed changes are minor and making the policy legislatively compliant.
Level of engagement selected	**3.** Formal two-way communication.

Rationale for selecting level of engagement	Council is legally required to consult on both policies using the SCP. The LGA enables SCP consultations to be combined.
Reviewed by Strategy & Policy	Mark Low; Strategy and Policy Manager Toni Durham: GM Democracy & Engagement

Next Steps

Date	Action / milestone	Comments
29th September 2025	Consultation opens	Joint consultation process for the Gambling Venue and Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy review.
27th October 2025	Submissions close	
November	Hearings and Deliberations	TBC with new term of Council. Run as a joint consultation process for the Gambling Venue and Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy review.
December	Adoption of policies	

Appendix 1

Ashburton District Council Policy Review Consultation – Statement of Proposal 2025

- **Gambling Venue Policy**
- **Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy**

Have your say by Monday 27 October 2025

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Purpose of this Statement of Proposal

The purpose of this Statement of Proposal is to inform the Ashburton District community of the proposed changes to both the Gambling Venue Policy and the Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy, and to ensure our community has the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed policies.

This statement of proposal has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of section 83 and 87 of the Local Government Act 2002. It includes draft policies and rationale behind both, as well as other reasonably practicable options Council considered.

Have your say by, Monday 27 October 2025

1. Gambling Venue Policy 2025

Every three years, Council is legally required to review its Gambling Venue Policy—and it's time to do it again.

This policy guides how we make decisions about Class 4 gambling venues (pokie machine venues) and TAB venues in our district. Although we've reviewed the policy regularly, it hasn't changed in 12 years. Now, some updates are needed to keep it compliant with current legislation and we want to hear what you think about these and the other changes we're proposing.

About the Policy

Under the Gambling Act 2003 and the Racing Industry Act 2020, all councils must have a policy that sets rules for:

- **Class 4 gambling venues**: these are places like pubs and clubs that have pokie (gaming) machines.
- **TAB venues**: these are venues where people can place bets in person on horse racing and sports.

Ashburton District Council currently has a combined policy that covers both types of venues. It's important to note that this policy does not apply to other forms of gambling like casinos, online gambling, or Lotto.

The law requires us to review this policy every three years. When we do, we must consider both the positive and negative social impacts of gambling on our community. At a minimum, the policy must state whether new Class 4 Gambling and TAB venues can be established in the Ashburton District, and if so, where they may be located.

The policy can also include additional rules, such as setting a maximum number of pokie machines allowed at each venue, venue numbers, and whether existing venues can relocate while keeping their current consent conditions—for example, retaining the same number of machines.

The policy reflects the key purposes of the Gambling Act 2003 at a local level. Wherever possible it aims to:

- Control the growth of gambling
- Prevent and minimise harm from gambling
- Facilitate responsible gambling
- Ensure that money from gambling benefits the community
- Enable community involvement in decisions about the provisions of gambling

Influencing Class 4 Gambling in our Community

While oversight of Class 4 Gambling and TAB venues is managed by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), councils do have some influence.

We are responsible for issuing venue consents for any new Class 4 Gambling or TAB venues that wish to operate in the Ashburton District. Without this consent, a venue cannot legally be established here.

While Council plays an important role in influencing the provision of new venues in the district, our influence is limited when it comes to venues that were already operating in the district before the Gambling Act came into effect in 2003.

There are several steps involved in setting up a new gambling venue. Here's how Council's policy fits into the process:

Process for authorising a new pokie machine venue

DIA issue a ***class 4 operators licence*** to the corporate society - this gives them authority to operate / manage pokie machines.

→

Once they have a licence to operate, they need to apply to Council for a ***class 4 venue consent*** - without this they aren't able to install pokie machines in a venue. The policy guides Councils decision to allow this.

→

Once Council issues the venue consent they can then obtain a ***class 4 venue licence*** from DIA which fully certifies them to operate pokie machines in the council approved venue.

What we've done so far

We've been working on the policy review for a few months. Here's what we've done in that time.

Stakeholder Engagement

- We've sought feedback from industry stakeholders to get their thoughts on the effectiveness of the current policy and get their views on both the positive and negative social impacts of gambling in the district.
- We received feedback from 8 stakeholders including venue managers, corporate societies, industry experts and harm minimisation organisations.

Social Impact Assessment

- We've also spent time assessing the gambling industry to identify any trends that might indicate an increased level of harm being experienced in the community and to assess the balance between the positive and negative impacts of class 4 gambling in the district.
- The report can be found **here.**

Policy Drafting

- Based on the findings of the social impact assessment report, a review of the current policy against current legislation, and the discussion had during a public workshop in July, we've drafted an updated policy. The key changes we are proposing are:
- To introduce a district wide venue cap of 20
- To allow relocations of existing venues under certain circumstances
- To introduce an additional location condition to prohibit venues establishing or moving into high deprivation areas
- We are also proposing to retain the cap of 5 machines for any new venue

Gambling in the Ashburton District – what we found out

Based on the findings from our social impact assessment report, we've gained a clearer picture of how gambling is impacting our district. While there have been some changes since the last report was completed in 2022, we do not believe these changes have led to, or signal, a significant increase in gambling-related harm within our community.

There are currently **131 pokie machines** in the district across **11 venues**. There is also an additional licence being approved that will add a **further 5 machines**.

10 of the 11 venues in the district were approved prior to the Act, meaning they can operate **a maximum of 18 machines** compared to **5 for new venues.**

Ashburton District's **machine per capita ratio is higher than the national average** – we have the **3rd highest number of machines** compared to other districts in Canterbury.

As a district, we **lost $6.8m dollars to pokie machines** in 2024. This equates to **$18,912 per day**, or **$144 per machine** per day.

On average, this equates to a **weekly loss of $4.48 per person** in the district.

Ashburton District ranks **33rd out of 63 councils for loss per head** – this means that per capita, our residents are **losing more money** than residents **from 30 other councils**.

6 people in the district sought **help for problem gambling** behaviour for the year ending 2023.

Per capita, Ashburton district has a **slightly higher problem gambling intervention rate** than the national average.

Almost half the venues in our district are located in **medium-high deprivation areas** which represent **higher risk areas for gambling harm** and **problem gambling.**

$1.56 million dollars was returned to the community through grant funding in 2023.

65 community organisations received funding in 2023 including sporting, education, arts, culture and heritage groups and environmental organisations.

The Returned Services Association club and MSA club were able to **fund their operations** with support from **funding generated by pokie machines.**

How we've approached the policy review

We see the policy as a key tool that Council can use to help shape the long-term impact of gambling in our district. When considering what the policy can influence, we think of it as a spectrum: at one end, stronger local regulation can gradually reduce the presence of the gambling industry over time; at the other, more flexible rules may allow venues greater freedom to establish and operate.

This approach helps us balance the policy to ensure that any decisions made reflect both local values and the broader regulatory framework.

As a Council, we've carefully considered the social impacts of gambling alongside other relevant factors, and we believe a **controlled growth approach** is the most appropriate approach for our community. This reflects the reality that the gambling industry in our district appears to be somewhat self-regulating, due to the district's size and the limited market space for new venues to establish.

You'll see this approach reflected in the changes we're proposing. We've also included options that represent other points along the regulatory spectrum—so you can see what different approaches might look like in practice.

We believe the policy is most effective when controls are applied as a holistic framework, rather than in isolation. That said, we're keen to hear your views on how each section should be approached.

The key areas of the policy that help implement our proposed approach include:

- The provision of new standalone TAB venues
- Capping Class 4 Gambling venue and machine numbers
- Location controls for both Class 4 Gambling and TAB venues
- Relocation of existing Class 4 Gambling venues

What are we proposing?

Tab Venues (Section 4 of the draft policy)

We are proposing to keep the policy the same, allowing a stand-alone TAB venue to establish in the district given it meets the conditions of the policy.

Why are we proposing this approach?

Given that TAB betting is largely conducted through the online app or at TAB areas within other venues, we think it's unlikely that a stand-alone TAB venue will establish in our district. However, in the unlikely event that an application is received, we don't see that this will significantly increase the risk of gambling related harm as it is likely that anyone who would visit the venue already engages in TAB gambling through other means currently available.

We believe the most effective way to manage the growth of TAB gambling in our district is to introduce an additional location-based condition that prohibits new TAB venues from being established in areas identified as having high levels of deprivation. These areas are more likely to experience greater exposure to gambling-related harm due to existing social and economic pressures. By restricting venue placement in such locations, we can help reduce the overall risk of harm and support a more responsible approach to gambling activity across the district.

What are the risks of this approach?

This approach assumes a stand-alone TAB is unlikely to establish in the district. This assumption is based on the fact that no applications have ever been received—even prior to the availability of online betting. There is a small risk that if a TAB venue does establish, this could increase gambling participation which may lead to an increase in negative effects being experienced within our community. It is also worth noting that unlike pokie machine operators, TAB doesn't have a legal obligation to return funding to the community – this means the money spent at a potential TAB venue provides no benefit to the community other than the enjoyment that may be experienced from those who participate.

Other possible options

Reduce / Maintain
This option would see Council prohibit any stand-alone TAB venue from establishing in the district to keep the number of TAB venues in the district at its current level of 0.

Why not this option? *We don't see that a change in policy will have any significant impact on what appears to be a declining stand-alone industry.*

Enable
This option would see Council allow a stand-alone TAB venue to establish without any additional location controls. This means a TAB venue could potentially establish in a high deprivation area of the district.

Why not this option? *We believe that a stand-alone TAB venue in itself will not pose significant risk to our community but believe there is a need to restrict venues from establishing in vulnerable parts of the district.*

Class 4 Gambling venue and machine caps (section 5.2 of the draft policy)

We are proposing to keep the policy the same for machine caps, continuing to limit the number of machines allowed in a new venue at 5. For venue caps, we're also proposing to introduce a district wide venue cap of 20 venues.

Why are we proposing this approach?

We propose to retain the cap on the number of pokie machines at 5 per venue—4 fewer than the maximum of 9 allowed under the Gambling Act. We see this as an effective way to manage the overall growth of machine numbers in the district. This lower cap still allows new venues to establish and benefit from the revenue generated by gaming machines, but it limits the scale of gambling activity at each location, helping to reduce potential harm.

In addition, we're proposing a district-wide venue cap of 20, which would allow for up to 8 new venue consents beyond the 12 existing consents. This approach strikes a balance between enabling future business development while maintaining control over gambling expansion. It ensures that growth is gradual and measured, rather than reactive or unchecked.

Under this model, the total number of machines in the district could reach 230 housed across 20 venues.

What are the risks of this approach?

This approach allows for controlled growth of Class 4 gambling venues, which could increase the risk of harm in the district. However, we consider this risk to be largely mitigated by a self-regulating market. Historical data suggests limited demand for new venues due to the district's size and market constraints, making significant growth unlikely.

That said, allowing 8 new venues to establish could shift consumer spending away from existing venues. This may reduce the funding returned to the community by corporate societies with established local arrangements. New societies are not required to return funds locally, meaning any financial benefit to the community could be minimal even if there are more venues.

Additional risks include increased visibility and accessibility of gambling, which may normalise gambling behaviour and lead to higher participation rates.

Reduce
This approach would utilise a sinking lid policy, meaning no new venues could open—even if an existing one closes— this approach would gradually reduce the industry over time.

Why not this option?
We believe allowing venues to operate in the district provides a net benefit to the community, current levels of harm do not indicate a more restrictive approach is needed.

Maintain
This approach would see Council set the venue cap to its current state of 12 venues. A new venue could only establish if an existing venue closed.

Why not this option?
We believe this approach is unnecessarily restrictive and limits business opportunities and economic growth despite historically low levels of gambling-related harm in our district.

Enable
This approach would see Council allow an unrestricted number of venues to establish and increase the machine limit per venue from 5 to the maximum of 9 allowed under the Act.

Why not this option?
Unrestricted growth could lead to increased gambling-related harm. We believe a controlled approach is necessary to protect community wellbeing.

Location controls (Section 5.1 of the draft policy)

We are proposing to largely keep the location controls the same but introduce one additional location control which prohibits venues from establishing in, or existing venues relocating to areas that have a socio-economic deprivation score of 8 or more (indicating high levels of deprivation).

Why are we proposing this approach?

There is extensive evidence that gambling harm is disproportionately experienced by individuals living in areas of high socioeconomic deprivation. In recognition of this, the Act requires councils to specifically consider the impact of gambling on these communities when reviewing their gambling venue policies. While incorporating this consideration into policy is likely to have a positive effect in reducing harm, it's important to acknowledge the geographic context of our district. Due to the relatively compact nature of our towns, residents—regardless of where they live—can easily access gambling venues across the district. This means that even if venues are not located in high-deprivation areas, they remain relatively accessible to those most at risk.

What are the risks of this approach?

We think the benefits of this approach largely outweigh any potential risks. However, we acknowledge that this approach could result in displacement of gambling activity rather than reducing it. There is a small risk that gambling activity could simply shift or grow in other areas of the district which could create other issues for the community. There is also a risk that restricting venues from establishing in certain areas could push gambling into less regulated environments like online casinos where harm may be harder to monitor and mitigate.

Other possible options

Reduce / Maintain

Council could introduce other additional location controls that further restrict where venues can establish or move to. These include restricting new venues from establishing within a certain distance to other venues, places of worship, schools and other sensitive sites.

Why not this option?

We believe the policy already restricts most of these locations as schools and places of worship are rarely located within the business zones that venues must establish within. We think adding in additional location controls will add complexity to the policy but will have minimal effect.

Enable

This option would see Council remove any additional location controls, allowing venues to establish or move anywhere in a business zone regardless of its deprivation indicator or proximity to a sensitive site.

Why not this option?

The Act requires councils to consider the impact of gambling on high-deprivation areas. Reducing location controls could lead to a saturation of venues in these vulnerable communities, increasing accessibility and exposure. This heightened presence could lead to greater rates of gambling-related harm, undermining the Act's intent and Councils responsibility to help minimise harm.

Relocation of existing venues (Section 5.3 of the draft policy)

We are proposing to update the policy to permit existing venues to relocate to an alternative site while retaining the same consent conditions for specific reasons. Relocations would be subject to additional conditions and would only be permitted where the venue is moving to a new location within the same town and the proposed area has a deprivation score of 7 or less (medium to low deprivation).

Why are we proposing this approach?

A recent Court of Appeal decision clarified the application of the Gambling Act 2003. This decision means councils must give formal consent for any gambling venue relocation—no matter how small the move. As a result, we need to update our policy to reflect this legal change and decide what our approach to relocations will be.

We're proposing to update the policy to allow relocations under a defined set of conditions. This approach recognises that many of the existing venues have operated in the district for over 20 years and are supported by the community. We acknowledge that, for practical reasons such as lease changes, venues may need to relocate during the course of their operations.

We don't think it's fair to revoke gambling consents solely due to a change in location. However, it is essential that relocations don't contribute to increased levels of harm. That's why we're proposing to restrict new locations to areas of lower socioeconomic deprivation. We think this will help reduce the concentration of gambling venues in higher-risk communities, while still allowing existing operators to continue under their current consent conditions.

Overall, we believe this approach strikes the right balance between supporting local businesses while meeting our responsibility to help minimise gambling-related harm in our community.

What are the risks of this approach?

While we do not consider the proposed approach to carry significant risk, it is important to acknowledge the small risk that it may lead to the displacement of gambling-related harm rather than a reduction, particularly if the new location increases accessibility for different groups. We also recognise that residents in the proposed relocation area may have concerns about the introduction of gambling venues in their neighbourhoods, including potential social impacts or changes to the character of their community.

Other possible options

Reduce / Maintain
This option would prohibit the relocation of existing Class 4 gambling venues. Over time, this would result in a gradual reduction in the number of venues permitted to operate up to 18 gaming machines under existing consent conditions.
Why not this option?
While this approach may appear to support harm minimisation, we believe it lacks flexibility and could unintentionally penalise long-standing, supported venues for reasons outside of their control. Given the current low levels of gambling harm in our district, we do not see clear value in prohibiting relocations.

Enable
This option would see Council allow relocations of existing venues for any reason without additional conditions.

Why not this option?
This option could lead to existing venues currently in lower deprivation areas moving to more vulnerable areas of the community, potentially leading to increased levels of harm. We think a balanced, controlled approach to relocations is needed to mitigate the risk of harm to our community.

Other proposed changes

What	Draft Policy Section	Why
Introduce a glossary and definitions section.	Glossary and Definitions	To define and clarify the terminology used throughout the policy.
Merge clause 1.2 and 1.3.	1. Introduction	For clarity and continuity.
Introduce five principles that guide the policy.	3. Policy Principles	Clearly defining these principles ensures transparency in how the policy was developed, provides a consistent framework for future reviews, and helps explain Council's position to the community.
Make some minor wording changes, heading updates, and reorder sections of the policy.	Throughout the policy	For clarity and continuity.
Add an additional clause (6.1).	6. Application and Fees	To clarify when a venue consent application is required.
Update parts of the decision-making process.	7. Decision Making	To align the policy with the current or future structure of Council. At the time of this review, council does not have an environmental services committee.

Draft policy

The full draft policy is available at itsourplace.nz or on page 21 of this document.

2. Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy

About the Policy

As a regulator and Building Consent Authority Council has the responsibility to confirm compliance with the Building Act 2004 and other relevant legislation with respect to dangerous and insanitary buildings. This includes ensuring existing buildings are safe and hazards are dealt with.

The Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings policy helps to provide clarity for members of the community on the approach to dangerous and insanitary buildings and to ensure Council meets legislative requirements. The policy also clarifies how this applies to heritage buildings in the district.

What does the policy cover or not cover?

The policy applies to all types of buildings within the district – residential, commercial, industrial etc. It does not include any reference to earth-quake prone buildings because, as of 2018, these are covered by sections 133AG - 133AY of the Building Act 2004.

How we've approached the policy review

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment informed Council that we have to update the Dangerous and Insanitary Building policy 2022 by including the reference to 'affected' buildings, to reflect the changes to the Building Act 2004. Apart from this required change the Ministry (MBIE) also recommended some further changes to the policy. Officers have reviewed the policy and assessed MBIE's recommendations, leading to the proposed updated policy.

What are we proposing?

Add 'Affected Buildings' to the Policy

The key change is to take '**affected buildings'** into account in the policy. This is a requirement following an amendment to the Building Act in 2013. In the draft policy we have added this in all the relevant sections.

What is an 'affected building'?
Affected buildings are buildings that could pose a risk to people's safety or to nearby properties because of their proximity to dangerous buildings. The Building Act states a building is an affected building if it is adjacent to, adjoining, or nearby to a dangerous building or a dangerous dam (Building Act 2004, Section 121A).

Identifying Dangerous, Affected and Insanitary Buildings

Another proposed change is to clarify that Councils approach to the identification of dangerous, affected or insanitary buildings is partially reactive, meaning it will not actively inspect but will act following complaints from the community, advice from Council officers or from other agencies (e.g. local health providers, NZ Police, NZ Fire Service, tradespersons etc).

Other proposed changes

Additionally, Council is proposing minor changes identified during the review with the purpose to improve clarity and readability:

What	Draft Policy Section	Why
Change the name of the Policy to Dangerous, Affected and Insanitary Buildings Policy	Name	Consistency
Adding the reference that Council has to send a copy of the policy to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment when adopted or amended	Policy Introduction	Required by s132(3) of the Building Act 2004
Adding 'dangerous dam' to the definition of affected building	Definitions	To match definition stated in the Building Act 2004.
Removing references to previous legislation	1	No longer relevant, removing the reference prevents confusion and improves readability.
Adding reference to relevant sections in the Act	3.5.2 / 3.6.1	Consistency and completeness
Adding clarification where the information if the building is found to be dangerous, affected or insanitary is recorded (e.g. on the LIM - land information memorandum).	3.7.3	Clarification

Why are we proposing this approach?

Apart from the proposed changes the policy is considered fit for purpose. The review period stated in the policy is every five years and the last review was done in 2022, which is only three years ago, when also minor changes were made to the policy.

What are the advantages?

- Updated policy will meet legislative requirements.
- There will be more clarity on Councils approach to identify Dangerous, Affected and Insanitary buildings.
- The document will be improved in readability and clarity.
- Community has opportunity to provide feedback.

What are the disadvantages or risks of this approach?

- None identified

Other possible options

Option 2: Make further/other changes to the policy

We're asking the community if they support the policy with the proposed changes. If the community provides feedback to have aspects added, removed or changed, Council can consider making further changes to the policy.

What are the advantages?

- Council could consider any further changes to the policy.
- Policy will meet legislative requirements
- There will be more clarity on Councils approach to identify Dangerous, Affected and Insanitary buildings.
- The document will be improved in readability and clarity.
- Community will have the opportunity to have their say.

What are the disadvantages and risks of this approach?

- Depending on the significance of the changes additional time is required to prepare the draft for consultation and the proposed timeframe might need to get updated.

Draft policy

The full draft policy is available at itsourplace.nz or on page 29 of this document.

Review process and timeline

Consultation will open on Monday 29 September and we're accepting feedback on both policies from the community till Monday 27 October 2025.

Submitters will have the opportunity to present their views to Council in person at the hearing, after which Councillors will consider and deliberate on all the submissions received.

Monday 29 September | Consultation opens: From this date, Council will accept feedback from the community regarding the changes being proposed in both policies.

Monday 27 October | Submissions close: This is the last date for the community to lodge their feedback**.**

November 2025 (TBC) | Public hearing and deliberation: Those who submitted can chose to speak to their feedback in person. Council will then consider all submissions received and decide if any further changes to the proposed policies are required.

