



**ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING OF
THE HUME CITY COUNCIL**

TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2017

7.00 PM

HUME GLOBAL LEARNING CENTRE, CRAIGIEBURN

OUR VISION:

Hume City Council will be recognised as a leader in achieving social, environmental and economic outcomes with a common goal of connecting our proud community and celebrating the diversity of Hume.

HUME CITY COUNCIL

**Notice of an
ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING OF THE HUME CITY COUNCIL**
to be held on Tuesday, 14 March 2017
at 7.00 PM
at the Hume Global Learning Centre, Craigieburn

To: a: Council	Cr Drew Jessop Cr Ann Potter Cr Joseph Haweil Cr Jodi Jackson Cr Carly Moore Cr Leigh Johnson Cr Jack Medcraft Cr Naim Kurt Cr Geoff Porter Cr Karen Sherry Cr Jana Taylor	Mayor Deputy Mayor
b: Officers	Mr Domenic Isola Mr Peter Waite Mr Daryl Whitfort Ms Margarita Caddick Mr Michael Sharp Ms Sue Haviland	Chief Executive Officer Director Sustainable Infrastructure and Services Director Corporate Services Director Community Services Acting Director Planning and Development Acting Director Communications, Engagement and Advocacy

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THIS LAND

"I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on Gunung-Willam-Balluk land. The Gunung-Willam-Balluk of the Wurundjeri are the first and original people of this land. I would like to pay my respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other communities who may be here today."

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. PRAYER

Almighty God, we humbly beseech Thee to vouchsafe Thy blessing upon this Council. Direct and prosper its deliberations to the advancement of Thy glory and the true welfare of the people of the Hume City.

Amen

2. APOLOGIES

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Councillors' attention is drawn to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1989 in relation to the disclosure of conflicts of interests. Councillors are required to disclose any conflict of interest immediately before consideration or discussion of the relevant item. Councillors are then required to leave the Chamber during discussion and not vote on the relevant item.

NOTICE OF MEETING

4. INAUGURAL SPEECHES

The Mayor will ask Aitken Ward Councillors if they wish to make an inaugural speech.

5. ASSEMBLIES OF COUNCIL

In accordance with section 80A(2) of the Local Government Act 1989, Council is required to report, as soon as practicable, to an Ordinary Meeting of Council, a record of any assemblies of Councillors held.

There are no records of assemblies to report on this section of the Agenda.

6. CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting of 13 February 2017 and the Ordinary Council (Town Planning) Meeting of 27 February 2017, including Confidential Minutes.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting of 13 February 2017 and the Ordinary Council (Town Planning) Meeting of 27 February 2017, including Confidential Minutes, be confirmed.

7. RECEIPT OF COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL TO BE ADOPTED

7.1 Minutes of Meeting No. 68 of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee held on Wednesday 10 August 2016

COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Minutes of Meeting No. 68 of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee held on Wednesday 10 August 2016.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Minutes of Meeting No. 68 of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee held on Wednesday 10 August 2016 be noted.

7.2 Minutes of Meeting No. 69 of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee held on Wednesday 16 November 2016

COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Minutes of Meeting No. 69 of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee held on Wednesday 16 November 2016.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Minutes of Meeting No. 69 of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee held on Wednesday 16 November 2016 be noted.

8. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

8.1 Residents of the Month - Ms Sue Maric and Mr Gary Murphy
(Nominated by Cr Carly Moore)

9. NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil

10. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

NOTICE OF MEETING

11. OFFICER'S REPORTS

The Mayor will ask the Councillors and gallery at the commencement of this section, which reports they wish to speak to. These reports will then be discussed in the order they appear on the notice paper. Reports not called will be dealt with in a block resolution at the end.

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14. URGENT BUSINESS

15. DELEGATES REPORTS

16. GENERAL BUSINESS

17. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The Meeting may be closed to members of the public to consider confidential matters.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Council close the meeting to the public pursuant to Section 89(2) (sub sections as listed), of the Local Government Act 1989 to consider the following items, which are confidential for the reasons indicated:

Report No.	Title	Reason for Confidential
COHE19	Capital Works Report	(d) contractual matters
COGE119	Assembly of Councillors	(h) any other matter which the Council or special committee considers would prejudice the Council or any person
COGE120	Leasing Report	(d) contractual matters

18. CLOSURE OF MEETING

**DOMENIC ISOLA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

9/03/2017

REPORT NO:	HE053
REPORT TITLE:	Highlands Hotel application for an additional 20 EGMs and Council's Social and Economic Impact Assessment
SOURCE:	Kristine Mueller, Social Policy & Early Years Planner
DIVISION:	Planning and Development
FILE NO:	HCC09/609-02
POLICY:	Responsible Gaming Policy
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	2.1 Foster a community which is active and healthy.
ATTACHMENT:	1. <i>Highlands Hotel Social and Economic Impact Assessment</i>

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

- 1.1 The Highlands Hotel (the Hotel) has lodged an application with the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VCGLR) for an additional 20 electronic gaming machines (EGMs).
- 1.2 The Hotel already has 60 machines and this proposal, if approved, would bring the total number of machines to 80, which represents 33.3% increase of machines at the venue.
- 1.3 In response to the Hotel's application, Council has drafted a Social and Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA), which is required to be submitted to the VCGLR on 4 March 2017 (or following working day, namely 6 March 2017).
- 1.4 The Assessment has determined that the proposed increase of 20 EGMs at the Highlands Hotel would have on balance, a net negative social and economic impact and will be detrimental to the wellbeing of the local (5km radius around the Hotel) and Hume communities.
- 1.5 On 24 February 2017 the VCGLR notified Council of the Public Hearing date as the 29 March 2017 (an additional day will be allocated if required).

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- 2.1 endorses the Highlands Hotel Social and Economic Impact Assessment compiled by Council officers (Attachment 1), which formed part of Council's submission to the VCGLR on 6 March 2017 in relation to the Highlands Hotel application to increase the number of EGMs by 20.**
- 2.2 endorses the conclusion of the SEIA not to support the application for an additional 20 EGMs at the Highlands Hotel on the grounds that their installation is expected to generate a net negative social and economic impact on the local and Hume communities.**
- 2.3 advises the VCGLR that it will not appear at the scheduled Public Hearing on 29/30 March 2017.**

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS:

- 3.1 In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* a function of Council is to endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard for the long-term cumulative health and wellbeing effect of its decisions.
- 3.2 In accordance with the *Gambling Regulation Act 2003*, Council can make a SEIA on gaming applications that fall within its municipal boundaries. Council is not a decision maker in this process, however does have the right to put forward a written submission presenting the results of the Assessment including the anticipated net positive or negative impacts resulting from the gaming application.

REPORT NO: HE053 (cont.)

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The preparation of the SEIA was undertaken internally by Council officers. The cost of legal representation at the Public Hearing and the preparation of Witness Statements is estimated to be \$18,300.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

This matter does not have any direct environmental sustainability implications.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

This matter does not have any direct climate change adaptation considerations.

7. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION:

Hume City Council's *Social Justice Charter 2014* recognises that every citizen has the right to a quality of life that allows them to freely realise their potential. The Charter seeks to advance a fair and just society and to promote respect for every citizen, encourage community participation, strengthen community wellbeing and reduce the cause of disadvantage.

8. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

8.1 Council's *Responsible Gaming Policy* requires Applicants to conduct a community attitudinal survey which seeks the impacts on the wellbeing of the community as a consequence of the application. Council also requires the Applicant to list each aspect of the proposal and ask the respondent's attitude to each.

8.2 The Applicant did not undertake a community survey in relation to its proposal. The Hotel's application stated:

8.2.1 "the Hotel is in an established gaming venue, being one of 14 in the City of Hume, which indicates that community is accustomed to the presence of gaming establishments within the area" (page 27)

8.2.2 "the Hotel is an existing gaming venue with a heavy involvement in community funding, so whilst difficult to assess on an individual nature, the addition of 20 EGMs is not expected to cause undue community opposition" (page 63).

8.3 According to its *Responsible Gaming Policy*, Council requested the Applicant on 18 January 2017 to undertake a survey pertaining to the relevant aspects in its application. On 3 February 2017, the Applicant confirmed that this would be done and requested the assistance of Council to develop a draft survey, which it did.

8.4 Although the Highlands Hotel is preparing to undertake a community attitude survey, the survey will not be undertaken prior to the completion and submission of Council's Social and Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) to the Commission on 6 March 2017. An extension was requested from the Commission on 6 February 2017 in order to incorporate the community survey findings into Council's submission. Notification of the Commission's refusal was received by Council on 15 February 2017.

8.5 In 2013, Council surveyed the general Hume community in relation to their attitudes to gambling. Relevant responses have been incorporated into Council's submission.

8.6 Council officers have also been in contact with local service providers in relation to the Hotel's application, and offered them an opportunity to provide a "Letter of Concern" to Council in order that they can be incorporated into Council's submission. Organisations that have been approached are:

- (a) Anglicare
- (b) Brotherhood of St Laurence
- (c) Craigieburn Connections
- (d) Chrysalis (Dare to Connect)
- (e) Dianella Community Health
- (f) Lentara Uniting Care.

REPORT NO: HE053 (cont.)

9. DISCUSSION:

9.1 Application at a glance:

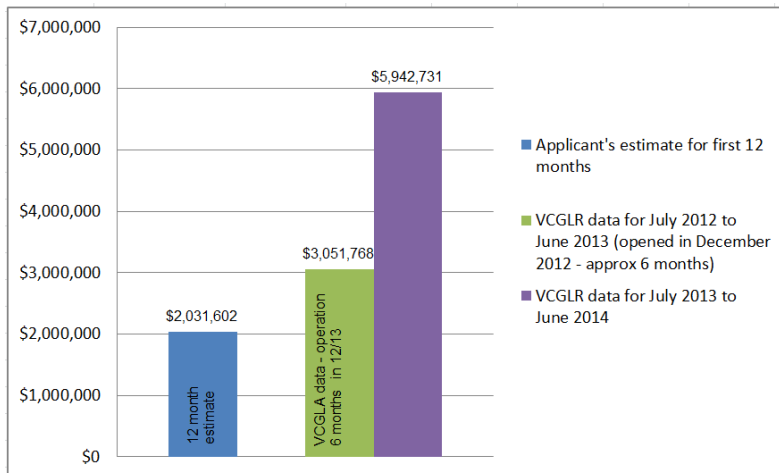
- 9.1.1 The Hotel is located on the corner of Aitken and Grand Boulevards, Craigieburn, opposite the Highlands Shopping precinct. The Hotel lodged an application with the VCGLR to increase the number of EGMs from 60 to 80 EGMs at the Hotel.
- 9.1.2 The Applicant seeks the approval for an additional 20 EGMS to be placed in the Highland Hotel. “The applicant has confirmed that the main advantage of the new machines would be the additional choice and entertainment options available to responsible patrons of the gaming room and to meet current and future demand as a result of the rapidly increasing local population within the venue’s catchment area” (page 23 of application).
- 9.1.3 The Hotel plans to extend the gaming room to accommodate the additional EGMs, which will also include the removal of the outdoor terrace and improve the Hotel façade. The estimated cost of the works is \$975,000. Other spendings on contracts, complimentary expenditures and the like from the proposal were unable to be determined by the Applicant.
- 9.1.4 The Hotel suggests that the proposal will lead to an average of two equivalent full-time jobs.
- 9.1.5 The Applicant estimates that in the first 12 months, the additional net gaming expenditure from these 20 machines will generate approximately an additional \$1.469m to \$1.687m at the Hotel and will increase the new gaming expenditure by \$1.028m to \$1.181m in the municipality. The application states that there will be a 30% transfer of gaming expenditure from other existing venues in Hume City, largely from the Craigieburn Sporting Club (at a rate of 25% of that 30%).
- 9.1.6 The Applicant has pledged a once-off \$100,000 cash donation to Council, to assist with local recreational developments being undertaken by Hume City Council upon approval of the application of the additional EGMs.

9.2 Impacts of the application on local and Hume communities:

- 9.2.1 The proposal is said to generate 2 EFT positions at the Hotel, however the nature of the positons are not outlined and could be a number of causal hours in the gaming room, which lessens its slight positive benefit.
- 9.2.2 The Hotel has indicated that it has a strong responsible gaming practice at the Hotel. Responsible management of gaming activities are legislated and are required to be undertaken by the Hotel, thus being of a more neutral impact on the Hume communities.
- 9.2.3 Increase in gaming machines and density, deemed to be a negative impact:
 - (a) The additional 20 EGMs at the Hotel will increase the number of machines in Hume to 833 EGMs and to a density of 5.7EGMs per 1,000 adults, which is higher than the average for metropolitan Melbourne (5.3) and for Victoria (5.6). It will also increase the gaming density in the local neighbourhood (5km radius around the Hotel) from 4.5 to 5.2. If one considers the impact on northern Craigieburn, this increases from 6.0 to 6.9 EGMs/1,000 adults.
- 9.2.4 Increase in gaming expenditure, deemed to be a negative impact:
 - (a) It is highly probable that the net gaming expenditure is significantly underestimated by the Applicant, given the previous application of the Hotel in 2010 underestimated its first 12 month level of revenue. Its six

REPORT NO: HE053 (cont.)

month gaming revenue being 50% more than what was estimated for the first 12 months, as shown in the graph below:



- (b) It is estimated that the gaming expenditure from the additional 20 machines will be greater than the average of \$1,578,068 as estimated by the Applicant. It will be more than likely be in the vicinity of \$2.721million, if the current loss rate per machine per year is used, which is \$136,041.18 per machine per year. This will equal more losses to gaming for local Craigieburn and Hume communities (majority of Hotel patrons come from postcode 3064).
- (c) The Applicant suggests that there will be a transference rate of 30% of gaming revenue from other venues (majority from Craigieburn Sporting Club). Here too it is probable that this figure is underestimated. The Applicant states that there is a growing number of patrons at the Hotel's gaming lounge and that the current utilization rate of the gaming machines is not at capacity (with only 1.7% of total trading hours surveyed over two weeks having a 70% or above utilization rate). It is therefore probable that the new gaming revenue generated at the Hotel will be greater than estimated by the Applicant.
- (d) The additional machines will exacerbate the local neighbourhood's and Hume's already higher than metropolitan Melbourne and State average of loss per adult:

	Local Neighbourhood 5km radius around the Hotel	Hume	metropolitan Melbourne	Victoria
Loss per adult	\$611 \$821 for northern Craigieburn	\$720	\$576	\$553

9.2.5 Increase in access to gaming opportunities, deemed to be a negative impact:

- (a) The Applicant has indicated that there are currently 2,450 patrons frequenting the gaming room per week. After the proposal, this is estimated to increase by between 400-500 patrons per week (approximately increase to 2,900 patrons per week). This will equate to more local residents participating in gaming opportunities at the Hotel. Here too, it is deemed that this increase will be underestimated, when it is compared to the number of gaming patrons frequenting a similar 80 machine hotel in Hume, which has approximately 6,760 patrons per week.

REPORT NO: HE053 (cont.)

- (b) The Hotel forms part of the Highlands Hotel Shopping precinct, making the machines very convenient and accessible to community members going about their day-to-day business (only have to cross one pedestrian crossing to reach the Hotel).
- (c) As part of its community benefit, the Hotel operates a courtesy bus, which picks up and drops off residents to the Hotel (of which 50% of the hours are outside of general business hours – thus Hotel orientated).
- 9.2.6 Located in disadvantaged and vulnerable communities, deemed to be a negative impact:
- (a) The Applicant included the following statement in its assessment:
- (i) *“The catchment of the Hotel would take in part of the LGA of Whittlesea, which ranks in the 7th Decile. This suggests that the area that would represent the catchment area for the Hotel are above average on the SIEFA scale of relative disadvantage and advantage. It is also noted that the LGA is likely to improve over time with strong population growth forecasts to continue in the Craigieburn area”* (page 30).
- (ii) *“In summary, in terms of social and economic profile of the City of Hume, the area shows very few signs of disadvantage”*(page 57).
- (b) Council’s SEIA argues that the communities in Hume and Craigieburn experience higher than average levels of disadvantage and are vulnerable to problems associated with gaming, reasons being:
- (i) The SEIFA index for relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage for Hume (950.3) and Craigieburn (980) indicate that they are more disadvantaged than the metropolitan (1021.1) and State (1006.7) levels.
- (ii) Other reports and indexes highlight Hume’s and Craigieburn’s levels of disadvantage and social and economic vulnerabilities, such as the Jesuit Social Services report *Dropping off the Edge*, which indicated that many suburbs (postcodes) in Hume have been showing consistent levels of disadvantage since reporting began in 1999.
- (iii) The Applicant has indicated that there are 150 individuals listed on their self-exclusion programs (equalling approximately 6% of their current number of weekly gaming patrons). It is more than likely that the additional machines and additional gaming patrons at the Hotel will increase the number of individuals that have problems with gaming and some will volunteer to self-exclude.
- (iv) The analysis of the demographic information of the local neighbourhood indicates that there are some close correlations between community profiles and those of problem gamblers. Hence, there may be a higher than average propensity for local residents to develop problems with gambling. Such profiles include:
- Younger profile – according to research younger persons, especially males, can be at risk of problem gaming due to risk taking behaviours. The Local neighbourhood demonstrates a younger profile in comparison to Hume and metropolitan Melbourne.

REPORT NO: HE053 (cont.)

- Cultural diversity – some 52% of residents speak only English at home in the local area compared with 66% in the metro region. Limited language skills can undermine responsible gaming messages at venues (which are normally in printed formats). Some communities may have different beliefs related to luck and chance, which may lead them to gamble more. Stigma and shame may create considerable barriers for some community members in seeking help.
- Indigenous community – the local area shows a higher proportion of residents from an Indigenous background than Hume and metro Melbourne. Research shows that the Indigenous communities experience much higher levels of gaming participation and related harms than non-Indigenous communities.
- Mortgage stress - Craigieburn experiences very high levels of mortgage stress, which exacerbates the financial wellbeing within families and can underpin desires to gambling more in order to “chase a win”.
- Family violence – research shows patterns and prevalence of the co-occurrence of family violence and problem gambling. Hume has the second highest rate of reported family violence in the north-west region in 2015/16.
- Disabilities - It was found that 3.5% of residents between the ages of 25 and 65 years in the 5km radius had a profound or severe disability compared to 2.5% for metropolitan Melbourne. It is evident through research that persons suffering from physical or mental health issues can be vulnerable to problems associated with gaming due to issues of social isolation, dissociative behaviours, distorted perceptions or having the inability to be responsible for their gaming behaviours.
- Occupational vulnerability - A higher percentage of 5km radius residents were employed in lower skilled industries, which traditionally attract lower wages and can be vulnerable to global fluctuations. For instance, 17.2% of the 5km community were employed in the manufacturing field compared to 14% for Hume and 10.9% for metropolitan Melbourne. Moreover, a larger percentage of persons in the 5km radius are employed in positions such as Machinery Operators and Drivers (12% compared to 10.4% and 2.9%) and Labourers (12.4% compared to 11.4% and 4.0%).
- Unemployment – In September 2016, both Craigieburn (7.5%) and Hume (9.2%) demonstrated higher levels of unemployment than the metro region (5.8%). The *Productivity Commission Report on Gambling* (2010) indicated that the magnitude of gambling expenditure relative to the income of the problem gambler is relevant to the harms caused to them and their families.¹ Community members on lower incomes have more to lose if they experience problems with gaming, with monies being taken away from other household costs such as payments towards leisure opportunities, utility and food bills, health and dental costs etc.

¹ Productivity Commission Report on Gambling 2010, p5.31.

REPORT NO: HE053 (cont.)

9.2.7 Community contributions and benefit, deemed to be a neutral impact:

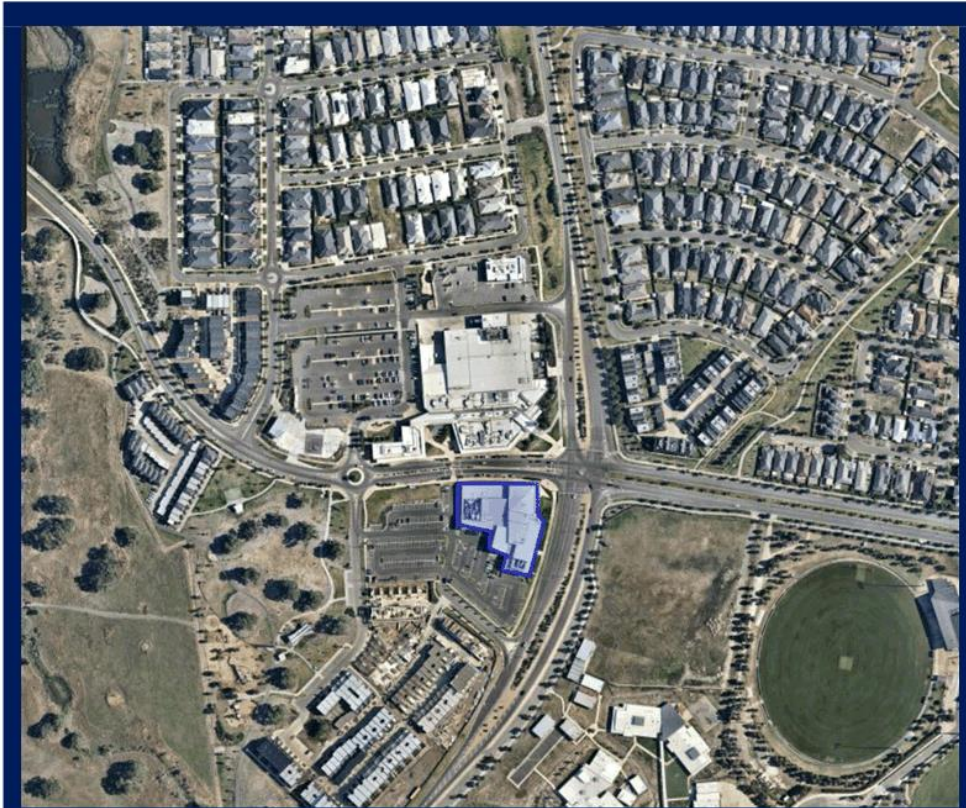
- (a) Numerous references have been made by the Applicant of their financial contributions to the community. This community benefit formed part of the Hotel's previous 2010 application, when they stated that they would donate \$75,000 for the following five years to community. This commitment is to end in 2017 and the current application is silent on the continuation of this contribution to the community in this current application, and thus is taken as such (ie. seen not to be ongoing).
- (b) Although the application has made reference to conversation with Council pertaining to the donation of \$100,000 towards local recreation facility, the Hotel by no means linked the \$100,000 conversation to its gaming application. At the writing of this SEIA, Council had not formed a view on the offer of the \$100,000, and thus should not form part of this application.

10. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL:

- 10.1 Upon consideration of all the positive, neutral and negative impacts from the Hotel's gaming proposal, the benefits do not outweigh the negatives. In summary:
- 10.1.1 there is an arguable small benefit (slight to neutral) found from the 2 EFT and the responsible gaming management practiced at the Hotel;
 - 10.1.2 the infrastructure investment and no community contributions are seen to be neutral; and
 - 10.1.3 negative impacts from the proposal are generated from the increase in machines, increase in gaming expenditure, increase in gaming density, increased convenient accessibility of machines, and an increase of machines in a socially and economically vulnerable community, where there is a higher propensity for problems with gambling.
- 10.2 The Assessment has determined that the proposed increase of 20 EGMs at the Highlands Hotel would have on balance, a net negative social and economic impact and will be detrimental to the wellbeing of the local (5km radius around the Hotel) and Hume communities.

11. CONCLUSION:

- 11.1 The VCGLR submission process requires Council to assess the costs and benefits arising from the Highlands Hotel application and thereby allow for an overall assessment of the net community impact.
- 11.2 After consideration of the positive, neutral and negative impacts that may result from the application, it is deemed that the small benefits are strongly outweighed by the negative impacts.
- 11.3 Thus the proposed increase of 20 EGMs at the Highlands Hotel will have on balance, a net negative social and economic impact on the local and Hume communities and thus should not be supported by Council.



**HIGHLANDS HOTEL
SOCIAL & ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Application to increase the number of
Electronic Gaming Machines from 60 to 80
at the Highlands Hotel

March 2017



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Highlands Hotel (the Hotel) has lodged an application with the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VCGLR) for an additional 20 electronic gaming machines (EGMs).

The Hotel already has 60 machines and this proposal, if approved, would bring the total number of machines to 80. This represents an increase of 33.3%% and the VCGLR considers all applications proposing EGM increases over 10% to be significant therefore requiring determination at a public hearing. According to the Application (NBA Group impact statement), *“the applicant has confirmed that the main advantage of the new machines would be the additional choice and entertainment options available to responsible patrons of the gaming room and to meet current and future demand as a result of the rapidly increasing local population within the venue’s catchment area”* (page 23).

Council’s position as reflected in the Hume City Council’s Responsible Gambling Policy (2013) includes a commitment to undertake a Social and Economic Impact Assessment in relation to each application made to the VCGLR and in response to gaming planning permit applications made to Council. Council assesses each application on a case by case basis in accordance with the VCGLR assessment criteria and Council’s policy directions. This ensures consideration of both the positive and negative impacts of each proposal, allowing for an overall assessment of the net community impact.

This report provides the details of the Social and Economic Impact Assessment which has been completed internally by Council officers. **The Assessment has determined that the proposed increase of 20 EGMs at the Highlands Hotel would have on balance, a net negative social and economic impact and will be detrimental to the wellbeing of the local (5km radius around the Hotel) and Hume communities.**

Therefore Council will not be supporting the Highlands Hotel’s application to increase the number of gaming machines by an additional 20 EGMs from 60 to 80 for the following key concerns:

- The local neighbourhood (within a 5km radius around the Hotel) **currently has ease of access to EGMs**, equalling 130 EGMs (inclusive of the 60 at the Hotel), which increases to a total of 210 EGMs if the radius is extended to 7kms.
- The Hume City communities have convenient access to gaming machines, demonstrated by a higher gaming density per 1,000 adults (5.5) than that of metropolitan Melbourne (5.3). The additional 20 EGMs would **render Hume with an even higher density of 5.7 EGMs/1000 adults** – higher than that of metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria.
- The **local area and Hume City experience higher levels of social and economic disadvantage** in comparison with metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria, with the municipality including some of the most disadvantaged suburbs in metropolitan Melbourne (Broadmeadows, Campbellfield and Coolaroo).
- According to the Applicant, the additional 20 EGMS will **increase the net expenditure at the venue between \$1.469 and \$1.687 million** for the first 12 months, which can be ill afforded by the local neighbourhood. This level of expenditure is considered to be **significantly underestimated** for reasons discussed in this Assessment. It is estimated that the **additional loss** to the local neighbourhood would be in the region **\$2,721million** if compared to similar loss rates per machine as currently experienced.
- The **expenditure per adult is currently significantly higher** in the local neighbourhood (\$611 or \$821 for northern Craigieburn) and in Hume (\$720) in comparison to

metropolitan Melbourne (\$576) and Victoria (\$553). The additional machines will **exacerbate** this for the local neighbourhood and the municipality.

- The additional **net expenditure from the 20 EGMs (\$1.469 and \$1.687 million) does not in any way offset the once-off offer of \$100,000 contribution** towards local recreational facility. Council has not formed a view on the offer of the \$100,000 and thus should not form part of the benefits of the application. In addition, the in-kind contributions to Hotel patrons (including subsidised and discounted meals and functions, vouchers to members and hotel bus) was part of its previous gaming application and will cease in 2017 and thus should not be seen to be a benefit in this application (Applicant is silent on the ongoing nature of these contributions).
- The **Hotel is in a highly accessible** and visible shopping precinct and is not “isolated” as stated by the Applicant. This convenient ease of access to gaming machines by community going about their day-to-day business is of concern. According to Council’s Local Planning Policy on Gaming – gaming machines should not be located:
 - *Where they are convenient to shops, community facilities and services or key public transport nodes where large numbers of pedestrians are likely to pass in the course of their daily activities.*
 - *In the core of activity centres where there is the highest intensity of activity, including the main shopping areas, and other widely visited civic, transport and community functions.*
- **Community direct response to the proposal was not undertaken** by the applicant at the time of the submission. However, the Hotel confirmed that they would undertake a community attitudinal survey in relation to their application (letter dated 3 February 2017).
- The local neighbourhood have many **comparable social, economic and demographic profiles as those with problem gamblers**, and therefore contain at risk groups who are vulnerable to problem gambling. The proposal will expose significantly more residents to opportunities for gaming and gambling and for a proportion of them to problems associated with gambling, including the **loss in income, health and wellbeing. If compared to gaming patronage of a similar Hotel (with 80 machines), the number of residents exposed to gaming would increase by 176%.**
- This SEIA will demonstrate that the additional 20 EGMS and the extension to the gaming room will provide little to no benefits to the Craigieburn community and there will be significant **immediate and longer term negative impacts** from the additional expenditure on the additional machines and increased opportunities for gambling at the venue.

Note: the VCGLR needs to disassociate the Highlands Gaming Application for the additional 20 EGMS from the Hume City Council as referenced in the Application and the Witness Statement of Mr Mazen Tabet. The telephonic conversation between Mr Tabet and a Council staff member in December 2017 was in reference to local sporting facility in Craigieburn. Mr Tabet made no reference of the Hotel’s intentions of applying for additional gaming machines and of their application’s condition of donating \$100,000 to Council upon the success of the gaming application.