December 2025 (TBC) | Council adopts final policy: Council will adopt a final version of the policies which will be in place for a further 3 years or until the next review.

Have your say

The easiest way to provide your feedback is online at itsourplace.nz

Your feedback will help us to know whether we are on the right track. You can do this by:

- Going to the dedicated consultation page at www.itsourplace.nz to complete the online survey for one or both of the policies.
- Dropping into the Council reception at Te Whare Whakatere, Baring Square East to fill in a hardcopy submission.
- Via email to submissions@adc.govt.nz

Please note that by making a submission, your information will be used in the following ways:

Submission material, including your name and organisation (if applicable) but excluding your contact details, will be included in material available to Council, media and the public at our office and on our website.

The contact details you provide will be used for administration of the consultation process, including informing you of the outcome of the consultation.

The information you have provided will be stored and held by Council. If you would like to request access to, or make a correction to your personal information, please contact the Council staff.

Submissions presented in the form of a petition or accompanied by multiple signatures will be processed as a single submission.

Submission Form

What policy are you submitting feedback on?

- ☐ **Gambling Venue Policy**
- ☐ **Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings**
- ☐ **Both**

You can submit on any or all of the questions below. You don't have to complete every question, and you can comment on any aspect of the draft policies. You can provide attachments to support your submission. The full draft policies are available at itsourplace.nz

Gambling Venue Policy Survey

Stand-alone TAB Venues

1. Do you support the proposal to allow stand-alone TAB venues to establish in the district?

Yes / No

Please explain:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Location of Class 4 Gambling Venues

2. Do you support the proposal to introduce an additional location control that prohibits new venues from establishing or existing venues relocating into high deprivation areas in the district?

Yes / No

Please explain:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Class 4 Venue and Machine Limits

3. Do you support the proposal to retain a cap of 5 machines for any new venues being established in the district?

Yes / No

Please explain:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Do you support the proposal to introduce a district-wide cap of 20 venues?

Yes / No

Please explain:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Relocations of Existing Venues

5. Do you support the proposal to allow relocations of existing venues for certain reasons?

Yes / No

Please explain:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Other Feedback

6. Do you agree with our other proposed changes?

Yes / No

Please explain:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

7. Do you have any other feedback or comments regarding the policy?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy Survey

1. Do you support the draft policy as presented?

Yes / No

Please explain:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Your details

Name*_____

Organisation (if appropriate) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email* _____

**these fields are required*

Do you wish to speak in support of your submission at the hearing?

(if no boxes are ticked, it will be considered that you do not wish to be heard)

- ☐ **Yes, Gambling Venue Policy**
- ☐ **Yes, Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings**
- ☐ **Yes, both**

The hearing will be held at Hine Paaka (the Council Chamber) in November (date to be confirmed).

If yes, do you wish to be heard: **In-Person** or **Virtually**

- ☐ **No:**

I do not wish to speak in support of my submission and ask that the following written submission be fully considered.

Policy

GAMBLING VENUE

TEAM:	~~Strategy & Compliance~~ Compliance & Development
RESPONSIBILITY:	Group Manager – ~~Strategy &~~ Compliance & Development
ASSOCIATED DELEGATIONS:	As per LocoDelegations under the Gambling Act 2003
ADOPTED:	xx December 2025
REVIEW:	xx December 2028
CONSULTATION:	Consultation as required by the Gambling Act 2003 and Racing Act 2020. ~~2006, none required on roll-over.~~
RELATED DOCUMENTS:	Gambling Act 2003, Racing Industry Act 2020, Local Government Act 2002, District Plan, and Sale of Liquor Policy / Local Alcohol Plan, Class 4 Gambling Social Impact Report 2025.

Glossary and Definitions

Business Zone means the same as stated in the Ashburton District Plan.

Class 4 Gambling means gaming machines within pubs and clubs (i.e outside a casino), which the Gambling Act 2003 classifies as high-risk, high turnover gambling. Class 4 gambling may only be conducted by a corporate society and raise money for authorised (e.g. community and non-commercial) purposes.

Council means Ashburton District Council.

Designated site means the same as stated in the Ashburton District Plan.

Gambling Harm means the same as stated in the Gambling Act 2003.

Gambling Venue means a class 4 gambling venue or a stand-alone TAB gambling venue.

Gambling Venue Consent means a formal approval issued by a territorial authority under the Gambling Act 2003 to a corporate society, permitting the establishment or relocation of a Class 4 gambling venue or a stand-alone TAB venue at a specified location within the district. This consent is a prerequisite for the corporate society to apply for a gambling licence from the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA). The consent is permanent, unless the venue ceases to operate for a continuous period of six months or more, in which case a new consent may be required. The granting of a territorial authority consent does not guarantee that a gambling licence will be issued by the DIA.

Gaming Machine means the same as stated in the Gambling Act 2003. Often referred to as pokie or slot machines.

High Deprivation means the most deprived areas in New Zealand, represented in the NZDep index as areas with a decile score 8-10.

Low Deprivation means the least deprived areas in New Zealand represented in the NZDep index as areas with a decile score of 1-3.

Territorial Authority means the same as stated in the Local Government Act 2002.

Medium Deprivation means areas in New Zealand that have moderate levels of deprivation, represented in the NZDep index as areas with a decile score of 4-7.

New Zealand Deprivation Index (NZDep) means the index used to measure socioeconomic deprivation in New Zealand using Statistics NZ mesh block (small area) data whereby decile 1 represents the least deprived areas in New Zealand and decile 10 represents the most deprived areas.

Problem Gambling means gambling that results in severe harm to individuals, families and communities.

TAB Venue means a stand-alone venue operated by TAB New Zealand where horse and sports betting services are offered.

Relocation means an existing class 4 venue can move from the current site to a new site while retaining the same consent conditions e.g. same number of gaming machines where consent has been granted by a territorial authority.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Gambling Act 2003 and the Racing Industry Act 2020 require territorial authorities to adopt a class 4 Gambling Venue Policy and a TAB Venue Policy for its district. This Gambling Venue Policy covers both class 4 or "pokie" gambling, and TAB New Zealand (hereafter referred to as) "TAB") gambling venues.

- "Class 4 gambling venue" refers to a place where gaming machine (pokie machine) gambling can take place under the Gambling Act 2003.
- "TAB" gambling venue refers to a venue owned or leased, and operated, by TAB New Zealand and where the main business carried on at the premises is providing racing betting or sports betting services as provided for in the Gambling Act 2003 and the

Racing Industry Act 2020.

1.2. The Gambling and TAB Venue Policy must be reviewed at least every three years and adopted in accordance with the requirements of the Gambling Act 2003 and the Racing Industry Act 2020 ~~and the policy development process must conform to the requirements of the special consultative procedure set out in the Local Government Act 2002~~.

~~1.3. The Gambling Venue Policy must be reviewed at least every three years, in accordance with the requirements of the Gambling Act 2003 and the Racing Industry Act 2020 and the policy review process must conform to the requirements of the special consultative procedure set out in the Local Government Act 2002.~~

~~1.4.~~1.3. The Gambling and TAB Venue Policy will guide Council decisions on the issuing of class 4 gambling venue consents required for all new class 4 gambling venues and for existing venues seeking to increase the number of gaming machines operated at a particular venue. It also covers whether or not TAB gambling venues may be established in the district and where they may be located.

2. ~~Objectives of the Policy~~Policy Objectives

2.1. To ensure the council and the community has influence over the provision of new class 4 and TAB gambling venues in the Ashburton District.

2.2. To enable the council and the community to influence the operation of existing class 4 and TAB gambling venues in the Ashburton District.

2.3. To allow those who wish to participate in class 4 and ~~horse and sports~~ TAB gambling to do so within the Ashburton District.

2.4. To minimise any potential negative social and economic impacts of class 4 and ~~horse and sports~~ TAB gambling in the Ashburton District.

2.5. To ensure the Ashburton District community is able to maximise the benefits from class 4 gambling proceeds returned to the community.

3. Policy Principles

The following principles have guided the development of the Ashburton District Council Gambling and TAB Venue Policy.

1. Gambling is a legitimate form of entertainment

Gambling is a popular and legitimate form of entertainment. Council believes class 4 and TAB gambling is entertainment that the majority of people who choose to, can enjoy in a responsible and safe manner.

2. **Gambling harm effects individuals, families, and the wider community**
   While many people gamble without harm, Council acknowledges that a proportion of the community may experience gambling related harm or have higher risk of developing problem gambling behaviours. Problem gambling can result in significant negative social and economic impacts, some of which will be serious for the individuals affected, their families and friends and for the community as a whole. Council recognises the need to mitigate both problem gambling and the wider spectrum of gambling harm.

3. **Harm minimisation is a shared responsibility**
   Venue operators and corporate societies have the ultimate responsibility to ensure harm minimisation processes are developed and implemented to minimise the potential negative effects of problem gambling. Council will seek to encourage a responsible approach to gambling and consider harm minimisation when reviewing this policy.

4. **Allowing controlled growth**
   Council supports a controlled growth approach to Class 4 gambling, recognising that while Council can apply regulatory controls, the gambling environment is largely shaped by external market forces such as consumer demand, economic conditions, and national policy settings. Council believes that growth should be carefully managed to ensure that any expansion is socially responsible and maintains the right balance between entertainment, harm minimisation, and community funding.

5. **Equitable and localised distribution of proceeds**
   Council does not have direct control over the distribution of community funding generated through Class 4 gambling. However, Council will support and facilitate local decision-making to ensure that proceeds are returned to and benefit the Ashburton community wherever possible.

Policy Statement

4. TAB Venue Policy

Council permits the establishment of stand-alone TAB gambling venues within the Ashburton District provided they meet the requirements of this policy.

4.1 Where TAB venues may be established

TAB gambling venues may be established in Ashburton District subject to:

4.1.1 Meeting application and fee requirements set by the Council from time to time and by the relevant legislation administered by the Department of Internal Affairs;

4.1.2 The venue being controlled by TAB New Zealand or a venue owned or leased, and operated by TAB New Zealand for the purposes of race and sports betting;

4.1.3 The venue being located within a Business Zone of the Ashburton District Plan or otherwise permitted by way of resource consent;

4.1.4 All necessary resource consent(s) having been granted and complied with;

4.1.5 The venue is not one where the primary activity of the venue is associated with family or children's activities and is not on a site listed as a "designated site" within ~~Appendix A.1 of~~ the Ashburton District Plan.

4.1.6 The venue being located in an area in the district with a socio-economic deprivation score of decile 7 or less[1].

5. Class 4 Gambling Venue Policy

Council permits the establishment of new class 4 gambling venues within the Ashburton District provided they meet the requirements of this policy.

5.1 ~~Where class 4 gambling venues may be established~~ Location of Class 4 Gambling Venues

Class 4 gambling (pokie machine) venues may be established in Ashburton District subject to:

5.1.1 Meeting application and fee requirements set by the Council ~~from time to time~~ and by the relevant legislation administered by the Department of Internal Affairs;

5.1.2 The primary activity of the venue being for the sale of liquor or for liquor and food, and the location of gaming machines within the venue being in an area where under 18 year-olds do not have free access to; or the venue being a TAB ~~New Zealand~~ venue;

5.1.3 The venue being located within a Business Zone of the Ashburton District Plan or otherwise permitted by way of resource consent;

5.1.4 All necessary resource consent(s) having been granted and complied with;

5.1.5 The venue not being one where the primary activity of the venue is associated with family or children's activities and is not on a site listed as a "designated site" within ~~Appendix A.1 of~~ the Ashburton District Plan;

5.1.6 The venue being located in an area in the district with a socio-economic deprivation score of decile 7 or less[2].

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[1] This means that the area will be a statistical area 1 (SA1) on the New Zealand Deprivation Index (NZDep) of 1-7. The NZDep decile rating will be that which applies at the time the application is submitted to Council.

[2] This means that the area will be a statistical area 1 (SA1) on the New Zealand Deprivation Index (NZDep) of 1-7. The NZDep decile rating will be that which applies at the time the application is submitted to Council.

5.2 ~~Number of gaming (pokie) machines to be allowed at a venue~~Venue and Gaming (pokie) Machine Limits

Number of machines allowed at a venue

5.2.1 New class 4 gambling venues shall be permitted a maximum of 5 gaming machines~~; unless the consent conditions are being transferred from an existing venue under section 6 of this policy.~~

5.2.2 As per section 92 of the Gambling Act 2003, existing class 4 gambling venues with a licen~~s~~ce issued before 17 October 2001 ~~and operating more than 9 gaming machines on 22 September 2003~~ shall be permitted a maximum of 18 gaming machines, provided there has been no period of 6 months or more since 17 October 2001 when no class 4 venue licence was held for the venue.

5.2.3 As per section 93 of the Gambling Act 2003, existing class 4 gambling venues with a licence issued after 17 October 2001 but before 1 July 2004 shall be permitted a maximum of 9 gaming machines.

~~Existing class 4 gambling venues and operating 7 or less gaming machines on 22 September 2003, shall be permitted a maximum of 7 machines. (See note below)[3].~~

5.2.4 No venue may, under any circumstances, operate more than 18 gaming machines.

District wide venue cap

5.2.5 The total number of class 4 venue licences (including those licenced on or prior to 17 October 2001) in the district shall not exceed 20.

5.3 Relocations of Existing Class 4 Venues ~~Transfer of existing class 4 gambling venue conditions~~

~~3.4. Where an existing class 4 gambling venue is moving to a new address and meets the following criteria, it will not be considered as a new venue or a relocation, and the existing consent and conditions will remain:~~

- ~~The new building will be in a site that is very close to the existing site;~~
- ~~The class 4 venue's name will be the same;~~
- ~~the ownership and management of the venue will be the same; and~~
- ~~for all intents and purposes, the patrons and public will regard the venue as being the same venue, even though its physical location will change in a relatively minor way.~~

~~*3 Note: No existing class 4 gambling venues in Ashburton District were operating 8 machines on 22 September 2003, therefore section 5.3 does not reduce the number of machines permitted for any existing operators.*~~

Grounds for Relocation Consent

5.3.1 As per the Gambling Act 2003, Council may grant consent for an existing Class 4 venue to relocate within the district, provided that the application demonstrates one or more of the following grounds:

a) There are unforeseen circumstances that prohibit continued operation at the current location, including but not limited to:
   i. Acquisition of the property under the Public Works Act 1981;
   ii. The corporate society is a tenant in a premises, and the landlord is either selling the premises, or the tenant's lease expires and obtaining a new lease is not possible;
   iii. Closure due to natural disaster, fire, or other unforeseen events.

b) The venue proposes to relocate to a lower deprivation area within the district, as defined by the latest NZ Deprivation Index.

c) The venue seeks to move to newly developed or more economically viable premises.

d) In circumstances not specifically outlined in this policy, delegated officers may exercise discretion to approve a venue relocation consent application, provided that the application aligns with the overall intent of the policy and the objectives of the Gambling Act 2003.

Conditions for Relocation Consent

5.3.2 In addition to the requirements in sections 5.1 and 5.2, the following conditions must be met for relocation consent to be granted:

a) The existing venue must cease operating as a Class 4 licensed premises upon relocation.
b) The new venue must be located within the same geographical area (e.g., the same town) as the original venue and be in an area that is decile 7 or lower~~.~~
c) The same corporate society must operate the new venue as operated the original venue.

~~5.4~~6. Applications and Fees

6.1 A venue consent application is required for all reasons as specified under section 98 of the Gambling Act 2003 or section 93 of the Racing Industry Act 2020.~~Venue consent A~~~~applications for Ashburton District Council territorial authority consent must be made on the approved form and must provide all the information requested.~~

6.2 Venue consent applications must be made on the approved form and must provide all the information requested.

6.3 Any venue consent application (for Class 4 or TAB venue) will require payment of a fee. The fee will be known as the Gambling Venue Consent Fee, and the amount will be specified in Council's

schedule of fees. The Gambling Venue Consent Fee must be paid prior to the consent being processed and is not refundable.

6.4 The Gambling Venue Consent Fee will be set by Ashburton District Council from time to time, and may include consideration for:

a. the cost of processing the application;
b. the cost of inspecting gambling venues on a regular basis to ensure compliance with consent conditions;
c. a contribution towards the cost of a triennial assessment of the social impacts of gambling in Ashburton District and the review of Council's Gambling and TAB Venue Policy;
d. Any other matters prescribed in the Local Government Act 2002 relating to the setting of fees by a Council.

5.57. Decision Making

7.1 Council has 30 working days in which to determine a consent application upon receiving a complete consent application containing all required information, and receipt of the full application fee.

7.2 Decisions will be made at officer level under appropriate delegated authority and be based on the criteria detailed in this policy. Any decision may be referred to the relevant committee or Council a panel of Council's Environmental Services Committee for a final decision at the officer's discretion.

7.3 Where a decision made at officer level is objected to by the applicant there will be the opportunity for the applicant to present a submission to a panel of Council's Environmental Services Committeethe relevant committee or Council for review and a final decision.

5.68. Monitoring and Review

8.1 Council will review the policy within three years of its last adoption.

8.2 Council will monitor the social and economic impacts of gambling on the community as part of the policy review process.

8.3 Any review or amendment of the policy, including the setting of fees, will be consulted on as required by the Gambling Act 2003 and Racing Act 2020. undertaken in accordance withusing the special consultative procedure prescribed in the Local Government Act 2002. Council may amend this policy at any time within the three-year policy review cycle.

8.4 Council reserves the right to introduce bylaws it deems necessary to control signage, advertising and visibility of machines issues; which may not be considered to be sufficiently covered by the Gambling Act 2003 regulations.

5.79. Commencement of Policy

9.1 The policy will take effect from the day after its adoption by Council.

*****

DRAFT Policy

DANGEROUS, AFFECTED AND INSANITARY BUILDINGS

TEAM:	Building Services
RESPONSIBILITY:	Building Services Manager
ADOPTED:	~~7 September 2022~~ TBC
REVIEW:	Every five years or as required Council is to send a copy of the policy to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment when adopted or amended as required by s132(3) of the Building Act 2004
CONSULTATION:	Special Consultative Procedure required when amending or replacing
RELATED DOCUMENTS:	Ashburton District Council Long-Term Plan, Ashburton District Plan, Building Act 2004, Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Act 2016, Health Act 1956, Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, Local Government Act 2002, Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, Resource Management Act 1991.

Policy Objective

This policy aims to achieve compliance with the Building Act 2004 and other relevant legislation with respect to dangerous, affected and insanitary buildings.

Definitions

Act, for the purposes of this policy, means the Building Act 2004.

Affected building has the same meaning as section 121A of the Act and generally means a building that is adjacent to, adjoining, or nearby a dangerous building as defined in section 121 of the Act or a dangerous dam within the meaning of section 153 of the Act.

Council means Ashburton District Council.

Dangerous building has the same meaning as section 121 of the Act and generally means a building that, for reasons other than earthquakes, is likely to cause injury or death, by collapse or otherwise, or is likely to cause damage to other property.

Heritage building, for the purposes of this policy, are those listed in Council's District Plan Schedule, Maraes and buildings listed in the New Zealand Heritage List.

Insanitary building has the same meaning as section 123 of the Act and generally means a building:

- that is offensive or injurious to the health of people because of the situation, construction or disrepair;
- where moisture penetration makes the building damp or causes dampness in an adjoining building; or
- which does not have adequate drinking water or sanitary facilities for its intended use.

Policy Statement

1. Introduction and background

~~1.1 This policy replaces the Dangerous Earthquake-prone and Insanitary Buildings Policy, first adopted in 2006 and last reviewed in 2012.~~

~~1.2 The Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Act 2016 was enacted on 1 July 2017. Council's policy on earthquake-prone buildings ceased to apply and Council is required to work to standards under national earthquake-prone building legislation.~~

~~1.3~~1.1 As per requirements of the Act, this policy states:

- the approach that Council will take in performing its functions under the Act;
- Council's priorities in performing those functions; and
- how the policy will apply to heritage buildings.

~~1.4~~1.2 All buildings, at the time of construction are required to meet the safety and sanitary requirements of that era. With time, a building can become dangerous and/or insanitary. While an event such as a major fire may change the status of a building, these changes are usually the result of changing safety and sanitation requirements, neglect, unauthorised building alterations or unauthorised

change in use.

~~1.5~~1.3Throughout Ashburton District there are a number of heritage and historic buildings which are a vital part of the district's cultural identity. These buildings will be categorised and assessed in the same manner as all other buildings in the district and will be subject to the same time-frames.

2. Overall approach

2.1 Policy principles

Council has noted that provisions of the Act in regard to dangerous and insanitary buildings reflect the government's broader concern with the health and safety of the public in buildings.

2.2 District characteristics

2.2.1 The built environment of Ashburton District has developed over the last 150 years. European settlement has largely been based around the successful agricultural economy of the district. Construction of buildings has been according to the standards and styles of the period.

2.2.2 Local buildings comprise a range of types and ages with construction techniques ranging from wood and unreinforced masonry buildings and an increasing number of modern buildings built to higher recent and current building standards ~~to a small number of modern steel and concrete buildings~~. Most buildings are only one or two-storeys.

3. Dangerous, Affected and Insanitary Buildings

3.1 Council is committed to ensuring that Ashburton District is a safe and healthy place to live.

3.2 Council acknowledges that conversions of existing buildings, lack of maintenance, lack of appropriate facilities, overcrowding and un-consented alterations can cause serious health and safety problems. The failure to obtain a building consent or the use of buildings for unauthorised purposes can pose a danger to the occupants as well as users. Dangers may include danger of collapse, inadequate fire protection or means of escape.

3.3 Dangerous, affected and insanitary buildings will be dealt with in much the same way as Council already deals with those buildings - by responding to complaints received from the public and advice received from the New Zealand Fire Service.

3.4 Council is actively involved in educating the public on Act matters with a view to encourage owners to obtain a building consent where necessary. Council treats building safety as a serious matter; buildings must be safe for their intended use and for occupiers.

3.5 Identifying Dangerous, Affected or Insanitary Buildings

3.5.1 Council has a partially reactive approach to ~~will~~ identify potentially dangerous, affected or insanitary buildings, which means Council will not actively inspect but will undertake proactive information collection, i.e. on receipt of information.

~~3.5.1~~3.5.2. The need for identification will be based on:

- complaints from members of the public,
- advice received from Council officers, and
- complaints or advice from other agencies (e.g. local health providers, NZ Police, NZ Fire Service, tradespersons etc).

~~3.5.2~~3.5.3When a building is identified by these means Council will investigate and assess the condition of the building to determine whether it is dangerous or insanitary in terms of sections 121, 121A and 123 of the Act~~-~~.

3.6 Assessment/prioritisation criteria

3.6.1 Council will endeavour to assess potentially dangerous, affected or insanitary buildings in accordance with s121 (1), s121A, ~~or~~ s123 or s123A of the Act within 5 working days. Where Council is satisfied a building is dangerous, affected or insanitary it will also assess the level of risk to public health or safety that is presented.

3.6.2 Council will give priority to buildings that have been determined to present such a high level of risk as to warrant immediate action to remove the risk to the users of the building and members of the public.

3.6.3 Options for immediate action include:

- Prohibiting any person from occupying or using the building;
- If necessary, erecting barriers and warning signs, plus securing the building to prevent entry until such time as remedial action can be taken;
- Undertaking remedial action under s129 of the Act. Note that in the case of insanitary buildings, Council reserves the right to use powers available under s34 of the Health Act 1956.

3.6.4 Where Council undertakes remedial action under either s129 of the Act or s34 of the Health Act, all costs will be recoverable from the building owner(s) as provided for in the relevant legislation.

3.6.5 Buildings that are determined to present a serious risk which is not immediate will be subject to the minimum timeframes for reduction or removal of the danger (being not less than 10 days) as set out in s125(1)(d) of the Act.

3.6.6 In addition to remedial action, the Act also empowers Council to prosecute building owners and the exercise of this power may also be considered at times by Council.

3.7 Investigation and enforcement process

3.7.1 Council will endeavour to:

- Respond to and investigate all building complaints received within 5 working days.
- Identify from these investigations any buildings that are dangerous, affected or insanitary.
- Assess the level of risk presented by the building and, if required, take immediate action.
- Inform the owner and occupier of the building to take action to reduce or remove the danger or insanitary condition, as required by s124 and s125 of the Act.
- Liaise with Fire and Emergency New Zealand when Council deems it appropriate, in accordance with s121 (2) of the Act.

3.7.2 Where the building is a heritage building listed in Council's District Plan, a Marae or building listed in the New Zealand Heritage List, Heritage New Zealand shall also be advised and consulted.

3.7.3 If the building is found to be dangerous, affected or insanitary but does not present an immediate risk, Council may:

- Make every attempt possible to contact the building owner prior to attaching a written notice to the building. Where contact cannot be made with the building owner, written notice will be attached to the building requiring work to be carried out on the building, within a time stated in the notice being not less than 10 days, to reduce or remove the danger.
- Give copies of that notice to the building owner, occupier and every person who has an interest in the land, or is claiming an interest in the land, as well as Heritage New Zealand (if the building is a registered heritage building) and record this information on property records (e.g. LIM - land information memorandum), generally available to the public.
- Contact the owner at the expiry of the time period set down in the notice in order to gain access to the building to ascertain whether the notice has been complied with.
- Where the danger is the result of non-consented building work the owner will formally be requested to provide an explanation as to how the work occurred and who carried it out and under whose instructions.
- Pursue enforcement action under the Act and Health Act 1956 and recover actual and~~&~~ reasonable costs, including but not limited to, utilising powers under s126.
- Consult with the owner of any affected building regarding appropriate risk management for the affected building.

3.7.4 If a building owner disputes a Council decision, or proposed action, relating to the exercise of Council's powers under this Policy, ~~All~~ all owners have the right to apply to the

Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) for a determination under s177(1)(b) of the Act.

3.8 Interaction between this policy and related sections of the Act

3.8.1 Section 41 (1)(c) of the Act provides for situations where, because of the urgency of work required, it is not practical to apply for a building consent before the work is undertaken. In these cases the application for a Certificate of Acceptance may be required.

3.8.2 In cases where a building is assessed as being immediately dangerous, Council may not require a building consent for urgent work. However, building owners must submit a written proposal to Council for agreement, before any work is undertaken.

3.9 Economic impact of policy

3.9.1 The intent of this policy is to protect the health and safety of people who use buildings. However, Council needs to be conscious of the costs of any work required to remove dangerous or insanitary conditions in the broader social and economic context of the community.

4. Heritage buildings

4.1 Philosophy

4.1.1 Where buildings are identified as dangerous, affected or insanitary, Council will ~~negotiate~~ work with the building owner and advise the owner to consult with Heritage New Zealand, pursuant to section 125 (2)(f) of the Act.

4.1.2 Council will inform the building owner of any other obligations known to exist relating to other legislation such as the Resource Management Act 1991 and the possible requirements of a resource consent. Peer review of structural strength assessment reports may be required if a resource consent application is lodged to demolish a heritage building. Where possible, Council will seek a mutually acceptable solution that meets heritage objectives and Act requirements included in this policy.

4.1.3 Council will serve notices requiring upgrading or demolition within specified timeframes, in consultation with building owners. A copy of any notice issued under s124 of the Act will be sent to the Heritage New Zealand in the case of all heritage buildings.

4.1.4 Any upgrading work must take into account the principles of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) NZ Charter, any advice from Council's heritage staff or other heritage professionals or organisations, where applicable and should be designed to involve minimal loss to heritage fabric.

4.1.5 Waivers ~~of~~ or modifications of the building code will be considered on a case by case basis.

4.1.6 Council funding of structural strength assessments and strengthening works will be subject to availability of Council grants, as determined by the Heritage Grants criteria~~, Long Term Plan and Revenue and Financing Policy~~.

4.1.7 Council will encourage building owners to retain heritage buildings wherever practicable.

5. Post disaster assessment

5.1 If, following a seismic event a building had previously been assessed as not dangerous, affected or insanitary, then Council will reassess the building under the conditions set out in this policy.

Appendix 2

Ashburton District Council

Report on Class 4 Gambling in Ashburton District

A social assessment to inform the 2025 review of the Ashburton District Council's Gambling Venue Policy

Document Control

Revision	Name	Author	Reviewed by	Date
1.0	Draft Report	Lou Dunstan	Mark Low Rick Catchpowle Tania Paddock	June 2025
2.0	Final Report	Lou Dunstan	Mark Low Rick Catchpowle	July 2025

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Notes

- *The legal gambling age in New Zealand is 18 years and over. Some statistics include those aged between 15-18, this is because the survey used in the report aimed to report on the prevalence of youth gambling in New Zealand amongst other indicators.*
- *Some statistics in this report will be taken from a "quarter" snapshot, these make up a portion of the annual statistics used.*
- *Deprivation is identified as a risk factor for gambling harm and problem gambling; this is measured using census variables.*

Definitions

Class 4: Refers to gaming machines (pokies) located in pubs and clubs which is as classified as high risk, high turnover gambling
Gambling harm: Refers to the harm caused by gambling to an individual, whanau or wider community.
Problem gambling: Refers to high-risk gamblers who experience severe gambling harm – this usually indicates gambling with negative consequences and loss of control.
Expenditure and gross machine profits: Refers to the money "lost" to gambling. E.g. total turnover less prizes paid out.
Offshore gambling: Refers to online gambling organisations that are not based in New Zealand.
Onshore gambling: Refers to the New Zealand gambling industry made up of online operators and venues based in New Zealand.

1. Executive summary

This report provides an overview of gambling in New Zealand and the Ashburton District, with particular reference to Class 4 gambling. It focuses on the social effects of "pokie" machine gambling, including problem gambling, and reports on recent changes in the industry and participation over the last 10 years.

Class 4 gambling has both positive and negative impacts for the community. A key benefit generated from class 4 gambling is grant funding for community organisations which is generated from the proceeds of gaming "pokie" machines. Approximately $1.5 million was returned to the Ashburton District community in grants in the 2023 calendar year.

The district is somewhat unique in that the Braided Rivers Trust Charitable Foundation make decisions on the distribution of funds generated from The Lion Foundation gaming machine venues in the district. Five of the eleven class 4 venues in the district are operated by The Lion Foundation. Machines in these venues generate a significant amount of the available grant funding, this sees the majority of community grants funded from gaming machines in the Ashburton District, staying in the district.

However, gambling harm is a serious social issue, not only for those directly affected but also their network of family, friends, workplaces, and the community at large. While problem gambling rates remain low in New Zealand, reports show that even low-moderate risk gamblers are experiencing harm, with 1 in 5 people experiencing gambling harm in their lifetime.

The Class 4 gambling industry in New Zealand appears to have reached a point of maturity in terms of industry size, with the total number of machines and venues in decline. The introduction of the Gambling Harm and Prevention Minimisation Regulations 2004 appears to have been one of the key factors contributing to this change. Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that users may be migrating to online platforms which has been a growing industry over the last 10 years.

Pub and club pokie machine participation (user) rates have also declined over the last 10 years, dropping by 6.4% since 2014, to 63.8% in 2023/24. While the size of the industry and participation has reduced, annual expenditure has increased by $792m in the last 10 years indicating that while less people are using pokie machines, those who do are spending more.

The current Ashburton District Gambling Venue Policy appears to be having some impact on controlling the negative effects of problem gambling. The policy does have a cap of 5 machines per venue for new venues, which is lower than the permitted number of 9 under the Gambling Act 2003[1]. This cap has some impact in controlling the number of new machines being established in the district.

However, 47% of machines in the district are located in medium-high deprivation areas[2], with 37 machines located in decile 9 deprivation areas. Additionally, pokie machine spending has been steadily increasing in the district indicating that those who are more susceptible to

[2] As determined by the socioeconomic deprivation index which measures the levels of deprivation for people in each small area in New Zealand using census variables.

gambling harm are potentially being negatively impacted. The current policy has no controls in place to limit or reduce the distribution of machines in highly deprived areas of the district.

The policy also has no controls in place to limit or reduce the number of venues in the district and currently allows for relocations of exisiting venue consents under specific conditions.

2. Key Findings

Changes to legislation and case law

- **Gambling (Gambling Harm Reduction) Amendment Act 2013** amended sections 101 and 102 of the Gambling Act 2003, requiring territorial authorities to consider venue relocation policies through the next review after the amendment, and during any review thereafter.
- **Court of Appeal Ruling (February 2025)** declared that "Waikiwi" relocations of Class 4 venues are no longer permitted without territorial authority consent.
- **Gambling Harm Prevention and Minimisation Regulations 2023** introduced monitoring procedures at venues to identify signs of harm earlier and more consistently.

National gambling participation rates

- Participation in offshore online gambling has increased by 2.7% since 2014. Onshore gambling participation has declined by 6.4% over the last 10 years, with 63.8% of New Zealanders participating in onshore gambling activity in the last 12 months.
- Pokie machine gambling participation in clubs and pubs has increased by 2.3% since 2020 (the last review).
- Class 4 pokie machine gambling is the 3rd most popular form of gambling behind Lotto and TAB (both offering online portals).

Gambling expenditure

- Total gambling expenditure (nominal amount) has increased by $792 million over the last 10 years, despite an overall decline in participation rates. In 2024, expenditure reached $2.792 billion. However, when adjusted for inflation and population growth, expenditure only increased by 2.69% in the last 10 years.
- In nominal terms, pokie machine expenditure has stabilised since the introduction of the Gambling Act but has not reduced. New Zealanders spent more on pokies in 2023 and 2024 than they have in any other year since 1991.
- **Ashburton District:** Total pokie machine expenditure for the year ending December 2024 was $6.884 million, an increase of 6.6% compared to the previous report (2020/21).

Number of venues and machines

- The number of gaming machines has declined from 22,646 in March 2004, to 13,812 in March 2025. Venue numbers have also decreased from 2,007 in March 2004, to 967 in March 2025.
- **Ashburton District:** As of December 2024, there were 11 venues and 131 pokie machines, a decrease from 12 venues and 135 machines in September 2015.

Distribution of proceeds

- In 2024, the rate of return was 43.4%, or $386 million, one of the largest return rates since 2013.
- **Ashburton District:** Approximately $1.5m was returned to the community in grants in the 2023 calendar year. This is $644,150 less than the previous year.

Social impacts of class 4 gambling

- One in five New Zealand adults (22%) experience harm related to their own or someone else's gambling at some point in their lives.
- Studies have found that those living in high deprivation areas, along with other risk factors, are more likely to be at risk of gambling harm. Currently, 61% of class 4 venues in New Zealand are located in high deprivation areas.
- **Ashburton District:** Currently, 47% of machines are located in medium-high to high deprivation areas, with 32 machines in the highest deprivation areas within the district.

Gambling harm and problem gambling prevalence

- The prevalence of problem gambling is low, with 2.4% of the population being moderate-risk and problem gamblers. This equates to 17,000 problem gamblers nationally.
- 55.4% of the population are concerned about the level of gambling in the community, with 46.2% indicating that raising money through gambling does more harm than good.
- **Ashburton District*:*** Five people in the Ashburton District sought intervention for problem gambling in 2023. While this number is low, the district has a slightly higher intervention rate compared to national figures, with 1.1 clients per 10,000 people seeking assistance for gambling problems compared to 0.87 clients per 10,000 people nationally.

Gambling Industry Stakeholder views[3]

Effectiveness of the Current Policy: 43% of stakeholders indicated that the policy is completely effective in achieving its intended objectives, while 57% found it somewhat effective.

- Comments included that the policy balances all purposes of the Gambling Act and is fine the way it is, but the district doesn't need more venues.
- Some stakeholders believe adopting a more restrictive policy is unlikely to reduce problem gambling.

Consideration of Additional Class 4 Venues: 71% of stakeholders supported the idea of continuing to consider additional Class 4 venues.

- Some stakeholders suggested a slightly more restrictive policy, such as a capped policy.
- There were concerns that reducing the local gaming machine offering might lead to a migration of gambling spend to offshore internet and mobile-based offerings.
- Others felt that the Ashburton area has sufficient gaming machines to meet the requirements of those gambling.

Relocation of Existing Venues: 57% of stakeholders supported allowing relocations for existing venues.

- Suggestions included expanding relocation provisions to include moves out of earthquake-prone buildings, relocations to more modern buildings, and moves due to exorbitant rental fees.
- Some stakeholders emphasized that venue relocation is a harm minimisation tool, especially if it involves moving venues out of high deprivation areas.

[3] *As part of pre-engagement Council engaged with stakeholders to gauge their views on the effectiveness of the current policy, potential policy controls and their experience related to the positive and negative social impacts of class 4 gambling in the Ashburton District. Eight responses were received in total.*

3. Report Purpose

This report has been prepared as part of the review of Ashburton District Council's Gambling Venue Policy. The Gambling Act 2003 (s.102(5)) requires all Councils to review their Class 4 Gambling Venue Policy within three years of the adoption of the policy, and every three years thereafter.

The review must consider whether the social impacts and risk of harm from gambling in the district requires mitigation through greater regulation. As part of the Gambling (Gambling Harm Reduction) Amendment Act 2013, territorial authorities were required to consider whether to include a relocation policy as part of the first review following the implementation of the Act (s.101(5)), or as part of any review thereafter.

The original policy was adopted by Council in March 2004, and reviewed every three years thereafter, with the last review carried out in 2022. Reviews carried out since 2012 have resulted in policy rollovers with no changes. Because of this, the community have not been consulted with for the last 13 years. However, key stakeholders have been invited through each review to provide information to help inform previous social impact reports.

Ashburton District Council's Gambling Venue Policy covers both Class 4 "pokie" gambling and TAB venues. However, this report focuses on pokie machine gambling, as the district does not have any stand-alone Totaliser Agency Board (TAB) stores. It is of note that the current policy does allow for a new stand-alone TAB venue to be established provided it meets the policy conditions.

This report provides background information to inform the 2025 policy review process. It provides stakeholders and the Ashburton District community with information about Class 4 gambling within a district context.

The report provides the following information:

- An overview of the Gambling Act 2003 (including relevant amendments) and the requirements on territorial authorities
- An overview of the gambling industry and gambling in New Zealand, with particular reference to Class 4 gambling (gaming or pokie machines)
- A review of information available on the social effects of pokie machine gambling, including problem gambling
- An assessment of Class 4 gambling in the Ashburton District
- An assessment of the social effects of pokie machine gambling in the Ashburton District, including problem gambling
- Information on changes in Class 4 gambling within Ashburton District since 2012.

4. Legislative framework

The Gambling Act 2003 ("the Act") covers all gambling in New Zealand, including Class 4 or gaming machine gambling. The Racing Industry Act 2020 covers betting on horse and greyhound races and other sporting events.

4.1. Purpose of the Gambling Act 2003

In summary, the purpose of the Act is to:

- Control the growth of gambling
- Prevent and minimise the harm caused by gambling, including problem gambling
- Facilitate responsible gambling
- Ensure modes of gambling are fair and transparent
- Ensure that money from gambling benefits the community
- Enable community involvement in decisions about the provision of gambling (s.3).

4.2. Controls on class 4 gambling

The Act categorises gaming (pokie) machines and race and sports betting as Class 4 gambling. The Act specifies that Class 4 gambling may only be conducted by a corporate society (a trust which distributes grants to community organisations) which holds a:

- Class 4 gambling venue consent, issued by the relevant territorial authority (s.30-33)
- Class 4 gambling operator's licence, issued by the Department of Internal Affairs, and
- Class 4 gambling venue licence, issued by the Department of Internal Affairs.

A Class 4 venue consent will be granted by the territorial authority if the application meets the requirements of the territorial authority's Class 4 Gambling Venue policy.

A Class 4 venue licence is granted by the Secretary of Internal Affairs if an application meets the requirements of a venue licence prescribed in sections 65 – 84 of the Gambling Act 2003.

A Class 4 gambling operator's license is granted to approved corporate societies by the Secretary of Internal Affairs if the applicant has been granted a venue consent by the relevant territorial authority and the application meets the requirements of the Act, including:

- Details of the purposes for which net proceeds will be distributed
- A statement of how the applicant intends to minimise the risks of problem gambling
- Information about the financial viability of the proposed operation and the means to maximise the net proceeds to be distributed for authorised purposes and how those proceeds will be distributed

- Information on key personnel including financial circumstances
- Any other information the Secretary may request to ascertain the suitability of the corporate society and its key personnel
- The gambling equipment to be used meets relevant minimum standards
- The venue is not used mainly for operating gaming machines.
  For further information see s.50 – 64 of the Act.

4.3. Statutory limits on machine numbers

The Act limits the number of gaming machines permitted at a venue. Venues which held a Class 4 venue licence on 17 October 2001 can operate up to 18 machines, while venues with a Class 4 venue licence issued after 17 October 2001 but before the commencement of the Gambling Act 2003 are able to operate up to nine machines as long as the Council venue policy allows this (s.89 – 97).

There is the option of applying for ministerial discretion to permit more than nine machines at some sites provided, amongst other things, the territorial authority has issued a consent that is consistent with its Class 4 gambling venue policy (s.95 – 96).

4.4. Role of territorial authorities

Territorial authorities are required to adopt a Class 4 Gambling Venue Policy, with the policy being required to have been through a special consultative procedure (as detailed in s.83 of the Local Government Act 2002). The Act requires territorial authorities review their Gambling Venue Policy at least every three years.

The requirement for territorial authorities to maintain Class 4 gambling venue policies is intended to provide communities with the opportunity to have some influence over Class 4 gambling in their community, and in particular to be able to control where venues may be established and the permitted number of gaming machines at each venue. The Act, however, only provides limited ability for a local authority policy to influence venues established prior to 2001.

During the 2016 review, amendments to the Gambling Act required consideration of whether or not to have a relocation policy (see section 4.6 of this report). Council determined the current relocation provisions in the policy were sufficient, which until now has been aligned with the Waikiwi case law criteria.

4.5. Introduction of regulations

The Harm Prevention and Minimisation Regulations 2004 includes a list of unsuitable Class 4 gambling venues, including:

- A venue at which the primary activity is anything other than onsite entertainment focused on persons 18 years and over, including (without limitation):
  - Food outlets such as dairies, supermarkets, fast food outlets or similar venues

- Offices, private residences, sports stadiums, circuses or fairs, amusement parlours, or other similar venues
- Internet cafes or other venues where the primary activity is electronic media
- Libraries, art galleries, museum, theatres, cinemas or similar premises
- Places of worship or venues that are not fixed permanent structures, including tents or vehicles.

The regulations require additional controls on gaming machines to interrupt play and provide information on the duration of play, how much the player has spent, net wins or losses, the odds of winning the game and ask whether the player wishes to continue to play.

Information must be provided by law at the venue about problem gambling and there are requirements to provide problem gambling awareness training to personnel employed at the venue in order to approach persons they consider may have problems.

The regulations also specify that venues must not have pokie machines and jackpot information visible from the outside of the venue and must not place an automatic teller machine (ATM) within the gaming machine area. Instead, the ATM must be visible to venue staff in the main bar / customer service area.