This offer to Council of \$100,000 towards a sporting facility was made prior to the gaming application and Council has not formed a view on the offer of \$100,000. Therefore the offer of \$100,000 should not form part of the application and thereby not to be seen to be a community benefit.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Highlands Hotel has lodged an application with the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation to increase the number of electronic gaming machines at their premises from 60 to 80. Hume City Council is the responsible authority for the Application for the venue.

Council's Social and Economic Impact Assessment forms part of its submission to the VCGLR under section 3.3.6 of the *Gambling Regulation Act 2003*. Section 3.3.7 of the Act states that 'the Commission must not grant an application for the approval of a premises as suitable for gaming unless it is satisfied that the net economic and social impact of the approval will not be detrimental to the wellbeing of the community of the municipal district in which the premises are located'.

Council's Social and Economic Impact Assessment explores both positive and negative social and economic impacts of increasing the number of EGMs at the Highlands Hotel from 60 to 80.

The VCGLR notified Council on 29 December 2016 of their receipt of the application and requested that if Council were to undertake a SEIA, the submission would be due on 4th March 2017 (next business day is 6th March 2017).

According to its Responsible Gaming Policy, Council requested the Applicant on 18 January 2017 to undertake a survey pertaining to the relevant aspects in its application. On 3 February 2017, the Applicant confirmed that this would be done and requested the assistance of Council to develop a draft survey, which it did.

Although the Highlands Hotel is preparing to undertake a community attitude survey, the survey will not be undertaken prior to the completion and submission of Council's Social and Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) to the Commission on 6 March 2017. An extension was requested from the Commission on 6 February 2017 in order to incorporate the community survey findings into Council's submission. Notification of the Commission's refusal was received by Council on 15 February 2017.

1. METHODOLOGY

The Assessment was undertaken by Council's Social and Community Planning Unit, in consultation with the Research Department, and has been reviewed by Council's Executive Management Team. Council's submission will be submitted to its Council on 6 March 2017 and be endorsed on 14 March 2017.

In terms of its methodology, research and analysis was carried out using a range of sources including:

- A review of relevant literature and research;
- An analysis of legislation and current policy directions;
- A review of relevant Hume City Council strategic plans and policies;
- A review of recent VCGLR and Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) decisions related to gaming;
- Analysis of local gambling statistics and EGM data;
- Analysis of demographic data;
- Analysis of local community responses to gaming from Council's Attitudinal survey 2013.

- Letters of concern from local community health and community support service providers; and
- Review of the application and its supporting reports, including the:
 - Amendment to venue operator licence to vary gaming machines
 - Social and Economic Impact Assessment, Highlands Hotel (NBA Group)
 - Expert's Report in Respect of the Application to vary the number of EGMs from 60 to 80 (ShineWing)
 - Witness Statements by the Mazen Tabet and Diana Asmar
 - Supplementary information provided by Williams Winter.

This information was then used to assess the likely impact of this proposal on the local community according to the Social and Economic Impact Assessment Framework for EGMs (www.socialimpactsofpokies.org.au). The Framework was developed by the Victorian Local Governance Association and Inner Northern Working Group on Gambling, a partnership between local government and other stakeholders in the Inner Northern Melbourne Metropolitan area, including Hume City Council. It identifies all the indicators that may be considered within a social and economic impact assessment and the evidence that supports these indicators.

NOTE: In December 2016, the Craigieburn Sporting Club had 7 electronic gaming machines removed from its premises. This is acknowledged by Hume City Council but is not reflected in the workings of this social and economic impact assessment, due to the unknown duration of this reduction and for consistency of data provided on the VCGLR website for 2015/16.

2. THE PROPOSAL AT A GLANCE

The Hotel is located on the corner of Aitken and Grand Boulevards, Craigieburn, opposite the Highlands Shopping Centre. The Hotel lodged an application with the VCGLR to increase the number of EGMs from 60 to 80 EGMs at the Hotel.

The applicant seeks the approval for an additional 20 EGMS to be placed in the Highland Hotel. *“(T)he applicant has confirmed that the main advantage of the new machines would be the additional choice and entertainment options available to responsible patrons of the gaming room and to meet current and future demand as a result of the rapidly increasing local population within the venue’s catchment area”* (page 23 of application).

With this additional revenue the Hotel plans to extend the gaming room to accommodate the proposed additional 20 EGMs, which will also include the removal of the outdoor terrace and improve the Hotel façade. The estimated cost of the works is \$975,000.

The Hotel suggests that the proposal will lead to an average of 2 equivalent full time jobs (of which 85% of the current staff are casual).

The applicant estimates that the additional net gaming expenditure from these 20 machines will generate approximately an additional \$1.469m to \$1.687m at the Hotel in the first 12 months and will increase the gaming expenditure by \$1.028m to \$1.181m for the municipality. The application states that there will be a 30% transfer rate from other existing venues in Hume City, largely from the Craigieburn Sporting Club (at a rate of 25% of that 30%).

The Applicant indicated that they were **unable to determine** a number of social and economic impacts pertaining to their proposal for an additional 20 machines, namely:

- Value of building maintenance contracts from the proposal for next 12 months
- Value of supply contracts for next 12 months
- Estimated proportion to be provided by suppliers from within the municipal district
- Value of complimentary expenditure for next 12 months
- Estimated impact of gaming on tourism to the municipal district for the previous financial year
- Estimated impact on tourism from the proposal (first 12 months)
- Estimate of average number of patrons who attend any part of or all of entire venue weekly
- Estimate of average number of patrons who use the gaming facility weekly
- Estimate additional weekly patrons who may attend any part for all of the venue weekly due to the approval of this proposal, and
- Estimate additional average number of patrons who may use the gaming facility weekly due to this proposal.

Clarity was sought from the applicant in regards to the nature of the community contributions that would result from the application. The submission by the NBA Group made various mentions of a \$100,000 contribution, however the terminology used varied amongst these mentions, namely:

- Page: 4 “if supported in this application the applicant is offering an additional \$100,000 to the Council community chest;”
- Page: 23 “the applicant has pledged an additional \$100,000 cash donation, to Council, to assist with local recreational developments being undertaken by Hume City Council upon approval of the application of the additional EGMS. This will be in addition to any of the pledges or programs currently operated by the Hotel”.
- Page: 26 “The Hotel has pledged to assist with the costs of the building the Athletics Pavilion as part of a \$100,000 donation to the Council”.
- Page: 29 “Although the process is currently ad-hoc in nature, there is a future commitment of an additional \$100k to this community fund to be disbursed as Council see fit”.
- Page 66 “It is noted that the Hotel has pledged an additional \$100,000 to assist with local recreational facilities being developed by Council, upon success of the application”...

The community contributions as per the Hotel's 2010 gaming application of \$75,000 per annum for 5 years would be drawing to a close in December 2017 and the application was silent as to whether their “community contributions” would continue.

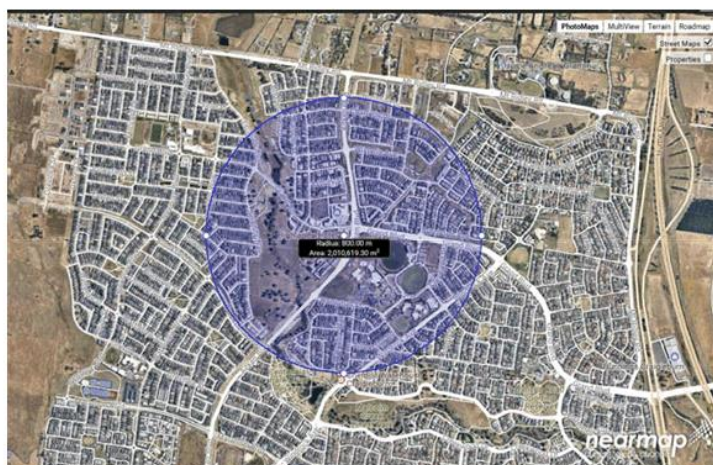
Representatives of the applicant provided clarification to the above matters (letter from Williams Winter to Council dated 3 February 2017) indicating that a once-off payment of \$100,000 would be made to Council. It was stated that it would be in addition to the existing pledges and community contribution programs currently in operation at the Hotel by the applicant. It should be noted that such benefits are in current operation and that no indication was made of its continuance and to what level.

Thus it is taken that this current application (additional 20 EGMS) will only provide a once-off \$100,000 community contribution for recreational facilities and that the current obligation of \$75,000 would cease in December 2017 once the 5-year period has lapsed.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

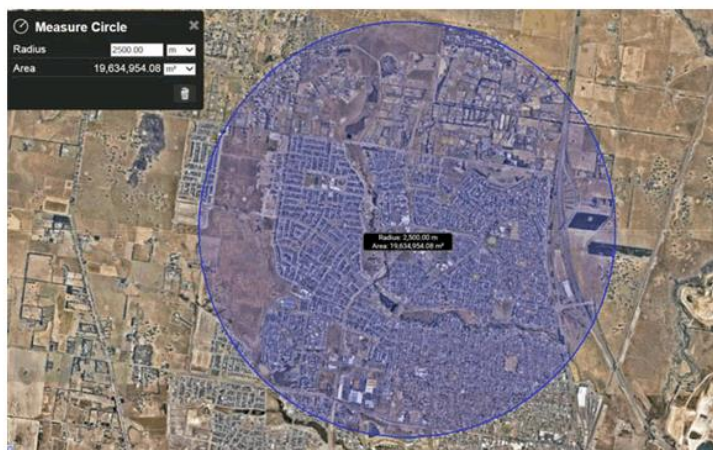
The Hotel is located at the corner of Aiken and Grand Boulevards in northern Craigieburn. To the north of the Hotel there is located the Highlands Shopping Centre, to its north east residential units, to its west the Mt Ridley College, to its south are newly built residential units and to its west the regional Sun Moth Park (see Map 1).

Map 1: 800m radius (walkability): Site Map of the Hotel on corner of Aitken and Grand Boulevards



(Source: NearMap)

Map 2: 2.5km radius (venue catchment area): Site Map of the Hotel on corner of Aitken and Grand Boulevards

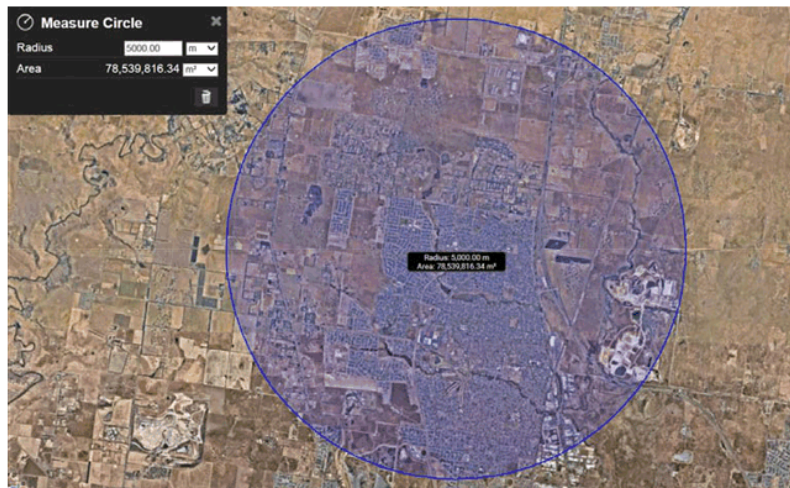


(Source: Nearmap)

Map 2 shows a 2.5km radius around the Hotel, which demonstrates a catchment which is largely residential land (and not open space and industrial land as stated in the application),

with a number of community and public facilities, including: child care and preschool centres, primary and secondary schools, reserves, parks, retirement village, library, town centre and recreation centres.

Map 3: 5km radius (venue catchment area): Site Map of the Hotel on corner of Aitken and Grand Boulevards



4. CATCHMENT

The first critical step in assessing the social and economic impacts of this application is to define the 'community' where the impact will be largely felt. Hence a number of indicators have been considered and a clear and logical conclusion drawn from them to identify the likely catchment area of the proposal.

The *Gambling Regulation Act 2003* refers to 'the community of the municipal district in which the premises are located'. However, as many cases before the VCGLR and VCAT have found, the municipal district is usually too large a geographic area to truly assess the impact a venue will have on a community. Relevant VCGLR hearings which have identified the impact of gaming venues at a more local level include Romsey¹, Laurimar² and the L'Unico Hotel in Clayton³.

Research has identified that people travel between 2.5km and 5km on average to access gaming machines⁴, which is a useful starting point for identifying the community that will be most impacted by this proposal.

Within the 5km catchment radius, there is one other gaming venue (straight line distances) which in addition to the Hotel's 60 EGMs provide 130 machines:

- Craigieburn Sporting Club (70 EGMs) – 2.6km

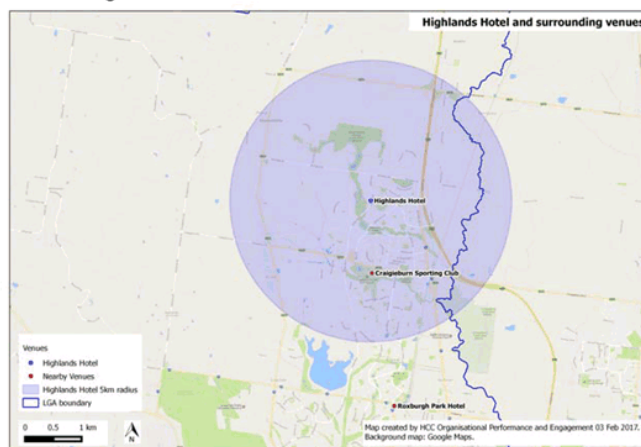
¹ VCAT Romsey Hotel v Macedon Ranges SC [2009] VCAT 2275, 12/11/2009

² VCGR, Laurimar Tavern, Doreen, City Of Whittlesea, 15/03/2010 and VCAT Whittlesea CC v George Adams P/L [2011] VCAT 534, 07/04/2011

³ VCGLR, L'Unico Hotel, Clayton, Monash City Council, 14/04/2012

⁴ Rennie v Darebin CC [2010] VCAT 1719 (22 October 2010) Stolberg Hotel, Preston VCAT Decision

Map 4: Gaming Venues within a 5km Radius:



Falling just outside of the 5km radius is an additional gaming venue with 80 EGMS:

- Roxburgh Park Hotel – 7.2km

The Applicant has provided a summary of the Loyalty Members at the Hotel which identifies that members were predominately from the 3064 post code area. A representative of the Hotel conveyed that it has been accepted the VCGLR that the profiles of the patrons of a venues gaming room and bistro are similar and can be compared. Thus, not having been provided the gaming patron profile by the Applicant, it will be taken that the Loyalty members and the gaming venue patron are comparable.

Table 1: Loyalty Members at the Hotel:

Postcode	Suburbs	No. of Members
3064	Craigieburn (NOTE: Roxburgh Park and Craigieburn share the same postcode)	3216
3756	Wallan, Upper Plenty, Chintin, Darraweit Guim	155
3048	Coolaroo, Meadow Heights	134
3059	Greenvale	129
3047	Broadmeadows/ Jacana and Dallas (NOTE: incorrectly shown in the application as Westmeadows and Attwood).	112
3076	Epping	108
3046	Oak Park, Hadfield, Glenroy	104
3754	Mernda, Doreen	89
3043	Gladstone Park, Tullamarine, Gowanbrae	75
3075	Lalor	70
3082	Mill Park	62
3083	Bundoora, La Trobe University, Kingsbury	62
3752	South Morang	57
3049	Westmeadows, Attwood	55
3429	Wildwood, Sunbury	54
3060	Fawkner	53
3764	Kilmore, Kilmore East, Glenaroua, High Camp, Forbes, Willowmavin, Moranding, Tantaraboo	53
3074	Thomastown	51
	Others	913

(Source: Social and Economic Impact Statement, Highlands Hotel 2016(NAB Report))

Council has therefore defined the relevant catchment area (local neighbourhood) for this assessment as a 5km radius around the Hotel, which incorporates the areas of Craigieburn, parts of Mickleham and Yuroke, and the northern area of Roxburgh Park.

5. POLICY CONTEXT

Gaming in Hume is regulated by the *Gambling Regulation Act 2003*, *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, *Local Government Act 1989* and the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.

The *Gambling Regulation Act 2003* provides the legislative framework for gambling in Victoria and creates various powers and authorities on gambling. The main objectives of the *Gambling Act* (under Section 1.1(2)) are:

- (a) to foster responsible gambling in order to -
 - (i) minimise harm caused by problem gambling; and
 - (ii) accommodate those who gamble without harming themselves or others;
- (b) to promote tourism, employment and economic development generally in the State.

The *Gambling Regulation Act 2003* identifies that gambling has both positive and negative impacts on the community. The *Gambling Act* also sets out the powers of the VCGLR to oversee the conduct of gambling in Victoria.

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* establishes a framework for planning the use, development and protection of land in Victoria, in the present and long-term interests of all Victorians. Section 4(2)(d) requires that consideration be given to the social and economic impact of the use and development of land.

The *Local Government Act 1989* confers powers to local government as the representative of the local community. The Act states that the primary objective of a Council is 'to endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard to the long term and cumulative effects of decisions'.

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* the function of a council is 'to seek to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing within the municipal district'. The *Public Health and Wellbeing Act* additionally states that the 'precautionary principle' should be applied to decision making (i.e. that a lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent or control public health risk).

6.1 Hume City Council Responsible Gaming Policy

Hume City Council's Responsible Gaming Policy 2013 seeks to provide a framework for Council to respond to applications for new or expanded gaming facilities within the municipality. Council is committed to assessing the impact of any proposed new gaming venue and gaming machines or the relocation of gaming machines on the specific locality in which they are proposed.

Council acknowledges that gaming a legal activity, which has been found to be problematic for the ordinary consumer and can have detrimental consequences for those affected by problem gaming and for the wider community. Council is concerned about the negative consequences that arise for persons experiencing problem gambling. Council' harm

minimisation approach aims to reduce the negative impacts and maximise the positive impacts of gaming venues for local communities and the City as a whole. Council, together with State Government and the VCGLR, has a responsibility to collaborate on harm minimisation strategies and to encourage the equitable distribution of income generated from gaming.

Council's Responsible Gaming Policy includes a clause that Council will not support any application for an increase in net number of EGMs if the Assessment involves a net detrimental impact on local or Hume communities. It also requires the applicant to undertake a community attitudinal survey as per section 6.2 of Council's Responsible Gaming Policy, which states:

Council will require all applicants who submit a gaming application to the VCGLR concerning Hume City and which propose an increase of EGMs at a venue (including all transfers), to seek the views of the surrounding community through an attitudinal survey.

- *This must be administered by an independent social market research firm and a copy of the raw data and survey instrument submitted to Council.*
- *The survey must list each aspect of the proposal and ask the respondents attitude to each. It must also seek the impact on the wellbeing of the community as a consequence of the application.*
- *The final survey must also be approved by Council's Research Department prior to implementation. A sample survey is included as Appendix X.*

6.2 Victorian Planning Provision and planning schemes

The government made a commitment to improve the input of local councils into the location of gaming machines by requiring a planning permit for all gaming machines and that as-of-right provisions for gaming machines no longer apply.

Clause 52.28-2 states:

"A permit is required to install or use a gaming machine.

This does not apply in either of the following circumstances:

- *Clause 52.28-3 or Clause 52.28-4 specifically prohibit a gaming machine.*
- *The gaming machine is in an approved venue under the Gambling Regulation Act 2003 on 18 October 2006 and the maximum number of gaming machines for the approved venue on 18 October 2006 is not exceeded".*

6.3 Local Planning Policy on Gaming

The Hume Planning Scheme includes a section on gaming known as the *Local Planning Policy on Gaming* which reflects Council's planning and land-use role in the provision of gaming venues. This policy links with the Responsible Gaming Policy to provide a sound framework on which Council can rely to inform their decision making on gaming applications.

The Local Planning Policy on Gaming supports the broad planning objectives of the Municipal Strategic Statement, in particular the social, activity centre and amenity objectives, by setting out how and where gaming machines should be located.

It recognises the need for a fair and equitable distribution of gaming machines throughout metropolitan Melbourne and Hume City and that gaming machines should reasonably be accessible to the community as a form of entertainment, but not be convenient.

The key objectives of the Hume Policy are:

- To discourage the location of gaming machines in disadvantaged areas;
- To ensure the location of gaming machines and the design and operation of facilities containing gaming machines minimise opportunities for convenience gaming and the incidence of problem gambling;
- To ensure that gaming machines are located where the community has a choice of non-gaming entertainment and recreation facilities and activities within the gaming venue and in the local area;
- To protect the operations and amenity of existing uses surrounding gaming venues.

It is policy that gaming machines should not be located:

- In areas of high socio-economic disadvantage as defined in the ABS Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) index of relative disadvantage.
- In areas where the average gaming machine density is higher than the average gaming machine density for metropolitan Melbourne.
- Where they are convenient to shops, community facilities and services or key public transport nodes where large numbers of pedestrians are likely to pass in the course of their daily activities.
- In the core of activity centres where there is the highest intensity of activity, including the main shopping areas, and other widely visited civic, transport and community functions.
- Where the gaming machines and associated uses will be incompatible with the predominant surrounding land uses on the basis of their:
 - ability to achieve safe pedestrian and vehicle access;
 - proposed design, location and operations detrimentally affecting the amenity of the surrounding area;
 - potential to compromise the ongoing operations of surrounding businesses and industry.

The SEIA will demonstrate that the location of the machines are not supported through the local planning policy of Hume City Council, according to the items as listed above in the policy (namely area of disadvantage, higher density, convenient to shops and transport, choice of non-gaming entertainment).

6.4 State Government Regulatory Changes

Victorian Parliament passed the *Gambling Regulation Amendment (Licensing) Act 2009* which amends the Gambling Regulation Act to implement the Government's model for new licensing arrangements in 2012. In addition to the creation of entitlements and new operator arrangements for gaming machines, it makes provision in relation to the location of ATMs, gambling signage and pre-commitment technology.

The Victorian Government proposed a voluntary system of pre-commitment at the 2010 election but after the Federal Government withdrew their support for mandatory pre-commitment the Victorian Government announced that they would no longer be going ahead with voluntary commitment systems in Victoria until 2016. The Victorian Government has stated that the implementation of a pre-commitment system would place too heavy a burden on venues and that Victoria should wait to see the outcome of the Federal Government's trial.

In August 2012, new gaming licensing arrangements were introduced in Victoria, ending the duopoly of Tattersalls and Tabcorp as owners of the EGMs. Venue operators had the

opportunity to purchase gaming machine entitlements through an auction process in May 2010 and the new arrangements will give greater control to venues, which will own their own machines, and will give them the opportunity for a greater share of the gaming machine revenue.

It was announced in December 2013 that the Victorian Government was to increase the tax payable on revenue earned from EGMs at hotel and club gaming venues. An increase of 4.2% would apply to the two top tax brackets only (no change for the bottom tax brackets where the monthly average per EGM player loss is below \$2,666. In addition, it was announced that the minimum Return to Player ratio was to be reduced from 87% to 85%.

7. ELECTRONIC GAMING IN HUME

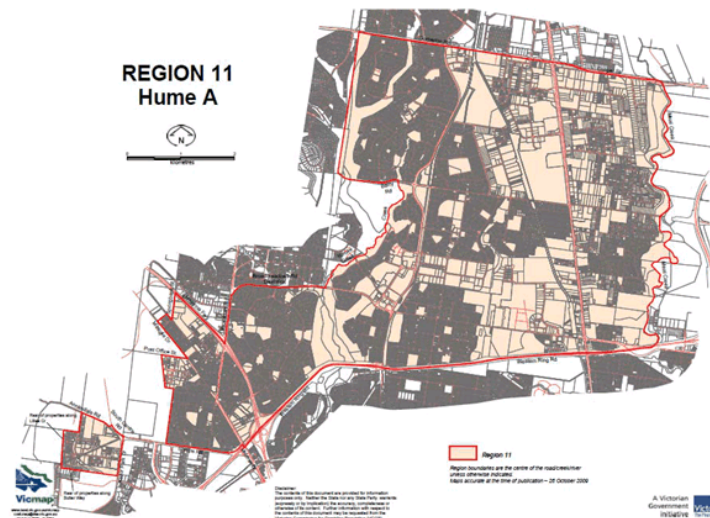
7.1 Gaming in Hume and Regional Cap

In 2015/16, Hume City has a total of 846 licenced EGMs and 813 attached entitlements across 14 venues. These venues include 9 hotels and 5 clubs.

On 10 September 2012, the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VCGLR) determined the maximum permissible number of gaming machines entitlements available for gaming in each capped region. There are 20 capped regions in Victoria. Any area not covered by a regional cap is subject to a municipal limit.

Hume City is partially covered by a regional cap. The regional cap of 435 licenced gaming machines is for the postcodes of 3043, 3047, 3048, 3060 and 3061 which encompasses the suburbs of Broadmeadows, Campbellfield, Coolaroo, Dallas, Fawkner, Gladstone Park, Jacana, Meadow Heights and Tullamarine. Please note the Roxburgh Park Hotel is located in Coolaroo.

Map 5: Hume Regional Cap:



(Source: VCGLR website)

Regional Caps were imposed by the State Government due to high relative disadvantage, significant EGM density and higher than average EGM expenditure. Correlations between these indicators identified communities that were most vulnerable to the harmful effects of gambling. There can be no increase of EGMs beyond the cap, although these machines can be relocated within the capped region. There are currently 413 EGMs (attached entitlements) in the capped region within Hume City, equating to approximately 95% capacity.

The Determination also stated that the maximum number of gaming machines outside the Hume capped region was to be 725 EGMs (based on 10 EGMs per 1,000 adults). In 2015/16 there were 400 EGMs outside the Hume regional capped area.

Although the Capped Region was to protect the more disadvantaged communities, it is interesting to note that the gaming venues within the capped region generate more losses per machine per year than in the uncapped region, namely approximately \$158,383 per year in comparison to \$101,578 per year.

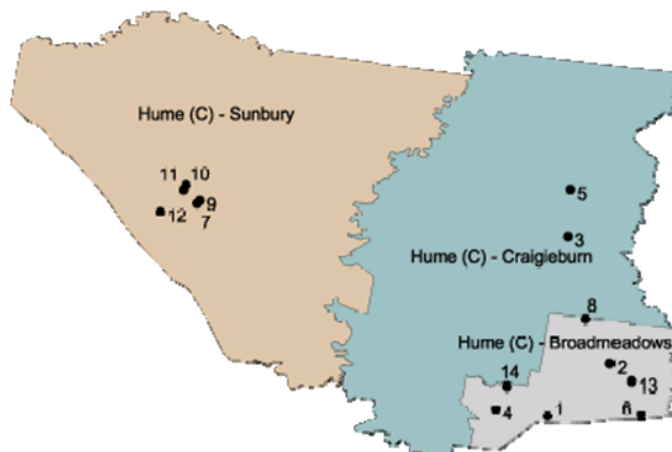
Table 2: Details of EGM Venues in Hume City 2015/2016

	Venue	Address	Attached Entitlements	Licensed EGMs	Venue Type	Capped Region
1	Broadmeadows Sporting Club	111 Sunset Boulevard, Jacana	55	64	Club	Yes
2	Coolaroo Taverner	Cnr Barry Road & Maffra Street, Coolaroo	47	54	Hotel	Yes
3	Craigieburn Sporting Club	Willmott Park, Craigieburn Road, Craigieburn	70	70	Club	No
4	Gladstone Park Hotel	186-202 Mickleham Road, Tullamarine	86	86	Hotel	Yes
5	Highlands Hotel	Cnr Grand & Aitken Boulevards, Craigieburn	60	60	Hotel	No
6	Meadow Inn Hotel	1435 Sydney Road, Fawkner	70	73	Hotel	Yes
7	Olive Tree Hotel	111 Evans Street, Sunbury	43	43	Hotel	No
8	Roxburgh Park Hotel	225 Somerton Road, Coolaroo	80	80	Hotel	Yes
9	Royal Hotel (Sunbury)	63 Evans Street, Sunbury	31	31	Hotel	No
10	Sunbury Bowling Club	49 Riddell Road, Sunbury	78	78	Club	No
11	Sunbury Football Social Club	Clarke Oval, Riddell Road, Sunbury	38	38	Club	No
12	Sunbury United Sporting Club	Langama Park, Mitchells Lane, Sunbury	40	40	Club	No
13	Sylvania Hotel	1631 Sydney Road, Campbellfield	75	87	Hotel	Yes
14	Westmeadows Tavern	10 Ardlie Street, Westmeadows	40	42	Hotel	No
	total		813	846		

(Source: VCGLR Statistics, January 2017, www.vcgr.vic.gov.au)

NOTE: In December 2016, the Craigieburn Sporting Club had 7 electronic gaming machines removed from its premises. This is acknowledged by Hume City Council but is not reflected in the workings of this social and economic impact assessment, due to the unknown duration of this reduction and for consistency of data provided on the VCGLR website for 2015/16.

Map 6: Map of Gaming Venues in Hume



(Source: VCGLR Statistics, January 2017, www.vcgr.vic.gov.au)

7.2 EGM Density

7.2.1 Pre Proposal Density

The Applicant has estimated the current gaming density to be 3.57 in Craigieburn (using the 2016 total population with the assumption that 77% of the population are adults – being 36,391 adults) (page 38 of application).