It is also a requirement that the gaming machines are operated by someone on site that has undertaken harm minimisation training. In some cases, the venue manager may ban the player from the gambling area of a venue for two years.

4.6. Gambling (Gambling Harm Reduction) Amendment Act 2013

The Gambling (Gambling Harm Reduction) Amendment Act 2013 amended sections 101 and 102 of the Gambling Act 2003. The amendments require that the first time a territorial authority commences a review of its gambling venue policy after 14 September 2013, the territorial authority must consider whether to include a venue relocation policy (see s.102(5A) of the Gambling Act 2003).

Relocation policy

The purpose of a relocation policy is to help address the concentration of Class 4 venues in high deprivation areas. S.101(5) of the Gambling Act 2003 defines a relocation policy as a policy setting out if and when the territorial authority will grant consent in respect of a venue within its district where the venue is intended to replace an existing venue (within the district) to which a class 4 venue licence applies (in which case section 97A applies).

A relocation policy could permit Class 4 venues to re-establish at new sites with Council's consent. The policy could specify circumstances that would allow relocation. These could include but aren't limited to:

- expiration of lease,
- acquisition of property under the Public Works Act,
- site development, and/or

- natural disaster making the venue unusable
- relocation to a lower deprivation area

Alternatively, Council could adopt a relocation policy that states Council does not permit relocations under any circumstances.

Council does not currently have a relocation policy, as clause 6.1 of the current policy only references transfers of existing Class 4 venues under the *Waikiwi* case law criteria. Clause 6.1 is set out below:

> *6.1. Where an existing class 4 gambling venue is moving to a new address and meets the following criteria, it will not be considered as a new venue or a relocation, and the existing consent and conditions will remain:*
>
> - *The new building will be in a site that is very close to the existing site;*
> - *The class 4 venue's name will be the same;*
> - *The ownership and management of the venue will be the same; and*
> - *For all intents and purposes, the patrons and public will regard the venue as being the same venue, even though its physical location will change in a relatively minor way.*

The above criteria are based on the 2013 High Court ruling in *ILT Foundation v The Secretary for Internal Affairs* [2013] NZHC 1330 (known as the 'Waikiwi' decision after the name of the venue involved). The High Court in *Waikiwi* decided that the following circumstances amounted to a minor change in the location of class 4 premise and therefore did not amount to a change of venue requiring consent from a territorial authority:

a) The change in location is minor;
b) The name of the premises would remain the same;
c) The ownership and management of the venue would not change; and
d) Patrons and the public would regard the tavern as being the same venue.

Soon after the High Court's *Waikiwi* decision, the Gambling Act was amended to specifically enable a Council's gambling policy to cover relocation, that is, if and when a class 4 venue may change its location. Council consent was required for any relocations, in addition to DIA consent.

However, the Secretary of Internal Affairs continued to apply the *Waikiwi* decision to minor changes in Class 4 venue locations, determining that such changes were not changes in "venue" for the purposes of the Act and therefore Council consent to these minor relocations was not necessary.

Until now, Councils policy has reflected the Secretary of Internal Affairs' interpretation and application of the *Waikiwi* decision and allowed venue consent holders to change the location of the premises without having to apply for a new consent, provided the change meets the above criteria.

As Council does not have a relocation policy outside of the *Waikiwi* 'transfer' conditions, any venues that wished to move location, but did not meet the criteria in clause 6.1, needed to apply for a new class 4 venue consent from Council.

Changes to the consideration of Waikiwi case law 2024

In February 2024, the High Court declared that "Waikiwi" relocations of class 4 venues are no longer permitted within the Court's interpretation of the Gambling Act. This decision was appealed, and the decision was upheld by the Court of Appeal in February 2025 (*Gaming Machine Association of New Zealand Incorporated v Feed Families Not Pokies Aotearoa Incorporated [2025] NZCA 16*).The Court determined that the Department of Internal Affairs cannot grant relocations in accordance with the *Waikiwi* precedent without Council consent, even if the relocation is only a minor change in venue. For venues to relocate to any new location, consent from the relevant territorial authority will be required.

With the Court of Appeal's decision, Council's current policy is not compliant with the Gambling Act 2003, as it does not require Council consent for minor changes in venue

4.7. Gambling (Harm Prevention and Minimisation) Amendment Regulations 2023

These amendments strengthen the 2004 regulations. The changes create clear and consistent standards that apply to all venues. A key amendment being the introduction of monitoring procedures at venues to support venue managers and staff identifying signs of harm earlier and more consistently. They also set out clear rules for how staff must respond when signs of harm are identified.

New responsibilities for venue managers:

- The monitoring of gambling rooms through regular sweeps
- Keeping records of each sweep
- Taking reasonable steps to identify players present for 9 sweeps in a row
- Considering if any player is showing signs of gambling harm
- Have conversations with those that display signs of gambling harm and record those conversations.

4.8. Proposed Online Gambling Bill

Online casinos based in New Zealand are illegal, but it is legal for New Zealanders to gamble on offshore online casino websites.

Online casino gambling is currently an unregulated activity and there are no guarantees of player safety. Currently, the only control in place is section 16 of the Gambling Act which makes it illegal to advertise offshore online gambling in New Zealand.

The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) is developing the online casino gambling legislation and building a new regulatory system, with the intention of channelling

customers towards up to fifteen licensed platforms who must meet a range of regulatory requirements.

DIA will regulate the new system, and it will be illegal for unlicensed operators to operate or advertise in New Zealand. It is expected that the bill will be enacted by early 2026.

Unlike onshore gambling operators, the online licenced operators will not have to return any money back into the community.

5. Gambling in New Zealand

5.1. Gambling participation

The Gambling Act 2003 classifies gambling based on the amount of money spent and the risk of problem gambling associated with an activity. Classes of gambling range from Class 1, representing low-stake, low-risk gambling, to Class 4, which represents high-risk, high-turnover gambling.

Gambling has evolved in the last 10 years, with participation in offshore online websites becoming more prevalent in New Zealand. Use of these sites including online pokies, online poker, other casino games, esport betting and overseas lotteries has increased by 2.7% since 2014.[4]

While participation in offshore gambling continues to rise, gambling participation in New Zealand is still concentrated on onshore gambling, with 63.8% of New Zealanders having participated in New Zealand based gambling activities in 2023/24.

However, the number of New Zealanders participating in onshore gambling has been in steady decline over the last 10 years, dropping by 6.4% since 2014 (Health Promotion Agency, 2025).

Table 5-1 – Annual Gambling participation numbers in New Zealand 2023/24

Number of people who have participated at least once in the previous 12 months	
Purchased a Lotto NZ product	2,378,000
Placed a bet - TAB	520,000
Played a pokie machine at a class 4 venue	**514,000**
Played a table or electronic game at a casino	323,000
Participated in overseas online gambling activity	156,000
Played housie or bingo	95,000

Source – Health Promotion Agency (2025)

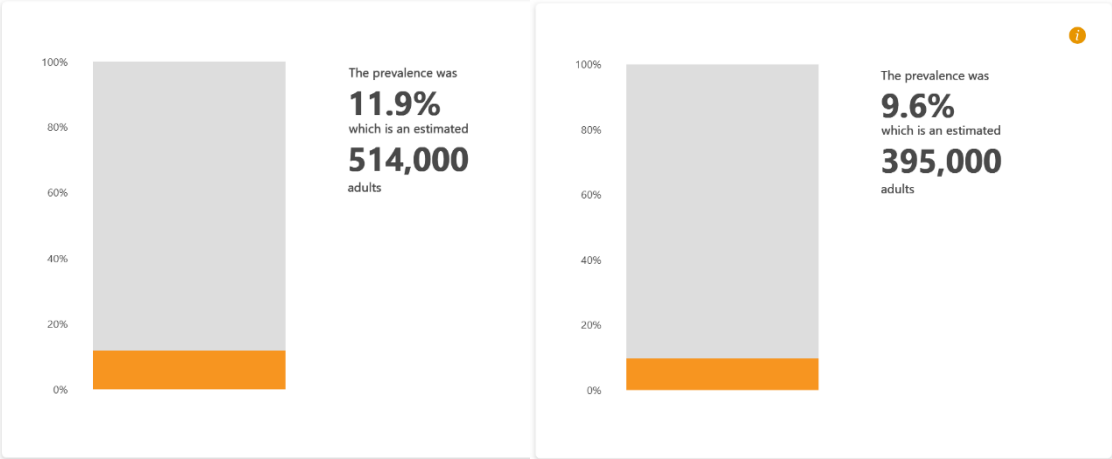
Class 4 gambling is a common form of entertainment in New Zealand, with the third highest participation rate. In 2024, it was found that approximately 514,000 (or about 1 in 10) New Zealanders aged 15 years and older played a pokie machine at a class 4 venue at

[4] Calculated using the statistics provided from the Ministry of Health in 2018 and 2025.

least once in the last 12 months. Of those, 25,000 (1 in 200) played every week for the last 12 months (Health Promotion Agency, 2025).

Compared to the last review in 2022, the prevalence of pokie machine gaming in pubs and clubs has increased from 9.6% to 11.9%, this represents 119,000 more people participating than at the time of the last social impact report as shown in figure 5-1. It is worth noting that Covid-19 lockdowns likely impacted participation rates in 2020 due to pokie venues being closed.

Figure 5-1 – Prevalence of New Zealanders who have played an electronic gaming machine at a pub or club (class 4 venue) in the last 12 months 2023/24 vs 2020.

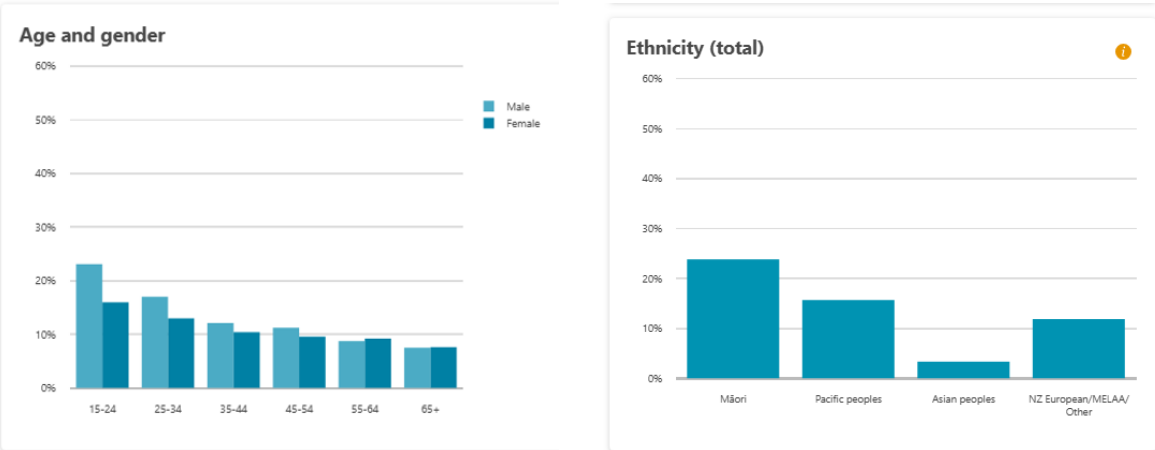


Source – Health Promotion Agency (2025a and 2020)

Those who participate in pokie machine gambling are more likely to:

- be male
- be under the age of 24
- identify as Māori
- be a moderate to high-risk gambler
- live in a high deprivation area

Figure 5-2 - Indicator: Played an electronic gaming machine at a pub or club (class 4 venue) in the last 12 months



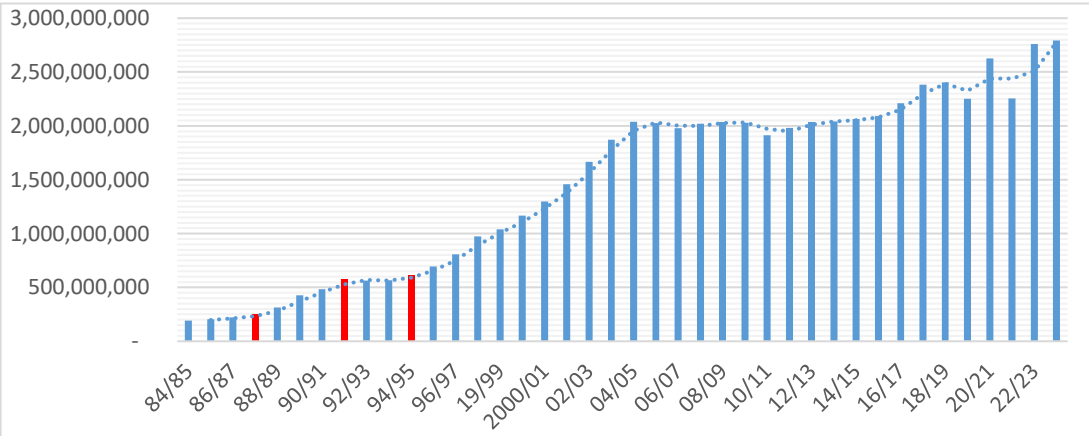
Source – Health Promotion Agency (2025a)

5.2. Gambling expenditure

Total gambling expenditure[5] increased dramatically when Lotto, TAB betting, gaming machines, and casinos all became regulated activity in New Zealand throughout the 1980s and 90s.

As shown in figure 5-3, from 1984-1987, gambling expenditure was relatively stagnant at around $200m per year. The introduction of Lotto in 1987, gaming machines in 1991, and casinos in 1994 saw gambling expenditure steadily increase year on year until it reached a peak in 2004 ($2,039m). The introduction of the Gambling Act in 2003 appears to have had some impact, with expenditure figures stabilising around the $2 billion mark since 2004.

Figure 5-3 - Gambling Expenditure (nominal) in New Zealand (All forms from 1984 to 2023)



[5] 'Expenditure', as discussed here, refers to turnover less the amount paid out or credited (prizes) – also referred to as gross profit.

Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2018, 2025a)

It is important to note that these figures include online gambling expenditure through the My Lotto app and the TAB app who both offered online portals in New Zealand from around 2012.

Offshore gambling expenditure is not included and is less reported due overseas sites currently being unregulated in New Zealand. However, it is estimated that New Zealanders spend between $300-500 million per year on overseas gambling websites (Stewart, E., 2021). Kiwibank reported that their customers are spending around $30 million per month on online gambling websites, 80% of which is offshore (Stuff, 2025).

Expenditure trends since last social impact report in 2022

The last report in 2022 included expenditure data up to 2020/21 year. Up to this point, gambling expenditure had been relatively stable. However, 2020/21 year saw a significant spike in gambling expenditure, increasing by $373 million compared to the previous year – the largest year-on-year increase since 2001/02 - 2002/03.

The Ministry of Health New Zealand suggests this surge may have been due to a rise in online gambling during the Covid-19 lockdown (26 March 2020 – 27 May 2020). During this period, online gambling increased from about $4.1 million per week at the start of 2020, to $6.25 million per week during level 3 and 4 lockdowns, representing a 51% increase from the same period the previous year. Of those who gambled online during the lockdown, 65% reported using MyLotto (Ministry of Health, 2021).

In the following year, gambling expenditure returned to within $2 million of pre-Covid levels, dropping to $2,254 million in 2021/22, from $2,252 million in 2019/20. However, the last two years have seen another sharp increase in gambling expenditure, rising by half a billion dollars from $2,254 million in 2021/22 to $2,792 million for the year ending 2024 (Department of Internal Affairs, 2025a)

Despite the notable increase in expenditure, participation rates have remained relatively stable, indicating that the gambling market has likely reached a point of maturity. While minimal growth in participation numbers is expected, those who do continue to participate may proceed to spend more.

Breakdown of expenditure – four main forms of gambling

The regulation of different forms of gambling in New Zealand has changed the way gamblers spend when participating.

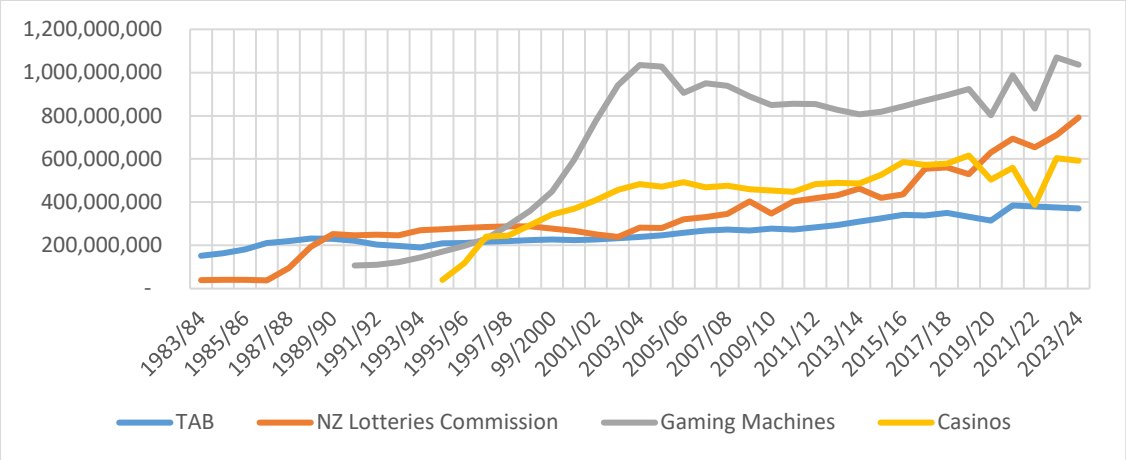
Betting expenditure through the TAB has been relatively stable since 1984, with an average annual increase of 2.1%, growing from $152m per year in 1984 to $371m per year in 2024.

Lotto, while having the highest participation rate of the four forms, does not attract the greatest expenditure. After becoming regulated in 1987 there was a 60% increase in expenditure from $2m in 1987, to $57m in 1988, this stabilised to an average annual increase of 4.9% to reach annual expenditure of $792m in 2024.

Gaming machines were introduced to pubs and clubs in 1991, recording expenditure of $3m in the first year of operations. From 1992 to 2004, pokie machine expenditure grew

substantially as show in figure 5-4, growing on average by 15.8% year-on-year during this period, reaching $1b in expenditure in 2004. Pokie machine expenditure has stabilised since the introduction of the Gambling Act but has not reduced. Nominally, Kiwis spent more on pokies in 2023 and 2024 than they have in any other year since 1991.

Figure 5-4 – Gambling expenditure (nominal) by four main forms (1984-2024)



Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2018, 2025a)

Casinos were the last form of gambling to be regulated in New Zealand with the first casino being opened in Christchurch in 1994. Casino expenditure increased 65% from $40m in 1994 to $117m in 1995. Since this point, the industry has experienced steady year-on-year growth, averaging 4.2%. There was a notable drop in casino expenditure from 2020 – 2022, this was likely an impact of Covid 19 lockdowns. Expenditure peaking again to reach $592m in 2023/24.

Impact of pokie machines on gambling expenditure

While pokie machine expenditure has stabilised since the enactment of the Gambling Act 2003, it continues to be the top earning form of gambling in New Zealand. As shown in table 5-2, expenditure from pokie machines makes up around 35% of the total expenditure across the four main forms of gambling. This has been consistent over the last 10 years. Currently, pokie machines account for 37.1% of gambling expenditure in New Zealand.

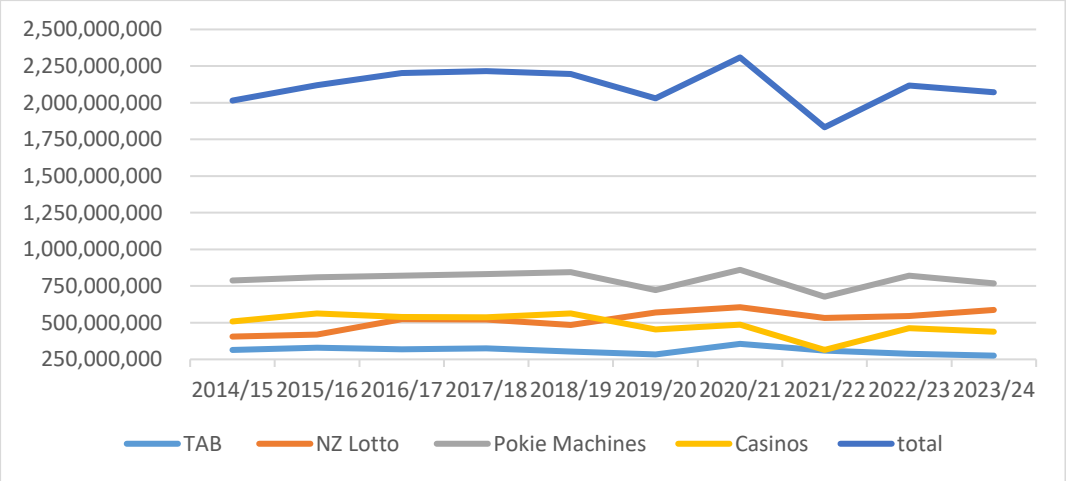
Table 5-2– Gambling expenditure (nominal) comparison of the main forms (2014-2024)

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
TAB	325m	342m	338m	350m	332m	315m	385m	380m	376m	371m
NZ Lotto	420m	437m	555m	561m	530m	631m	694m	654m	710m	792m
Pokie Machines	**818m**	**843m**	**870m**	**895m**	**924m**	**802m**	**987m**	**833m**	**1,070m**	**1,037m**
Casinos	527m	586m	572m	578m	616m	504m	559m	387m	604m	592m

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total	2.09b	2.2b	2.33b	2.38b	2.40b	2.25b	2.62b	2.25b	2.76b	2.79b

Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2025a)

Figure 5-5- Inflation and population adjusted expenditure comparison of the main forms (2014-2024)

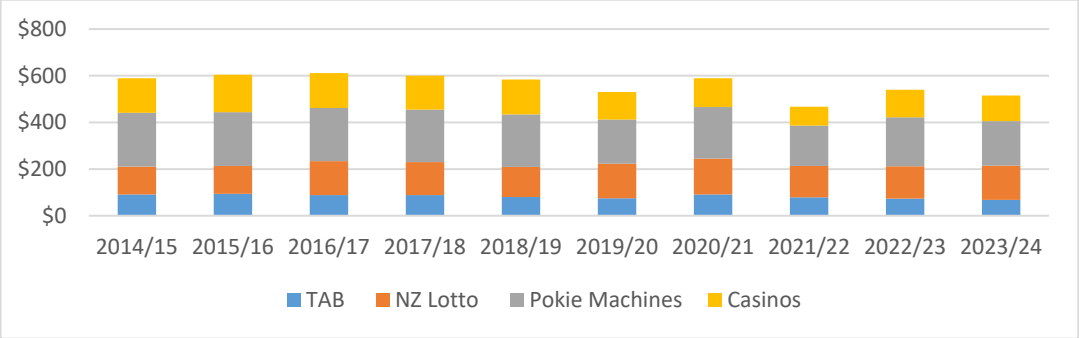


Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2025b).

Expenditure per capita

Adjusting for the effects of both inflation and changes to New Zealand's population (18 years and older), gambling expenditure has increased by 2.69% in the last 10 years, increasing from $2.01m in 2014/15 to $2.07m in 2023/24. However, per capita spending has decreased, dropping from $589 per capita in 2014/15 to $515 per capita in 2023/24.[6] this information is shown in Figure 5-6.

Figure 5-6- Inflation adjusted expenditure per capita by type from 2014 to 2024



Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2025b).

As shown in figure 5-6, pokie machine expenditure represents the largest proportion of per capita spending over the past 10 years. On average, pokie machine expenditure accounts for 38% of the total inflation adjusted spend per capita each year. In 2023/24,

[6] *Inflation adjustment methodology was revised by DIA in July 2022 (after the last social impact report was completed) to incorporate adjustments from the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and set a base year of 2010/11. Past methodology has applied adjustments incorrectly, resulting in misleading representation of inflation over time. Based on this, a comparison from the last review has not been completed.*

pokie machine expenditure made up 37%, or $191 of the $515 total per capita spend. This is followed by NZ lotto with $146, casinos with $109, and TAB with the lower of the four main types at $68 per capita.

Expenditure by territorial authorities

As shown by Table 5-3, gross machine proceeds or gaming machine profits (GMP) (the money left after paying out prizes) for Ashburton District for the March 2025 quarter was $1,698,215.86 (Department of Internal Affairs, 2025c).

Nationally, Ashburton ranks 33rd out of 63 territorial authorities for the loss per head of population[7]. This is calculated by dividing the latest expenditure figures published by the DIA for that quarter by the population 18 years and over. The population figures come from the 2023 census (usually resident population) and the expenditure for the period is taken from the DIA statistics (March quarter 2025).

Table 5-3 Quarterly nationwide gaming machine proceeds by territorial authority, and loss per person 18 or over (March 2025 quarter)

	District	GMP	Pop>18	Loss/person
1	KAWERAU DISTRICT	$663,082.63	5,139	$129.03`
2	THAMES-COROMANDEL DISTRICT	$3,002,423.06	25,539	$117.56
3	ROTORUA DISTRICT	$5,695,253.07	49,869	$114.20
4	NAPIER CITY	$5,273,326.75	46,287	$113.93
5	WHAKATANE DISTRICT	$2,817,704.15	25,728	$109.52
6	GORE DISTRICT	$1,002,912.46	9,174	$109.32
7	SOUTH WAIKATO DISTRICT	$1,784,930.76	16,887	$105.70
8	INVERCARGILL CITY	$4,169,875.02	39,816	$104.73
9	GREY DISTRICT	$1,061,234.07	10,266	$103.37
10	LOWER HUTT CITY	$7,526,827.58	75,633	$99.52
11	TAUPO DISTRICT	$2,737,756.93	29,055	$94.23
12	HOROWHENUA DISTRICT	$2,493,906.43	26,715	$93.35
13	HAURAKI DISTRICT	$1,468,970.32	15,756	$93.23
14	WAIROA DISTRICT	$532,533.55	5,931	$89.79
15	UPPER HUTT CITY	$2,847,045.97	32,562	$87.43
16	PALMERSTON NORTH CITY	$5,231,299.74	60,111	$87.03
17	PORIRUA CITY	$3,455,833.02	39,906	$86.60
18	WAITOMO DISTRICT	$561,470.12	6,579	$85.34
19	WANGANUI DISTRICT	$2,899,884.88	34,092	$85.06
20	GISBORNE DISTRICT	$2,863,093.24	34,218	$83.67
21	MACKENZIE DISTRICT	$310,820.89	3,765	$82.56
22	CHRISTCHURCH CITY INCLUDING BANKS PENINSULA WARD	$23,156,070.49	286,896	$80.71
23	TAURANGA DISTRICT	$8,635,721.94	107,856	$80.07
24	HASTINGS DISTRICT (December 2024 INCD. Central Hawke's Bay)	$5,635,294.36	70,632	$79.78
25	FAR NORTH DISTRICT	$4,015,166.04	50,871	$78.93

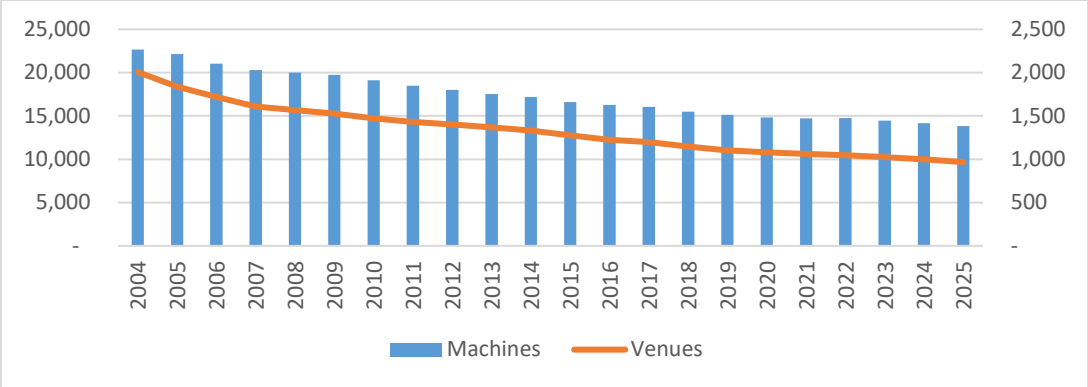
[7] In the context of gambling expenditure, "loss per head" would represent the average amount of money lost by each person who participates in gambling activities.

	District	GMP	Pop>18	Loss/person
26	OPOTIKI DISTRICT	$532,273.89	6,960	$76.48
27	TIMARU DISTRICT	$2,600,529.78	34,707	$74.93
28	NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT	$4,504,517.30	61,584	$73.14
29	MARLBOROUGH DISTRICT	$2,690,845.21	36,921	$72.88
30	BULLER DISTRICT	$594,010.80	8,208	$72.37
31	SOUTH TARANAKI DISTRICT (MARCH 2021 INCD. STRATFORD)	$1,933,212.36	27,195	$71.09
32	RANGITIKEI DISTRICT	$783,098.06	11,103	$70.53
33	**ASHBURTON DISTRICT**	**$1,698,215.86**	**24,276**	**$69.95**
34	MATAMATA-PIAKO DISTRICT	$ 1,776,814.86	26,211	$67.79
35	TARARUA DISTRICT	$ 881,961.66	13,134	$67.15
36	CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT	$1,220,999.30	18,441	$66.21
37	NELSON CITY	$ 2,581,135.37	39,054	$66.09
38	RUAPEHU DISTRICT	$ 591,898.20	9,045	$65.44
39	WHANGAREI DISTRICT	$4,374,475.52	68,430	$63.93
40	WELLINGTON CITY	$9,057,872.91	146,877	$61.67
41	AUCKLAND CITY	$68,583,347.36	1,124,842	$60.97
42	KAPITI COAST DISTRICT	$2,474,540.28	42,417	$58.34
43	HURUNUI DISTRICT (JUNE 2019 INCD. KAIKOURA)	$777,493.95	13,389	$58.07
44	WESTLAND DISTRICT	$390,365.18	6,831	$57.15
45	WAITAKI DISTRICT	$984,061.54	17,373	$56.64
46	MASTERTON DISTRICT	$1,114,030.49	19,869	$56.07
47	MANAWATU DISTRICT	$1,270,845.95	22,830	$55.67
48	WAIPA DISTRICT	$ 2,278,521.05	41,349	$55.10
49	TASMAN DISTRICT	$2,337,898.92	43,353	$53.93
50	HAMILTON CITY	$ 6,245,701.46	116,445	$53.64
51	WESTERN BAY OF PLENTY DISTRICT	$ 2,045,820.72	41,112	$49.76
52	DUNEDIN CITY	$4,814,815.05	97,311	$49.48
53	WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT	$2,402,816.33	48,627	$49.41
54	SOUTH WAIRARAPA DISTRICT	$ 412,235.07	8,865	$46.50
55	CARTERTON DISTRICT	$338,074.41	7,557	$44.74
56	SOUTHLAND DISTRICT	$ 913,167.07	22,368	$40.82
57	KAIPARA DISTRICT	$734,737.87	19,146	$38.38
58	OTOROHANGA DISTRICT	$244,029.08	7,167	$34.05
59	CLUTHA DISTRICT	$ 427,762.20	13,149	$32.53
60	WAIMATE DISTRICT	$177,032.13	6,099	$29.03
61	QUEENSTOWN-LAKES DISTRICT	$933,958.06	33,798	$27.63
62	SELWYN DISTRICT	$1,451,442.51	53,889	$26.93
63	WAIKATO DISTRICT	$2,542,983.80	105,840	$24.03

5.3. Gaming machine and venue numbers

Gaming machine numbers in New Zealand are naturally declining. In June 1994, there were 7,770 pokie machines in New Zealand, this increased to a peak of 25,221 machines in 2003. Since then, the number of machines has declined slowly but steadily from 22,646 on 31 March 2004 (Department of Internal Affairs, 2025d) to 13,812 in March 2025 (Department of Internal Affairs, 2025b).

Figure 5-7 Total machine and venue numbers in New Zealand from 2004 to 2025



Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2025b and 2025d).

Likewise, the number of gaming machine venues in New Zealand has decreased in recent years with venue numbers falling from 2,007 in March 2004, to 967 in March 2025 (Department of Internal Affairs, 2025d).

The total number of venues is currently made up of 816 pubs/commercial premises and 161 clubs/non-commercial premises (Department of Internal Affairs, 2025b). Increased compliance costs associated with new gaming regulations and a seemingly mature gaming market means it is unlikely there will be any significant increase in either total gaming venues or the number of machines in the future.

6. Distribution of proceeds from gaming machines

New Zealand is one of the few countries where Class 4 gambling is a not-for-profit activity. The Gambling Act provides for Class 4 gambling to be permitted only where it is used to raise funds for authorised purposes. Section 4 of the Act defines authorised purposes as:

- A charitable purpose,
- A non-commercial purpose that is beneficial to the whole or a section of the community
- Promoting, controlling, and conduction rate meetings under the Racing Act 2003, including the payment of stakes
- Classes 1-3 gambling can also raise money for electioneering purposes.

Gaming machine societies are required under the Gambling Act and the Gambling (Class 4 Net Proceeds) Regulations 2004 to distribute a minimum amount of 40 per cent of their proceeds to the community. However, there is no requirement for these funds to go back into the local communities where they came from.

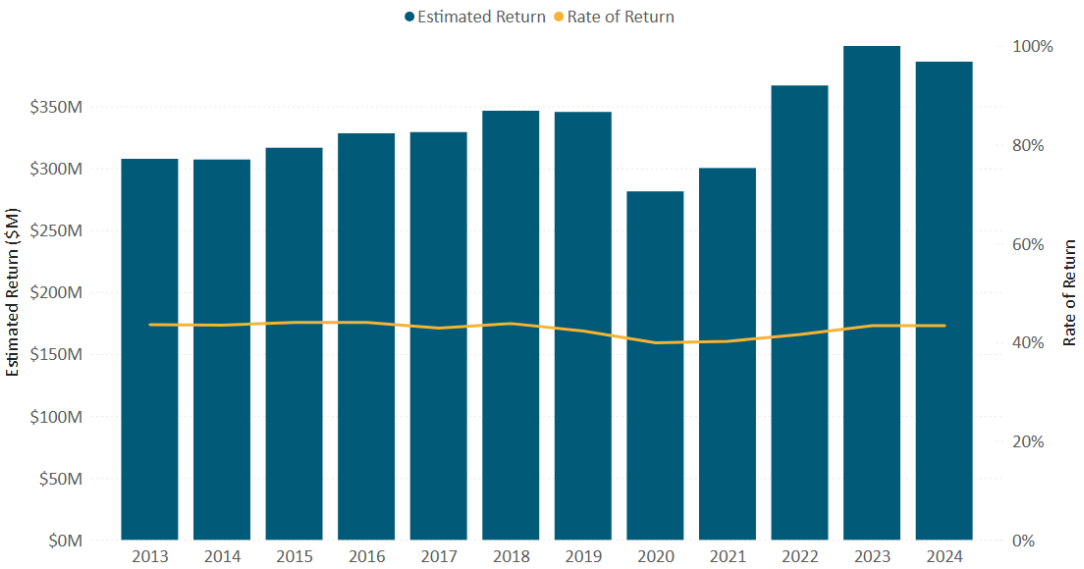
Corporate societies must provide information on how to apply for a grant at each venue and must publish details of grant availability at least every three months. Societies must also publish details of both successful and unsuccessful applications for grants at least annually and detail the amount(s) given to successful applicants (see s.110 of the Gambling Act).

Figure 6-1 - Allocation rate of Class 4 gaming machine gross proceeds (excluding GST)

Source: Department of Internal affairs, personal communication, 2025.

In 2024, the rate of return in New Zealand was 43.4%, or $386m. This represents one of the largest return rates in New Zealand since 2013 as shown in figure 6-2.

Figure 6-2 – Rate of return of Class 4 gaming machine gross proceeds over the last 10 years (2013-2024)



Source: Department of Internal Affairs (2025b)

7. Problem gambling in New Zealand

7.1. Definition of problem gambling

While most people who gamble do not develop problem gambling behaviour, for some, gambling can have negative impacts. Section 4 of the Gambling Act 2003 defines a problem gambler as "a person whose gambling causes harm or may cause harm". In this context gambling-related harm:

> *(a) means harm or distress of any kind arising from, or caused or exacerbated by, a person's gambling; and*
> *(b) includes personal, social, or economic harm suffered –*
> *(i) by the person; or*
> *(ii) the person's spouse, partner, family, whanau, or wider community; or (iii) in the workplace; or (iv) by society at large.*

In New Zealand, gambling behaviour is primarily assessed using the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) which categorises gamblers into four categories:

- Non-problem gamblers
- Low-risk gamblers
- Moderate risk gamblers
- Problem gamblers

The PGSI is a 9-item scale whereby participants rate their own gambling behaviours on a scale from 0 (never) to 3(almost always), in response to the following questions:

- Have you bet more than you could really afford to lose?
- Have you needed to gamble with larger amounts of money to get the same feeling or excitement?
- Have you gone back another day to try and win back the money you lost?
- Have you borrowed money or sold anything to get money to gamble?
- Have you felt that you might have a problem with gambling?
- Has gambling caused you any health problems, including stress or anxiety?
- Have people criticised your betting or told you that you had a gambling problem, regardless of whether or not you thought it was true?
- Has your gambling caused any financial problems for you or your household?
- Have you felt guilty about the way you gamble, or what happens when you gamble?

Total scores range from 0-27, with scores of 0 indicating non-problem gambling, 1-2 indicating low-risk gambling, 3-7 indicating moderate-risk gambling and 8-27 indicating problem gambling (Health Promotion Agency, 2025b)

It is important to note that there is a difference between "harmful gambling" and "problem gambling". Harmful gambling categorises the broad definition of "harm" under

the Gambling Act 2003 which can be experienced by all gamblers. Problem gambling refers to those who experience severe harm from gambling (Problem Gambling Foundation, 2024)

7.2. Prevalence of Gambling harm and problem gambling

A study undertaken in New Zealand by Abbott and Volberg (2000) found the prevalence of problem gambling varies significantly according to demographic variables. The variables identified were age, ethnicity, highest qualification, labour force status, occupation, household size and household income. In summary, the highest risk demographic groups identified were:

- People aged between 25 and 45 years
- People who identify as Māori and Pasifika
- People with no formal qualification
- People who are unemployed
- People who work in elementary occupations and/or plant and machine operators
- People living in households with five or more people
- People who live in households with an income of $20,000 to $30,000[8].

As shown in figure 5-2, some of these risk factors we present in the results from the Health Promotion Agency (2025b) gambling harm survey. In addition to these risk factors, results of the survey also indicated males and those living with a disability, mental health or neurological conditions were also more at risk of developing problem gambling behaviours.

Gambling Harm

Some forms of gambling present higher risk than others, evidence shows that harm is far more likely to be associated with continuous forms of gambling like pokie machines where users can immediately reinvest their winnings to continue gambling. It has been reported that 54% of people accessing gambling-harm intervention services cite pub or club pokies as the primary problem gambling mode (Ministry of Health, 2024).

While most New Zealanders who gamble do so without developing problem behaviours, research shows that one in five New Zealand adults (22%) experience harm related to their own or someone else's gambling at some point in their lives. Harm includes financial harm, relationship disruption, conflict, psychological distress, damage to health, cultural harm, reduced participation at work or study and criminal activity. Around 381,000 adults reported second-hand gambling harm in their wider families or households in the past year (Health Promotion Agency, 2025).

It is important to note that nearly 50% of all gambling harm is experienced by people who participate in low-risk gambling. Data from the Health Promotion Agency gambling harm survey (2025) shows that in 2023/24, 8.3% of New Zealanders experienced some level of gambling harm in the past 12 months, 5.9% of which was experienced by low-risk gamblers.

[8] Equivalent to income of $37,794 to $56,691 in 2025. Information retrieved from Reserve Bank of NZ inflation calculator.

Gambling harm is inequitably distributed in New Zealand. The survey also found that Māori, Pacific, some Asian communities, and young people are more likely to be affected.

Problem Gambling

The prevalence of problem gambling in New Zealand is low compared to other countries. Data from the Health Promotion Agency gambling harm survey found that 2.4% of the population are moderate-risk and problem gamblers. The New Zealand Community Trust made an official information request to the Ministry of Health to clarify what percentage of this number was made up of problem gamblers. The Ministry advised that 1.9% are moderate-risk gamblers with the remaining 0.5% were problem gamblers, this equates to around 17,000 adults in New Zealand.[9]

7.3. Social impacts of problem gambling

The impacts of problem gambling can occur to the individual, their whanau and friends, as well as the wider community. These impacts are often categorised into the following domains (Browne et al., 2017):

- Health and morbidity
- Emotional or psychological harm
- Financial harm
- Productivity harm
- Relationship / interpersonal conflict
- Criminal activity

Health and Morbidity
There is a significant body of evidence indicating that problem gambling is strongly associated with a number of other comorbidities such as addiction to alcohol, nicotine and other substances. At a national level, evidence suggests there is a relationship between problem gambling and poorer physical health. Browne et al. (2017) indicates that a self-reported study found that reporting of good health decreased with increased gambling risk, with only 22% of problem gamblers reporting good health compared to 57% of non-gamblers.

Emotional or Psychological Harm
The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (n.d.) advise that mental health conditions are often comorbid for individuals who experience gambling related harm. It is suggested that these individuals are more predisposed to feelings of guilt, shame and risk of suicide. The Health Promotion gambling harm survey (2025b) found that 4.2% of the population felt guilt about the way they gamble, or what happens when they gamble. 1.6% indicated that gambling has caused them health problems including stress and anxiety.

Financial Harm

[9] This can be found in the submission in appendix 1.

In the 2023/24-year, New Zealanders spent $11.5b on pokie machines, with prize returns of $10.5b, resulting in $1 billion dollars in losses.

For individuals and whanau, financial harm does not only refer to crisis level harm such as bankruptcy or loss of major assets but includes escalating harm such as the erosion of savings, juggling or failure to pay bills, borrowing money or a decline in living standards. In the last 12 months, 3.6% of the population indicated they bet more than they could really afford to lose, with 2.3% indicating they had gone back another day to try win back money they had lost (Health Promotion Agency, 2025b)

Workplace and Education Harm

Browne et al. (2017) reports the impact of preoccupation with gambling on studying and/or working relationships, resulting in poorer work performance, increased absenteeism, theft of resources and in some cases termination. Rockloff et al. (2021) suggest that problem gambling can have intergenerational impacts, finding that children of problematic gamblers may experience educational harm as a result of attendance and achievement issues.

Relationship and interpersonal conflict

According to Browne et al. (2017), there is a strong connection between problem gambling and the breakdown of family and personal relationships. Research indicates that people experiencing problems with gambling are more likely to be separated or divorced. Data from the Health Promotion Agency gambling harm survey shows that 8.2% of the population have experienced household harm in the last 12 months e.g. had an argument about time or money spent gambling, had to go without something they needed and/or had to take time of study or work because of someone else's gambling.