Calculation of the adult population within the 5km radius attached EGM density (4.5) is less than the Hume (5.5), metropolitan Melbourne (5.3) and Victorian averages (5.6).

Table 3: EGM Density, 30 June 2016

	Local Neighbourhood 5km radius around the Hotel	Hume (LGA)	Metropolitan Melbourne	Victoria
Adult Population	29,050*	147,127	3,578,211	4,730,711
No. attached entitlements	130	813	18,794	26,330
Attached EGMs per 1000 adults	4.5 6 id data for northern Craigieburn	5.5	5.3	5.6

(Source VCGLR website except for the 5km radius)

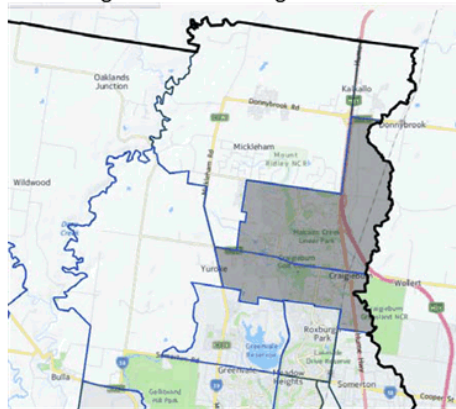
*extracted population for 5km radius from the Hotel based on 2011 Census

The applicant's proportional use of Craigieburn's 2016 estimated total population from Profile ID (namely general use of 77% of total population for Craigieburn) is incorrect. Craigieburn has a younger aged profile than that of Hume and the metropolitan average, thus the estimate of the number of adults would be inflated.

In examining the number of adults (18 years plus) in the ID consulting forecast profile in the whole of Craigieburn is 33,592 adults – thus providing a gaming density of 3.8 EGMs per 1,000 adults.

However, if the demographic data for northern Craigieburn is examined, where the Hotel is located (21,617 adults), the density significantly denser at 6.0 EGMs per 1,000 adults, higher than Hume, metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria.

Map 7: ID Consulting data: Craigieburn and Craigieburn North boundaries:



7.2.2 Post Proposal Density

According to the Applicant, the additional 20 EGMS would raise the gaming density to 4.12 EGMs/1,000 adults.

The installation of 20 additional machines at the Hotel would not only increase attached EGM density to 5.2 in the 5km radius area, but would also render Hume City with an even higher density of gaming machines per 1,000 adults than metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria, which is indicated in Table below:

Table 4: EGM Density after the proposal

	Local Neighbourhood 5km radius around the Hotel	Hume (LGA)	Metropolitan Melbourne	Victoria
Adult Population	29,050	147,127	3,578,211	4,730,711
No. attached entitlements	150	833	18,814	26,350
Attached EGMs per 1000 adults	5.2 6.9 for northern Craigieburn	5.7	5.3	5.6

(Source: data from VCGLR website with the additional 20 machines accept for the 5km radius).

If the id consulting data is used for Craigieburn and northern Craigieburn, the densities are higher than those proposed by the Applicant – namely:

Table 5: EGM Density after the proposal using id consulting data for Craigieburn and northern Craigieburn

	Id consulting Total Craigieburn	Northern Craigieburn
Adult Population 2016	33,592	21,617
No. attached entitlements	150	150
Attached EGMs per 1000 adults	4.4	6.9

Both methodologies for local neighbourhood, Craigieburn and northern Craigieburn show significant increases in gaming densities in the affected area.

7.3 EGM Expenditure

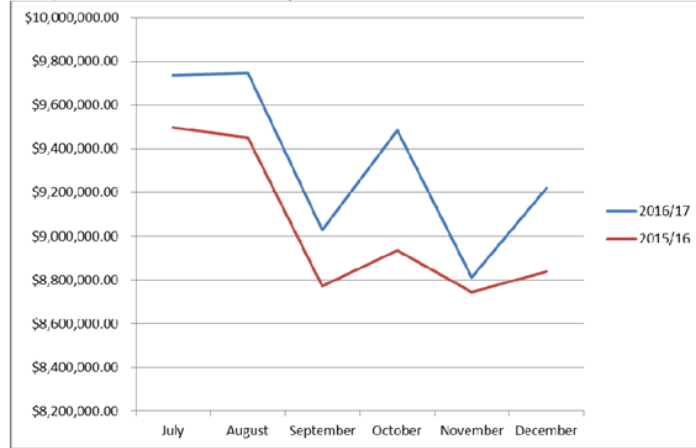
History of Expenditure: Since the introduction of gaming machines into Victoria, Hume City has experienced increases in net gaming expenditure. Although the industry suggests that the gaming market is reaching a maturation stage, the introduction of new gaming venues, additional machines and new gaming technologies keeps the sector buoyant, including in Hume City.

Increases in expenditure as indicated under Table 5 shows that the gaming market in Hume City is not at maturation stage and there are no signs of the expenditure plateauing, if the first 6 months of expenditure for 2015/16 is compared to 2016/17, as indicated below:

Net EGM expenditure is the total amount lost by players.		
Financial Year	2016/17	2015/16
	\$	\$
July	9,738,891.54	9,498,610.08
August	9,746,026.49	9,449,554.24
September	9,028,919.78	8,772,991.18
October	9,485,664.21	8,935,498.05
November	8,812,258.25	8,745,062.11
December	9,221,912.67	8,839,611.03
January	0.00	8,864,523.74
February	0.00	8,072,736.26
March	0.00	8,850,295.96
April	0.00	8,577,028.04
May	0.00	8,876,291.88
June	0.00	8,561,552.46
TOTAL	\$56,033,672.94	\$106,043,755.03

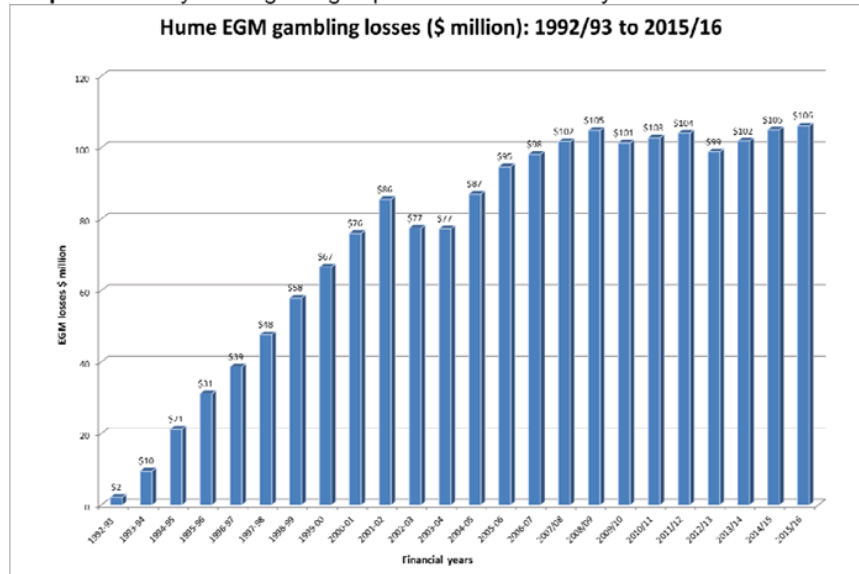
Source: VCGLR website

Graph 1 Losses per month in Hume City for first 6 months in 2014/15 and 2015/16:



The expenditure for 2016/17 equates to a 3.3% increase on the 2015/16 expenditure over the same period of 6 months. This is also an indication that the losses in Hume potentially can be \$109,543,198.95 for the 2016/17 year and that an additional 20 machines will further exacerbate these losses to community.

Graph 2: History of net gaming expenditure in Hume City



7.3.1 Pre Proposal Expenditure

Total net EGM expenditure in Hume City for the 2015/2016 financial year was \$106,043,755. This represents a 1.04% increase on the previous year's expenditure of \$104,943,986.

Hume City had the 6th highest level of net EGM expenditure in 2015/16, when compared to other municipalities across Victoria, with the five top ranked being Brimbank (\$143 million), Casey (\$124.8 million), Greater Dandenong (\$118.8 million) and Monash (\$111.4 million).

The top three venues with the highest level of gaming expenditure in Hume City during 2015/16 were Gladstone Park Hotel with \$19,004,721 (representing a 1.4% increase on 2014/15 expenditure); Roxburgh Park Hotel with \$15,947,242 (a 5% increase on 2014/15 expenditure) and Meadow Inn Hotel with \$11,584,666 (representing a 4.5% decrease on 2014/15 expenditure). The Craigieburn Sporting Club has the highest gaming expenditure of all Hume Clubs and is in the top revenue generators across the State. The club experienced a growth in expenditure of 2.7% from 2014/15 to 2015/16.

In percentage terms, the Highlands Hotel experienced the most significant change in expenditure, from \$7,363,879 in 2014/15 to \$8,162,417 in 2015/16. This represents a 10.8% increase which is substantial when the average increase per venue for Hume City is 1.03%.

Table 6: Total EGM Expenditure per Venue for 2014/2015 and 2015/2016

Venue Name	2014/2015 Net Gaming Expenditure	2015/2016 Net Gaming Expenditure	% change
BROADMEADOWS CLUB	2,523,718	2,659,926	5.4
COOLAROO TAVERNER	5,309,700	5,374,923	1.2
CRAIGIEBURN SPORTS CLUB	9,337,591	9,588,845	2.7
GLADSTONE PARK HOTEL	18,744,702	19,004,721	1.4
HIGHLANDS HOTEL	7,363,879	8,162,417	10.8
MEADOW INN HOTEL	12,126,943	11,584,666	- 4.5
OLIVE TREE HOTEL	5,894,441	5,636,765	- 4.4
ROXBURGH PARK HOTEL	15,185,478	15,947,242	5.0
ROYAL HOTEL SUNBURY	5,019,467	4,915,363	-2.1
SUNBURY BOWLING CLUB	3,655,778	3,889,406	6.4
SUNBURY FOOTBALL CLUB	1,741,983	1,836,501	5.4
SUNBURY UNITED SPORTING CLUB	1,830,138	1,658,008	-9.4
SYLVANIA HOTEL	11,277,128	10,840,865	- 3.9
WESTMEADOWS TAVERN	4,933,040	4,944,105	0.2
Total	104,943,986	106,043,755	1.03% average increase/venue

(Source: VCGLR Statistics, January 2017, www.vcgr.vic.gov.au)

Expenditure at Hotels vs Clubs: In 2015/2016 the net expenditure from Hotels was \$86,411,067 which was a \$556,290 increase (0.65%) on the net expenditure on the previous financial year. In 2015/2016 the net expenditure from Clubs was \$19,632,686, which was an increase of \$543,478 on the net expenditure from the previous year.

The expenditure per machine (attached entitlements) in Hotels is much higher than that in Clubs. In 2015/2016 the average net expenditure per machine per year in Hotels averaged at \$162,427/EGM in comparison to Clubs in Hume at \$69,867 (equating to 132.5% higher expenditure per machine than in Clubs).

Expenditure per adult: Although Hume City has a similar EGM density to that of the State it shows a significantly higher expenditure per adult, \$720 in comparison to \$553. This is 30% higher than that of the State's average adult expenditure (and is 25% higher than the metropolitan average).

The 2015/16 expenditure in Craigieburn was \$17,751,263, thus for the local neighbourhood the expenditure per adult is \$611, which is higher than those at the State and metropolitan levels.

In examining the id consulting data for northern Craigieburn, the loss per adult is even higher, being \$821. This is of great concern because the proposal will expose Craigieburn adults to more machines and more losses will result from the local community.

Table 7: Current annual EGM Expenditure per Adult 2015/16

	Local Neighbourhood 5km radius around the Hotel	Hume	Metropolitan Melbourne	Victoria
Expenditure	\$611 \$821 for northern Craigieburn	\$720	\$576	\$553

(Source: VCGLR Statistics, January 2017, www.vcgr.vic.gov.au)

The high levels of expenditure are of great concern to Council if the levels of disadvantage within Hume are considered. Hume City is ranked the 3rd most disadvantaged municipality within metropolitan Melbourne with a SEIFA disadvantage index of 951.75. Those with potentially less disposable income are losing more on average than their State and metropolitan counterparts.

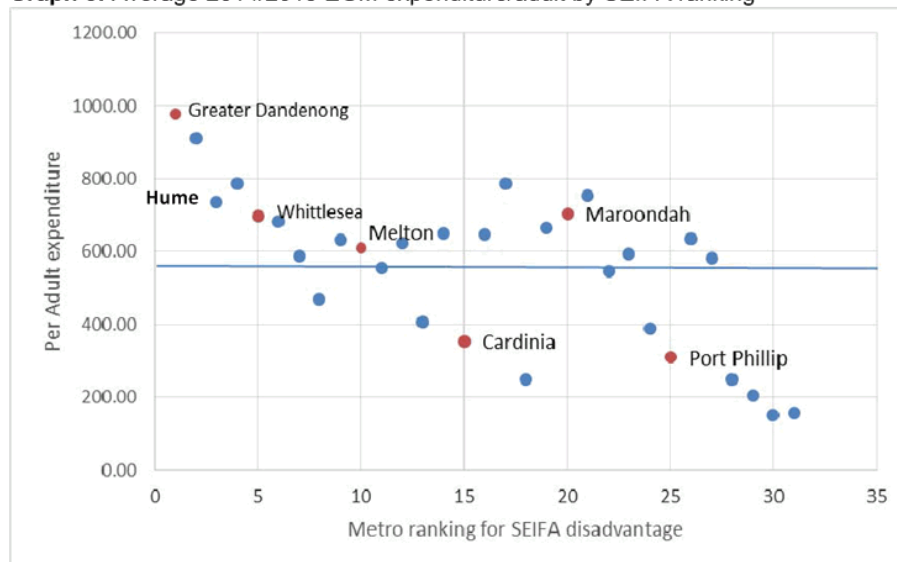
Many of Hume's residents are already experiencing social and economic hardships (including lower levels of English proficiency, mortgage and rental stress, lower levels of educational attainment and lower level skilled employment), and these hardships are further exacerbated by expenditures on EGMs.

Table 9: Gaming statistics of EGM Data 2014/15

Indicator	City of Hume	Rank - Metro	Metropolitan Melbourne	Victoria
Adult expenditure (per capita)	\$755	8	\$576	\$553
EGMs per 1,000 adults	6.1		5.8	6.1
Expenditure per EGM	\$130,365	1	\$101,207	\$96,837
SEIFA (disadvantage)	950	3	1020.3	1009.6

It is apparent that in the municipality there is an unusually high spending pattern on EGM gambling. This is typical for municipalities in the lower range of SEIFA, which makes the City of Hume vulnerable to the impacts of EGMs, as seen on the following graph:

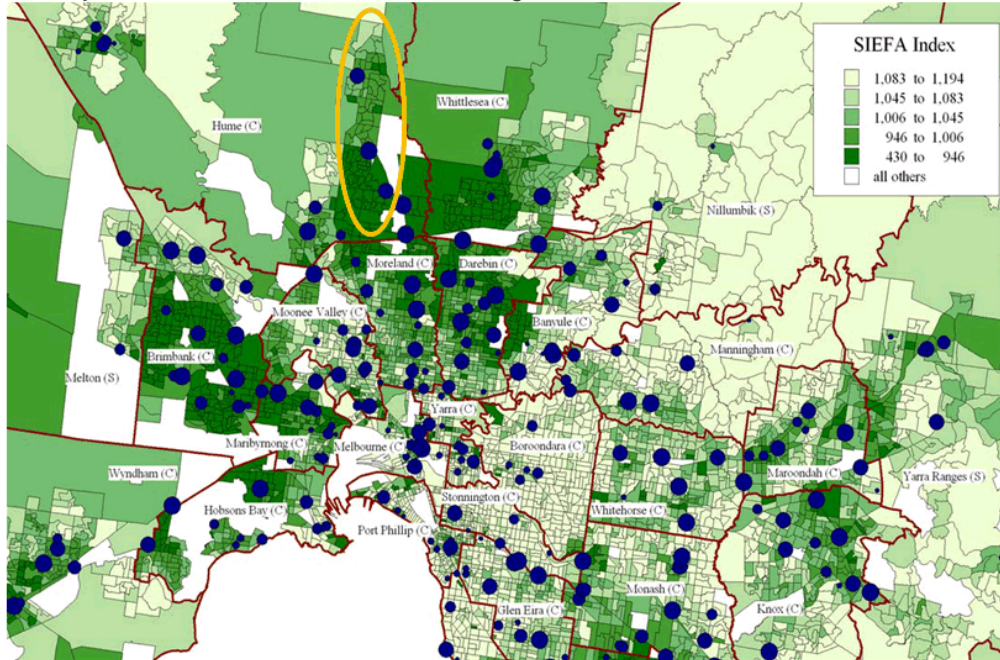
Graph 3: Average 2014/2015 EGM expenditure/adult by SEIFA ranking



(Source: VCGLR Statistics, January 2017, www.vcgr.vic.gov.au)

The map below demonstrates the correlation between gaming EGMs and areas experiencing high levels of disadvantage, including the Hume growth corridor, from Broadmeadows towards Craigieburn.

Map 8: Distribution of EGM venues and losses against SIEFA conditions



(Source: City of Greater Dandenong (based on 2006 census data) 2016)

7.3.2 Post Proposal Expenditure

The Applicant indicated that the additional 20 EGMS will generate an additional \$1.469m to \$1.687m gaming expenditure in the first 12 months at the venue. It is also indicated that some of the new expenditure will be transferred from other gaming venues, to the amount of 30% which in turn will then result in a total of new net expenditure of \$1.028m to 1.181m to the LGA.

The applicant states that this increase to the municipality would equate to an average of 1% increase to the total actual gaming expenditure within Hume when compared to 2015/16 expenditure levels.

Expenditure for the Hotel and for the Hume Municipality

According to the Applicant the additional machines will generate between \$1,469,235 to \$1,686,900 (average \$1,578,068) in the first 12 months post installation, thus bringing the total expenditure at the hotel to approximately \$9,631,706 to \$9,849,371 (average of \$9,740,538.50).

If this projected expenditure at the Hotel is used, then the loss per machine at the Hotel will decrease from its current \$136,041.18 per machine per year to a range of \$120,396.33 to \$123,117.14 (average \$121,756.74/EGM/year), which is deemed unlikely.

In regards to the Municipality, the additional new expenditure from the 20 EGMS within the first 12 months is proposed to range between \$1,028,465 and \$1,180,830 which reflects a transference rate of 30% from other gaming venues in Hume. This would increase the total

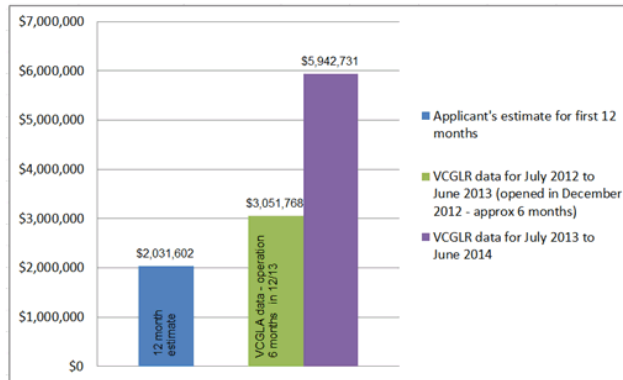
expenditure in Hume to between \$107,072,220 to \$107,224,585 (average \$107,148,403). Thus, this would potentially equate to a decrease in the loss per machine from \$130,435 per machine per year to \$128,538.08 to \$128,720.99 (average \$128,630), again deemed unlikely.

These low levels of estimated expenditure need to be questioned, for the following reasons:

- It has been recognised by the Commission that new expenditure has been underestimated by applicants for venues within Hume City (noted by the Commission at the Craigieburn Sporting Club Public Hearing): where it was stated *“It should be noted, however, that he conceded that the Tabcorp calculation of likely expenditure at the Roxburgh Park has proved to be considerably less than the figure actually achieved”* (section 25 Public Hearing Decision 9 March 2006).
- This can be also be inferred from the previous application from the Highlands Hotel, which suggested that the expenditure for the first 12 months from the 60EGMs would be \$2,031,602 from the 60EGMs. According to VCGLR data, the first 12 months (July 2012 to June 2013) the Hotel generated \$3,051,768, which demonstrated a 50.2% increase on the estimations made in the Highland’s application (**it should be noted that the Hotel was not operational for the full year but had open in December 2012**).

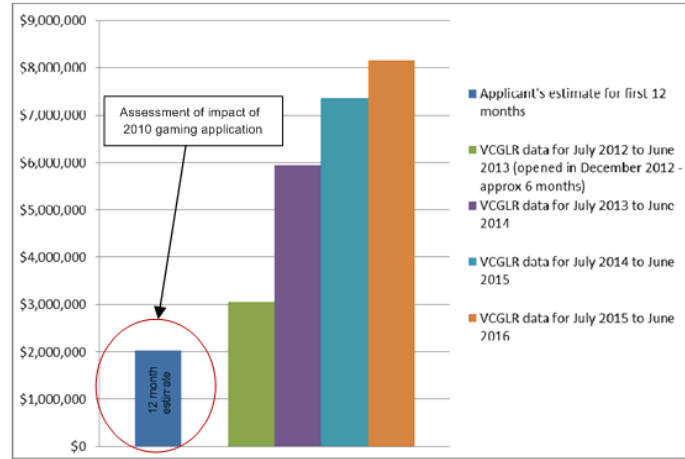
The Highlands Hotel went on further to generate in 2013/2014 a significant increase on its expenditure, an increase of 94.7% (\$5,942,731) on the previous financial year, which is illustrated in the following graph:

Graph 4: Estimated and actual net expenditure at the Higliand Hotel in the first 12 months of operation:



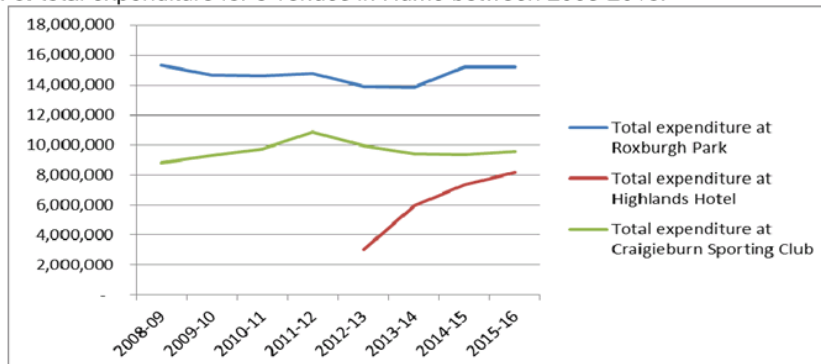
- The first 12 months of a new venue is still in an establishment phase and the real growth in gaming expenditure begins to increase in the 2nd or 3rd year. Thus the 12 month indicator should be reviewed in order to reflect the true growth in a new gaming venue market. If the above expenditure trend at the Hotel is increased to 2015/16, the graph would demonstrate the following growth pattern for the 60EGMs at the Highlands Hotel:

Graph 5: Estimated and actual net expenditure at the Higliand Hotel up to 2015/16:



- The applicant indicates that the transference rate of the additional machines would be approximately 30%. The 'knock-on' effect of this change in gaming market share amongst gaming venues is clearly visible in the actions taken by the Craigieburn Sporting Club and the Roxburgh Park Hotel, where both venues increased the number of their gaming machines - Craigieburn Club in 2012 by 7 machines (prior to the Highlands Hotel coming on line) and Roxburgh Park Hotel in 2014 by 9 machines.

Graph 6: total expenditure for 3 venues in Hume between 2008-2016:



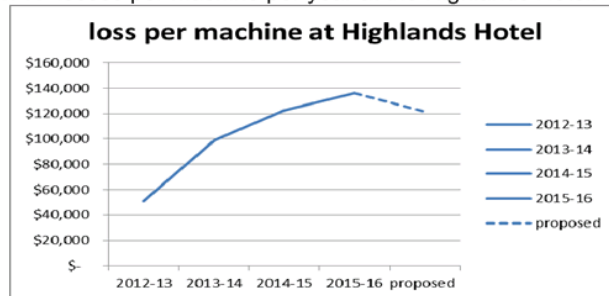
- Thus, the development of the Highlands Hotel led to a direct increase of 60 EGMs and a following indirect increase of 16 EMGs at the two closest gaming venues. It would be of great concern if the current Highlands Hotel application were to be successful, that other local gaming venues would apply for more machines in order to maintain or increase their gaming market share.
- The expenditure at the Hotel is still increasing. The comparison of the first half of 2015/16 to that of 2016/17 indicates that the Hotel has had a 15.7% increase in gaming expenditure, increasing from \$3,995,961 to \$4,621,372, in the first 6 months of the year.

- The current loss per machine at the Highlands Hotel is \$136,040, which is higher than the average loss per machine across Hume (\$130,435), and for Metropolitan Melbourne (\$103,121) and that of Victoria (\$99,381). This loss per machine has exponentially grown from 2012/13 (see graph 5).

However, the Applicant indicates that post application will lead to a decrease in loss per machine per year in stating that the additional expenditure from the additional 20 machines would equal an average of \$1,578,068, thus increasing the total expenditure at the Hotel in a 12 month period to \$9,740,485 (equating to a loss per machine per year being \$121,756).

- It is deemed unlikely that this indicative decrease in expenditure per machine after the proposal is a true reflection, for a number of reasons:
 - The Hotel has shown a very strong growth rate in the gaming expenditure and loss per machine since 2012, as is indicated by the graph below:

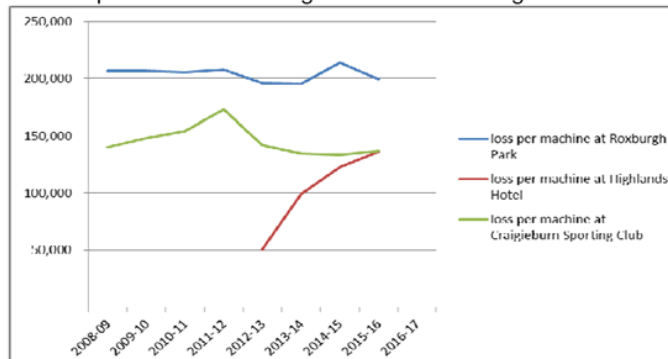
Graph 7: losses per machine per year at the Highlands Hotel:



Thus it is unlikely that the projected growth at the Hotel would veer significantly from this growth trajectory (given the continued growth in gaming revenue in the first half of 2016/17). Thus, if the current level of loss per machine at the Hotel is used, the additional 20 machines would increase the gaming expenditure at the Hotel by approximately \$2,721,000 within the first 12 months, which is significantly higher than the Applicant's estimate (difference of \$1,142,932 or by 72.4%).

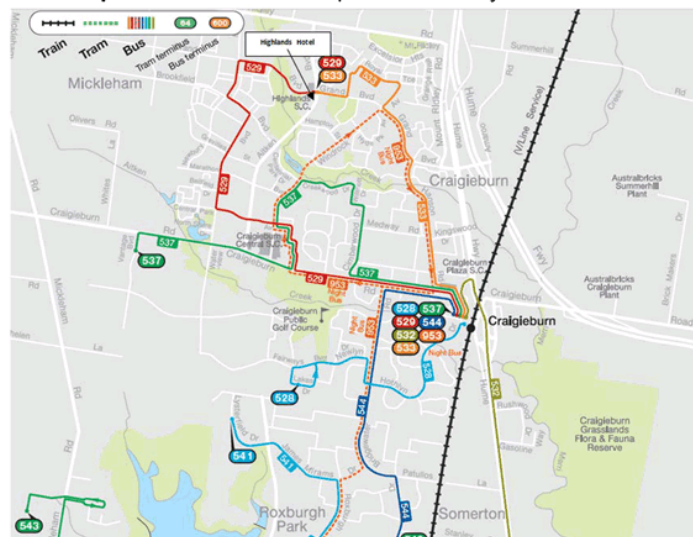
- Applicant suggests that there is a growing number of patrons at the Hotel's gaming lounge (page 3). More patrons would signify higher machine utilisation rates and increased expenditure per machine.
- The level of utilisation of the gaming machines is not at capacity, with only 1.7% of total trading hours of the EGMs having a 70% or above utilisation rate (page 59) and thus has significant capacity to increase. If compared with a similar 80EGM Hotel, such as the Roxburgh Park Hotel, it was estimated that the Roxburgh Park Hotel had an average of 84.5patrons per machine. The Highlands has estimated a current average of 40.8patrons per machine and 36.3patrons per machine post proposal. With an increase in utilisation there will likely be a similar loss per machine to that of similar of the Roxburgh Park (it is perceived that the slight dip is due to their renovations at the hotel after a successful gaming application in 2014), as shown below:

Graph 8: loss per machines for Highlands and Roxburgh Park Hotels



- The *Final Report on the Review of Gaming Machine Legislation* (November 2000, pg 65) highlighted that evidence from Victoria and other States that larger venues tend to be more profitable, both in aggregate expenditure and in terms of revenue per machine. The direct relationship between gaming venue size and machine revenue is relevant given that the application is increasing the size of the gaming room and with the number of machines, thus it is anticipated that the revenue will increase accordingly.
- *A study of gambling in Victoria – problem gambling from a public health perspective* (Hare 2009) showed that there has been a significant increase in frequency in playing EGMs by problem gamblers (from 56.7 times per annum in 2008 to 87.6 times per annum in 2014) as well as moderate risk gamblers (from 22.7 times per annum in 2008 to 86.2 times per annum in 2014). Thus it is more than likely that the additional machines will attract not only more gaming patrons, but will facilitate higher frequencies in gaming and thus higher levels of expenditure per machine per annum.
- Despite the Applicant's statements pertaining to the 'isolated' nature of the Hotel (pages 30, 58 and 61) the Hotel is highly accessible and has a great ease of access and convenience to patrons and general public through:
 - Located within a shopping precinct
 - Ample car parking on site and on opposite side of Grand Boulevard within the Highlands Shopping Centre
 - Situated on the axis of Grand and recently completed Aitken Boulevard (high car traffic and visibility, with increased connectivity via Aitken Boulevard in a north/south direction linking the Hotel into Craigieburn South, Roxburgh Park, Meadow Heights and Greenvale).
 - Increased pedestrian traffic across Grand Boulevard is evident due to Council receiving community requests for improved signage and street lighting at the pedestrian crossing.
 - The purchase of a community bus by the Hotel to ferry patrons to the Hotel 7 days per week and on average of 11 hours per day (of which almost 60% falls into the category of general non-business hours).
 - Direct access to 2 bus routes along Grand Boulevard, with bus stops directly opposite the Hotel and the Highlands Shopping Centre, as indicated by the PTV map below:

Map 9: extract of PTV map for Hume City



8. LOCATIONAL FACTORS

8.1 Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Hume City includes a wide range of communities, with some experiencing substantial disadvantage. According to the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA 2011), Hume City is the 3rd most disadvantaged municipality in metropolitan Melbourne as well as containing three of the most disadvantaged suburbs in metropolitan Melbourne (Broadmeadows, Dallas, and Coolaroo).

The City also includes some areas of relative advantage when compared to these three suburbs, but which have considerable social and economic vulnerabilities on closer examination, including unemployment, mortgage stress and low skill levels.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) does not publish SEIFA scores for geographic areas larger than LGAs. As stated in the SEIFA Technical Report 'Indexes are no longer produced for geographic levels higher than those listed above (CD, POA, SLA & LGA). The reason is that as the size of an area increases, it becomes correspondingly more heterogeneous and the socio-economic index becomes less and less meaningful. To analyse the socio-economic differences between large areas, we recommend observing the distribution of Collection District scores within each area.'⁵

However there is a method for constructing indexes for geographies larger than Collection District level. Hume City Council has used this method to construct indexes for the Melbourne Metropolitan Region and Victoria for each of the four indexes⁶. Indexes were

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics - 2039.0.55.001 - Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) - Technical Paper, 2006

⁶ Collection Districts (CDs) form a 'best fit' 5km radius around the Club. Given the general principle that gaming venues attract residents within a five kilometre radius, a catchment area has been formulated around the Hotel at

also constructed for the 5km radius from the Hotel. These indexes are compared to the indexes published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Table 9: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas

Area	Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage
Local Neighbourhood: 5km radius of the Highlands Hotel	980
Hume	950.3
Metropolitan Melbourne	1021.1
Victoria	1006.7
SSC ⁷ Craigieburn	978

(Source: Hume City Council Research Team)

The Local Neighbourhood has a higher SEIFA score compared to Hume LGA however a lower score compared to the metropolitan Melbourne and Victorian scores. Overall, this indicates that the local neighbourhood around the Hotel experiences higher levels of disadvantage compared to metropolitan and State averages.

However, there are two important characteristics that the SEIFA indexes do not represent well⁸.

- While income and expenditure are included, aspects such as inherited wealth, savings, indebtedness, and property values are not.
- Infrastructure such as schools, community services, shops and transport are not represented by the indexes and have a central impact on an area's relative advantage or disadvantage. The ABS provides "locational disadvantage" as an example of this weakness.

RMIT University's Centre for Applied Social Research recently considered the application of SEIFA rankings to Interface communities, those communities that live in the green wedge and the urban growth boundary that form an arc around metropolitan Melbourne, and expanded on their limitations:

"In aggregate, it is clear that citizens living at the Interface are not, relatively speaking, deprived. The SEIFA (Socio-Economic Index for Area) data from the 1996 Census calculates indicators of the proportion of households owning or purchasing dwellings, the proportion of dwellings with four or more bedrooms, families with incomes over \$78,000, single parents with incomes over \$31,200, mortgages over \$1,300 a month and rents over \$249 a week. The Shire of Nillumbik scored very well on this measure of socio-economic resources in 1996, while the other seven interface municipalities all scored just marginally better than the state average. However...SEIFA indicators can divert attention from precisely those people who most need human service provision, with aggregate indicators simply hiding problems and risks" (Marston, G and others, 2003, *Human Services Gaps at the Interface between urban and rural*, page 12).

that radius. Where a CD falling within the 5km radius had less than 50% of its residents falling within the 5km radius area, the CD was excluded from the data profiling.

⁷ This is a Census-specific area where Collection Districts are aggregated to approximate suburbs.

⁸ ABS: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas 2001, information paper 2039.0

The Interface Councils include some of the fastest and largest growing suburbs in Victoria such as the municipalities of Hume, Whittlesea and Wyndham. RMIT identified three “distinctive patterns of social needs and vulnerability” experienced in the Interface municipalities:

- Families with young children;
- Housing and mortgages; and
- Keeping up with rapid growth.

The local neighbourhood area that includes Craigieburn and parts of Mickleham is currently the area of Hume which is growing rapidly, often referred to as the ‘northern growth corridor’. Families and young children seeking affordable home ownership opportunities are the most common residents that have made Craigieburn home.

As the RMIT study stated:

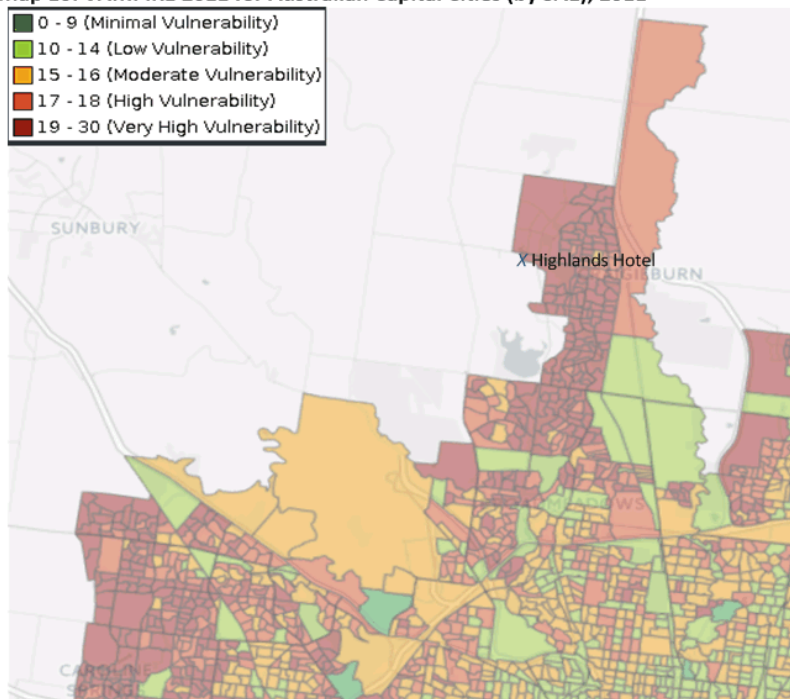
“The combination of the high proportions of families with young children and high mortgages in housing estates is a significant risk factor in the majority of Interface municipalities. Aggregate figures on socio-economic status can obscure the financial stresses residents may encounter in paying substantial mortgages. High rates of mortgages can signify high rates of exposure to rising interest rates, and the associated risk of falling behind on mortgages.” (page 14).

The key question in relation to the Application is whether its net economic and social impact will not be detrimental to the wellbeing of the community (section 3.4.20 (1) (c) of the Gaming Regulation Act). The SEIFA rankings consider disadvantage – not wellbeing – and do not take into key factors in the wellbeing of an interface growth community (in particular, as pointed out by the ABS – who compile the indices - indebtedness and “locational disadvantage”).

Other useful index is the Vulnerability Analysis or Mortgage, Petrol and Inflation Risks Expenditure (VAMPIRE)⁹ that is particularly relevant to growth areas such as Hume. This index made up of car dependence, income level and mortgages produces a vulnerability score that can be mapped in a similar way to SIEFA. It provides a useful lens on vulnerability for outer suburban areas that typically have inadequate access to public transport, and mortgages that are high relative to income so are particularly vulnerable to high fuel prices, high interest rates and pressures from inflation.

⁹ <https://aurin.org.au/projects/lens-sub-projects/vulnerability-analysis-of-mortgage-petroleum-and-inflation-risks-and-expenditure-vampire-index/>

Map 10: VAMPIRE 2011 for Australian Capital Cities (by SA1), 2011



(Source: Australian Urban Research Infrastructure Network (AURIN), based on data from the ABS Census of Population and Housing 2011)

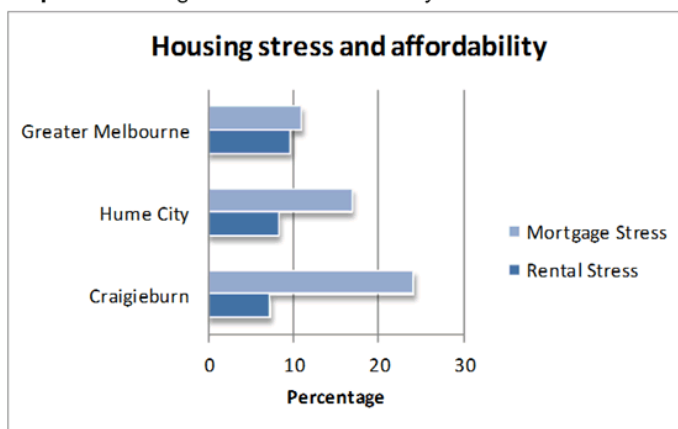
Significant populated areas of Hume City are vulnerable on the VAMPIRE Index and as mapped above the Highlands Hotel sits within a highly vulnerable area.

There is a perception that housing is more affordable in the outer suburban areas typical of growth areas such as Craigieburn in Hume. However increasing petrol costs and utilities costs, coupled with the lack of local employment and poor public transport options is pushing people into higher mortgage stress.

The applicant provided information regarding the levels of *housing stress and affordability* relevant to the application. The applicant's own statistics, charted below shows a clear level of vulnerability in Craigieburn. It shows that close to a third of households in Craigieburn are experiencing housing related stress (rental or mortgage), a quarter of the residents (24.3%) are experiencing mortgage stress. At 23.4% Craigieburn households experience more mortgage stress than that of the average Australia household at 18.4%¹⁰.

¹⁰ Wright, D (2016), Not of struggle street yet, but mortgage stress risk is rising.
<https://theconversation.com/not-on-struggle-street-yet-but-mortgage-stress-risk-is-rising-64293>

Graph 9: Housing Stress and affordability



(Source: Social and Economic Impact Statement Highlands Hotel, Craigieburn 2016)

In the applicant's summary this level of stress is considered to be normal and not of significance as many people in Victoria "are seemingly prepared to commit a higher proportion of their personal or household income towards securing their own home".

The applicant's own figures seem to be consistent with recent reports such as *The Age*¹¹ which reports that residents in Craigieburn and Burnside are the two suburbs in Melbourne with the highest levels of mortgage delinquency (Moody's Investors Service Australia Residential Mortgage Delinquency Map). It demonstrates that people living in the outer growth suburbs are generally young families, who spend a higher proportion of their income on mortgages. The report goes on to show that part of the reason that an increasing number of community and welfare service organisations are working in outer suburban growth areas is because "Often people living on the fringe are much more vulnerable in terms of employment opportunities, with more people with part time and casualised employment".

This is consistent with information from Lentara Uniting Care, the lead provider of financial counselling services in the Cities of Hume and Moreland. Lentara Uniting Care report in 2016 that the highest number of new clients accessing their financial counselling services in their service region is from Craigieburn (21%)¹². In fact at 21% of new clients for 2016, the only location in Hume and Moreland that came close to Craigieburn is Broadmeadows (15%) which is universally acknowledged as one of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable communities in greater Melbourne. In addition to the highest increase in new clients in their region being from Craigieburn, Lentara Uniting Care relayed to Hume Council Officers the following features of their 2016 clients:

- The average client counselling session has increased from 180 mins to 230 mins.
- Problem gambling as a feature of a client's financial difficulties is emerging as one of the main presenting issues that leads to longer counselling sessions due to the complex issues underlying problem gambling and arising from gambling.

¹¹ Robb, K (2016), Victorian mortgage delinquency holds steady, but certain suburbs hit hard <https://www.domain.com.au/news/victorian-mortgage-delinquency-holds-steady-but-certain-suburbs-hit-hard-20160404-gnxmz7/>

¹² Lentara Uniting Care, Financial Counselling Report 01 January to 31 January 2017 (internal document provided by Lentara Uniting Care Broadmeadows)

- In this region Craigieburn (and Sunbury) has the highest number of “priority 1 clients”- priority 1 clients being those people/families at risk of becoming homeless and or “imminently losing their home”. Furthermore Lentara Uniting Care claim they are at capacity in their Craigieburn service and could easily and immediately absorb one more EFT Financial Counsellor if they had the resources.

The applicant’s claims that the housing stress and affordability evidenced in Craigieburn is no different to and is not of any particular concern from the rest of the state that experiences this type of stress makes light of all the evidence and experience that shows the serious socioeconomic challenges faced by communities in Hume. This high level of socioeconomic disadvantage indicates that communities in Hume already lack the opportunities, capacity and resources to face challenging and changing circumstances. The outer suburban areas such as Craigieburn already experience a disproportionate impact on their households due to the relatively greater living costs faced with long commute times, and lack of local employment opportunities, as well as the relative social isolation and poor access to community and health services.

Data from Gamblers Help North and North Western (GHN) was not provided prior to the completion of this assessment. However in discussions with GHN they claim residents in Hume City, particularly from Broadmeadows and Craigieburn, form one of their largest client base in the north and north western region.

8.2 Accessibility of EGMs

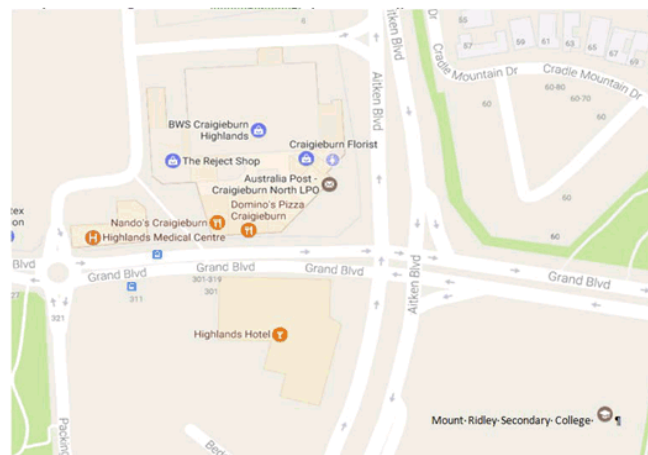
Within the 5km catchment radius, there is one other gaming venue, the Craigieburn Sporting Club, which in addition to the Highland Hotel’s 60 EGMs, provides another 70 machines. There is an additional 80 machines just outside of this radius at Roxburgh Park Hotel. In total, residents in the Local Neighbourhood have access to 210 EGMs, demonstrating that they have ease of access to gaming machines and high levels of consumer choice in a variety of venues and venue types.

There is substantial research in Australia which links EGM density and accessibility to gambling activity. An Australian National University study found that people who live closer to their regular gaming club were more likely to use EGMs, to use them more often and to spend more on EGMs¹³. The correlations between accessibility and gaming harms were also reiterated in the *Productivity Commission Inquiry: Gambling* (2010) under section 14.4 where it highlighted research into this gambling issue. Furthermore research studies such as Young, Markham and Doran (2012)¹⁴ found venues in accessible locations such as near a supermarkets and those with high numbers of gaming machines were associated with increased levels of gaming harm. This application would increase the number of EGMs in a location that is considered highly accessible as it is within a shopping precinct that includes the Highlands Shopping Centre, popular fast/takeaway food stores, medical centre and service stations. In addition the Highlands Hotel in a convenient destination with ample car parking, and travel route for the local bus network and the nearby secondary school.

¹³ Australian National University (2004), *Gaming Machine Accessibility and Use in Suburban Canberra*, S. 6.2

¹⁴ Young, M, Markham, F and Doran, B 2012, Placing Bets: gambling venues and the distribution of harm’, *Australian Geographer*, vol. 43, no 4

Map 11: Highlands Shopping precinct:



(Source: Google Maps)

Since the introduction of the new licensing arrangements in August 2012, the number of EGMs in Hume has increased to 813 (12% increase) and the level of expenditure has increased by \$7,283,683 (7.4% increase). The additional 20 EGMs will increase the level of accessibility gaming opportunities for local residents in the 5km radius (increasing the EGM gaming density from 4.5 to 5.2 EGMs per 1,000 adults, or to 6 in the northern part of Craigieburn), which in turn will increase opportunities for increased gaming expenditure at the venues (and player losses). Although it is noted that the gaming density for the 5km radius is lower than that for Hume, metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria, the area has a lower SEIFA Index for advantage and disadvantage compared to Melbourne and Victoria, and therefore calls for concern.

Research¹⁵ has shown that vulnerable people in lower socioeconomic groups have been identified as 'at risk' of problematic gambling behaviours and the harms caused by gaming, as well as that the "poor spend a greater proportion of their income on gambling than do middle income earners".¹⁶

The Applicant indicates that there is a high utilisation rate of the current 60 EGMs and that the additional 20 would potentially generate an additional 400 to 500 patrons per week to the gaming venue at the Hotel. If the same current machine to patron ratio is maintained (namely approximately 2,450 patrons to 60 EGMs), then there is a potential that the additional 20 machines could attract 800 patrons more per week to the gaming venue, 300 more than suggested by the Applicant, and if compared with a similar 80 machine hotel, this is a very low estimate (Roxburgh Hotel has approximately 6760 patrons per week)

The Applicant also indicates that the high gaming machine utilisation times are around meal times. The Witness statement indicates that patrons have to 'wait' to access machines before or after their meals, this 'normalisation' of gaming as an add-on activity to a family outing is of great concern. This is also enabled through the provision of the children's activity area within the Hotel, where either partner of the family can go gaming, while the rest

¹⁵ Report released by the Australian Psychological Society on the psychology of gambling <http://www.psychology.org.au/publications/inpsych/2010/december/gambling/>

¹⁶ Abbot and Cramer 1993 in Department of Justice 200: *Socio-economic impacts of access to electronic gaming machines in Victoria*, p14).

of the family can access activities elsewhere in the Hotel. Recent studies by Deakin University show that children are having a greater level of recall of gaming brands/logos, which is due to their high exposure to gaming activities (The Age 3 June 2016).

8.3 Alternative Entertainment (but still underpins gambling)

Hume City Council's Local Planning Policy on Gaming states 'it is policy that gaming machines should be located in venues which have a range of non-gambling entertainment and leisure options'.

The Highlands Hotel provides a range of facilities and limited entertainment opportunities, including food and drink, Sports bar with pay TV, poker nights and DJ's on Fridays. Although such entertainment provides socialisation opportunities for patrons, they nevertheless underpin increased access to gambling opportunities. This is also very apparent when the floor area of the gaming room and the TAB sports bar are compared to the rest of the Hotel "non-gambling" space. The Sports Bar and the gaming room footprints are of similar size and combined are approximately 38% of the floor space of the Hotel.

The images below show some examples of the Applicant's activities that demonstrate that in addition to proving EGMs, they have regular activities that are considered gambling.



(Source: Highlands Hotel's Facebook post 20 October and 22 November 2016)

The clustering of a variety of gambling activities are of a concern given research demonstrates a "strong association between gaming machines and most other forms of gambling"...and that "even if it was not their preferred activity or their primary gambling

activity, all the problem gamblers interviewed gambled on gaming machines at least occasionally.¹⁷

Research has found that that people who have few alternative entertainment options were more likely to have problematic gambling behaviour¹⁸. The Hotel's indication that patrons are "forced to wait" to access gaming machines is an indication of the lack of other activities for the patrons at the Hotel (witness statement Diana Asmar, para 21).

In addition, research indicates the inducements (such as discounted meals, product give-aways, and free meals) may encourage increased levels of gambling activities amongst patrons.¹⁹ The Applicant views its discounted meals (to a value of \$85,000) as a community benefit, while previously mentioned research contradicts this as a potential harm where it may act as an incentive to participate in gambling activities at the Hotel.

In recognition of this concern, Council included a condition on the Highlands Hotel's current planning permit being: "Management must have in place a management strategy intended to put in place alternative social activities for patrons other than gaming during the proposed operational hours to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority".

8.4 Community Facilities

Hume City Council's assessment of community infrastructure requirements has highlighted there is a spread of community and leisure facilities in the 5km radius (with less in the newer growth areas of Craigieburn/Mickleham). Whilst Council plans to develop new community hubs in the northern suburbs of the Hume Corridor, there is also a need for investment on aging infrastructure. Also the availability of facilities do not automatically equate to community access and use.

Council's Community Grant program highlights gaps between community/leisure facilities and community participation and involvement. Many community groups have applied to Council's Community Grants program to undertake activities that will strengthen community resilience, address hardships and disadvantage, overcome isolation, and address access to basic needs (material aid) – demonstrating the social and economic vulnerability of the Hume community and in Craigieburn (demonstrated by the number of emergency relief services located in Craigieburn):

¹⁷ Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, *The Victorian Gambling Study: Qualitative Component*, November 2012, page 21.

¹⁸ Thomas, A., Moore, S., Kyrios, M., Bates, G., Meredyth, D. & Jessop, G. (2010), *Problem Gambling Vulnerability: The interaction between access, individual cognitions and group beliefs/preferences*, Department of Justice, Melbourne.

¹⁹ *Productivity Commission Inquiry into Gambling 2010*, section 12.6.

CRAIGIEBURN Anglicare
59 Craigieburn Road, Craigieburn Call 9.00 A.M. on Friday Morning only to call
Ph: **0408 129 590**
By appointment only. For residents of Roxburgh Park, Craigieburn, Wallan,
Mickleham and Kalkalo. Must have healthcare or pension card.

CRAIGIEBURN Brotherhood of St Laurence – NO FOOD VOUCHERS
120 Hothlyn Drive, Craigieburn
Ph: **9305 5100**
Mon - Fri 8.30am - 5.00pm
Family Day Car Scheme, XMAS toy service, Progress Loans, Legal Aid
Service. For health care or pension card holders who have been residing in
Hume for a minimum of six months.

CRAIGIEBURN Dianella Community Health
55 Craigieburn Road, Craigieburn
Ph: **9303 0509**
By appointment only, must ring on Friday at 9.00am. Food vouchers only.
For residents of City of Hume.
CRAIGIEBURN Salvation Army
75 Interlink Drive, Craigieburn
Ph: **8339 4987**
Mon – Thursday 12.00pm - 4.00pm
Food vouchers and food parcels
Resident in Craigieburn, Somerton, Campbellfield, Broadmeadows, Dallas,
Meadow Heights, Coolaroo, Roxburgh Park and Meadow Heights.

8.5 Community Attitudes to Gaming

Council's Responsible Gaming Policy requires applicants to conduct a community attitudinal survey which seeks the impact on the wellbeing of the community as a consequence of the application. Council also requires the applicant to list each aspect of the proposal and ask the respondents attitude to each.

The Romsey VCAT case identified the importance of considering the impact on community wellbeing as part of EGM applications. VCAT found that decisions must take into account the character of the community and the sort of community where people want to live²⁰.

The Applicant did not undertake a community survey in relation to its proposal (its potential benefits and harms).

Council values the views from its residents on issues that may affect them and in accordance with its Responsible Gaming Policy sought that the Applicant to undertake a community attitudinal survey on its application. Unfortunately the findings from this community survey could not be included in this submission due to Council's request for an extension being refused by the Commission.

Nonetheless, Council sought responses from community service providers to the application in order to gain information on the likely impact of the additional machines on the Craigieburn community.

In Council's community attitudinal survey to gaming 2013 indicated 70.9% of Hume residents agreed/strongly agreed that pokies were too widely accessible and 50.3% agreed/strongly agreed that pokies contribute to serious social issues within their local area.

²⁰ Romsey Hotel Pty Ltd v Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation & Anor (Occupational and Business Regulation) [2009] VCAT 2275 (12 November 2009)

9. PRESENCE OF VULNERABLE GROUPS IN HUME, CRAIGIEBURN AND LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD

The applicant’s SEIA states that:

- The table also shows that City of Hume scored 950 on the SEIFA index of advantage and disadvantage....As such the SEIFA ranking in these ‘metro-fringe’ urban growth municipalities is changing much more significantly (tending upwards) between the census periods...” (pages 45 and 46).
- “There are no notable disadvantageous populous around the location of the Hotel” (page 63)...
- “...in terms of social and economic profile of the City of Hume, the area shows very few signs of disadvantage” (page 57).

Despite the statements made in the applicant’s SEIA report, residents in Hume City and Craigieburn do experience high levels of disadvantage and poor levels of health and wellbeing.

Further to section 8 of this SEIA, research undertaken on disadvantage and poverty has highlighted the significant levels of disadvantage in Hume and in Craigieburn. The longitudinal studies undertaken by the Jesuit Social Services (JSS) on disadvantage have indicated that Broadmeadows (and some surrounding neighbourhoods) has consistently fallen into the category of a highly disadvantaged neighbourhood, despite experiencing urban renewal and population growth.

According to *Dropping Off the Edge 2015*, indicated that Broadmeadows was the most disadvantaged post code in the State. It also shows that over the years the postcode had increased in its level of disadvantage – moving from a Band 3 level of disadvantage in 2004 to that of a Band 1 in 2015. It also showed that many of most disadvantaged postcodes in 2015 were also found to be most disadvantaged in the previous 2007 study, including Broadmeadows and Campbellfield (with Coolaroo appearing in the 2015 study) as shown in the table below:

Most disadvantaged postcodes in Victoria – comparison with previous years

(Bands illustrate the severity of disadvantage experienced by a location with Band 1 being most severe. Locations listed alphabetically within bands.)

	2015	2007*	2004	Estimated Population (2011)
Most disadvantaged				
	3047 Broadmeadows	✓ (B1)	✓ (B3)	10, 578
	3214 Corio	✓ (B3)	✓ (B3)	15,072
BAND 1	3177 Doveton	✓ (B2)	✓ (B1)	8,404
	3200 Frankston North		✓ (B6)	5,626
	3404 Maryborough	✓ (B1)	✓ (B4)	7630
	3840 Morwell		✓ (B4)	13,691
Supplementary Special case	3520 Korong Vale	✓ (B1)	✓ (B1)	248
	3022 Ardeer			2,823
	3019 Braybrook	✓ (B2)	✓ (B1)	8,180
	3048 Coolaroo			3,261
BAND 2	3061 Campbellfield	✓ (B4)		5,467
	3940 Rosebud West	✓ (B1)		4,579
	3355 Wendouree			9,766

Source: <http://k46cs13u1432b9asz49wnhcx-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/DOTE-state-fact-sheet-Vic3.pdf>

The map provided below indicated that the majority of Hume City demonstrates high levels of disadvantage according to the 2015 *Dropping off the Edge Study*:



Source: <http://k46cs13u1432b9asz49wnhcx-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/themes/dote2015/resources/melbourne.pdf>

The SIEFA index for relative disadvantage for the area of Craigieburn 5km radius around the hotel is lower than that for the Hume City area, but higher than the Melbourne Metropolitan area and that of Victoria (as illustrated under section 8 of this SEIA).

9.1 Centrelink Benefits

Many residents within Hume City are recipients of Centrelink Benefits. This is also the case with residents living in those suburbs that fall into the Local Neighbourhood area.

The high recipient levels of Centrelink benefits in the suburbs of Craigieburn and Mickleham give an indication of levels of support and inter reliance which are experienced in some households, households that are reliant upon limited and fixed incomes and households that may have members who are reliant upon recipients of Centrelink benefits for care and support. Such households will likely be vulnerable to problems associated with gambling due to them not having buffers against unexpected outgoings of income.

Table 10: Recipients per 1,000 residents aged 18 years or over:

Region	Health Care Card	Low Income Card	Newstart Allowance	Parenting Payment Single	Pensioner Concession Card
Craigieburn - Mickleham	146.0	34.5	53.3	17.2	191.2
Hume (C)	139.8	38.6	60.4	17.1	254.7
Victoria	88.5	32.9	37.0	11.7	221.5

The three largest categories of benefits within the Craigieburn and Mickleham area (after family benefits and child care payments) are Health Care Card, Aged Pension, and the Newstart Allowance. Reliance upon Carer Allowances (eg payments to those who are primary carers for a person with a disability) follows on after Newstart as a significant Centrelink benefit provided to residents of Craigieburn.²¹

Problem gambling

The Victorian gambling prevalence study conducted in 2014 estimated the rate of problem gambling to be 0.81 per cent of the population (Hare, 2015). This rate may seem small but the Productivity Commission estimates that problem gamblers contribute 40 per cent of total EGM losses; and for each problem gambler, another 7 to 10 people are adversely affected.