Criminal Activity

Problem gambling has been found to be associated with criminal behaviour, most commonly property crimes and fraud. Browne et al. (2017) report a study whereby 32 gamblers (26 classified as problem gamblers) were interviewed, the results indicated that a third of participants reported that their gambling had led to problems with the police or to a conviction for crimes related to gambling. According to SHORE (2008), those who engaged in pokie machine play in bars were significantly more likely to be involved in criminal activities compared to those who never gamble.

Community Impact

The Health and Lifestyle survey measured how gambling affects local communities. Figure 7-1 shows that 55.4% of the population are concerned about the level of gambling in the community, with 46.2% indicating that raising money through gambling does more harm than good.

Figure 7-1 -Results from Health Promotion Agency Community Harm: New Zealand Gambling Survey

Indicator	%
Raising money through gambling - does more good than harm	8.3
Raising money through gambling - does equal good and harm	28.9
Raising money through gambling - does more harm than good	46.2
Concerned about the level of gambling in the community	55.4
Experienced household level harm	8.9

Source: Health Promotion Agency, 2025c

7.4. Social impacts of gambling in high deprivation communities

Community deprivation in New Zealand is measured through the Deprivation Index which takes into account a number of variables from the 2023 Census, as displayed in table 7-1.

Table 7-1 - Community deprivation dimensions and variables

Dimension of deprivation	Description of variable (in order of decreasing weight in the index)
Communication	People with no access to the Internet at home
Income	People aged 18-64 receiving a means tested benefit
Income	People living in equivalised[10] households with income below an income threshold
Employment	People aged 18-64 unemployed
Qualifications	People aged 18-64 without any qualifications
Owned home	People not living in own home
Support	People aged <75 living in a sole parent family
Living space	People living in equivalised households below a bedroom occupancy threshold (i.e overcrowding)

Source - Atkinson et al. (2024).

A score of 10 on the index indicates that the community is in the most deprived 10% of areas in New Zealand and a score of 1 indicates the least deprived areas.

Living in an area that has a high socio-economic deprivation-score is a major risk factor for problem gambling (Ministry of Health 2008). People who live in lower socio-economic neighbourhoods (generally those with a higher deprivation index score) are more likely to be exposed to gambling and suffer gambling related harm.

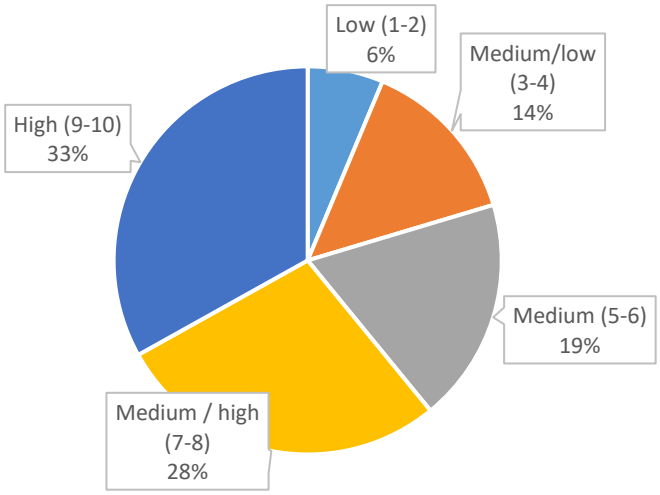
Research from the Ministry of Health (2008) suggests that people in lower income groups contribute a disproportionately greater amount of their income to gambling than people in a higher income bracket.

[10] ***Note:*** *Equivalisation is a method used to control for household composition.*

Health Promotion Agency gambling participation survey data indicates that of the 514,000 New Zealanders who played a pub or club pokie machine in the last 12 months, 168,000 resided in high deprivation areas. Of the 104,000 moderate risk and problem gamblers in New Zealand, 41,000 resided in high deprivation areas.

Venue location impacts these trends, with 61% of venues in New Zealand being located in medium-high to high deprivation areas, as shown in figure 7-2.

Figure 7-2 -Distribution of Class 4 venues by deprivation areas in New Zealand



Source: Department of Internal Affairs, 2025c

Problem Gambling Foundation New Zealand (n.d.) reports that in 2023, 74% of the amount lost in New Zealand came from areas of high deprivation. However, the same areas only received 12% of the available grants.

7.5. Harm minimisation

In 2023, the Government announced new gambling harm prevention and minimisation regulation to strengthen gambling harm minimisation in class 4 venues. These regulations place large onus on class 4 venues, particularly operators and managers to identify and address gambling harm in their venues.

Pubs, clubs and TAB venues must operate in accordance with the following inclusions within the Act and regulations:

Licencing

- All class 4 venues must renew their licence yearly
- All licence holders must have a harm minimisation policy which includes how to identify problem gamblers, and a statement about how harm will be minimised at the venue.

Venue design / layout

- No automatic teller machines (ATM) are permitted in gambling areas of venues.
- Any ATMs in the venue must be in line of sight from bar staff working at the main bar or customer service area.
- Pokie machines must not be visible from outside the venue.

Advertising restrictions

- Jackpot advertising must not be visible or audible from outside the venue.
- The word "jackpot" or similar branding must not be published in a way that gives the impression there is a gaming machine jackpot at the venue.

Training / Venue practices

- Managers and staff who supervise the gambling duties must be trained in problem gambling awareness before they commence supervising duties.
- Pamphlets must be available at the venue to give information to players whose gambling may be causing harm.
- Venue staff must actively monitor gambling areas on a regular basis to observe player behaviour and to look for any signs that a player's gambling may be causing harm. Gambling areas are wherever the gaming machines are located. This is called a "sweep".
    - Sweeps of gambling rooms must be conducted at least three times per hour and at least 10 minutes apart.
    - Staff must keep track of how long individual players have been gambling. Gambling for nine sweeps in a row (about 3 hours) is a sign that harm is or may be occurring.
    - Venue staff must have a conversation with a player if a sign of harm is identified. Staff must make records of all these conversations.
    - Venue staff must take appropriate action and provide assistance where harm is or may be occurring.
    - Venue staff and managers must follow up if the player continues to show signs of harm.
- Venues must keep records of all sweeps, signs identified and a summary of all conversations, including the outcome of those conversations and interventions.

7.6 Problem gambling treatment services in New Zealand

Problem Gambling Levy

The Ministry of Health has responsibility for managing the funding of problem gambling support services. The funding comes from a levy on the gambling industry regulated through the Gambling Act 2003, which reimburses the government for the costs associated with preventing and minimising gambling harm.

The levy is collected on the profits of New Zealand's four main gambling operators: gaming machines in pubs and clubs, casinos, the New Zealand Racing Board and the New Zealand Lotteries Commission; and is set every three years, with the formula used for calculating the levy rates for each sector specified by the Gambling Act 2003.

The current levy for gaming machine operators is 1.24% (as of 1 July 2025) of gross gambling profits, established under the Gambling (Problem Gambling Levy) Regulations 2019. This has decreased from the 2013 levy which was 1.48% but increased from the levy rate of 0.78% at the time of the last social impact report (2022).

Telephone Helpline Services
The Gambling Helpline service provides a free 0800 contact service and acts as a first point of contact for people experiencing some form of gambling-related harm, either directly or as a result of a significant other's gambling.

Intervention Services
At the time of the last review, there were two national providers of problem gambling services – the Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand and the Salvation Army's Oasis Centre for Problem Gambling – as well as a number of regional or local providers.

As of 2024, the Salvation Army's Oasis centre is no longer operational. This service has been replaced by two targeted providers, Mapu Maia which is a Pasifika focussed support service and Asian Family Service, both of whom are based in Christchurch.

The total number of clients receiving intervention services for problem gambling in New Zealand from July 2022 to June 2023 was 10,386. This is an increase of 703 clients from the previous year (Ministry of Health, 2024). In Ashburton District, 7 clients were assisted[11] which is 0.067% of the overall total number of clients assisted in New Zealand (Ministry of Health, 2024).

8. Gaming machine gambling in Ashburton District

8.1. Gaming machine and venue numbers in Ashburton District

As of 31 December 2024, there were 11 venues and 131 pokie machines in the Ashburton District. This compares with 12 venues and 135 machines in September 2015, a decrease of 0.7% in the number of machines in the district over the past 6 years (Department of Internal Affairs, 2025d).

The number of pokie machines in the district has been gradually decreasing since December 2004, when there were 162 pokie machines. The number of venues in the district decreased to 12 in December 2015 with the closure of The Shed (which housed 18 machines) in June 2015.

In March 2016, an application was received from Robbies to add an additional two machines (which is the maximum number of machines possible under the current policy of seven machines). This venue is now known as the Phat Duck. In 2018, the Railway Tavern Rakaia also added an additional machine.

There has been a net loss of 3 machines and 1 venue in the district since the last social impact report (2022). This has resulted from the closure of Arcadia Bar and Restaurant which housed 7 machines and the addition of 4 machines at the Blue Pub in Methven.

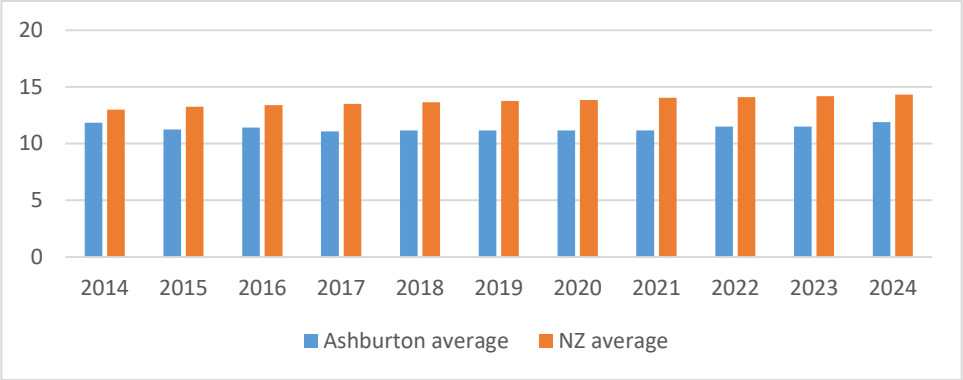
Nationally, both venue and machine numbers are dropping, with machine numbers dropping at a faster rate than the Ashburton District. However, when the average number of machines per venue is compared, the district remains below the national average.

[11] *This includes all intervention types including brief interventions.*

Table 8-1 - Change in number of Class 4 gaming machine venues and machine numbers, 2021-24

	Change in number of venues	Change in number of machines
Ashburton District	-1 (8.3%)	-3 (2.2%)
New Zealand	-73 (-6.9%)	-758 (-5.1%)

Figure 8-1 - Average number of machines per venue 2014- 2024



Department of Internal Affairs, 2025d)

This translates to 35.6 gaming machines per 10,000 residents in the Ashburton District. This has dropped from 37.3 in 2021, and 46.9 in 2014, which shows that the growth of the district's population is not being reflected in the growth of class 4 gaming machines.

The national average is 26.3 gaming machines per 10,000 residents. Ashburton District has, therefore, a higher than the national average ratio. However, both the district and national averages have decreased since 2014, showing that Ashburton District is following the national trend. It should be noted that rural territorial authorities tend to have a higher-than-average machine to resident ratio due to lower population densities and greater dispersal of venues.

In 2005, territorial authorities with more than 100 machines per 10,000 residents were all rural authorities. By contrast cities tended to be under 50 machines per 10,000 residents (Ministry of Health, 2006).

The following graphs give an indication of the comparative density of venues and number of machines for neighbouring territorial authorities in the Canterbury region. It is important to note that since 2014, most areas have been in decline.

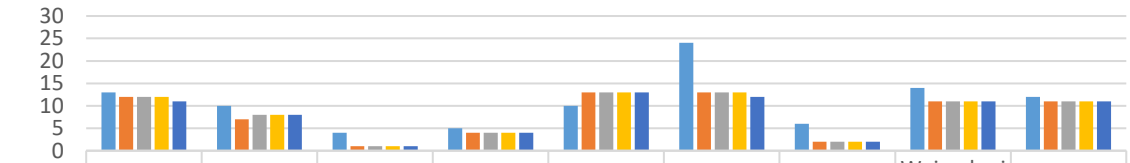
Since the last social impact report in 2022, venue numbers and machine numbers have declined slowly across the region, the outlier being Selwyn District where machine numbers have been increasing since 2014.

As of December 2024, Mackenzie District has the highest number of machines per 10,000 people with 65.5 machines.[12]

[12] Based on the districts estimated population as at December 2024 of 5,500 and 36 machines.

Selwyn has the lowest number of machines per 10,000 people at 14.4. Ashburton has the third highest number of machines per 10,000 people in the Canterbury region.

Figure 8-2 - Number of venues per territorial authority in the Canterbury Region 2014-2024[13]

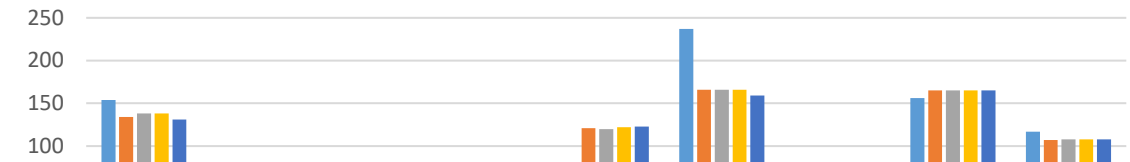


	Ashburton	Hurunui	Kaikoura	Mackenzie	Selwyn	Timaru	Waimate	Waimakariri	Waitaki
2014	13	10	4	5	10	24	6	14	12
2021	12	7	1	4	13	13	2	11	11
2022	12	8	1	4	13	13	2	11	11
2023	12	8	1	4	13	13	2	11	11
2024	11	8	1	4	13	12	2	11	11

2014 2021 2022 2023 2024

Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2025d)

Figure8-3 - Number of machines per territorial authority in the Canterbury Region 2014-2024[14]



	Ashburton	Hurunui	Kaikoura	Mackenzie	Selwyn	Timaru	Waimate	Waimakariri	Waitaki
2014	154	61	57	41	81	237	38	156	117
2021	134	54	18	37	121	166	16	165	107
2022	138	58	15	36	120	166	16	165	108
2023	138	58	15	36	122	166	17	165	108
2024	131	58	15	36	123	159	17	165	108

Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2025d).

[13] Christchurch has been excluded from this graph as the much higher venue and machine numbers skews the data.
[14] Christchurch has been excluded from this graph as the much higher venue and machine numbers skews the data.

8.2 Types of venue and societies operating in the Ashburton District

All gaming machines in Ashburton District are in licensed premises, with 9 commercial venues such as pubs, taverns, and hotels. The remaining 2 are located in non-commercial venues such as the MSA and RSA.

The two clubs in the district with gaming machines (the Ashburton MSA and the Ashburton Returned Services Association (RSA)) operate as societies and use the funds generated primarily for club related capital expenditure, typically building and equipment purchases.

The Lion Foundation is the largest gaming society in the district and operates machines in five licensed premises, including the Devon Tavern, The Brown Pub, Hotel Ashburton, Tinwald Tavern, and the Railway Tavern. The remainder of the societies operating gaming machines in the district are other national operators, namely, Air Rescue Services, New Zealand Community Trust, The Trusts Community Foundation Limited and Youthtown Incorporated.

Table 8-2 shows gaming machine venues in the Ashburton District over the last 12 years (2012-2024), the society which holds the gaming license for each venue, the number of machines at each venue, and whether the venue was licensed before October 2001. Please note, those in grey are no longer current gaming machine venues.

As of December 2024, Ashburton township had 93 machines housed across 6 venues, followed by Methven with 21 machines housed in 2 venues, Rakaia with 14 machines across 2 venues and Hinds with 3 machines all located in 1 venue.

Since 2014, Methven's total number of machines has increased by 3, while Ashburton township and Rakaia have decreased by 20 and 1 respectively. Hinds gaming machine numbers have remained the same since 2012.

Table 8-2- Ashburton District venue and machine numbers 2012-2024

Venue name	Society name	Approved prior to 2001	Dec 2012	Dec 2015	Dec 2018	Dec 2021	Dec 2024	Change since 2021
~~Arcadia Restaurant & Bar~~	~~Four Winds Foundation Ltd~~	~~No~~	~~0~~	~~7~~	~~7~~	~~7~~	~~0~~	**-7**
Ashburton Club & MSA	Ashburton Club & MSA	Yes	18	18	18	18	18	-
Ashburton RSA	Ashburton Returned Services Assn. Inc.	Yes	18	18	14	14	**14**	-
Blue Pub	NZ Community Trust	Yes	9	8	8	8	12	**+4**
Devon Tavern	The Lion Foundation (2008)	Yes	18	18	18	18	18	-
Hinds Tavern	The Lion Foundation (2008)	Yes	3	3	3	3	3	0
Hotel Ashburton	The Lion Foundation (2008)	Yes	18	18	18	18	18	-
Phat Duck Ashburton (previously Robbie's Bar & Bistro)	Air Rescue Services Limited	No	5	5	7	7	7	-
Railway Tavern Rakaia	The Lion Foundation (2008)	Yes	6	6	7	7	**7**	-
~~Revival Sports Bar~~	~~The Lion Foundation~~	~~No~~	~~5~~	~~0~~	~~0~~	~~0~~		~~-~~
South Rakaia Hotel	Trust Aoraki Limited	Yes	7	7	7	7	7	-
The Brown Pub	NZ Community Trust	Yes	9	9	9	9	9	-
~~The Shed (Sommerset Tavern)~~	~~The Lion Foundation~~	~~Yes~~	~~18~~	~~0~~	~~0~~	~~0~~		~~-~~
Tinwald Tavern	The Lion Foundation (2008)	Yes	18	18	18	18	18	-
TOTAL gaming venues – Ashburton District			13	12	12	12	11	**-1**
TOTAL gaming venues – New Zealand			1,381	1,238	1,117	1,050	977	**-73**
TOTAL gaming machines – Ashburton District			152	135	134	134	131	**-3**
TOTAL gaming machines – New Zealand			17,670	16,393	15,257	14,743	13,985	**-758**

Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2025d).

9. Economic effects of gaming machine gambling in Ashburton District

9.1. Total expenditure and loss

'Expenditure,' also known as 'net proceeds', 'revenue', or 'losses', refers to the amount put into machines (turnover) which is not returned through prizes. The total expenditure for the district for the year ending December 2024 was $6,884,141.81 or around $18,912 per day. This is an increase of 6.6% on the level of expenditure compared to the previous report (2020/21).

Table 9-1 - Total gaming machine expenditure in Ashburton District 2013/14 -2023/24 (nominal population adjusted)[15]

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total expenditure (class 4)	$5.831m	$6.126m	$5.963m	$5.933m	$6.165m	$6.042m	$5.510m	$6.425m	$6.971m	$7.341m	$6.884m
Expenditure per head of total population*	$223.95	$231.09	$220.28	$216.17	$223.07	$218.06	$195.53	$227.68	$246.61	$252.28	$233.04
Average expenditure per week per head of population	$4.31	$4.44	$4.24	$4.16	$4.29	$4.19	$3.76	$4.38	$4.74	$4.85	$4.48

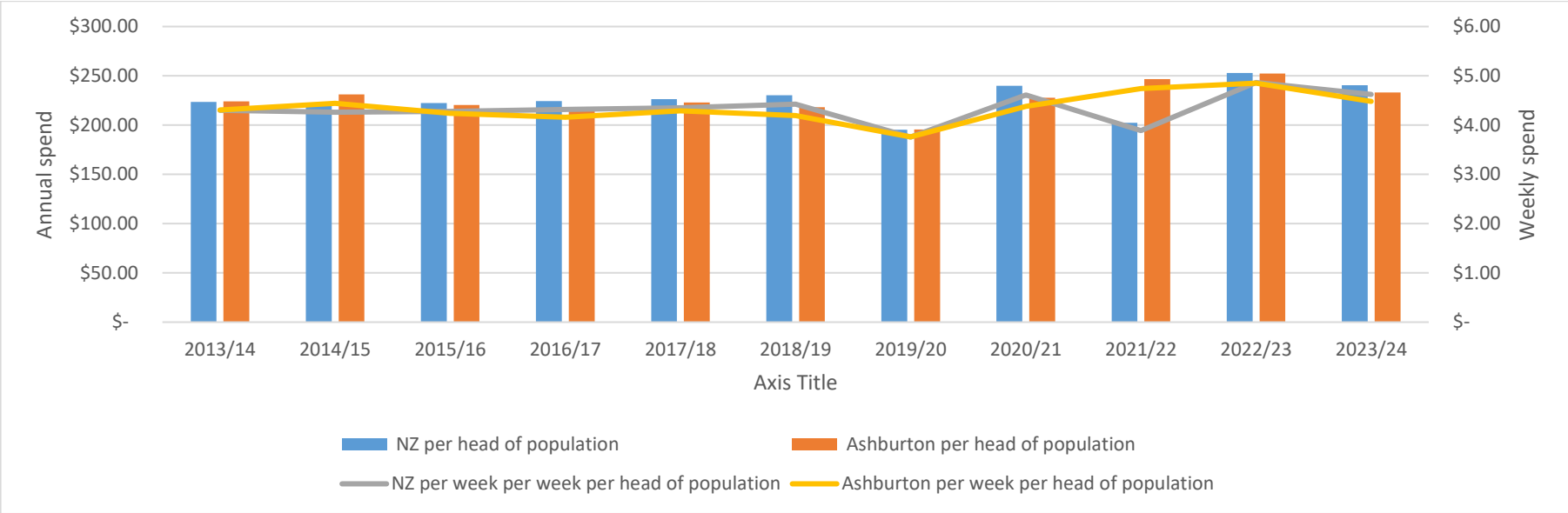
Source - Department of Internal Affairs (2025b)

As shown in table 9-1, Ashburton District has a slightly lower per head of population spend compared to New Zealand. However, in the year 2021/22 the per head spend in Ashburton was $44.33 more than the New Zealand per head spend, this results in a higher per week spend in the Ashburton District in the same year.