The Hotel has indicated that they have an exclusion program and that 150 individuals are listed in that program (equaling 6.1% of the number of gaming patrons per week at the Hotel). If the same levels of patrons/machine are used (which is an underestimate compared to other 80EGMs venue), then potentially 3,267 patrons may see approximately 200 individuals listed on the exclusion program. This is a voluntary program and it relies on the problem gambler to self-exclude themselves from the gaming activities at the Hotel, and the level of success is not well evidenced.

Problem gamblers have high participation in gaming machine gambling. The 2014 prevalence study found 67% of problem gamblers used gaming machines, and playing them was the highest spending activity. Problem gamblers are 17 times more likely to gamble on gaming machines compared to non-problem gamblers.

The proportion of Victorian adults who participate in gaming machine gambling has decreased from 21.5% in 2008 to 15.2% in 2014. However the frequency of play for those at risk has changed significantly. Prevalence study showed that moderate risk gamblers increased gaming frequency from 22.73 times per year to 86.24 times and for problem gamblers this increased from 56.37 times in 2008 to 87.61 times in 2014. Low risk gamblers have decreased their frequency of play from 16 times per year in 2008 to 12 times per year in 2014. As noted, gaining data on the incidence of problem gambling in the City of Hume was not possible within the timeframe of this assessment process.

Regardless of the measures of the prevalence of problem gambling, there is general acceptance by governments, community and welfare groups, and to a lesser extent the gambling industry, that there are significant numbers of problem gamblers.²²

Estimates of the incidence of problem gambling should be considered with some regard to a number of factors.

- The two main indicators used to measure the prevalence of problem gambling are expenditure per adult (sourced from the VCGLR) and presentations at Gamblers Help North and other welfare and support agencies. These indicators are unable to measure the other key factor relating to problem gambling, namely the difficulty associated with time, in addition to money.

²¹ Source: Department of Social Services, Payment Demographic Data, September 2016.

²² Australian Government Productivity Commission (2010) p5.4

- Expenditure is calculated through two variables, namely the expenditure in a local government and expenditure per adult in that local government. It is important to note that Hume has significantly higher levels of expenditure per adult and gaming expenditure in comparison to the metropolitan and State levels.
- Pubs and Hotels are now the most common locations to play EGMs (Prevalence Study)
- Problem gambling is a hidden issue. As a result presentations at welfare and community service are unlikely to be an accurate measure, as they only measure people who are seeking help for their problems. As indicated by the Prevalence Study, very low percentages of moderate risk and problem gamblers seek assistance.

The *Health Promotion Resource Guide for Problem Gambling Prevention in Northern Melbourne*²³ illustrates that there are a number of research papers that show there are at risk groups who are potentially vulnerable to problem gaming, including:

- “Young people and young males
- Senior Victorians
- People experiencing substance abuse
- People experiencing mental health issues
- People of CALD backgrounds
- People of Koori/Indigenous backgrounds
- People with intellectual/cognitive disabilities
- People in community services or corrections
- Families and friends of problem gamblers”.

In reviewing the dominant motivating factors for problem gamblers to gamble and to frequent gaming venues (*Stage One Report 2003*), it is of great concern that the communities within Hume City and the 5km radius have many comparable social and demographic profiles as those of problem gamblers, and therefore have a potentially higher propensity towards problem gambling, including younger persons; CALD community; low proficiency in English; unemployment; lower income levels; disabilities and mental health issues; and lower education levels.

Detailed analysis of potentially vulnerable residents to problem gaming can be found in Appendix 1 of this Assessment.

10. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The following section looks at the social and economic impacts from the proposal according to the *Social and Economic Impact Assessment Framework* for EGMs. These impacts include both positive and negative impacts and are weighed up in the analysis under Section 11 of this Assessment. Impacts are categorised as either individual, interpersonal, organisational or community.

²³ Rennie, Susan: *Health Promotion Resource Guide for Problem Gambling Prevention in Northern Melbourne*, Banyule Nillumbik PCP, June 2009
<http://www.nepcp.org.au/sites/www.nepcp.org.au/files/Health%20Promotion%20Resource%20Guide%20for%20Problem%20Gambling%20Prevention%20in%20Melbourn's%20North.pdf>

10.1 Individual

10.1.1 Entertainment & Enjoyment

The proposal will increase the availability of EGMs in the Hotel by 33.3%, which some consider a positive impact for those patrons who enjoy and are able to gamble responsibly. However, there is already reasonable access to EGMs in Hume City, which currently has a higher EGM density than the metropolitan Melbourne and State averages.

The Productivity Commission (2010) identified that gaming venues often provide benefits including low prices, good food, friendliness, safety, and a pleasant atmosphere; they are accessible and open long hours²⁴. State Government research also found venues with EGMs were seen as safe, clean, attractive, secure and new and were preferred venues, especially for women²⁵. Nonetheless, these positive features of the venue become diluted due to the co-occurrence of gaming venue with social venue and the nature of the benefits and entertainment hosted at the Hotel.

While people are attached to gaming venues due to perceptions that they provide safe and social environments, the exposure to gaming presents potential risks for patrons.

The witness statement of Diana Asmar indicates that the Hotel is frequented by “primarily families together with senior groups which come in busloads” (para 18). This is very concerning observation, where research indicates that senior citizens are vulnerable to gaming, with Arcare residential estate located within the local neighbourhood. The presences of children in venues reinforce a sense of safety and harmlessness and is widely used as a marketing technique (Bestman, A et..at.)²⁶.

These marketing techniques encourage families and children into gaming venues with childrens’ meals, birthday parties, and family fun days including childrens activities though EGMs are adult only entertainment. The presence of children in gaming venues means children will be exposed to gambling at an early age and could normalise gambling.

²⁴ *ibid*, S. 6.3

²⁵ Thomas et al (2010), S.2.2.3.

²⁶ Bestman, A., Thomas, S., Randle, M., Pitt, H., Daube, M., & Pettigrew, S. (2016). Shaping pathways to gambling consumption? An analysis of the promotion of gambling and non-gambling activities from gambling venues. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 24(2), 152-162.



(Source: Highlands Hotel Facebook 22 June 2016)

The Applicant's marketing activity example above demonstrates that they target families and children as patrons by providing activities that make bringing children to the venue normal. These 'mother and children' only activities also appeal to many women particularly in growth areas where their partner may have a long commutes to and from work, and have limited family or friends for social opportunities. Research shows that women experiencing isolation and loneliness can be exposed to higher risks of problem gambling due to venue attributes²⁷.

The Applicant indicated positive benefits provided by the Hotel through the offering of \$75,000 worth of discounted meals, vouchers, and the operational cost of their bus service at the venue between 2012 and 2017. Nonetheless, it should be noted that research has indicated that such discounts can act as inducements or incentives for residents to frequent the venue and in turn be exposed to gaming activities²⁸.

According to Council's *Community Attitudinal Gambling Survey 2013*, 7 out of 10 residents 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' that gambling has improved their social life (70.9%) and more than half 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' that gambling venues provide an enjoyable atmosphere (51.2%).

As part of the same Survey, a large proportion of residents 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that problem gambling is a serious social issue (48.6%) and that the increased availability of gambling opportunities has increased the incidence of problem gambling (49.6%).

10.1.2 Loss of Health

Gambling can impact on the health and well-being of gamblers and their families, resulting in costs to the health system. It has been documented that people with severe gambling problems also have correlations in suffering from a wide range of mental and physical health

²⁷ Trevorrow, K. & Moore, S (1998), *The Association Between Loneliness, Social Isolation and Women's Electronic Gaming Machine Gambling*

²⁸ Productivity Commission *Inquiry into Gambling 2010*, section 12.6.

problems, including suicide attempts, depression, relationship and marital breakdown, criminal activity and imprisonment, as well as severe financial difficulties²⁹. With a high EGM expenditure per adult, the health effects of gambling in the 5km radius around the Hotel are of concern.

It is commonly accepted that many gamblers or members of their families may seek assistance from health workers but without naming gambling as a problem – they present for related health or mental health problems, such as those identified above.

As shown with the ABS SEIFA index of disadvantage, Hume City is the 12th most disadvantaged LGA in Victoria and the third most disadvantaged in Metropolitan Melbourne. Hume City has many low income families and people with little training and unskilled occupations.

It has been documented that people with severe gambling problems suffer from a wide range of mental and physical health problems, including suicide attempts, depression, relationships and marital breakdown, criminal activity and imprisonment, as well as severe financial difficulties (Productivity Commission).

Although much of the estimated expenditure is expected to be transferred (63.4%), new expenditure indicates some new gamblers, or gamblers who will increase their gambling activity as a result. By increasing the access to EGMs, it is likely that this will also increase the negative impact of lost health or exacerbation of health issues for some individual gamblers and their families through the participation in increased gaming opportunities or the diversion of household monies from food, utilities, leisure and health expenditures.

10.1.3 Loss of Finances

Research has identified that the incidence of problem gambling can lead to issues of financial hardship, debts, asset losses and bankruptcy³⁰. As discussed under Section 7 of this Assessment, the 5km radius already has significantly higher EGM expenditure levels (\$611 in local neighbourhood to 821/adult in northern Craigieburn) compared to metropolitan Melbourne (\$576) and Victoria (\$553).

ShineWing Expenditure Report, prepared on behalf of the Hotel, anticipates this proposal will increase EGM expenditure by \$1.469 to 1.687 million over the first twelve months for venue and between \$1.028 and \$1.18 million in Hume.

Although it suggests that there will be 30% transference of expenditure from over gaming venues, there is every likelihood that there will be a significant increase in expenditure within 5km from the Hotel. It is very likely that the estimated increase in expenditure from the additional 20 machines is significantly underestimated as previously suggested in this assessment.

Increased losses from the local neighbourhood will lead to increased losses of personal finances to gamblers in the local community, which is of concern because the occupations of local residents deemed more casual and more vulnerable than those has by Metropolitan Melbourne residents. Approximately 16.9% are technicians/trades; 16.5% clerical/administrative; 12% machine operators and 12.4 labourers, in comparison with 6.7%; 7.6%; 2.9% and 4.0% in Metropolitan Melbourne. This is even more concerning due to Hume losing a number of significant manufacturers and jobs since the Global Financial Crisis, such as the recent Ford Factory closure in Broadmeadows.

²⁹ Productivity Commission (1999), *Australian Gambling Industries*, Report No.10, Canberra.

³⁰ Ibid

Furthermore, the Productivity Commission estimates that problem gamblers share of the total losses is estimated at around 40% to 60% of all gamblers losses, which can lead to significant impacts for individual and families (taking that problem gamblers comprise 0.8% of gamblers).

10.2 Interpersonal

10.2.1 Family Violence and Relationship Breakdown

The Productivity Commission estimates that for every problem gambler, up to seven other people are affected (such as family members, friends or colleagues)³¹. The Commission also found that this can lead to relationship breakdown through a lack of trust, increased arguments, stress and financial hardship. Research has found evidence that problem or moderate risk gamblers experience divorce and separation as a result of gambling³².

There is also evidence linking alcohol consumption and gambling. According to the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, gambling and alcohol were often collectively associated in causing harms, as they may damage the individual, resulting in depression, anxiety and contemplation of suicide, while they give rise to domestic violence and severe relationship issues³³.

Family violence can be either the cause of gambling (gambling as a means of coping), or the outcome (increase in violence due to stressors created from gambling)³⁴. Hume City has the second highest rate of reported family violence incidents in Melbourne's northern region, with 1,550 per 100,000 population in 2015/16³⁵.

Women's Health in the North (WHIN) have identified an increasing number of cases in their services related to women who report gambling as one of the factors that exacerbates family problems including family violence. For WHIN the interaction of gambling problems and family violence is so significant that they developed training and reference tools for family violence workers to identify gambling problems and for gamblers help services to identify and assess family violence.

The Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation's (the Foundation) submission to the Royal Commission on Family Violence in 2015³⁶ relayed its concerns on the presences of family violence as harm and complicating factor associated with problem gambling. In its submission the Foundation provided compelling evidence and findings from international and Australian research that in families where gambling is a problem there is more than likely to be than the general population families who experience family violence. Furthermore the overall stress and pressure of living with a problem gambler family member results in a higher risk of family violence. The Foundation also relayed alarming evidence that in one study of people who identified with gambling problems, half these people had perpetrated physical violence against their children.

³¹ Ibid, S.7

³² Gambling Research Panel (2004) *Problem Gamblers, Loved Ones and Service Providers* (New Focus Research).

³³ South Australian Centre for Economic Studies (2005), *Community Impacts of EGM Gambling* (Victoria and Western Australia).

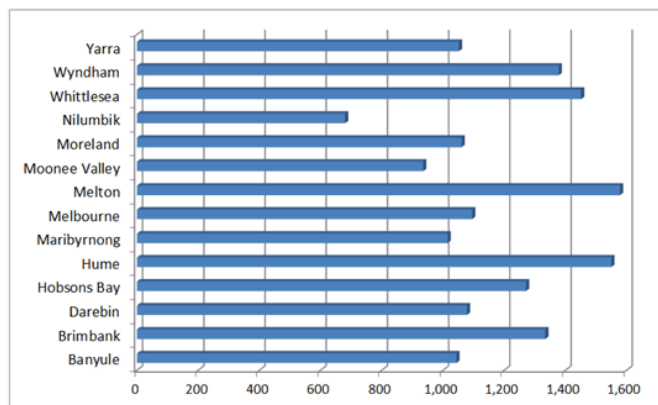
³⁴ Community West (2007), *Exploring the Links Between Family Violence and Problem Gambling*.

³⁵ Crime Statistics Agency, Family Incidents Victoria
<https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/crime-statistics/latest-crime-data/family-incidents-1>

³⁶ The Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (2015), Submission to the Royal Commission of Family Violence.

Suomi et al (2013) showed that 52.5% of surveyed families reported some form of family violence in the past 12 months. This high rate of family violence of family members of problem gamblers has significant implications for families and support services, which are already at capacity in Craigieburn.

Table11: Rates of reported family incidents per 100,000 population, North West Region, 2015/2016



Source: Crime Statistics Agency Victoria, Family Incidents data tables

The emerging evidence of the link between family violence and problem gambling, and the significant proportion of family incidents in the community that the harms caused by gambling to the community amount to more than just the financial problems of a problem gambler but cascades over to other family members and the communities they live in.

10.3 Organisational

10.3.1 State Taxes, shareholders venue operators

The additional machines at the Hotel will generate additional revenue for State Government tax for consolidated revenue and for Community Support Fund (now called the Community Infrastructure Fund).

It should be noted that there is a high leakage rate of economic benefits from local areas from gaming through shareholders, Government taxes and non-local venue operators.

10.3.2 Revenue from Gaming Venues

If estimated expenditure is correct, additional EGM expenditure will be a positive impact for the Hotel, however there will be a negative impact for other existing EGM venues with the 30% transference of revenue away from the affected venues, mainly from other venues within (and just outside) the 5km radius of the venue – largely from Craigieburn Sporting Club (25%) and the Roxburgh Park Hotel.

10.3.3 Revenue to patrons and community groups

According to the applicant, benefits have been received by patrons and community groups in the past by way of free food and beverages, support for annual functions for community organisations, subsidised meals, vouchers for members and sponsorships to community and sporting clubs (in Jan-June 2016 equalling \$1,500 or 0.26% of all community contributions).

However this application remains silent on the ongoing contributions past 2017 (previous application included \$75,000 per annum for 5 years). Council has not made any commitment to accept this once-off payment, and as previously stated the `offer` was made with no connection to a gaming application and should not form part of the application.

10.4 Community

10.4.1 Expanded Facilities

The application holds no expanded facilities or services at the Hotel other than the plans to extend the gaming room to accommodate the proposed additional 20 EGMs, which will also include the removal of the outdoor terrace and improve the Hotel façade. The estimated cost of the works is \$975,000. The extension will benefit only those Hotel patrons who participate in gaming.

It is highly likely that the `community benefit` from the Hotel improvements are regarded less of a benefit to the community than is anticipated from the Applicant, thus significantly lessening the weight that should be given to the gaming extension as a positive impact for the community.

10.4.2 Support for Community Groups

Hotels with EGMs contribute towards the Community Support Fund (CSF) administered by State Government to the equivalent of 8½% of their net EGM expenditure. This payment into the Grant program does not equate to spending back into the Hume community through the CSF funded projects.

In its December 2009 application to the VCGLR for 60 Electronic Gaming Machines, the venue stated it would establish the Highlands Hotel Community Benefit Program. The Program would provide an amount of \$75,000 per annum for a period of 5 years to be invested into the Craigieburn community to assist in a variety of initiatives such as improving open space areas, providing equipment to developing sporting and community groups and providing additional assistance to local service groups. The Hotel indicated that they were to undertake extensive consultation with local groups in formulating the details of this program. The program would then be reviewed after 5 years depending upon the operating environment at that time. In addition, the Hotel also proposed to contribute a one-off payment of \$100,000 towards the provision of a sporting pavilion (Highlands Hotel Social and Economic Impact Assessment report by Urbis, page 10).

In May 2010, the VCGLR granted the Highlands Hotel's application for 60 EGMs. Further to issuing its decision on the application, the VCGLR made the following note of the applicant's proposal of financial contributions; however they were not made a condition of the Hotel's gaming licence:

"Finally, the Applicant's proposed direct financial contributions of \$75,000 per annum for a period of 5 years to local community groups and initial once-off donation of \$100,000 to the Council to assist with construction of a local sporting pavilion, are direct benefits that would accrue to the Craigieburn community if the application were granted" (VCGR, Decision and Reasons for Decision in the matter of Highlands Hotel, 6 May 2010, page14).

It should be noted that Council did not receive a \$100,000 payment after the Commission decision in 2010, however received the amount over a number of payments staggered over 3 financial years. In addition, the \$75,000 was not a direct financial contribution to local

community groups, but took the form of largely free or discounted meals, courtesy bus and 'birthday vouchers'.

Table 12: Community contributions made by the Hotel 2015:

Figure 4 | Community Donations | 1st January 2015 to 30th June 2015

HIGHLANDS HOTEL COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION FUND				TOTALS	
1 January 2015 to 30 June 2015					
Donations					
Local charities	\$ 300.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 500.00	\$	\$ 950.00
Free carers for lunch	\$ 22.90	101 pax		\$	2,312.90
free coffee for community groups/carers	\$ 3.70	4662 pax		\$	17,249.40
Biggest Morning tea	28/05/2015	room hire - 2 days morning tea		\$	2,800.00
Discounted meals for community groups/senior citizens					
\$10 lunch		539	\$ 12.90	\$	6,953.10
\$15 lunch		2376	\$ 7.90	\$	18,770.40
\$17.90 lunch		3871	\$ 5.00	\$	18,355.00
\$22.90 dinner		1243	\$ 4.00	\$	4,972.00
Birthday credit	\$ 30.00	2535		\$	76,050.00
courtesy bus	\$72.00	182		\$	13,104.00
please note that the cost of supplying a driver is not included					
TOTAL				\$ 161,516.80	

(Source: Highlands Hotel Social and Economic Impact Statement, NAB Group 2016)

Hume City Council has on a number of occasions expressed concern about the nature of the Highlands Hotel's Community Benefit Program and of the apparent mismatch in expectations of the program. Hume City Council has expressed the unsatisfactory nature of the benefit program and how the community benefit fund was not used to directly benefit the community but instead used predominantly towards meals, drinks and venue discounts for patrons and members of the Highlands Hotel.

Council offered advice to the Hotel in order to assist them in developing a process to disburse the monies directly to community groups via grants and sponsorships. The Hotel continued with their contribution program as indicated above.

In 2015 Hume City Council requested the VCGLR to explore Council's concern regarding the unsatisfactory nature of Highlands Hotel Community Benefit Program. The concern being that in contrast to the VCGLR's Decision statement requesting the Highlands Hotel direct financial contributions of \$75,000 per annum for a period of 5 years to local community groups, Highlands Hotel is primarily providing discounted meals and drinks in their premise. The Commission resolved on 16 February 2017 that the contributions made by the venue met the requirements of the Victorian Government's Gazette number S218, dated 28 June 2012, which details activities that constitute community benefits.

Furthermore the Applicant claims to provide a "community bus" that "plays a big part in the local aged community by helping the "elderly attend appointments at the doctors, hospital, hairdressers and shopping in the local area". Providing transport to patrons, particularly those who may not have access or are unable to drive themselves to the Hotel is commendable. *Courtesy buses* however are a common and widely acknowledged marketing activity in many venue based products that ensures patrons can access the venue with ease, and therefore consume the product. The suggestion that the Hotel's courtesy bus is a "community bus" and therefore contributes some form of contribution back to the local community is not supported. It is difficult to imagine that the courtesy bus is available for the broader local community who are not patrons or members of the Hotel.

While donations to community groups or sporting clubs are seen as a positive benefit, recent research commissioned by UnitingCare argues that when community donations are

compared to total losses in the community, they represent only a small percentage (as indicated under 10.3.3). The research found that gaming machines are therefore an 'extremely inefficient and high cost method for funding community sporting and charitable activities'³⁷.

The Applicant claims "*the Hotel and Council are working together to develop guidelines and invite community groups to make requests for contribution to ensure that the needs are met in line with community expectations*". Hume City Council would argue that on numerous occasions since 2014 it tried to engage the Highlands Hotel management to consider a community benefit program that would see the \$75,000 dispersed directly into the local community. The applicant to date has not expressed any interest or demonstrated in any manner they would consider this approach.

10.4.3 Employment

The Club currently has 12 salary staff and 69 casual staff members and the proposal is expected to generate an additional 2 EFT jobs at the Hotel, however it is not stated if casual or salaried. Although can be seen to be arguably slightly positive (slight to neutral), it is unlikely that the expanded gaming room will create 2 salaried full time positions at the Hotel – more likely to be casual positions to address peak periods of patron demands in the gaming lounge (unlikely to be serving other patrons waiting to access the gaming lounge due to it not reaching full capacity at the machines – as indicated on page 59 where it states that only 5 hours out of a total of the sampled 294 are at a 70% or above utilisation rate).

This perceived 'gain' in employment at the Hotel will potentially lead to a loss of employment at another gaming venue. Considering 30% of the expenditure will be transferred largely from other venues in Hume City, it could be argued that this will impact employment needs at the other venues, therefore resulting in a potential net loss of employment at the affected venues.

The low potential for the gaming sector to generate jobs is noted by the general Hume community. According to Hume City Council's 2013 *Community Gambling Survey*, one fifth of respondents 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' that gambling increases employment (21.5%).

Gambling is a low-intensity employer and high capital sector. For the investment in EGM gambling, the return on employment is very low. National data indicates that the job intensity associated with gambling expenditure is quite low at 3.2 jobs per \$1 million of gambling income compared to 20.2 jobs per \$1 million of takings from food and meals (six times higher). This employment has failed to grow in line with gaming income, hence low to insignificant positive impacts from gaming on employment versus high negative impacts in losses. In examining the gaming revenue and the Highlands Hotel salaried staff, this job creation factor is lower still, with 1.47 jobs per \$1million of gaming revenue.

Therefore, whilst employment is considered a positive impact of this proposal, it is noted that if residents spent the additional money on non-gambling retail, services or entertainment, then the employment benefit would be up to six times higher. This lack of job creation opportunities for the level of expenditure is a concern when one views the unemployment data in Craigieburn/Mickleham area being at 7.5% and the recent loss of jobs south of Craigieburn at the Ford factory closure.

³⁷ Livingstone C., Kipsaina C. & Rintoul A. (2012) *Assessment of poker machine expenditure and community benefit claims in selected Commonwealth Electoral Divisions*. UnitingCare Australia, Canberra.

10.4.4 Contribution to the Local Economy

Much of the economic benefits were not determined by the applicant, hence it proved difficult to provide a considered response. The extension to the gaming room was estimated to be at a cost of \$975,000. Some construction activity would occur from this, however it would not be of a long duration due to the level of expenditure.

10.4.5 Community Safety

Research commissioned by the Department of Justice found there was a positive link between income-generating crime (in particular, property related income-generating crime) and gaming expenditure³⁸.

Whilst it is not possible to determine the rate of gambling related crime in Hume, police crime statistics for the municipality show an increase in crime rates over the last 12 months, indicating that crime is an increasing issue for the area.

Perceived safety is another issue and does not necessarily have to be linked to crime levels. If a community feels unsafe, and links this safety to issues such as gambling in the community, it will impact negatively on community wellbeing. According to Community Indicators Victoria, Hume residents felt less safe at night compared to the Northern & Western Metro Region and the Victorian State average.

Although the Hotel may provide a welcoming and safe environment for patrons, responses back from the local community on the Hotel's proposal (*2014 South Hume Community Survey*) indicated that approximately a third of respondents were of the opinion that the hotel post renovations would have a negative/very negative impact on the neighbourhood, with 35% of the 20 negative responses linking directly to crime related impacts).

³⁸ Wheeler, S., Round, D.K. & Wilson, J.K. (2010), *The Relationship between Crime and Gaming Expenditure in Victoria*, Department of Justice, Melbourne.

11. SUMMARY OF IMPACTS

Summary of social and economic impact of Highlands Hotel gaming application to increase by 20 EGMS resulting directly from proposal:
Economic

Impact:	Assessment statements	Council cumulative assessment for local neighbourhood and Hume municipality		
		Negative	Neutral or no impact	Positive
Additional 20 EGMS	<p>Applicant: will offer more choice and support patrons at the Hotel in accessing gaming machines who are currently “forced to wait”. It will also address growing demand as result of increasing population. Application acknowledges that the additional machines will increase the machines in Craigieburn to 150 machines and 833 in Hume City.</p> <p>Hume: the current 60 EMGs are not at capacity and show much lower utilisation rates when compared to another 80EGM hotel, thus the additional machines are not required to meet current demand. The additional machines will lead to increased expenditure leaking out of Hume City. The additional machines will increase the number of machines in the local neighbourhood and Hume and thereby the gaming densities over metropolitan Melbourne (against gaming policy positions).</p>	Negative impact (machines currently under-utilised, no need for machines – will lead to more expenditure leaking out of Hume).		
Gaming Expenditure	<p>Applicant: in the first 12 months – the new expenditure at the hotel will increase between \$1,469 to \$1,687 million, and for Hume between \$1,028 and \$1,181million (because of a 30% transference rate...mostly from the</p>			

	<p>Craigieburn Sporting Club). There will be an increase in expenditure across Hume by 1% from one venue alone in the first 12 months.</p> <p>Hume: It is believed that the net gaming expenditure is significantly underestimated – given the past application of the Hotel in 2010 underestimated its first 12 month level of revenue. Its 6 month gaming revenue being 50% more than what was estimated for the whole year.</p> <p>It is estimated that the gaming expenditure for the Hotel would be more in the vicinity of \$2.721million if the current loss rate per machine per year is used. This will be more losses for Craigieburn communities.</p>	<p>Negative impact (significant increase in expenditure for local neighbourhood and Hume).</p>		
<p>Gaming expenditure transfer</p>	<p>Applicant: estimated a 30% transference rate – with 25% will be coming from Craigieburn Sporting Club and 5% from other venues in Hume.</p> <p>Hume: 25% of revenue away from a sporting club to a Hotel, and this may impact on employment levels too. Revenue from the Hotel goes to taxes, shareholders and owner (increased levels of leakage out of the community and out of Hume). “Community benefits” at the Hotel largely go into subsidised meals and drinks, Hotel courtesy bus and \$30 birthday vouchers for members. The sporting club is a not for profit and profits go into the facility and its operations.</p>	<p>Negative impact (increased expenditure leakages from Hume City)</p>		

Gaming density	<p>Applicant: states that the gaming density in Craigieburn is 3.57EGms/1000 adults and will increase to 4.12, which is lower than metro average of 5.25.</p> <p>Hume: used a 5km radius (not whole of Craigieburn) and this reflects density of 4.5EGMs/1000 adults....and if one looked at northern Craigieburn, this density would be higher at 6EGms/1000 adults. The proposal will increase densities to 5.2 for the local area and 6.9 for northern Craigieburn, the one being similar to metro Melbourne average and the other significantly higher than 5.3.</p>	Negative impact (higher than metro average)		Slight positive to Neutral – (may not be local residents and may be causal and thus not of a permanent nature).
Employment	<p>Applicant: Additional 2 EFT staff will be employed at the Hotel, this will be in addition to construction staff on the extension</p> <p>Hume: Given the unemployment rate in Craigieburn, it is an arguable positive (slight to neutral) benefit to have 2 jobs created. However research argues that this is an expensive way to generate jobs – if hotels expenditure and number of full time salaried jobs are assessed – would equal \$1million per 1.47 jobs. It would be highly likely that the 2 additional jobs would be casual – only used when the gaming room is in higher use with more patrons needing to be serviced.</p>			
Infrastructure investment,	<p>Applicant: the application will lead to an extension of the gaming room with will include the changing of the façade and the removal of the</p>			

development and maintenance	outdoor terrace. Estimated to be at a cost of \$975,000 Hume: the extension is only to the gaming room- thus not all patrons would benefit from this investment. Also other community members (if not gamblers) would not benefit from this – not as if it were a function room for events that the community could access. The construction benefit of the extension would be short lived for it would be deemed as a small construction job.		Neutral to negative (no benefit to the larger community and increased exposure to gaming and the increase of the dominance of gaming activities at the Hotel.)	
Supply contracts	It is also acknowledged that the increased size of the gaming room will enable increased exposure of residents to gaming opportunities and potentially to problems that are associated with gaming on EGMs. In addition, the increased floor space of the gaming room increases the dominance of gaming activities at the hotel (gaming room with the TAB sporting bar) for the application does not provide investments into other non-gaming activities at the Hotel. Applicant: the applicant was unable to determine the economic impact		Neutral	
	Hume: without the determination, it was difficult to provide a considered response.			