[15] *Population adjusted for Ashburton District population over the age 15. Note, the legal gambling age in New Zealand is 18 year and over but subnational data for individual ages is not available – this information has been populated using age composition data from Informetrics NZ.*

There has been minimal change in Ashburton districts per head spend in the last 10 year, averaging around $225 a year since 2014. Since the last report in 2022, there has been some fluctuations in our district's per head spend, increasing from $227.68 in 2020/21 to $252.28 in 2022/23, returning to $233.04 for the previous year end December 2024.

Figure 9-1 - Gaming Machine annual expenditure per head and per head per week for Ashburton District compared to New Zealand (population adjusted)



*Source - Department of Internal Affairs (2025b) *Statistics New Zealand Total Population Estimates*

Ashburton District ranks 33rd of 63 territorial authorities in terms of gross machine proceeds (the money left after taking out prizes) for the March 2025 quarter (as shown in table 4-3 on page 18). The monetary loss per head of population to pokie machines in the Ashburton District is $69.95 for the March 2025 quarter.

9.2. Distribution of proceeds and return to the community

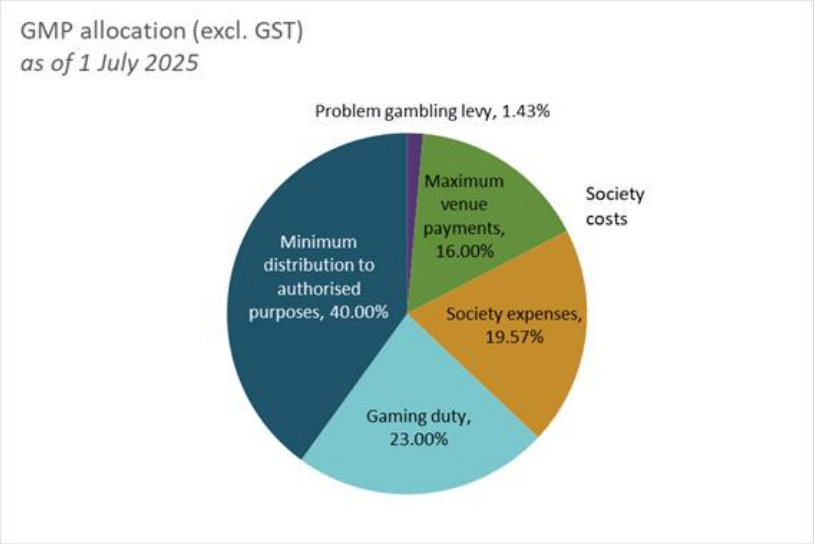
Regulations prescribe how proceeds may be applied. Societies that operate gaming machines fall into two categories:

1. Clubs – operating gaming machines in their own premises such as chartered clubs, sports clubs, or Returned Services Associations (RSAs)
2. Public societies – operating gaming machines in commercial venues such as hospitality businesses including pubs, hotels and restaurants.

Clubs are permitted to use all profits (following deductions for tax and the gambling levy) to benefit the Club provided those purposes are recognised as authorised purposes (including mortgage repayments, club operating costs, members' welfare, courtesy vehicles and charitable activities).

As shown by Figure 9-2, corporate societies are legally required to return a minimum of 40% of the proceeds from non-casino gaming machines to the community in the form of grants. The remainder of the gross proceeds go to the government in taxes and duties, operating costs which are incurred by the corporate society operating the machines. Corporate societies have an obligation to minimise costs and return the maximum amount possible to the community and are often able to distribute more than 40%.

Figure 9-2 - Allocation of Class 4 gaming machine gross proceeds



Source: Department of Internal Affairs, personal communication (2025).

In the Ashburton District, the distribution of available grant funding generated from machines operated by The Lions Foundation continues to be locally controlled. The Braided Rivers Community Trust (BRCT) administer grant funding for the district on behalf of The Lions Foundation. Decisions on grant funding applications are made by the Grants

Distribution Committee consisting of the six elected Ashburton BRCT Board members, the Mayor of Ashburton District, and two independent community representatives.

Any proceeds generated by other gaming societies operating in the district do not have to be returned to the Ashburton District.

10. Grants to Ashburton District from Gaming Proceeds

According to the Department of Internal Affairs data, the total grants to the Ashburton District for the 2023 calendar year was $1.565m[16].

The table below outlines the grants received by the Ashburton District community for the 2023 year. The table does not include profits from machines that are registered to Ashburton Club & MSA and Ashburton Returned Services Association Inc., as those profits go directly to the organisations.

Table 10-1 - Gaming Machine Trust Grants to Ashburton District 2023

Gaming Machine Trust Grants to Ashburton District	
Trust	**Amount granted**
The Lion Foundation	$1,288,479
One Foundation	$115,511
Air Rescue Services	$70,615
New Zealand Community Trust	$63,241
Aotearoa Gaming Trust	$20,000
Mainland Foundation	$5,000
Redwood Trust Incorporated	$2,500

Source – Te Tari Taiwhenua. (n.d.)

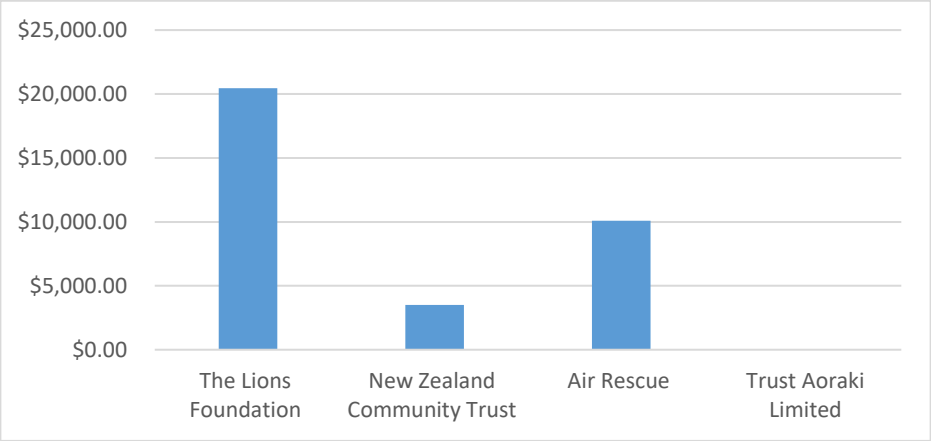
The Lion Foundation generated $36.5m in grants in 2023, the Ashburton District received 3.53% of the total grant funding available from this trust. It is worth noting that One Foundation does not currently operate any machines within the district but returned the second highest value to the community in 2023, representing 0.8% of their GMP. Aotearoa Gaming Trust, Mainland Foundation and Redwood Trust Incorporated also do not operate any machines within the Ashburton District but collectively returned $27,500 to the Ashburton Community in grant funding.

[16] Note - there is room for error with this figure due to grants that may have been missed, or grants which do not specify the region to which they are granted or are granted to national organisations.

Trust Aoraki Limited who operate nine machines in the district did not feature in statistics available from DIA. According to their website, for the 2023/24 financial year, Trust Aoraki distributed $1.64m into the local communities of Timaru, Temeka, Kurow, Twizel, Omarama and Fairlie indicating that no grants were return to the Ashburton District from the machines operated.

In considering the distribution of proceeds, the Lion Foundation will always be the largest monetary contributor as they operate 63 machines across five venues in the district. On a per machine basis, the Lion Foundation returned $20,452 from every machine they operate in the district, compared to Air Rescue Trust who returned $10,087 per machine, NZCT who returned $3,513 and Aoraki Trust Limited who did not return any money per machine as indicated in figure 10-1.

Figure 10-1 – Grant return per machine by each corporate society operating in the Ashburton District.



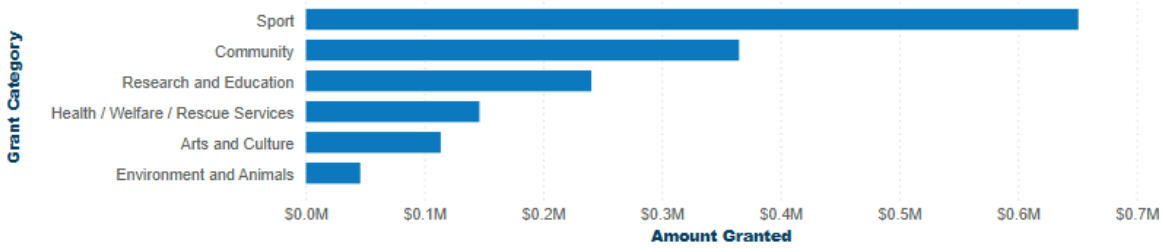
Source – Te Tari Taiwhenua. (n.d.)

In 2023, sports organisations received the largest proportion of grant funding totalling $650,897, equalling 41% of the total grants returned to the community. Notable recipients include Rakaia Rugby who received $213,500, Tinwald Family Sport and Recreation Association who received $70,000 and Tennis Mid Canterbury who received $40,000.

Community organisations made up the second largest proportion of grant allocations, collectively receiving $365,097 or 23% of the total grants returned to the district. This included Staveley Campsite Committee who received $93,000 and Community House Mid Canterbury who received $61,513.

Figure 10-2 demonstrates how the $1.5m of grants returned to the Ashburton District was allocated.

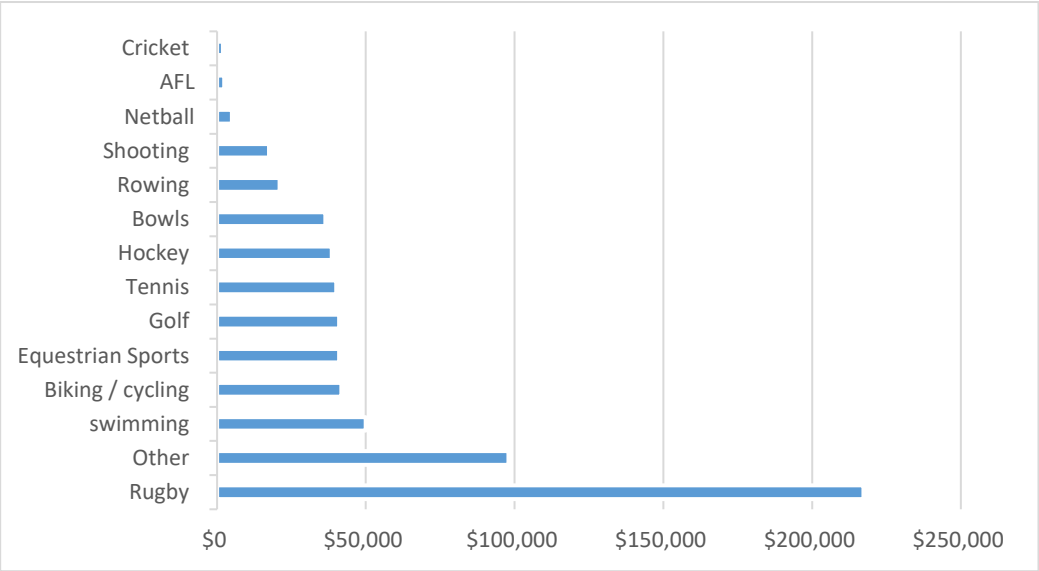
Figure 10-2 – Class 4 Grants to Ashburton District sorted by category – 2023



Source – Te Tari Taiwhenua. (n.d.)

Within the sports organisations, rugby groups received 33% of the funding for this category. Other sports organisations such as the Tinwald Family Sport and Recreation Association made up the "other" category in figure 10-3, totalling $97,959. Cricket groups received the least amount of grant funding, receiving $2,000 in 2023.

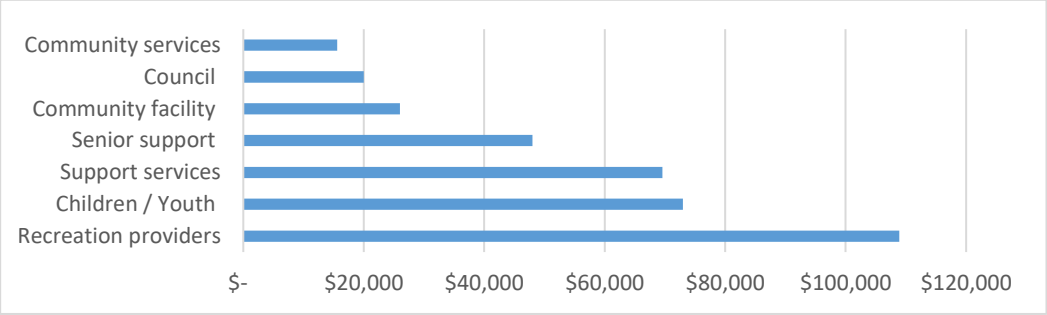
Figure 10-3 – Distribution of Grant Funding Within the "Sports" Category– 2023



Source – Te Tari Taiwhenua. (n.d.)

Community organisations collectively received $365,097 in 2023 as shown in Figure 10-4, with the largest contribution being received by recreation providers such as the Staveley Campsite Committee who received 26% of the total grant funding received by community groups.

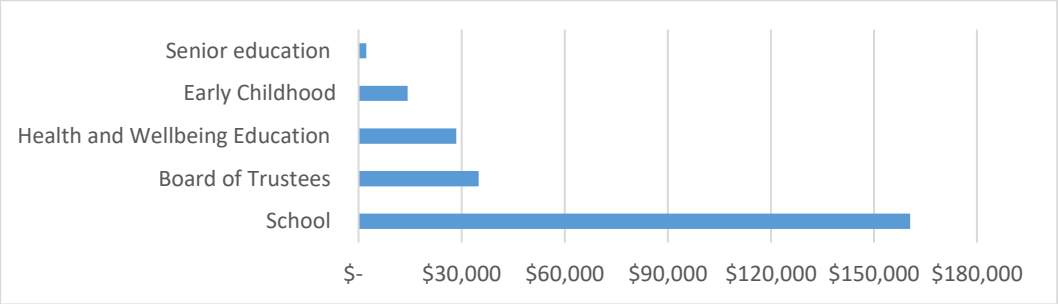
Figure 10-4 – Distribution of Grant Funding Within the "Community" Category– 2023



Source – Te Tari Taiwhenua. (n.d.)

Education and research providers collectively received $240,652 in grant funding, most of which was received by schools in the district, as shown in figure 10-5.

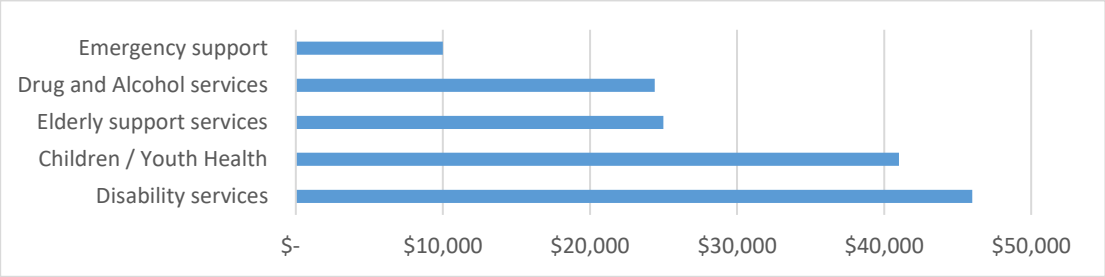
Figure 10-5 – Distribution of Grant Funding Within the "Education and Research" Category– 2023



Source – Te Tari Taiwhenua. (n.d.)

$146,399 was granted to health, welfare and emergency services, with disability services receiving 31% of that funding. As shown in figure 10-6, Children and Youth services such as Plunket and Youthline received $41,000 collectively.

Figure 10-6 – Distribution of Grant Funding Within the "Health, Welfare and Emergency" Category– 2023



Source – Te Tari Taiwhenua. (n.d.)

Within the Arts and Culture category, cultural groups received 70% of the $113,800 allocated to this category. The remaining $44,000 was granted to arts organisations.

The Ashburton A&P Association received the majority of grant funding allocated to the Environment and Animals category, receiving $40,000 in 2023.

Overall, sixty-five community organisations received grant funding in the Ashburton District for the 2023 year.

11. Gambling Harm and Problem Gambling in Ashburton District

11.1. High Deprivation areas in the Ashburton District

As of 2023, The Ashburton District Council had an average socioeconomic deprivation score of 5.1 indicating medium level deprivation. Deprivation scores range from 1 (least deprived) in Ashburton North to 6 in Allenton South (moderate deprivation) to 8 in Hampstead (high deprivation).

Table 11-1 shows where the 11 current venues are placed relative to the deprivation score of the area. Currently, 5 of the 11 venues are located in areas with a deprivation score higher than 7 meaning 47% of the machines in the district are located in higher deprivation areas, with 32 machines located in the highest deprivation areas in the district.

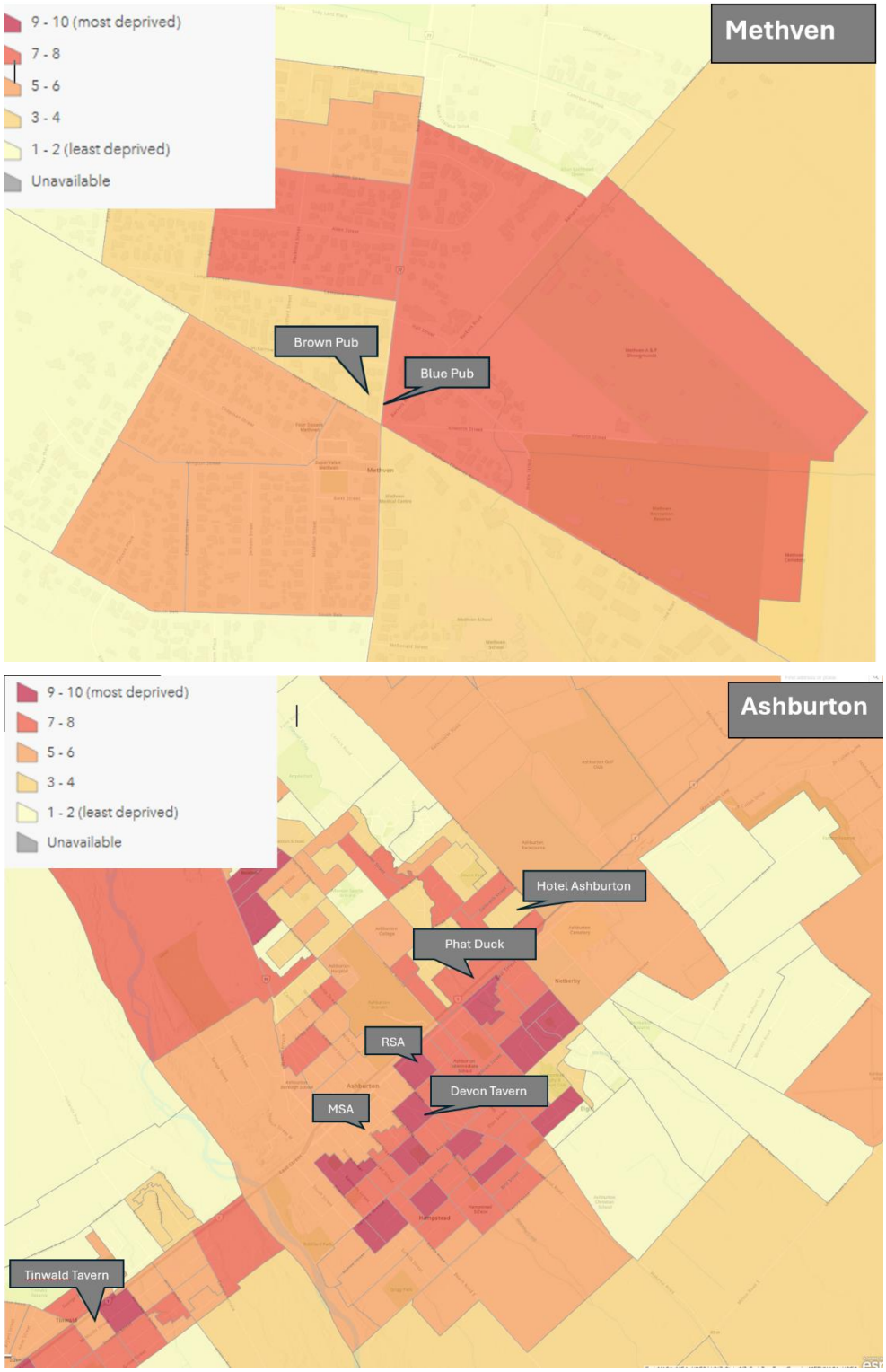
Table 11-1 - Number of machines by area (2024) and deprivation score (2023)