Complimentary expenditures	Applicant: the applicant was unable to determine the economic impact		Neutral	
Responsible Gaming management	Applicant: argues that they have a proven RSG practice record. They undertake regular training with staff. Adequate signage and reading material is available for patrons. Venue adheres to gaming regulations and has a self-exclusion program at the venue. Hume: the responsible gaming practices are a legislated requirement and thus need to be in place.			Positive to neutral (legislated requirement)
Tourism	Applicant: the applicant was unable to determine the economic impact Hume: without the determination, it was difficult to provide a considered response.		Neutral	

Social:

<p>SEIFA and disadvantage of local community and Hume;</p>	<p>Applicant: The application states that “the catchment of the Hotel would take in part of the LGA of Whittlesea, which ranks in the 7th Decile. This suggests that the area that would represent the catchment area for the Hotel are above average on the SIEFA scale of relative disadvantage and advantage. It is also noted that the LGA is likely to improve over time with strong population growth forecasts to continue in the Craigieburn area” (page 30). It also states that “although housing stress is relatively high, it is a strain many areas of Melbourne are feeling and is not restricted to the Craigieburn area alone” (page 57).....“In summary, in terms of social and economic profile of the City of Hume, the area shows very few signs of disadvantage”(page 57).</p> <p>Hume: The SEIA index for relative socio economic advantage and disadvantage for the local neighbourhood (980) and Hume (950.3) are both lower than for metropolitan Melbourne (1021.1) and Victoria (1006.7). In looking at other indicators for disadvantages (mapped VAMPIRE index and Dropping of the Edge Report) show that Craigieburn experiences high levels of disadvantage and vulnerability, as does other communities across Hume, with Broadmeadows ranked the highest disadvantaged postcode in Victoria in 2015 (JSS Dropping off the Edge Report).</p>	<p>Negative (increased number of machines in a significantly disadvantaged municipality and in a local neighbourhood that experiences high levels of disadvantage and vulnerabilities).</p>		
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Community attitudes	<p>Applicant: no community attitudinal survey undertaken as part of their application. "the Hotel is in an established gaming venue, being one of 14 in the City of Hume, which indicates that community is accustomed to the presence of gaming establishments within the area" (page 27). "the Hotel is an existing gaming venue with a heavy involvement in community funding, so whilst difficult to assess on an individual nature, the addition of 20 EGMs is not expected to cause undue community opposition" (page 63).</p> <p>Hume: In Council's community attitudinal survey to gaming 2013 indicated 70.9% of Hume residents agreed/strongly agreed that pokies were too widely accessible and 50.3% agreed/strongly agreed that pokies contribute to serious social issues within their local area.</p>	Negative (Hume residents have indicated that they are too accessible and cause serious harm)	Neutral (\$100,000 should not be liked to gaming application and Council has not formed a view on this offer).	
Funding contributions towards improvements to recreational/community facilities	<p>Applicant: The application states that a once-off contribution of \$100,000 be provided to Council towards local recreational facilities.</p> <p>Hume: Although the application has made reference to conversations with Council pertaining to the donation of \$100,000, it was by no means linked to the Hotel's gaming application. At the writing of this SEIA Council had not formed a view on the offer of the \$100,000, and thus should not form part of this application.</p>		Neutral (\$100,000 should not be liked to gaming application and Council has not formed a view on this offer).	

Community contributions	<p>Applicant: The applicant also made numerous references to their financial benefits to the community. This community benefit was part of the Hotel's 2010 application when they stated that they donate \$75,000 for the next 5 years to community. The application is silent on the continuation of this benefit to the community.</p> <p>Hume: Although the Applicant was diligent in providing their financial statements in their SEIA, no other community benefits are directly linked to this application. Upon further inquiries by Council in this matter, representatives indicated that "again we note all of our client's existing community contributions per Table 1 on page 21 of the NBA Groups Social and Economic Impact Statement will continue in addition to the further \$100,000 cash donation to Council" (letter dated 3 February 2017). Still no commitment was provided to the amount nor the duration of the existing contributions (which formed part of their former application).</p>		Neutral (no details provided in the current application to the continuance of their community contributions).	
Venue Patrons	<p>Applicant: Hotel provided the postcodes of the members of their Loyalty program – indicating that the majority of the members (69.3% of known postcodes) came from post code 3064 (Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park). Additional machines will provide more choice to patrons.</p> <p>Hume: majority of Hotel patrons are local from Craigieburn and into northern parts of Roxburgh Park – which links in strongly to the 5km catchment of the Hotel. Increased losses from local residents around the Hotel are of great concern, for residents who do experience higher levels</p>	Negative (significant losses from local residents around the Hotel)		

	of social and economic stress.			
Average number of gaming patrons weekly and proposed	<p>Applicant: Numbers only provided on request by Council – which was 2,450 patrons per week in the gaming room, which was deemed to increase by between 400-500 patrons per week after the proposal.</p> <p>Hume: The increase in number of patrons is deemed to be underestimated when compared to like Hotels with 80EGMs, such as the Roxburgh Park Hotel. There it was estimated that the Roxburgh Park Hotel had 6760 patrons per week in the gaming room, compared to the Hotel's estimate of 2,900 patrons per week. More patrons in the gaming room equals more residents exposed to gaming activities and the likelihood of being exposed to the harms and problems that gaming can bring to gamblers and their families.</p>	Negative (more residents exposed to gaming and the harms associated with gaming)		
Accessibility of machines	<p>Applicant: the applicant indicates that the Hotel is 'isolated' and that is a destination venue.</p> <p>Hume: This application would increase the number of EGMs in a location that is considered highly accessible as it is within a shopping precinct that includes the Highlands Shopping Centre, popular fast/takeaway food stores, medical centre and service stations. It is convenient for community members going about their day-to-day business – one pedestrian crossing away. In addition the Highlands Hotel in a convenient destination with ample car parking, and travel route for the local bus</p>	Negative (machines are too convenient within a shopping precinct – ease of access to machines by residents)		

	<p>network and the nearby secondary school.</p> <p>Also, if the same current machine to patron ratio is maintained (namely approximately 2,450 patrons to 60 EGMS), then there is a potential that the additional 20 machines could attract 800 patrons more per week to the gaming venue, 300 more than suggested by the Applicant, and if compared with a similar 80 machine hotel, this is a very low estimate (Roxburgh Hotel has approximately 6760patrons per week).</p> <p>The higher than metropolitan average machine density for the local area and for Hume provides a good indication of the accessibility of machines to adults.</p>			
<p>Responsible gaming</p>	<p>Applicant: Applicant undertakes legislated roles and responsibilities pertaining to responsible gaming. Applicant also stated that 2 Gamblers Help Northern Venue Support program officers are involved at the Hotel in the delivery of up-to-date training for its employees.</p> <p>Hume: it is acknowledged that Hotel management ensure that they deliver on the legislated requirements and run an exclusion program – of which 150 members are listed. No further efforts in responsible gaming management were articulated in the application.</p>			<p>Slight positive to neutral (undertaking legislated requirements)</p>

<p>Problem gaming</p>	<p>Applicant: the application argues that the proposal “will not result in an excessive increase in convenient gaming” due to the remoteness of the Hotel to other venues, on periphery of commercial district and that is it a destination venue. In addition, the application states that there is a “slight risk in an increase in problem gambling at this venue” (page 5), which they see is offset by the ongoing commitment of the Hotel management to the local community through \$100,000, \$9750,000 on extension and 2 new jobs.</p> <p>Hume: there are 150 individuals listed on the exclusion program at the hotel, which is approximately 6% of total gaming patrons. This may increase further with additional machines and patrons after the proposal (if a similar patron level is reach like Roxburgh park – this exclusion list may increase to 400).</p>	<p>Negative (increase in problem gamblers in the local neighbourhood and Hume).</p>		
<p>Relationship/emotional costs</p>	<p>Applicant: no comments on this indicator</p> <p>Hume: Research indicates patterns and prevalence of co-occurrence of family violence and problem gambling (Suomi et al, 2013). Of the sample families in the study – more than 50% reported some form of family violence from problem gamblers. Hume has the second highest rate of reported family violence in Melbourne’s northern region in 2015/16. With more local families being exposed to gaming from the Hotel – there is a high probability there will be an increase in economic stress (families which are already under significant levels of mortgage stress) and in turn</p>	<p>Negative (high probability of an increase in the level of family violence).</p>		

	<p>lead to high levels of violence in the home.</p> <p>Applicant : Indicated that the local community are not disadvantaged and are not vulnerable</p>			
<p>Local community and problem gambling</p>	<p>Hume: the demographic information of the local neighbourhood indicates that there are some close correlations between community profiles and those of problem gamblers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Younger profile – according to research younger persons, especially males, can be at risk of problem gaming due to risk taking behaviours. The local neighbourhood demonstrates a younger profile in comparison to Hume and metropolitan Melbourne. • Cultural diversity – some 52% of residents speak only English at home in the local area compared with 66% in the metro region. Limited language skills can undermine responsible gaming messages at venues (which are normally in printed formats). Some communities may have different beliefs related to luck and chance, which may lead them to gamble more. Stigma and shame may create considerable barriers for some community members in seeking help. • Indigenous community – the local area shows a higher proportion of residents from an Indigenous background than Hume and metro Melbourne. Research shows that the Indigenous communities experience much higher levels of gaming participation and related harms than non-Indigenous communities. • Mortgage stress - Craigieburn experiences very high levels of mortgage stress, which exacerbates the financial wellbeing within families and can underpin desires to gamble more in order to “chase a win”. • Family violence – research shows patterns and prevalence of the co-occurrence of family violence and problem gambling. Hume has the 	<p>Negative (high probability of increase in problems of gaming due to correlation of community profile and problem gaming).</p>		

	<p>second highest rate of reported family violence in the north-west region in 2015/16.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabilities - It was found that 3.5% of residents between the ages of 25 and 65 years in the 5km radius had a profound or severe disability compared to 2.5% for metropolitan Melbourne. It is evident through research that persons suffering from physical or mental health issues can be vulnerable to problems associated with gaming due to issues of social isolation, dissociative behaviours, distorted perceptions or having the inability to be responsible for their gaming behaviours. • Occupational vulnerability - A higher percentage of 5km radius residents were employed in lower skilled industries, which traditionally attract lower wages and can be vulnerable to global fluctuations. For instance, 17.2% of the 5km community were employed in the manufacturing field compared to 14% for Hume and 10.9% for metropolitan Melbourne. Moreover, a larger percentage of persons in the 5km radius are employed in positions such as Machinery Operators and Drivers (12% compared to 10.4% and 2.9%) and Labourers (12.4% compared to 11.4% and 4.0%). • Unemployment – In September 2016, both Craigieburn (7.5%) and Hume (9.2%) demonstrated higher levels of unemployment than the metro region (5.8%). The Productivity Commission Report on Gambling (2010) indicated that the magnitude of gambling expenditure relative to the income of the problem gambler is relevant to the harms caused to them and their families.³⁹ Community members on lower incomes have more to lose if they experience problems with gaming, with monies being taken away from other household costs such as payments towards leisure opportunities, utility and food bills, health and dental costs etc. 			
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³⁹ Productivity Commission Report on Gambling 2010, p5.31.

12. CONCLUSION

The Highlands Hotel currently operates 60 licenced EGMs and is proposing to increase their number of EGMs to 80.

Economic benefits from the hotel are not significant when one considers that it includes only the extension of the gaming room in order to accommodate the additional machine. The application does not propose any expansions of its services or facilities to its patrons, other than gaming.

The Hotel has offered a once-off payment of \$100,000 to Council towards local recreational facilities. Council has not formed a view on the offer of \$100,000 and when the offer was made, there was no connection between the offer and the gaming application. Also the current community contributions are to be completed in 2017 and no commitment has been made for its continuance.

It is foreseen that there will be longer term negative impacts from the proposal, including:

- the increased net gaming expenditure from the additional 20 machines in the local neighbourhood and for Hume, which is anticipated to be far higher than estimated by the applicant
- vulnerable residents being exposed to increased opportunities to gamble
- increased opportunities for the loss of disposable incomes by families (many of whom are already economically and socially stressed)
- increased exposure to family violence from problem gamblers (of which the hotel already has 150 listed on their exclusion program)
- increased gaming densities in Hume City
- higher expenditure per adult in Hume and the local community.

Thus the Council considers the social impacts to be negative and in turn outweigh the positive impacts.

DECISION: It is the opinion of the Hume City Council that the Application will have a net detrimental social and economic impact on communities within a 5km radius of the Hotel and across the wider Hume municipality.

Therefore Council does not support the Highlands Hotel's application to increase the number of gaming machines by an additional 20 EGMs from 60 to 80.

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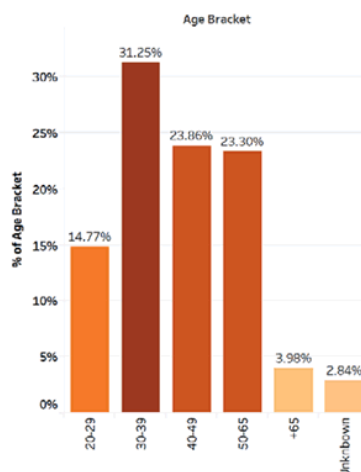
**APPENDIX 1
VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES:**

**Detailed analysis of the social and demographic correlations of residents
in the local neighbourhood with problem gamblers**

Younger profile:

The median age of residents in the 5km radius of the Hotel is 28 years in comparison to 33 in Hume and 36 in Greater Melbourne. Persons less than 18 years equal approximately 31% of the total population in the radius area, compared to 27.5% and 22.2% for Hume and Greater Melbourne respectively. According to research, younger persons can be at risk of problem gambling due to risk taking behaviours or having lived experiences with problem gambling via their parents⁴⁰, which may be likely given the higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage within the 5 km radius.

According to problem gambling data provided by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, more than 46% of Hume residents seeking assistance are under the age of 40 years, demonstrating that younger persons are experiencing problems with gambling in Hume.



Indigenous community:

The local community has a significantly higher proportion of indigenous community members that Hume and metropolitan Melbourne, being 1.4% compared to 0.6% and 0.5% respectively. Research funded by the VRGF shows that gambling rates are much higher and gambling related harms are much more common in the indigenous community than the wider community (Hing et al, 2014). It also discovered that indigenous community members tend to gamble more on the EGMs than other forms of gambling and can run the risk of high gaming expenditure, drinking while gambling and using gaming as a means of escape.

According to problem gambling data provided by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, approximately 2.8% clients seeking assistance between July 2015 to December

⁴⁰ Health Promotion Resource Guide for Problem Gambling Prevention in Melbourne's North (page 11).

2016 were Indigenous, which was the third highest cultural group. With a significant increase of gaming machines and having a higher level of indigenous community members in the local neighbourhood around the hotel – there is high probability that the indigenous community may suffer increased levels of negative impacts from gaming.

CALD community:

Hume City is widely considered to be a culturally diverse municipality, with 41% of the population speak a language other than English. However, the 5km radius is an even more culturally diverse area, with 44.7% of the population speaking a language other than English, with the five top language spoke being Turkish (6.9%); Arabic (5.7%); Italian (3.2%); Sinhalese (3.1%) and Chaldean Neo-Aramaic (2.8). In Melbourne, by contrast, 29% of the population speaks a language other than English.

According to problem gambling data provided by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, approximately 3.98%, 3.41% and 1.14% of clients seeking assistance were from Turkish, Iraqi and Assyrian backgrounds.

Research illustrates that culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) may be at risk of developing problems with gaming due to limited language skills that undermine responsible gaming messages or having limited access to culturally appropriate community support services⁴¹.

The Australian Gambling Research Centre, in its recent review of research examining gambling in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in Australia, states⁴²:

- CALD communities within developed nations – including Australia – tend to *participate in gambling less* than the overall population, but those who do gamble may be *more likely to experience problems*.
- CALD people who gamble may be more likely to develop problems than individuals from the general population due to different beliefs about luck and chance, factors relating to migration, and issues around stigma and shame.
- Stigma and shame can create considerable barriers to help seeking in CALD communities.
- Increased access to gambling and migration stressors may increase the chance that migrants might gamble, placing them at additional risk of developing problems.

The study, *The Impact of Gaming on Specific Cultural Groups*, was commissioned by the VCGA and included an examination of the impact of gaming on Arabic speaking, Chinese speaking, Greek speaking and Vietnamese speaking communities. The study found that members of these cultural groups who engage in gambling have a higher propensity to gamble heavily, and experience serious gambling problems. This finding further raises concern of the potential for increased negative social consequences that can arise from the increase in the number and accessibility of electronic gaming machines within the 5km radius, given the areas Arabic speaking community.

⁴¹ Health Promotion Resource Guide for Problem Gambling Prevention in Melbourne's North (page 11).

⁴² AGRC Discussion Paper No.7, October 2016, *Gambling in culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Australia*

Proficiency in English:

Approximately 14% of residents within the 5km radius do not speak English well or not at all. Whilst this is lower compared to Hume City at 18.1%, it is higher to metropolitan Melbourne at 12.9%. However, lower levels of English proficiency within the 5km radius is potentially higher than 14% as new families from Sri Lanka and Indian have settled in the area since the 2011 census. Also the affordability of housing in Craigieburn attracts a number of financially vulnerable families, some of whom are newly arrived or are refugees. Here too, lower levels of English are present. There is increased concern that these communities would be rendered more at risk of developing problems with gaming due to difficulties in understanding the responsible gaming message displayed at the Hotel, and more broadly in accessing relevant information and support services.

Larger households:

The average size of the household in the 5km radius is 3.2 persons, in comparison to 3.1 for Hume and 2.6 for metropolitan Melbourne. In addition, households with 4 or more persons are significantly higher in the 5km radius, with 44% having 4 or more persons (in comparison with 38.3% and 27.8% in Hume and Greater Melbourne respectively). Thus the impacts of problem gaming from an individual member of the household would have higher ramifications given the higher number of impacted persons. In addition, with more persons per household and lower than average household incomes, families in the 5km radius would be more affected by potential financial losses to gaming than smaller households on higher incomes (as is the case generally in metropolitan Melbourne).

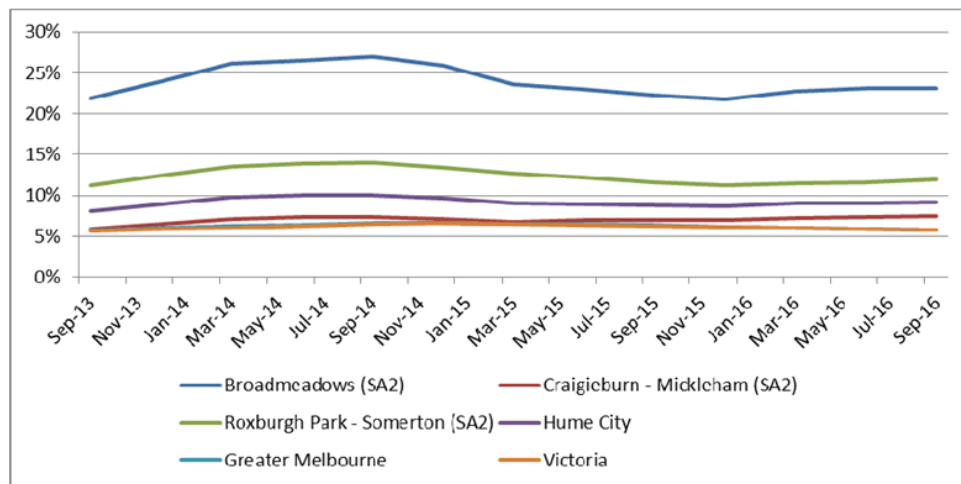
One parent families and jobless parents:

The percentage of one parent families with children under 15 and an unemployed parent is higher at 5.3% when compared to Hume City at 5.0% and metropolitan Melbourne at 3.0%.

Unemployment:

The level of unemployment within the 5km radius at 6.7% is lower than that of Hume City (7.6%) but higher than metropolitan Melbourne at 5.5% (2011 census).

At September 2016, unemployment levels within the Broadmeadows (23.1%) and Craigieburn (7.5%) (SA2) and Hume City (9.2%) are significantly and consistently higher than the average unemployment levels of metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria (both 5.8%), as indicated by the graph below:



The SA2 of Roxburgh Park – Somerton has been included due to Roxburgh Park (12.0%) sharing the same postcode as Craigieburn. Further, the applicant has highlighted that the Hotel's largest patronage comes from the Craigieburn/Roxburgh Park (postcode 3064). This is of great concern given the areas significant unemployment rate and research which correlates unemployment with problematic gambling.

Lower incomes:

The number of residents receiving Centrelink assistance is higher for those living in the SA2 area (Craigieburn and Mickleham) than Hume City or Victoria. For instance, the rate of recipients per 1,000 residents aged 18 years or over for a Health Care Card is 146.0 for Craigieburn-Mickleham compared to 139.8 and 88.5 for Hume and Victoria, respectively. For the Parenting Payment Single, it is 17.2 for Craigieburn-Mickleham, 17.1 for Hume and 11.7 for Victoria.

Thus there is a high probability that a number of the residents within the 5km radius are on fixed incomes sourced from CentreLink benefits - which limits the amount of disposable income after expenses are paid. Being on limited or low incomes makes the big win an attractive option as well as to 'chase losses' in order to try and win back the money which has been lost.

The *Productivity Commission Report on Gambling (2010)* indicated that the magnitude of gambling expenditure relative to the income of the problem gambler is relevant to the harms caused to them and their families.⁴³ Community members on lower incomes have more to lose if they experience problems with gaming, with monies being taken away from other household costs such as payments towards leisure opportunities, utility and food bills, health and dental costs etc

⁴³ Productivity Commission Report on Gambling 2010, p5.31.

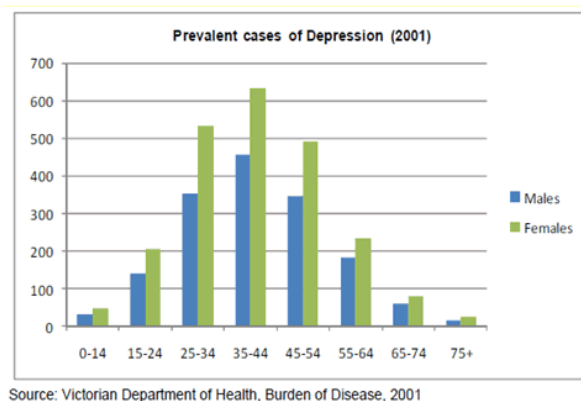
Higher levels of disabilities:

Residents within the 5km radius showed higher levels of disability when compared with metropolitan Melbourne. It was found that 3.5% of residents between the ages of 25 and 65 years in the 5km radius had a profound or severe disability compared to 2.5% for metropolitan Melbourne.

It is evident through research that persons suffering from physical or mental health issues can be vulnerable to problems associated with gaming due to issues of social isolation, dissociative behaviours, distorted perceptions or having the inability to be responsible for their gaming behaviours.⁴⁴ Losses experienced at the EGMs may exacerbate mental health issues through increased levels of stress, anxiety or feelings of shame.

The co-occurrence between gaming venues and social meeting places may be an issue for many residents who have mental health issues - where the venue is both a place to socialise and to participate in gambling activities. One of the themes that emerged from research conducted in the *Stage One Report* was of the experiences which gamblers had of the gambling environment and the way in which they were perceived to be places of safety and security. 'Indeed, the safety, accessibility and convenience of the environment is recognised by several of the regional Victorian respondents who acknowledge that for many, women in particular, the gaming venues are frequently the only place to go'.⁴⁵

The vulnerability of the Hume community is of particular concern for many of the incident cases contained in the Burden of Disease Report⁴⁶ for Hume City indicate that mental illness is responsible for 21% of the burden of disease in Hume City. Depression is the second largest contributor to prevalent cases due to mental diseases, accounting for 20.6% of all cases. Depression is particularly prevalent within the female population as the graph below represents:



Lower skilled jobs:

A higher percentage of 5km radius residents were employed in low skilled industries, which traditionally attract lower wages and can be vulnerable to global fluctuations. For instance, 17.2% of the 5km community were employed in the manufacturing field compared to 14% for

⁴⁴ Health Promotion Resource Guide for Problem Gambling Prevention in Melbourne's North, p 12.

⁴⁵ Stage One Report 2003, p38

⁴⁶ Victorian Department of Health, Burden of Disease 2001.

Hume and 10.9% for metropolitan Melbourne. Moreover, a larger percentage of persons in the 5km radius are employed in positions such as Machinery Operators and Drivers (12% compared to 10.4% and 2.9%) and Labourers (12.4% compared to 11.4% and 4.0%). These occupations tend to be vulnerable due to the global fluctuations (as clearly demonstrated by the Global Financial Crisis where Hume loss a number of manufacturing businesses and jobs). These occupations also tend to be part of shift operations with workers working very early and very late hours, hours which are captured by the operations of hotels and clubs, many of which stay open until 3am or 5am and when opportunities for gaming is available.

REPORT NO:	HE054
REPORT TITLE:	D.S. Aitken Reserve Master Plan
SOURCE:	Bruce Fordham, Manager Leisure Centres and Sports
DIVISION:	Corporate Services
FILE NO:	HCC/40.1055-03
POLICY:	-
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	2.1 Foster a community which is active and healthy.
ATTACHMENT:	1. <i>D.S. Aitken Reserve Master Plan</i>

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

- 1.1 The D.S. Aitken Reserve Master Plan (Plan), Attachment 1 has been prepared to guide Council's future development of the D.S. Aitken Reserve located on Craigieburn Road.
- 1.2 This Plan focuses on the provision of the sport, recreation and leisure activities at this well used reserve.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 That Council adopt the Master Plan for D.S. Aitken Reserve.
- 2.2 The proposed works and project costs be referred to the Hume City Council Capital Works program for consideration.

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS:

The provision of leisure services is a function specified in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 The adoption of the D.S. Aitken Reserve Master Plan will direct Council's prioritisation and required funding for the development and delivery of improvements at this district level reserve. The following proposed projects and the costings as at June 2016 estimates.

Map Item No.	Project	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Sports Infrastructure				
1	DS Aitken Oval – upgrade the floodlighting – 100 lux	\$200,000		
2	Upgrade and extension to sports pavilion identified in concept planning process (planning commenced) capital works funding - \$375,000 (15/16) and \$1,475,000 (16/17).	Capital Funding for this project allocated in 2015/16 and 2016/17		
8/9	Improve the tennis club entry and upgrade of tennis club amenities		\$320,000	
12	New electronic scoreboard – sports oval	\$60,000		
General Reserve Upgrades				
3	New pathways around the reserve – sealed paths		\$127,075	
3	New pathways around the reserve – unsealed paths		\$66,000	

REPORT NO: HE054 (cont.)

Map Item No.	Project	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
5	Relocate and upgrade play space		\$200,000	
6	Expand and upgrade the skate facility to a District site			\$167,500
7	Maintain the existing hardstand area			\$15,000
11	Demolish the existing brick toilets and replace with an automated unit			\$157,500
13	Undertake tree planting throughout the reserve include pathway avenues and clump planting to improve landscape amenity			\$40,000
Traffic Management				
4a	New car park Western wing of oval (30 places)	\$148,000		
4b	South of cricket nets (18 spaces)			
4c	On reserve entry (11 spaces)			
4d	New 90 deg parking on Dianne Ave and Rayfield Ave (82 spaces)			\$251,000
4e	New 39 car spaces at entry to the reserve		\$132,689	
4f	Reconfigure existing car park south of the tennis courts (23 spaces)		\$47,000	
4g	Close the existing site entry off Craigieburn Road	\$10,000		
4h	Cease use of overflow car parking and rehabilitate grassed area	\$20,000		
Other considerations				
10	Investigate Selwyn House future development opportunities	Subject to separate funding consideration		
	Total:	\$438,000	\$892,764	\$631,000

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- 5.1 Developing new upgraded facilities at D.S. Aitken Reserve will address best practice in environmental sustainability design principles.
- 5.2 This project may be subject to further reporting/investigation as a result of State and Federal Legislation related to both Heritage and Environmental considerations.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

- 6.1 Recommendations in the Plan take into consideration Council's environmental sustainability responsibilities and seek outcomes to reduce or minimise Council's carbon emissions and subsequent impact on climate change.
- 6.2 The Plan places significant emphasis on improvements to the amenity of the reserve, including extensive tree planting, the installation of a path network and other initiatives to accommodate passive users of the reserve

REPORT NO: HE054 (cont.)

7. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION:

- 7.1 Participation in leisure to achieve outcomes, such as health and wellbeing, social connection and community capacity building are behind many of the directions and actions proposed in the Plan.

8. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

- 8.1 As part of the research behind the D.S. Aitken Reserve Master Plan, the following stakeholders (Section 8.3) were consulted in order to seek their input into the future planning of the reserve.

- 8.2 Consultation with the project stakeholders comprised of meetings, interviews and surveys, and was carried out during the period October – November 2015 and also through the period 24 October 2016 to 21 November 2016 (seeking written feedback to the plan).

- 8.3 The stakeholder groups consulted included:

- Reserve User Groups:
 - Craigieburn Football Club – Essendon District Football League – 16 Teams and 425 members.
 - Craigieburn Super Rules Football Club – AFL Masters and Vic Metro – 2 Teams and 50 members.
 - Craigieburn Cricket Club – Victorian Turf Cricket Association and North Western Metropolitan Cricket – 20 teams and 426 members.
 - Craigieburn Tennis Club – 150 members, does not include hot shots or cardio participants.
 - Selwyn House – User numbers not available.
- Other Stakeholders
 - Craigieburn residents.
 - Hume City Council staff with a planning, management and maintenance responsibility at the reserve
 - Craigieburn Residents' Association
 - Northern Men's Shed
 - Craigieburn Angling Club
 - Craigieburn Netball Association

- 8.4 Written consultation:

- 8.4.1 Conducted 24 October – 21 November 2016 – hard copy information sent to all user groups and residents within 500 walkable metres of the site seeking their feedback on the proposed plan.

(a) Responses:

- (i) Residents – 10 responses
- (ii) Craigieburn Football and Cricket Club (including masters) – submissions from all clubs
- (iii) Selwyn House – 1 response from management group - also 28 individual responses
- (iv) Craigieburn Tennis Club – 1 club response - 3 community responses
- (v) Other – EDFL response

REPORT NO: HE054 (cont.)

9. DISCUSSION:

- 9.1 The Plan has been developed to help guide Council's future development of the amenity of the reserve, especially the areas dedicated to parkland as well as the sporting infrastructure at D.S. Aitken Reserve.
- 9.2 The Plan identifies and addresses key challenges facing the tenant clubs as well as addressing the concerns of surrounding residents.
- 9.3 The Plan makes recommendations in relation to a number of improvement initiatives at the reserve. The main issues and the resultant recommendations and or changes to the circulated plan are detailed below:

Proposed works	Change to original plan
<p>D.S. Aiken Reserve Oval floodlighting:</p> <p>The current oval floodlighting is uneven and does not comply with the minimum standard for local competition sports training of 100 lux. It is proposed that they be upgraded to meet this standard.</p>	No change
<p>Pavilion upgrade and expansion.</p> <p>The main pavilion has a number of inadequacies, including non-compliant change amenities, poor provision for umpires and a general lack of amenities that are female friendly.</p> <p>In addition, the tenant clubs have identified the social rooms as being too small for their needs, and that the bar and kitchen spaces are inadequate for their current uses.</p> <p>Whilst the size and condition of the social spaces do need to be expanded and upgraded to make the area fit for purpose, a seating capacity of up to 120 people is more commensurate with the competition status of the tenant clubs and of a pavilion designed to service a suburban sporting club.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the need to expand and upgrade the social rooms, a higher priority is the upgrade of the changing and amenity areas for the players and umpires (both genders need to be catered for).The pavilion concept design process will assess the viability of connecting the main pavilion and the meeting room/ canteen building.</p> <p>This project (pavilion development) is subject to a separate planning process that has commenced. Capital funding has been allocated within the 2015/16, 2016/17 financial years to deliver this project.</p>	No change
<p>New pedestrian path network throughout the reserve:</p> <p>D.S. Aitken Reserve currently lacks an internal path network, and has poor definition of the pedestrian access points into the reserve.</p> <p>The landscape concept plan recommends the construction of a new internal path network to better connect the sub-precincts within the reserve to facilitate better use of the whole reserve. A well-constructed path network will enable all year use as well as better define safe routes throughout the reserve.</p> <p>Formed pedestrian access points at each corner of DS Aitken Reserve are also proposed</p>	No change

REPORT NO: HE054 (cont.)

Proposed works	Change to original plan
<p>Redesigned playground:</p> <p>The plan supports the relocation of the playground closer to the area near the skate park with a delineation of space between the two facilities. This will ensure good surveillance of the space.</p> <p>It is proposed that the playground precinct also include a shelter (gazebo style), BBQ and picnic facilities (tables and seats), bins, and a drinking fountain to better cater for passive and active recreation uses.</p> <p>It is further recommended that a new standalone unisex public toilet be installed adjacent to the playground precinct to replace the existing brick public toilets between the pavilion and Dianne Avenue, which are planned to be removed</p>	<p>Playground moved nearer to the skate park and away from car park entrance on Dianne Avenue.</p> <p>Increased number of seating and shading to be provided.</p>
<p>Expanded youth area:</p> <p>The plan supports the expansion and upgrade of the skate park precinct to create a multipurpose youth zone, which is consistent with the directions of Council's Skate, Scooter and BMX Plan (2013). The current skate park was constructed in the late 1990's and has served the community well, but is now ready for an upgrade.</p>	<p>No change.</p>
<p>Traffic management improvements</p> <p>The key issues impacting on D.S. Aitken Reserve relating to traffic include:</p> <p>The main entrance on Craigieburn Road is an inefficient and unsafe exit point for vehicles after matches and events, due mainly to the high volumes of traffic using Craigieburn Road. It is proposed that a traffic management study be conducted to address any potential issues that may impact on Dianne Avenue. It is noted that Craigieburn Road will also be duplicated in the future.</p> <p>It is proposed that the main reserve entrance on Craigieburn Road be closed, and the entrance off Dianne Avenue become the main entrance/ exit point. This will direct all traffic accessing and exiting the reserve onto the feeder roads of Selwyn and Rayfield Avenues, which is considered a safer option than traffic entering and exiting the reserve off Craigieburn Road, which will only get busier as Craigieburn continues to grow.</p> <p>The plan recommends that all car parking around the southern and eastern sides of the oval be discontinued, to allow sufficient space to install a path around the perimeter of the oval and establish a better quality park (with tree plantings) along the Craigieburn Road edge and the area around the skate park. This proposal is not supported by the sporting clubs at the reserve but with additional parking around the site and a larger covered area at the pavilion it is believed this is a better outcome to meet all user needs.</p>	<p>Some additional parking on the north western edge of the main oval. Additional of parking to the north east of oval</p>
<p>Additional tennis court for the Craigieburn Tennis Club:</p> <p>The Craigieburn Tennis Club currently has a stable membership, but is experiencing an increasing number of people wanting to</p>	<p>No change.</p>

REPORT NO: HE054 (cont.)

Proposed works	Change to original plan
<p>access courts for social tennis and to participate in tennis coaching classes. As a result the Club has requested an additional court to meet this demand.</p> <p>The need for accessible netball training courts was also identified by the Craigieburn Netball Association, during the consultation process. The demand for recreational basketball was not raised during this study, but is a popular addition at other reserves.</p> <p>It is recommended the area to the north of the existing tennis courts be maintained for the possible future expansion of the tennis club.</p>	
<p>Expanded tennis club entry:</p> <p>The existing tennis club entry off the Selwyn Avenue car park is cluttered and not welcoming. It currently comprises a gated access into an area that includes a maintenance/ storage shed, little landscaping, with views to the sidewall of the clubrooms. In order to improve patrons' arrival experience, it is proposed to:</p> <p>Following advice from the Council's Parks staff it was proposed to remove the existing cypress trees behind the clubrooms and replaced them with a more open planting treatment similar to what exists to south along Selwyn Avenue.</p> <p>Relocate the existing fence behind the clubrooms 2-3 metres towards the roadway. This will open up the rear of the building and enable it to accommodate the maintenance and equipment storage sheds currently located at the entry.</p> <p>Landscape the entry area (plantings, paving, and seating) and install a BBQ.</p> <p>Upgrade the tennis clubrooms:</p> <p>The tennis clubrooms are used by tennis club members, some regular users (gym, martial arts and dance) and casual hirers (birthday parties and the like).</p> <p>The internal areas do not meet the needs of the tennis club, and in some instances is not fit-for-purpose.</p> <p>The recommended upgrades to the tennis clubrooms include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relocation of the kitchen to the southern end of the clubrooms (including a possible minor extension to the building), including opening the tennis facility entry area in order to integrate the BBQ and kitchen spaces. - Upgrade and expansion of the toilets to include a small changing space and an accessible toilet. - Provision of a new internal secure storage. - Explore the opportunity to provide a tennis club office/ meeting room. 	<p>No change.</p>
<p>Future expansion of Selwyn House:</p> <p>Further investigation will be required into any expansion of Selwyn House to provide an additional program room for the</p>	<p>Provision of planning funds required to investigate</p>

REPORT NO: HE054 (cont.)

Proposed works	Change to original plan
<p>Craigieburn Education and Community Centre. It is proposed that funding be provided to conduct a detailed feasibility study into the needs of this service. There was considerable feedback on the need for the inclusion of Selwyn House in the development of the Plan.</p> <p>The works proposed by the management body at Selwyn House included a second classroom suitable for arts and craft programs through the refurbishment of the current occasional childcare room and associated spaces. An extension to the building would accommodate a new purpose-built occasional childcare facility and a second office would be constructed to accommodate outreach services.</p>	possible future expansion.
<p>New electronic scoreboard:</p> <p>A location has been identified in the plan for a proposed electronic, digital scoreboard.</p>	No change.

- 9.4 Other items that have been raised that are not related to the reserve will be addressed as a part of an internal referral processes.

10. CONCLUSION:

- 10.1 The D.S. Aitken Master Plan provides a detailed analysis of the issues confronting the current and future users of the reserve. The Plan attempts to provide Council with clear direction and advice when responding to stakeholders' aspirations.
- 10.2 It is now proposed that the Plan be adopted and the proposed works referred to the Capital Works program for consideration.

D.S. Aitken Reserve Master Plan

March 2017





Introduction

D.S. Aitken Reserve is located on Craigieburn Road, Craigieburn, and is bound by Selwyn, Dianne and Rayfield Avenues. The reserve is the primary outdoor sporting reserve servicing the eastern area of Craigieburn by providing football, cricket and tennis opportunities. The reserve also includes a skate park and playground, and a large open space area.

D.S. Aitken Reserve was the first sporting reserve established in Craigieburn. It was initially established in the 1950s, for the purpose of providing a cricket oval for the residents of Craigieburn. As part of the 1967 subdivision of Craigieburn, D.S. Aitken Reserve was expanded to its present size of approximately 4 hectares.

Hume City Council prepared a master plan for the reserve in 1998, and many of the recommendations from the master plan have been implemented. However, some of the facilities and infrastructure at the reserve are now ageing or are no longer fit for purpose. In addition, Council has received a number of requests during the past few years from user groups to either provide new facilities or expand and redevelop existing facilities. It is timely, therefore, that Council has undertaken a review of the existing master plan to develop a new D.S. Aitken Reserve Master Plan.

The draft Plan has been prepared following comprehensive community/ stakeholder consultation, and considers not only the potential to improve the existing sporting facilities, but also recommends new and upgraded facilities and spaces for passive and active recreation uses. The main aim of the Plan is to establish clear directions for the future use and development of the reserve, with a key focus to improve its landscape amenity and the functionality of the sporting facilities. Participation in leisure to achieve outcomes, such as health and wellbeing, social connection and community capacity building are behind many of the directions and actions proposed in the Plan. Any future development of Selwyn House which is located on the north west corner of the site will be the subject of further investigation and consideration.

Existing Situation/ Context

Current Facilities and User Groups

D.S. Aitken Reserve is council-owned and comprises of one sports oval with a turf centre wicket, four cricket practice nets, six artificial grass tennis courts, three pavilions and clubrooms servicing the sports clubs, several formed and informal car parking areas, and a skate park and playground set in an expansive parkland area. Selwyn House is located on the northwest corner of the reserve and provides a range of community learning and support services.

The following regular user groups use the reserve:

- Craigieburn Football Club
- Craigieburn Super Rules Football Club
- Craigieburn Cricket Club
- Craigieburn Tennis Club
- Craigieburn Education and Community Centre Incorporated (located within Selwyn House)

Community Profile

Craigieburn is a rapidly developing urban area within Hume City. Its population in 2016 is estimated to be 47,000, but is expected to increase by almost 20,000 people by 2041. Craigieburn is characterised by a larger proportion of people in the younger age groups (0 – 17 years) and a smaller proportion of people in the older age groups (60+ years) when compared to Hume's average.



D.S. Aitken Reserve is located within the older and established area of Craigieburn, and the demographic profile around the reserve is older than the rest of Craigieburn. The area immediately surrounding the reserve has been fully developed.

Strategic Context

The following Council strategies, reports and plans were important informant documents for the preparation of the draft D.S. Aitken Reserve Master Plan.

- Hume City Council Plan 2013-2017
- Hume City Leisure Strategy 2013-2018
- Hume Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017
- Hume Skate, Scooter and BMX Plan 2013
- Craigieburn Gardens Master Plan 2012
- Hume Open Space Strategy 2010-2015
- Hume Walking and Cycling Strategy 2010-2015

Site Issues and Opportunities

The preparation of the D.S. Aitken Reserve Master Plan has been underpinned by the identification and then assessment of various issues and opportunities for the reserve. These were identified from a combination of sources, including Council staff, endorsed Council plans and strategies, a review of the reserve and surrounds by the consultant team (Simon Leisure Consulting & MEMLA landscape architects), and input and feedback from reserve user groups, other community groups, and local residents. Further written consultation was conducted in November/December 2016.

A round of community and stakeholder engagement was initially undertaken during the period October and November 2015 (to identify and confirm issues), and was followed by a second round of consultation in December 2016 to receive feedback on concept plans. The following groups were consulted during the study.

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Council staff | • Northern Men's Shed group |
| • D.S. Aitken Reserve Sporting Club user groups | • Craigieburn Angling Club |
| • Selwyn House Coordinator | • Local residents (survey and meeting) |
| • Craigieburn Residents Association | |

The priority issues and opportunities for the reserve that were identified included the following:

1. Reserve lacks an internal path network and seating opportunities.
2. A feature of the reserve is the mature Red Gums, particularly along the northern and southern boundaries.
3. Poor condition of public toilets.
4. Residents and user groups support upgrading the reserve's landscaping to enhance the attractiveness of the reserve, including additional tree planting, BBQ area, seating and shelter.
5. Poor condition and functionality of the existing sports pavilion and the tennis clubrooms.
6. The Craigieburn Tennis Club identified the need for additional court(s), as the existing courts are being fully utilised.

7. The Craigieburn Football Club prefer that off-road car parking is maximised within the reserve, however, Council and residents support the cessation of car parking on the grassed open spaces areas due to the degradation to the surface caused by vehicles and that additional car parking around on the site will meet these needs. New opportunities have been proposed in the plan.
8. Opportunity to install angled car parking along the reserve boundaries along Dianne and Rayfield Avenues edges.
9. Safety issues and congestion are created by the existing reserve entry off Craigieburn Road.
10. Improved floodlighting for the oval.
11. Northern Men's Shed group and the Craigieburn Angling Club support the installation of new facilities on the reserve to accommodate them.
12. Selwyn House identified the need to expand the facility to enable addition spaces to be provided to accommodate a new childcare and new 'wet' teaching/ program space, this will be the subject of separate consideration.

D.S. Aitken Reserve Master Plan Directions

- A. Retain the oval to its current size, as enlargement will require the removal of existing mature trees around the oval, would take the oval closer to the skate park and to Craigieburn Road, and would result in the loss of unencumbered open space in the reserve. Upgrade the oval floodlighting to the minimum standard for local competition (100 lux).
- B. Upgrade the main pavilion to become fit for purpose (project currently in planning stage).
- C. Install a new pedestrian path network throughout the reserve to better connect the sub-precincts within the reserve, to improve safety for pedestrians, and to enable the reserve to better accommodate people who use it as a place for exercise.
- D. Remove the reserve entry off Craigieburn Road, as it is an inefficient and unsafe exit point for vehicles after football matches and events, and have the entrance off Dianne Avenue become the main entrance/ exit point.
- E. Cease the overflow car parking that occurs around the oval along the southern and eastern boundaries, but provide new car parking along the Rayfield Avenue and Dianne Avenue edges in the form of indented car parking, construct a new car park east of the pavilion, and formalising car parking in specific locations within the reserve. There will also be additional covered viewing areas with the redevelopment of the pavilion area.
- F. The master plan supports the relocation of the playground closer to the skate park as identified by the sporting clubs. This will still provide ample surveillance for playspace users.
- G. Expand and upgrade the skate park precinct to create a multipurpose youth zone.
- H. Retain the existing hardstand area north of the tennis courts for future community uses, including the possible future expansion of the tennis courts.
- I. Improve the arrival experience of patrons to the Craigieburn Tennis Club by replacing the cypress trees behind the clubrooms with a more open tree planting treatment, and opening up the area at the rear of the building and undertaking landscaping of the entry area (plantings, paving, seating) and install a BBQ.
- J. Undertake upgrades to the tennis clubroom to ensure it is fit for purpose and better meets the needs of tennis club patrons.
- K. Demolish the two brick public toilet blocks located between the pavilion and Dianne Avenue, and replace them with a standalone unisex automated toilet (consider locating adjacent to the playground precinct).
- L. Install an electronic scoreboard on the main sports oval.

A number of other issues and opportunities for D.S. Aitken Reserve were considered during the master plan process, but have not been incorporated into the Plan following an investigation of suitability, feasibility and need. These included the installation of a building to accommodate the Northern Men's Shed and the Craigieburn Angling Club. This was not supported as a men's shed is not a reserve-dependent activity, a similar facility already exists in Craigieburn, and the proposed building would have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the reserve. A permanent netball court in the area between Selwyn House and the tennis courts was also not supported, as it was determined that the space should remain a flexible use area and also allow for the future expansion of the tennis courts.

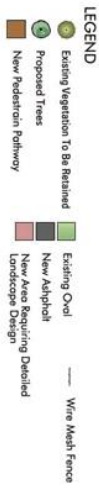
Existing site conditions – D.S. Aitken Reserve



D.S. Aitken Reserve Master Plan

Page 5





1. D.S. Aitken Oval retained in existing form. Flood light upgraded to 100 lux.
2. Pavilion upgrade and expansion.
3. New pedestrian path network throughout the reserve.
4. Traffic Management Improvements:
 - 4a. New 30 space car park on the western wing of the oval.
 - 4b. New 30 space car park south of cricket nets which are retained.
 - 4c. New 11 space car park on entry road.
 - 4d. New 11 space car park on Dianne Avenue and 50 on Rayfield Avenue.
 - 4e. New 38 space car park on entry road.
 - 4f. New 38 space car park to provide 200 additional car parking spaces.
 - 4g. Close the existing reserve entry.
 - 4h. Cease use for overflow car parking.
5. Redesign playground with single unisex automated toilet and a shelter positioned to take advantage of sweeping winds to south west.
6. Existing skate facility expanded to create a multipurpose youth area.
7. Maintain existing hard stand for community courts. Potential overflow tennis/multipurpose courts.
8. Expand the tennis facility to provide a more welcoming and open entry to the clubrooms.
9. Upgrade tennis clubrooms separating the kitchen and the toilets and if possible expand the tables to provide change rooms and showers.
10. Any future expansion of Selwyn House to subject to a detailed needs study.
11. Remove existing brick public toilet and adjacent to the playground.
12. New electronic scoreboard.
13. Additional tree planting in the reserve.

Implementation and Costings



Map Item No.	Project	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Sports Infrastructure				
1	DS Aitken Oval – upgrade the floodlighting – 100 lux	\$200,000		
2	Upgrade and extension to sports pavilion identified in concept planning process (planning commenced) capital works funding - \$375,000 (15/16) and \$1,475,000 (16/17).	Capital Funding for this project allocated in 2015/16 and 2016/17		
8/9	Improve the tennis club entry and upgrade of tennis club amenities		\$320,000	
12	New electronic scoreboard – sports oval	\$60,000		
General Reserve Upgrades				
3	New pathways around the reserve – sealed paths		\$127,075	
3	New pathways around the reserve – unsealed paths		\$66,000	
5	Relocate and upgrade playspace		\$200,000	
6	Expand and upgrade the skate facility to a District site			\$167,500
7	Maintain the existing handstand area			\$15,000
11	Demolish the existing brick toilets and replace with an automated unit			\$157,500
13	Undertake tree planting throughout the reserve include pathway avenues and clump planting to improve landscape amenity			\$40,000
Traffic Management				
	New car park		\$148,000	



Map Item No.	Project	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
4a	Western wing of oval (30 places)			
4b	South of cricket nets (18 spaces)			
4c	On reserve entry (11 spaces)			
4d	New 90 deg parking on Diamne Ave and Rayfield Ave (82 spaces)			\$251,000
4e	New 39 car spaces at entry to the reserve		\$132,589	
4f	Reconfigure existing car park south of the tennis courts (23 spaces)		\$47,000	
4g	Close the existing site entry off Craigleburn Road	\$10,000		
4h	Cease use of overflow car parking and rehabilitate grassed area	\$20,000		
	Total:	\$438,000	\$892,764	\$631,000

REPORT NO:	SU200
REPORT TITLE:	Planning Scheme Amendment C176 - Municipal Strategic Statement - Planning Panel Recommendations and Adoption
SOURCE:	Sarah Kernohan, Strategic Planner
DIVISION:	Planning and Development
FILE NO:	HCC12/885-4
POLICY:	-
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	4.1 Facilitate appropriate urban development while protecting and enhancing the City's environment, natural heritage and rural spaces.
ATTACHMENT:	1. <i>Post Panel proposed wording changes</i>

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

Planning Scheme Amendment C176 seeks to replace the existing Municipal Strategic Statement with a new revised Municipal Strategic Statement, remove the Interim Telecommunications Conduit Local Policy and insert a new Liquor Licensing Local Policy in the Hume Planning Scheme. At its meeting on 12 September 2016, Council resolved to refer all submissions regarding Planning Scheme Amendment C176 to an Independent Planning Panel appointed by the Minister for Planning. The Panel considered submissions at a Panel Hearing on 29 November 2016 and has provided Council with a report recommending Council adopts the Amendment with changes as outlined in this report. It is recommended that Council support all Panel recommendations apart from two minor drafting changes.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council, having considered the Independent Planning Panel report in accordance with Section 27 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*:

- 2.1 adopts Planning Scheme Amendment C176 with changes in accordance with Section 29(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*;**
- 2.2 submits the adopted Amendment to the Minister for Planning for approval in accordance with Section 31(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.**

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS:

Planning and Environment Act 1987.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Administrative costs associated with the preparation and exhibition of the Planning Scheme Amendment, including panel costs are provided for within the Strategic Planning budget.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

The revised Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) identifies a number of objectives and strategies to minimise the environmental impact of new development including strategies to: increase access to a range of employment, retail, recreation, community, education and leisure uses; protect, conserve and enhance areas of natural heritage significance; facilitate new public transport infrastructure and services; deliver new walking and cycling infrastructure and improve the sustainability of new buildings.

REPORT NO: SU200 (cont.)

6. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The revised MSS identifies a number of objectives and strategies to achieve a more sustainable built environment. The implementation of these strategies will help deliver a sustainable and liveable city that is more resilient and adaptable to climate change.

7. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION:

The Planning Scheme Amendment has met the principles of Hume's Social Justice Policy by engaging the community through a formal consultation process, as discussed below.

8. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

8.1 In accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, Planning Scheme Amendment C176 was placed on exhibition from 24 May 2016 to 24 June 2016, by notice in the local papers, the Victorian Government Gazette and letters to relevant authorities and prescribed Ministers.

8.2 Seven submissions were received regarding the Amendment. The submissions were received from:

- MAB (developer);
- Mitchell Shire Council;
- City of Melton;
- Melbourne Water;
- Public Transport Victoria (PTV) and Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR);
- Victorian Planning Authority (VPA); (formerly Metropolitan Planning Authority) and
- County Fire Authority (CFA).

8.3 Of the seven submissions received, one opposed the Amendment (MAB), and remaining six requested changes to the Amendment.

9. DISCUSSION:

9.1 Post Exhibition MSS Changes

9.1.1 Officers proposed a number of changes to the exhibited MSS. These changes consisted of several policy neutral changes to improve the readability of the strategies, and a number of other changes in response to submissions. These changes were outlined in the Council Report seeking referral of the Amendment to a Planning Panel.

9.2 Panel Hearing

9.2.1 Council resolved at its meeting on 12 September 2016, to refer all the submissions to an Independent Panel in accordance with Section 23(1)b and 23(2) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

9.2.2 On 22 September 2016, a Panel was appointed by the Minister for Planning to hear and consider submissions. A Directions Hearing was held on 18 October 2016 and the Panel Hearing was held on 29 November 2016.

9.2.3 MAB whilst attending the Directions Hearing and requesting to be heard at the Panel Hearing, ultimately did not attend the Panel Hearing. The decision by MAB to not attend the Panel Hearing was made as a result of officers resolving a number of outstanding concerns with MAB in the week prior to the Panel Hearing.

9.2.4 No other submitters attended the Panel Hearing.

REPORT NO: SU200 (cont.)

9.3 Panel Report

9.3.1 Council received the Panel Report on 20 December 2016. Overall, the Panel is supportive of the Amendment stating in their report that:

“After considering all submissions, the Panel concludes that the revised MSS presents a clear vision and strategies that will guide future amendments and permit applications over the next four years and beyond. The Amendment is largely supported by, and implements, the State Planning Policy Framework including Plan Melbourne, and is consistent with the relevant Ministerial Directions and Practice Notes. The Amendment is well founded and strategically justified, and the Amendment should proceed, subject to a number of changes”.

9.3.2 All post exhibition changes to MSS are supported by the Panel.

9.3.3 Section 27(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* requires Council as the Planning Authority to consider the Panel's report before deciding whether or not to adopt the Amendment.

9.3.4 The Panel recommended that the Amendment be adopted, subject to five recommended changes. The recommended changes and officers responses are outlined below.

9.3.5 Amend the Municipal Strategic Statement to remove references to the Kalkallo Retarding Basin as a location for a potential hospital or university.

(a) The Kalkallo Retarding Basin is a 380 hectare parcel of land owned by Melbourne Water, located directly north of the Merrifield Town Centre. The land is currently used for drainage purposes, and comprises a substantial portion of the land forming the future Merrifield North PSP. The VPA is preparing a Master Plan for this land as a precursor to the Merrifield North PSP process. Once finalised, the Master Plan will set out the preferred use and development of the land.

(b) The revised MSS identifies both the Kalkallo Retarding Basin and the Lockerbie Town Centre as locations for a potential hospital, university and regional sports centre consistent with *Hume Corridor HIGAP*.

(c) Melbourne Water, Mitchell Shire Council, the VPA, and MAB all made submissions regarding the identification of these land uses within the Kalkallo Retarding Basin.

(d) Melbourne Water submitted that the Kalkallo Retarding Basin is a critical piece of infrastructure that is required for flood protection, and that due to ongoing discussion regarding the future of this land through the Master Plan process, it is premature to identify the future use of this land for a hospital, university and state scale sports facility. Additionally, Mitchell Shire Council, the VPA and MAB also raised concerns with the identification of a potential hospital and university, siting different preferences for the identification of these land uses at Lockerbie vs Kalkallo Retarding Basin.

(e) In responding to the above submissions at Panel, it was submitted that the identification of these potential land uses at Kalkallo Retarding Basin was consistent with State and local policy. In particular, *Plan Melbourne* and the *Northern Growth Corridor Plan* which identifies the land as the location for regional active open space (consistent with a State scale sports facility), and *Hume Corridor HIGAP* which identifies the land as the location for a potential sports facility, university and hospital.

REPORT NO: SU200 (cont.)

- (f) It was also submitted that the Kalkallo Retarding Basin has a number of advantages over the Lockerbie Town Centre as the preferred location for a future hospital and university, including its existing State Government ownership, potential for surplus land, proximity to the future Merrifield Town Centre, and the earlier development of the future Merrifield Town Centre compared with that of Lockerbie.
- (g) The Panel in their report states that *“Plan Melbourne supports the location of universities and hospitals in a MAC, rather than in (or adjacent to) an Activity Centre”*, noting that *“locating a university and hospital in (or adjacent to) an Activity Centre in preference to a MAC is inconsistent with Plan Melbourne”*. Further, the Panel Report states that it considers that it is premature to identify the Kalkallo Retarding Basin as a location for a potential hospital or university at this stage, and that more detailed planning is required to identify where (and how much) surplus land might be available in the Kalkallo Retarding Basin.
- (h) Officers acknowledge that *Plan Melbourne* supports the location of universities and hospitals with a MAC, however note that there is nothing in *Plan Melbourne* that precludes locating these land uses within (or adjacent to) an Activity Centre.
- (i) However, in acknowledging the Panel recommendation, it is proposed to remove all references to a potential university or hospital at the Kalkallo Retarding Basin consistent with the Panel’s recommendation. Further amendments to the MSS can be considered following the outcome of the VPA Master Plan process for the retarding basin.

9.3.6 Before adopting the Amendment, Council should give further consideration to:

- **whether the Strategic Framework Plan in Clause 21.01 should clearly identify Sunbury’s position as an Activity Centre in the activity centre hierarchy; and**
 - **the appropriateness of Strategies 11.3 and 11.5 in Clause 21.02-3 in the Municipal Strategic Statement, which reference Sunbury Town Centre as a location for a potential hospital or tertiary education facility.**
- a) Sunbury Town Centre is identified as the ‘Sunbury Town Centre’ within the Strategic Framework Plan in the exhibited MSS and strategies within Clause 21.02-3 identify the Sunbury Town Centre as a location for a potential hospital or tertiary education facility.
 - b) Despite not being raised in any submissions or discussed at the Panel Hearing, the Panel stated in their report that they had *“reservations about the appropriateness of encouraging a hospital and tertiary education facility in the Sunbury Town Centre, for the same reasons that the Panel considers it is inappropriate for the MSS to encourage these types of facilities to locate at (or adjacent to) the Merrifield Town Centre”*. The Panel Report also raised concern that the Strategic Framework Plan did not clearly identify Sunbury’s position in the activity centre hierarchy.
 - c) As noted above, no submissions were received in relation to these issues, so the Panel is limited in the extent to which it can make recommendations on this matter. Despite this, the Panel has recommended that Council reconsider these aspects of the MSS before adopting the Amendment.