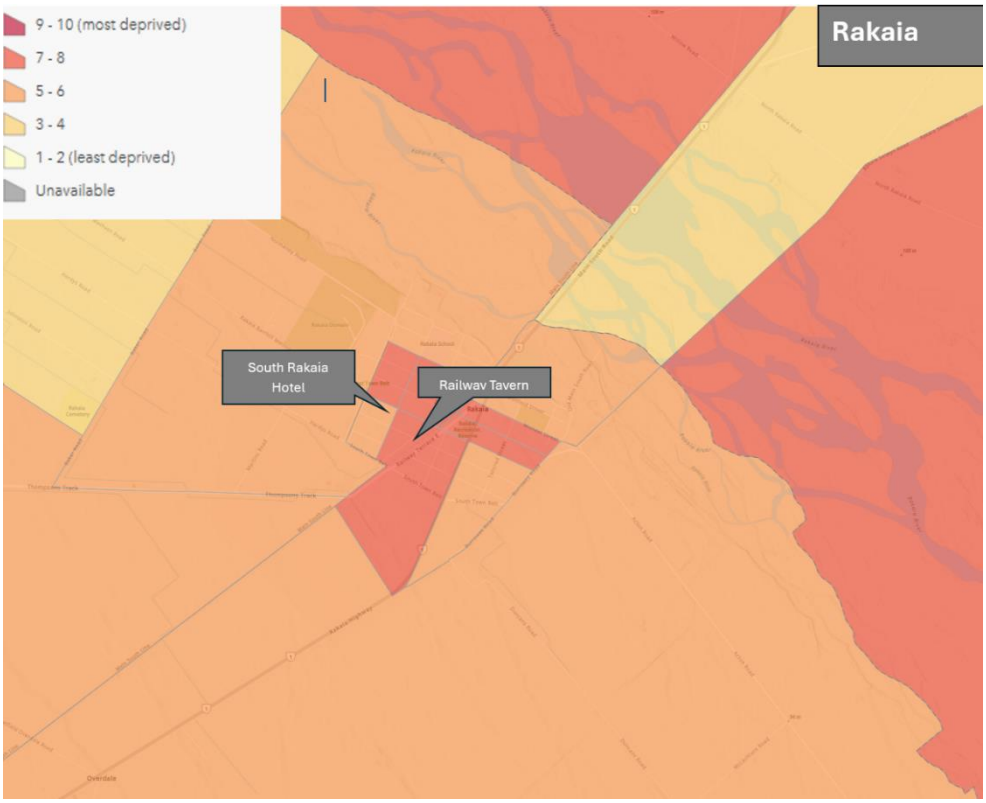
Venue	2024 Number of machines	Area (SA2)	2023 Deprivation score
Ashburton Club & MSA	18	Ashburton Central	**6**
Devon Tavern	18	Ashburton East	**9**
Phat Duck Ashburton	7	Allenton East	**8**
Hotel Ashburton	18	Allenton East	**3**
Hinds Tavern	3	Ealing-Lowcliffe	**7**
The Blue Pub, Methven	12	Methven	**7**
The Brown Pub, Methven	9	Methven	**3**
Ashburton RSA	14	Ashburton East	**9**
South Rakaia Hotel	7	Rakaia	**6**
Railway Tavern, Rakaia	7	Rakaia	**8**
Tinwald Tavern	18	Tinwald South	**5**

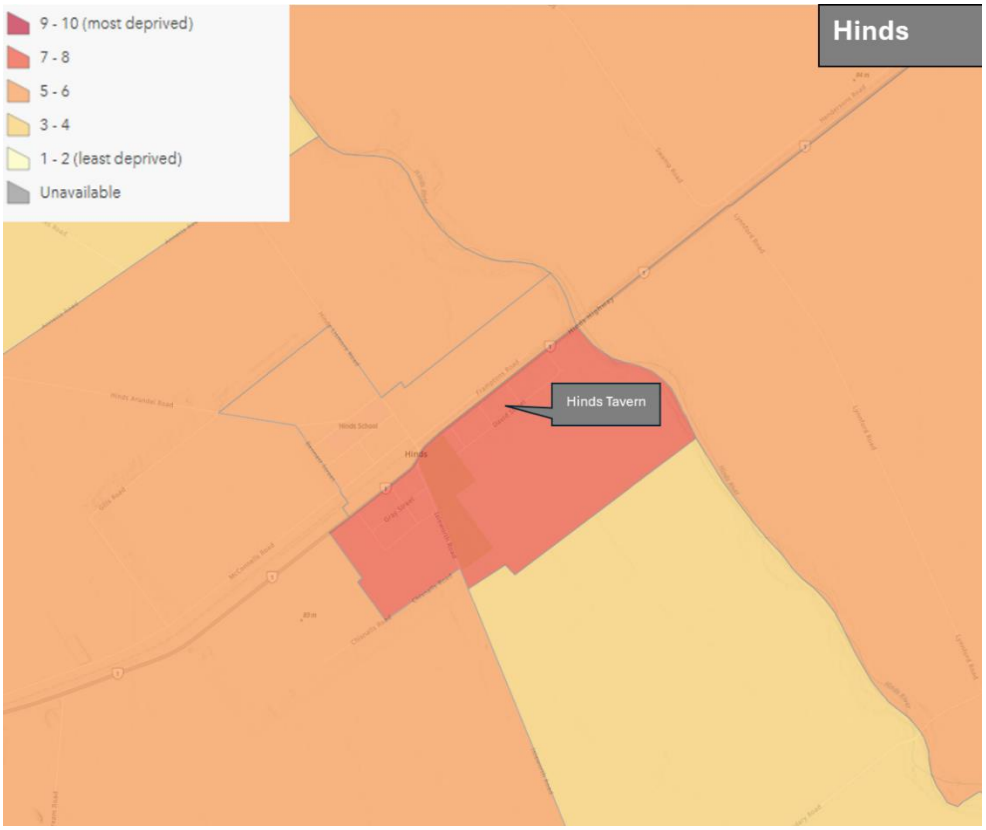
Source: Environmental Health Intelligence New Zealand, n.d

Figure 11-1 provides a view of venue locations relative to the deprivation areas for each town in the district.

Figure 11-1 – Location of venues in towns across the Ashburton District







Source: Environmental Health Intelligence New Zealand, n.d

11.2. Risk Factor Prevalence in Ashburton District

Given the variable risk factors, it is difficult to predict how much of district's population is at risk of developing problem gambling behaviours. Table 11-2 indicates what percentage of the population represents each risk factor. Based on this, it is estimated that approximately 21.5% of the district's population may be at risk of developing problem gambling behaviours.

However, it is important to note that this just an estimate and may vary due to the likelihood that individuals may fall into multiple risk categories. For example, 3% of the district's population fall into the top three risk indicators – males aged 25-45 who live in high deprivation areas.

Table 11-2 – indicators

Indicator	Population Percentage
Aged 25-45 years	30%
Māori and pacific island ethnicity	8.2%
No formal qualification	20%
Unemployed	4.5%
Elementary occupations	15%
Households with more than 5 people	10%
Household income of $37,000 - $56,000	25%
Male	50.9%
Disability	24%

Source: Stats NZ

11.3. Problem gambling services

At the time of the last social impact report (2022), there were two main providers of counselling to problem gamblers in Ashburton District, the Problem Gambling Foundation and the Salvation Army Oasis Centre. Both organisations provided services as an outreach from Christchurch and conduct counselling services in Ashburton District on an 'as required' basis.

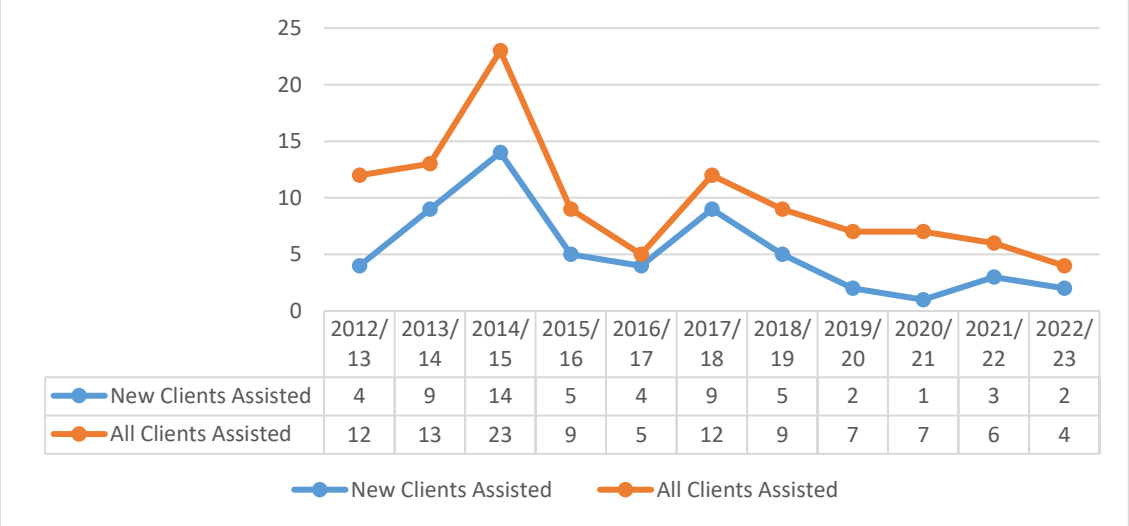
As of January 2024, Salvation Army Oasis Centre no longer provides support services and has now been replaced by targeted serviced including Mapu Maia who provide support to Pasifika and Asian Family Services (AFS), both have offices located in Christchurch.

The Ministry of Health collates gambling service intervention data throughout New Zealand. Figure 11-2 shows the number of new and repeat clients in Ashburton District for the last 10 years.

It is important to note that the total number of clients excludes brief interventions. These interventions are often administered at large group events and fairs where people

affected by gambling harm are likely to be in attendance. Because of the nature of these interventions, the numbers can fluctuate. Therefore, excluding brief interventions from the data set provides a more accurate depiction of the change in the number of clients.

Figure 11-2 - Number of clients (excluding brief interventions) in Ashburton District 2012/13 – 2022/23



	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
New Clients Assisted	4	9	14	5	4	9	5	2	1	3	2
All Clients Assisted	12	13	23	9	5	12	9	7	7	6	4

Source - Ministry of Health (2024) (excluding brief intervention type).

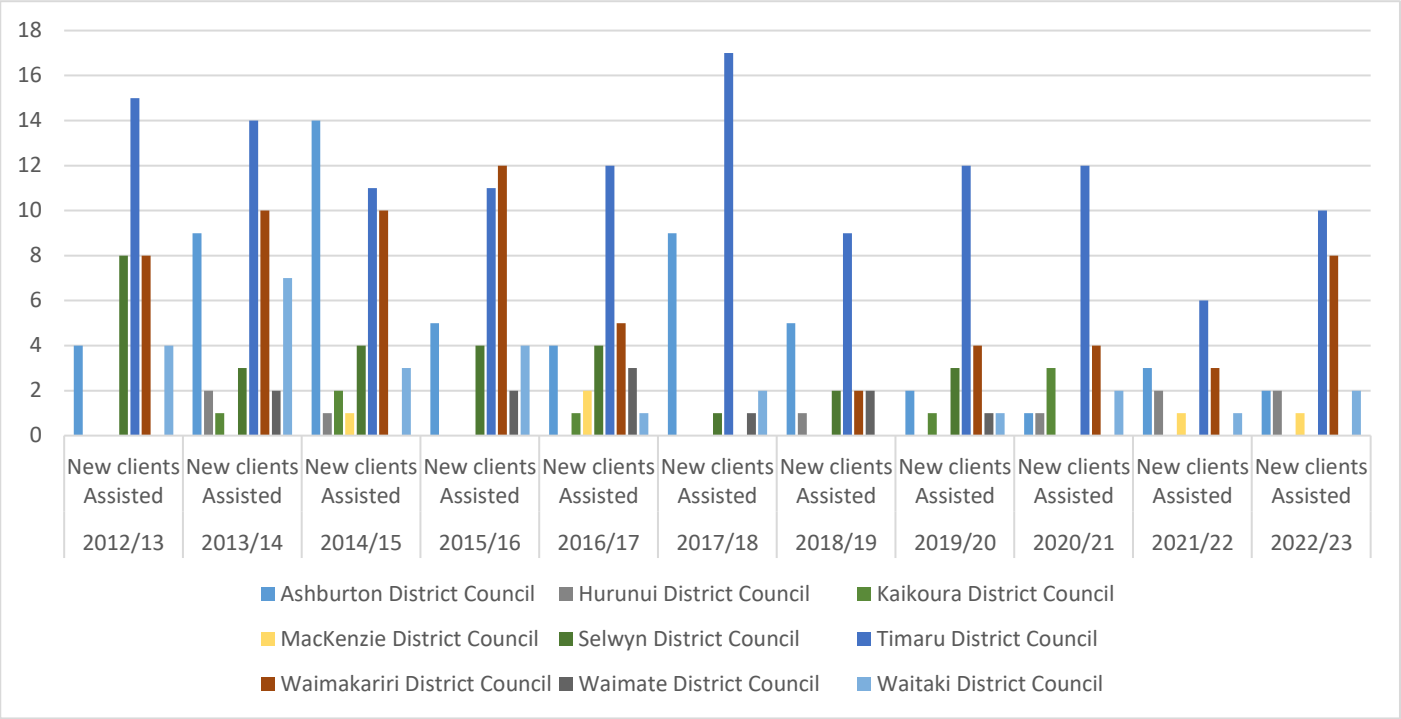
The number of new clients presenting for intervention in the Ashburton District has remained stable over the last 5 years, with only two new clients presenting in the 2022/23 year.

Feedback received by the Problem Gambling Foundation (n.d) indicates that intervention data doesn't accurately measure the prevalence of gambling harm, citing that the Ministry of Health's need assessment and outcomes monitoring reports show that only 16% of potential clients for gambling support services (that is, people who reported harm results in a moderate to high PGSI score) actually access or present at these services.

Comparatively, the number of people seeking assistance for gambling problems in Ashburton District is higher than the national figures. As of 2023, Ashburton District had 1.1 clients per 10,000 people in the district compared to 0.84 clients per 10,000 people nationally. As a percentage, Ashburton District accounts for 0.9% of the total number who accessed gambling intervention services in 2022/23.

Compared to other districts in the Canterbury region Ashburton has lower client intervention rates. As show in Figure 11-3, Timaru and Waimakariri have the highest intervention rates in the region. For the 2022/23-year, Ashburton District had the same number of presentations as Hurunui and Waitaki but more than Kaikoura, Selwyn and Waimate districts.

Figure 11-3 – Number of new clients for each district from 2012/13 to 2022/23



Source - Ministry of Health (2024) (excluding brief intervention type).

12. Impact of Ashburton District Council's Gambling Venue Policy

12.1 Ashburton District Council's Gambling Venue Policy

Ashburton District Council's Gambling Venue Policy has been in place since 2004 and has remained unchanged since 2012. The policy has the following provisions:

Where Racing Board venues may be established:

TAB gambling venues may be established in Ashburton District subject to:

- Meeting application and fee requirements set by the Council from time to time and by the relevant legislation administered by the Department of Internal Affairs;
- The venue being controlled by TAB New Zealand or a venue owned or leased, and operated by TAB New Zealand for the purposes of race and sports betting
- The venue being located within a Business Zone of the Ashburton District Plan or otherwise permitted by way of resource consent;
- All necessary resource consent(s) having been granted and complied with;

- The venue not being one where the primary activity of the venue is associated with family or children's activities and is not on a site listed as a “designated site” within Appendix A.1 of the Ashburton District Plan.

Where Class 4 gambling venues may be established:

- Meeting application and fee requirements set by the Council from time to time and by the relevant legislation administered by the Department of Internal Affairs;
- The primary activity of the venue being for the sale of liquor or for liquor and food, and the location of gaming machines within the venue being in an area where under 18-year-olds do not have free access to; or the venue being a TAB New Zealand venue;
- The venue being located within a Business Zone of the Ashburton District Plan or otherwise permitted by way of resource consent;
- All necessary resource consent(s) having been granted and complied with;
- The venue not being one where the primary activity of the venue is associated with family or children's activities and is not on a site listed as a “designated site” within Appendix A.1 of the Ashburton District Plan.

Numbers of gaming machines to be allowed:

- New venues shall be permitted a maximum of 5 gaming machines.
- Existing venues, with licences issued before 17 October 2001, operating 9 or more gaming machines on 22 September 2003, shall be permitted to increase the number of machines operated at the venue to a maximum of 18 machines.
- Existing venues with licenses issued after 17 October 2001 and operating 7 or less gaming machines on 22 September 2003, shall be permitted a maximum number of 7 machines.
- No venue shall operate more than 18 gaming machines.

Transfer of existing Class 4 gambling venue conditions:

- Council’s policy allows the transfer of existing class 4 gambling venue conditions provided that the Waikiwi case law criteria is met, as at the time the policy was created, this was not considered a ‘relocation’ for the purposes of the Act.
- This criterion is that:
    - The new building will be in a site that is very close to the existing site;
    - The class 4 venue’s name will be the same;
    - The ownership and management of the venue will be the same; and
    - For all intents and purposes, the patrons and public will regard the venue as being the same venue, even though its physical location will change in a relatively minor way.

13. Stakeholders Consulted

The following stakeholders were invited to participate in a stakeholder survey from 14 May – 16 June 2025. The survey focussed on the following areas of interest:

- Effectiveness of the current policy in achieving its objectives.
- Feedback on policy inclusions including number of venues, machines and relocation policy.
- Negative and positive social impacts of class 4 gambling in the Ashburton District.

Four Winds Foundation Ltd	Arowhenua Whanau Services	He Waka Tapu	Ashburton RSA
New Zealand Community Trust	CAP (Christians against poverty)	Community & Public Health Ashburton	Braided Rivers Community Trust Ashburton
Air Rescue Services	Hakatere Marae Komiti	Presbyterian Support	Ashburton Club & MSA
Pub Charity	The Phat Duck	New Zealand Racing Board	Blue Pub
Youthtown Incorporated	Tinwald Tavern	Oasis Centre	Brown Pub
Trust Aoraki Limited	Armadillos	Pegasus Health	Devon Tavern
Family Mental Health Services	Food and Health New Zealand	Community House Mid Canterbury	Problem Gambling Foundation
The Lion Foundation	Railway Tavern	Hinds Tavern	Hotel Ashburton
Safer Gambling Aotearoa	Salvation Army	Safer Ashburton District	South Rakaia Hotel
	Gaming Machine Association New Zealand	Hospitality Association New Zealand	

13.1 Summary of Stakeholder feedback on current Gambling Venue Policy

Seven survey responses were received from stakeholders, most of whom were either corporate societies or class 4 venue holders. One late submission was received from an intervention service after stakeholder engagement closed. Officers have opted to include the feedback as it helps provide balanced feedback to inform this report. A summary of feedback can be found in appendix 1.

Key findings from the feedback received included:

- **43% of stakeholders indicated the policy is completely effective in achieving the intended objectives, the rest indicated it is somewhat effective**. Stakeholder feedback included:
  - The policy does balance all purposes of the Gambling Act
  - Your current policy is balanced

- Fine the way it is but don't need any more venues
- Adopting a more restrictive policy is unlikely to reduce problem gambling

➢ **71% of stakeholders indicated that Council should continue to consider additional class 4 venues.** Stakeholder feedback included:
    - We would not be opposed to a slightly more restrictive policy - that is a capped policy.
    - This Health NZ data clearly shows there is no correlation between sinking lid policies and a reduction in gambling-related harm.
    - Any reduction in the local gaming machine offering may have unintended consequences, as this may simply lead to a migration of the gambling spend to offshore internet- and mobile-based offerings
    - The Ashburton area has sufficient gaming machines to meet the requirements of those gambling
    - There are sufficient venues already

➢ **57% of stakeholders indicated that Council should allow relocations for existing venues.** Stakeholder feedback included"
    - Council could consider a more flexible relocation clause. Possibly, the relocation provisions of the existing policy could be expanded to specifically include: -
      - relocations out of earthquake prone buildings to more suitable / stronger buildings;
      - relocations to more modern and refurbished buildings;
      - to allow venues to relocate in circumstances where landlords are demanding exorbitant rental fees
    - Venue relocation is a harm minimisation tool. If a venue wishes to relocate out of a high deprivation area to a lower deprivation area, the policy should permit this. There is no good policy reason for taking steps to restrict this option. Restricting the option to relocate simply entrenches venues in high deprivation locations.

➢ **Of the negative impacts derived from class 4 gambling, stakeholders indicated that financial hardship and mental health issues were the two most prevalent in the Ashburton District.**

➢ **Of the positive impacts derived from class 4 gambling, stakeholders indicated that community funding through grants and employment opportunities provided the greatest benefit to the Ashburton District.**

➢ **Two stakeholders provided additional feedback in the form of a written submission with the following additional points:**
    - New Zealand's rate of problem gambling is low by international standards.

- If the policy was to be available for formal consultation, it would be requested that the limit of 5 machines for new venues be replaced with the national limit of 9 machines and a more comprehensive relocation policy be adopted.
- The 2021 TBS advisory report found that gambling in New Zealand had a net positive wellbeing benefit totalling around $1.74b to $2.16b per annum.

➢ **One late submission was received which provided the following feedback:**
- Class 4 gambling (pokies in pubs, clubs and TABs) is the most harmful form of gambling in Aotearoa.
- In 2023, $7.3m was lost to pokies in the Ashburton District, an increase in previous years despite a drop in gaming machine numbers.
- It is estimated that 1 in 5 people in New Zealand will experience harm in their lifetime.
- Reports show that only 16% of potential clients for gambling support services actually access or present at these services.
- Sinking lid policies are one of the most effective policies for reducing pokie spending, resulting in a 13% reduction for districts that have one in place.
- Reports from the Ministry of Health reveal that pokies in the most deprived areas provide over half of the total Class 4 gambling expenditure.

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