REPORT NO: SU200 (cont.)

- d) Sunbury HIGAP identifies the Sunbury Town Centre as the preferred location for a university and hospital. The revised MSS is significantly influenced by the two HIGAP strategies and incorporates the land uses visions of the HIGAP strategies.
- e) For the same reasons outlined above regarding the identification of a university and hospital at the Kalkallo Retarding Basin, it is not considered inconsistent with *Plan Melbourne* to identify the Sunbury Town Centre as the preferred location for a university and hospital.
- f) Sunbury Town Centre whilst designated as an Activity Centre, functions as a higher order Activity Centre, serving a large regional catchment. The exhibited MSS provides a clear direction around hierarchy of activity centres, noting that whilst the Sunbury Town Centre and the proposed new Sunbury South centre are both designated as ‘Activity Centres’ within *Plan Melbourne*, the Sunbury Town Centre is the primary activity centre within Sunbury. This primacy is acknowledged with the Strategic Framework Plan by providing a different legend to identify the Sunbury Town Centre as primary centre.
- g) It is considered appropriate in this instance that the Sunbury Town Centre is provided with an alternative legend in the Strategic Framework Plan. As noted above, Sunbury’s position within the activity centre hierarchy is clearly identified within the exhibited MSS text. The Strategic Framework Plan is not intended to be read in isolation, but rather to visually illustrate the content within the text.
- h) As outlined above officers have considered the points raised by Panel, however for the reasons outlined above do not consider that further changes need to be made to the MSS.

9.3.7 Amend the Municipal Strategic Statement to remove Strategy 4.3 in Clause 21.02-2, Strategy 10.2 in Clause 21.02-3, and Clause 21.02-5, which reference criteria for changes to the Urban Growth Boundary.

- (a) The outward growth of Hume is currently controlled by the Melbourne Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Changes to the UGB are determined by State Government, however Council is typically consulted on these changes and is the first point for enquiries from landowners.
- (b) In order to assist Council in responding to such queries, along with responding to any future review of the UGB, *Hume Corridor HIGAP* outlines Council’s position on the UGB and provides requirements that proposals for changes to the UGB should demonstrate. These requirements were included in the revised MSS as ‘Policy guidelines’.
- (c) Both the VPA and MAB submitted that it is inappropriate and unnecessary to include Council’s criteria for supporting changes to the UGB in the MSS. They submitted that changes to the UGB are determined by the State Government subject to Parliamentary ratification and a comprehensive assessment process by State Government, and that this inclusion of such local policy with the MSS is inappropriate.
- (d) Council submitted to the Panel, that the intent of including these requirements in the MSS, is the same as for its inclusion in *Hume Corridor HIGAP*. That is, to assist Council in considering the need and suitability of future changes to the UGB as and when a process for change is commenced by State Government, or when landowners request Council’s support for such changes.

REPORT NO: SU200 (cont.)

- (e) The Panel in their report agreed with submissions from the VPA and MAB, and stated that *“it is not appropriate for the MSS to identify criteria that must be met, to Council’s satisfaction, for a change in the UGB. Although Council will typically be consulted in relation to proposals to shift the UGB, it is not up to Council to determine what criteria should be met for changes to the UGB to be contemplated. This is the role of State Government”*.
- (f) The policy guidelines do not seek to change the State Government process for changing the UGB or prohibit any landowner requesting that the State Government make changes to the UGB. Whilst officers consider that policy guidelines are reflective of State Planning Policy relating to Urban Growth, it is considered that Council should follow this panel recommendation and remove the references to criteria for changes to the UGB from the exhibited MSS.
- (g) The UGB criteria, whilst proposed to be removed from the revised MSS, remains adopted Council policy within *Hume Corridor HIGAP*. Council can continue to use this criteria as a means for considering requests for support to change the UGB.

9.3.8 Amend the Municipal Strategic Statement to more clearly define the level of commitment to infrastructure projects.

- (a) The revised MSS includes references to a number of long-term infrastructure projects (such as potential train stations, bus routes and road projects) which have not yet been committed to by the relevant agency, and are at this stage unfunded.
- (b) In their submissions, PTV and the VPA stated that they did not support including infrastructure projects in the MSS until they are committed to by the relevant agency.
- (c) In response to these submissions, Council’s submission to Panel stated that the revised MSS identifies infrastructure that is required to support the future growth of the municipality. It was submitted that the infrastructure (including unfunded and uncommitted projects) is identified in the two HIGAP strategies, and that it is appropriate that the MSS illustrate Council’s strategic aspirations for future infrastructure.
- (d) The Panel in their report agreed with Council, stating that *“it is appropriate to include references in the MSS to future infrastructure that Council has identified as needed to support the growth of the municipality, whether or not that particular infrastructure is committed to, or funded”*. The Panel Report went on to note that *“However, it is important that unfunded and uncommitted projects are clearly identified as such, and as projects for which Council will advocate rather than as items that will be delivered. In particular, any such projects should be referred to as ‘potential’, not ‘proposed’”*.
- (e) Officers have undertaken a review of the revised MSS and are satisfied that the Strategic Framework Plan and Strategic Transport Plan correctly identify future infrastructure projects as either ‘potential’ or ‘proposed’, with the exception of the Attwood Connector. The words ‘potential’ will be added to the Strategic Transport Plan to ensure correct reference to the status of this road project. It is also noted that all future infrastructure projects are listed as ‘Other Actions’ within the revised MSS as advocacy items.

REPORT NO: SU200 (cont.)

9.3.9 Make other drafting changes set out in the Panel's preferred version of the Municipal Strategic Statement.

- (a) In addition to the matters outlined above, the Panel in their report have recommended a number of drafting changes to the MSS. The recommended changes are unrelated to the matters discussed above and are not a result of submissions. The changes consist of improvements to the wording of the strategies. For the most part these drafting changes are accepted.
- (b) There are two wording changes that are not accepted. These are the additional text recommended to Clause 21.02-1 Strategy 3.5 and Clause 21.03-2 Overview. Whilst the Panel's attention to the specific wording of the strategies is acknowledged, in this instance the additional recommended text changes the intent of the sentence/strategy. For this reason the proposed two changes are not supported.
- (c) There are three wording changes that are accepted, with additional changes by officers. These are Clause 21.02-3 Strategy 12.1, Clause 21.05-3 Strategy 6.4 and Clause 21.05-3 Merrifield Town Centre Overview. The additional changes proposed are to provide additional clarity on the intent of the sentence/strategy. The three additional changes are considered consistent with the other Panel recommendations as outlined above.
- (d) The Panel recommended wording and the proposed adopted wording is shown in Attachment 1.
- (e) All other Panel recommended drafting changes are supported.

10. CONCLUSION:

Hume Planning Scheme Amendment C176 and submissions have been considered by an Independent Planning Panel appointed by the Minister for Planning. The Panel has recommended that Amendment C176 be adopted with changes. It is recommended that Council supports all Panel recommendations apart from two minor drafting changes. It is recommended that Council adopts the Amendment with changes and submits it to the Minister for Planning for approval.

Panel recommended wording changes that are not accepted

Clause 21.02-1 Managing Growth and Increasing Choice, Strategy 3.5

Limit new development where it exceeds the capacity of existing infrastructure, unless the existing infrastructure is to be upgraded or appropriate new infrastructure will be provided.

Clause 21.03-2 Housing, Overview

Hume's housing stock is overwhelmingly dominated by large detached dwellings. The Hume housing market is primarily aimed at delivering homes for family households. While there is an expectation and an assumption that this will continue to remain true for new housing in the growth areas, there is a need for greater housing diversity. This includes demands for an increasing number of smaller households; to house an ageing population, and the community's aspirations of being able to age in their local community.

Panel recommended wording changes that are accepted, with additional changes (shown in bold) by officers.

Clause 21.02-3 Sunbury, Strategy 12.1

Facilitate the delivery of the transport network shown in Figure 1 in Clause 21.07, including advocating for elements of the network shown in Figure 1 that are as yet unfunded or uncommitted to by the relevant agency.

Reword as two separate strategies.

- Facilitate **and safeguard the opportunity for** the delivery of the transport network shown in Figure 1 in Clause 21.07.
- Advocate for the funding and commitment for **other** elements of the network shown in Figure 1.

Clause 21.05-3 Sunbury Town Centre, Strategy 6.4

~~Discourage~~ Ensure retail development outside the Sunbury Town Centre ~~to that which~~ **does not detract from and** recognises and compliments the role and function of the centre.

Clause 21.05-3 Merrifield Town Centre, Overview

Mickleham (Merrifield) Town Centre has the potential to meet many of the retail, employment and service requirements of the residential and employment areas immediately surrounding it and to the north-west of Beveridge and up to Wallan. Its proximity to the potential Merrifield Park, its location on the proposed premium bus service Aitken Boulevard corridor, and its good access to the Hume Freeway, the existing Donnybrook Station and future Lockerbie Train Station make it well located for ~~a future university and hospital (or equivalents)~~ facilities servicing a sub-regional catchment, **which may include tertiary education and health services.**

REPORT NO:	SU201
REPORT TITLE:	Hume City Council Submission to Permitted Clearing Regulations Proposed Planning Scheme Amendment
SOURCE:	Amanda Dodd, Coordinator Environmental Planning; Bernadette Thomas, Manager Environment
DIVISION:	Sustainable Infrastructure and Services
FILE NO:	12/835
POLICY:	-
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	4.1 Facilitate appropriate urban development while protecting and enhancing the City's environment, natural heritage and rural spaces.
ATTACHMENT:	1. <i>Hume City Council Permitted Clearing Regulations Submission</i>

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

The Victorian State Government has released proposed regulatory system changes in response to its review of the native vegetation clearing regulations. Council has prepared a submission to these draft changes.

Council's response reflects key, Council adopted strategies, plans and policies such *Pathways to Sustainability 2015-2019, Live Green Plan 2015-2019, Land & Biodiversity Plan 2015-2019, Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2014-2017, and the Biodiversity Planning Policy.*

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That:

2.1 Council notes the response to the review of the native vegetation clearing regulations was submitted by Council officers on 8 March 2016, and

2.2 Council's response to the proposed regulatory system changes to the native vegetation permitted clearing regulations be endorsed (refer Attachment 1).

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS:

3.1 Biodiversity and native vegetation is protected under Victorian legislation through the *Victorian Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and Commonwealth legislation through the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

3.2 Council is responsible for ensuring that all development proposals comply with state legislation.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Nil

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

The proposed changes will support Council's effort to fulfil Theme 4 of the Hume Horizons 2040 Plan (HH 2040), which is 'a sustainably built and well-maintained City with an environmentally engaged community.' The changes assist Council to achieve the community's expectations for environmental sustainability in Hume Horizons 2040 being 'The City's natural heritage, environment and rural spaces are protected, enhanced, maintained and valued'.

REPORT NO: SU201 (cont.)

6. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The proposed amendment will assist local flora and fauna to adapt to a changing climate.

7. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION:

The proposed changes seek to better reflect the community's concerns about the impact of native vegetation removal on local connection to nature and access to natural spaces.

8. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

No community consultation was required to prepare this response. All Victorians have been invited to provide feedback on the regulatory changes.

9. DISCUSSION:

9.1 The Victorian State Government has released proposed regulatory system changes in response to its review of the native vegetation clearing regulations.

9.2 The date for final submissions was 8 March 2016. Council officers have submitted a response and this report seeks Council endorsement of the submission.

9.3 A Hume City Council officer has been involved with the review for two years as one of two councils included in the stakeholder reference group.

9.4 The response highlights general support for the changes with a few areas of improvement including:

9.4.1 Ensuring avoidance is a key principle in all applications for native vegetation removal.

9.4.2 A strong commitment from the state government and Department of Environment Land Water and Planning for funding the ongoing improvement of the regulations, including timeframes for delivering the improvements.

9.4.3 Ensuring that all native vegetation offsets are traded through a state government hosted native vegetation credit register.

9.4.4 Placing emphases on the issues associated with enforcement under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* for significant clearance cases.

9.5 Responses to all of the proposed improvement are contained in the attachment.

10. CONCLUSION:

10.1 The process for engagement with local government during the drafting of these proposed regulatory changes has resulted in Council's support for the proposed changes.

10.2 The proposed changes to the system are likely to result in beneficial outcomes for native vegetation and biodiversity within Hume.



Review of the native vegetation clearing regulations

March 2017

Name of respondent – Hume City Council

1. Introduction

Hume City Council welcomes the release of the proposed amendments to the native vegetation clearing regulations. The review and the proposed amendments address many of the concerns raised by Council in its submission to changes to the native vegetation framework in 2012.

Council is generally supportive of the review of the Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations and the improvements proposed in the consultation paper released in December 2016. Council appreciates the extensive consultation and clear communication from the regulatory team that has been a critical part of this review, and also acknowledges the value of its direct involvement as part of the stakeholder reference group for this review. Council hopes that local government officers will play a role in the proposed Native Vegetation Regulations Advisory Group proposed within the paper and on working groups to deal with the ongoing improvements. Particularly, local government must be involved in determining how the permitted clearing regulations, and the broader planning scheme, will interact into the future with the proposed changes to the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (FFG) 1988*.

Council officers have contributed to submissions prepared by the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Local Government Professionals Biodiversity Planning Network. Council generally supports the issues raised within these submissions.

Council’s submission is split into three sections, Section 2 which summaries comments on the proposed improvements that seek to change the VPP, Section 3 which outlines concerns with the application of clause 52.16 which has not been addressed in the review to date and section 4 which highlights some concerns with the ongoing improvements.

2. VPP amendments

Hume City Council’s comments on the improvements that seek to be addressed through changes to the VPP and incorporated documents are described in table 1 below.

Table 1 – Improvements addressed by changes to VPP

Proposed Improvement	Comments
Proposed improvement 1: <i>Clarify that the primary focus of the regulations is to ensure avoidance of native vegetation removal where possible.</i>	The Assessment Guidelines have provided clear rewording of the three step approach of avoid, minimise and offset. The clarification of the three step approach is strongly supported.
Proposed improvement 7: <i>Require an avoid and minimisation statement for all</i>	However the wording within section 4.6.1 of the Assessment Guidelines creates unrequired ambiguity about the three step approach for the Basic Assessment Pathway. Avoidance should be the first step in all

REPORTS – SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

14 MARCH 2017

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING OF COUNCIL

Attachment 1 - Hume City Council Permitted Clearing Regulations Submission

<i>applications and consider this in decision making.</i>	applications including within the Basic Assessment Pathway.
Proposed improvement 2: <i>Consolidate comprehensive policy guidance for native vegetation removal.</i>	The implementation strategy proposed is supported. However the ongoing improvement documentation (see section 4 below) is also required to support the streamlined implementation of the system. Timelines for completion of the ongoing improvements should be included.
No proposed improvement 3 or 4 included in the documentation	N/A
Proposed improvement 5: <i>Reduce the low risk-based pathway threshold.</i> Proposed improvement 6: <i>Replace the Native vegetation location risk map with an updated map of highly localised habitats.</i>	The inclusion of large trees, sensitive wetlands and coastal areas, rare and threatened species habitat and endangered EVCs into the assessment pathway determination is supported. More funding is required to improve state databases to accurately map these values.
Proposed improvement 8: <i>Require an offset strategy for all applications and consider this in decision making.</i>	This improvement is supported.
Proposed improvement 9: <i>Change to two pathways – a “lower assessment pathway” and a “higher assessment pathway”.</i>	Conditionally supported. Avoidance of the removal of native vegetation must be required in all three pathways (see 1 and 7 above).
Proposed improvement 10: <i>Provide clearer guidance on when to refuse an application to remove native vegetation.</i>	This improvement is supported. The Assessment Handbook must be complete and released at the same time as the planning scheme amendment occurs.
Proposed improvement 11: <i>Include a decision guideline that allows councils to consider locally important biodiversity when assessing applications.</i>	This improvement is supported.
Proposed improvement 12: <i>Allow habitat characteristic information collected at the site to be used to supplement the maps of a species habitat in the permit application process and for offset sites.</i>	Conditionally supported. It remains unclear how this approach can be used in cases where the modelling is incorrect at the clearing site, where a clearing site contains threatened species habitat and where populations of that threatened species are present. The maps should be allowed to be challenged by any party at any point in time. A clear and transparent process should be available for this prior to the planning scheme amendment.
No proposed improvement 13 included in the documentation	N/A
Proposed improvement 14: <i>Place greater emphasis on key areas of habitat for dispersed species in decision making and offset requirements.</i>	This improvement is supported. More funding is required to ensure modelled data is accurate.

Proposed improvement 15: <i>Differentiate between the biodiversity value of scattered trees for use in decision making and offset requirement determination.</i>	This improvement is supported.
Proposed improvement 22 <i>Clarify wording of exemptions.</i>	This improvement is generally supported with the following comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Planted Vegetation exemption differs between clause 52.16 and 52.17 and should contain the same wording. - Exemptions which include trees – should be a total of 15 trees which doesn't include more than 5 large trees, rather than 20 trees (15 small and 5 large) - Dead Vegetation Exemption – remove the word <i>deliberately</i> as it requires a burden of proof that may not be able to be realised.

3. Draft VVP clauses

Hume City Council has concerns that the draft VPP clauses still have outstanding issues that have not been addressed by the review to date. These are summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2 - VVP clauses

Draft VPP Clauses	Comments
Clause 12 – <i>Environmental and Landscape Values</i>	It is unclear why international agreements such as the Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA) and China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (CAMBA) agreements are specifically mentioned but the <i>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999</i> is not.
Clause 12.01-1 – <i>Protection of Biodiversity</i>	Clause 12 should include policy guidance around the <i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</i> listed species, particularly where these do not occur within areas of native vegetation. Planning guidance should also include any local government policy and strategy incorporated into the planning scheme.
Clause 52.16 – <i>Native Vegetation Precinct Plan (NVPP)</i>	An incorporated NVPP should not remove the requirement for a planning permit to remove native vegetation. The removal and offsets processes set up within 52.16 in the absence of a secondary planning permit are difficult for local government to track and appropriately enforce. Precinct Structure Plans (the equivalent land use planning tool) do not turn off the requirement to obtain a subdivisional permit, so in most cases a permit is still issued for the site. Hume City Council still see the value in strategically considering native vegetation through an NVPP process – however this should be a guidance and implementation document that feeds into planning permits for development. At a minimum, changes are needed to clause 52.16 to place mandatory reporting on the conditions within the NVPP prior to the removal of the native vegetation to prevent councils from wasting resources investigating reports of illegal native vegetation clearance. All offsets for Native Vegetation Precinct

	<p>Plans should be tracked through the Native Vegetation Credit Register and the information made publically available.</p> <p>In addition the protection status for native vegetation under the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> within the NVPP drafting process can be difficult to ascertain as the requirement to prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Plan is only triggered by the development of the land, not a planning scheme amendment. This means that a decision on the protection or removal of native vegetation that may be of value under the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> may not be known at the time that an NVPP is incorporated. If this vegetation is then allowed to be removed without a planning permit unintended breaches of the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> may be facilitated by the process.</p>
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4. Ongoing improvements

Council supports the implementation approach for proposed improvements 2,3,4,10,13,16,17,18,19,20,21,23 and 24. However, as has been the process for this review, local government must be represented on working groups to assist in guiding the preparation of the associated documentation. Council would like to see a clear commitment from the state government and the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning to timeframes associated with finalising the documentation associated with these improvements. Many of these problems have been known since before the 2012 review and unless there are clear and accountable timeframes for implementation they will remain issues for decades to come.

Proposed improvement 18

Council believes that all offsets including onsite, in addition to third party (as proposed), offsets should be registered through the Credit Register to save local government from costs associated with creating their own tracking systems and to ensure transparency around gains and losses across the state.

Proposed improvements 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29

Council would also like to note that for cases with significant clearance of native vegetation and biodiversity values, the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* does not contain the most appropriate tools and penalties to act as a sufficient deterrent. While beyond the scope of this review, the state government should review the maximum penalties allowed within the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. In addition, the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* review that is currently underway should also ensure that enforcement can be undertaken by the state government and its agencies on private land when breaches are of a significant nature.

5. Conclusion

The review of the native vegetation permitted clearing regulations is welcomed. Together with the review of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and the draft Biodiversity Strategy, Hume City Council is optimistic that the decline of extent and quality of native vegetation in the state can be prevented.

Council strongly encourages the continued involvement of local government in finalising the implementation of the changes to biodiversity planning and regulation within the state.

REPORT NO:	SU202
REPORT TITLE:	Sustainability Report 2015/16
SOURCE:	Nick Chester, Project Support Officer; Bernadette Thomas, Manager Environment
DIVISION:	Sustainable Infrastructure and Services
FILE NO:	HCC04/416/02
POLICY:	-
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:	4.2 Create community pride through a well-designed and maintained City.
ATTACHMENT:	1. <i>Sustainability Report 2015/16</i>

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:

To provide Council with information regarding the release of the *Sustainability Report 2015/16*. The report contains the latest data available covering ten sustainability indicators and ten case studies, highlighting the progress made under the *Pathways to Sustainability Framework 2015-2019*, Council's overarching environmental policy document.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council endorses the *Sustainability Report 2015/16*.

3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS:

There are no legislative impacts arising from the development of the *Sustainability Report 2015/16*. Where Council has regulatory or enforcement powers, or obligations under environmental legislation, these have been included in the report where relevant.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications arising from the development of the *Sustainability Report 2015/16*.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

The report highlights the ongoing commitment of Council and the Hume community to improve Hume's environment and the overall sustainability of the city. The ongoing pressures on Hume's environment and the challenges these pose are also highlighted in the report.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The report covers adopted Council policy and programs designed to enable Council and the community to adapt to the projected impacts of climate change, in addition to those actions designed to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases.

7. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION:

The Charter of Human Rights has been reviewed in relation to this report and there are no issues to be considered in this regard.

8. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

8.1 Data in the report has been obtained from a broad range of internal and external stakeholders.

8.2 The report will be circulated to existing distribution lists, interest groups, stakeholders and be available for download or viewing from Council's website. Promotional activities will take place upon endorsement of the report by Council.

REPORT NO: SU202 (cont.)

9. DISCUSSION:

- 9.1 The *Sustainability Report 2015/16* format is based upon the four strategic pathways in *Pathways to Sustainability Framework 2015-2019*. The four pathways are: Sustainable Places, Sustainable Communities, Sustainable Leadership and Environmental Stewardship.
- 9.2 The pathways include a range of indicators covering environmental trends and targets, as well as more detailed information regarding other programs and projects:
- 9.2.1 Sustainable Places – this pathway contains two case studies: a grant-funded conservation project in Broadmeadows Valley Park and the Hume Energy Savers program for households.
- 9.2.2 Sustainable Communities – this pathway contains six indicators and three case studies based on municipal wide data and community engagement programs: Hume Enviro Champions; sustainable transport; residential and commercial greenhouse gas emissions; residential water use; commercial and industrial water use; community recycling and waste management; the Live Green sustainable living engagement program; and the Business Efficiency Network.
- 9.2.3 Sustainable Leadership – this pathway covers three indicators and two case studies that report on Council's own environmental performance: Council water use; Council's greenhouse gas emissions including a solar installation case study at Craigieburn Child and Family Centre; Council waste and recycling; and the Live Green Work Green program.
- 9.2.4 Environmental Stewardship – this pathway highlights Council's efforts to conserve biodiversity on public and private land and contains three case studies and one indicator relating to land and biodiversity: Conserving our Rural Environment (CoRE) projects and the Sunbury Rabbit Action Group; and wildlife diversity in Council managed nature conservation reserves.
- 9.3 Key updates and trends in terms of Council's own environmental performance:
- 9.3.1 Council's water use was 16 ML or 7 per cent higher than in the previous year. This is due to increased usage at some existing facilities and reserves due to lower rainfall and service changes (for example, the establishment of warm season grasses).
- 9.3.2 Unfortunately Council's target for potable water use in Council operations has not been achieved. Instead of a 10 per cent reduction in water use per person in Hume by 2016, based on 2011 usage, water use per person has increased by 34 per cent since 2011. The Bureau of Meteorology weather records indicate that both 2010 and 2011 were very wet years when water use for irrigation would have been considerably less making a reduction target based on this year difficult to achieve. Large increases in consumption since 2013/14 are due to significant service changes including the new 50 metre pool at Broadmeadows Aquatic and Leisure Centre, and irrigation of additional ovals at John Ilhan Reserve and Greenvale Recreation Reserve.
- 9.3.3 Council's greenhouse gas emissions decreased by 3.7 per cent on the previous year's total. This is largely due to the bulk changeover of 8,798 residential streetlights in 2014/15 and 2015/16 – electricity use from street lighting decreased by 18 per cent with annual savings of \$500,000 and 3,100 tonnes of emissions.
- 9.3.4 Council's installed solar capacity has increased from 27kW to 137kW and will continue to increase in 2016/17.
- 9.3.5 Waste diverted from landfill at five main Council sites including the Broadmeadows Offices has increased from 55 to 70 per cent.

REPORT NO: SU202 (cont.)

- 9.3.6 A switch to 100 per cent recycled paper in the Broadmeadows office has occurred through a Live Green Work Green initiative. This is an increase from 20 per cent recycled content paper.
- 9.3.7 Council's annual wildlife survey program shows a consistent increase in the number of native species recorded in the Conservation Estate, contributing to biodiversity outcomes across the surveyed sites.
- 9.4 Key updates and trends across the municipality and the achievements of environmental community engagement programs:
 - 9.4.1 Residential water use has increased by 785 ML or seven per cent since 2014/15. This is greater than the population increase of 2.74 per cent. On a per household basis, annual consumption increased by 185 KL or four per cent. There has been a 3.7 per cent average increase per household since 2010/11.
 - 9.4.2 Total residential greenhouse gas emissions in Hume from electricity and gas use in the home decreased by 6,000 tonnes or 1% from 2012 to 2013 (the most recent data available).
 - 9.4.3 Hume's total waste generation has increased by 1,809 tonnes or 2.7 per cent. Waste generation per household has increased very slightly by 2 kg or 0.2 per cent.
 - 9.4.4 The ongoing development of the Hume Enviro Champions program is featured, showcasing examples of meaningful, community driven environmental initiatives. Over 72 champions have lead and made changes in their communities through the program.
 - 9.4.5 The Business Efficiency Network (BEN) continues to grow, with almost 700 businesses now part of the network. Through the BEN, Hume Light\$mart Program has assisted businesses to collectively save over \$154,000 on their electricity bills and around 1,366 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per annum by replacing inefficient lighting with more energy efficient lighting.
 - 9.4.6 The Live Green program has continued to increase in popularity; the program enabled around 2,500 interactions with residents and the opportunity for residents to learn from sustainability experts at over 65 practical workshops and seven festivals.

10. CONCLUSION:

- 10.1 The sustainability report continues to provide important information and progress updates towards adopted Council targets and goals. In addition, valuable information regarding many programs and projects is provided.
- 10.2 Long term trends are presented in many areas, for example energy, water and waste management, providing a basis on which to make informed decisions.



HUME CITY COUNCIL
**SUSTAINABILITY
REPORT**
2015/16

 hume.vic.gov.au/sustainabilityreport





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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage within the municipality and acknowledges the Gunung-Willam-Balluk of the Wurundjeri as the Traditional Custodians of this land. Council embraces Aboriginal living culture as a vital part of Australia’s identity and recognises, celebrates and pays respect to the existing family members of the Gunung Willam Balluk and to Elders past and present.

1. SUSTAINABLE PLACES

Summary

Sustainable places include many elements - well designed buildings suited to the climate; public open space that retains and protects natural values; convenient walking and cycle paths as a viable alternative to the car; accessible, frequent and well-connected public transport; leisure, cultural and social opportunities for cohesive and healthy communities; public open space that retains and protects natural values; and local education and employment opportunities. These are some of the things Council is endeavouring to achieve throughout Hume.

Case Study: Broadmeadows Valley Park and *Geranium sp. 1* project

In March 2014, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning discovered the presence of threatened flora species, *Geranium sp. 1* (Large-flower Crane's-bill) in Broadmeadows Valley Park. Funding was gained through a *Threatened Species Protection Initiative - Critical Action and Strategic Partnerships* (CASP) grant, providing the opportunity for specific management to be implemented.

The project, from January to June 2016, consisted of a prescribed burn, targeted weed control pre- and post-burn and the installation of a 420 metre rabbit proof fence. The burn in April 2016 was undertaken in one section of the project site, allowing for comparison of management techniques for this species.



Figure SP1 (Left)
Geranium sp. 1 flower

Figure SP2 (Right)
Vegetation assessment quadrat

Post-fire monitoring of the site, completed with the assistance of community members, recorded significantly high numbers of *Geranium sp. 1* individuals within the project site, particularly in the burn area. *Geranium sp. 1* germinates as well as regrowth were noted in the quadrats in the burn area.

The large estimated population size, an estimated median of 17,500 *Geranium sp. 1* individuals in the unburnt area and 55,000 plants in the burn area, will enable seed to be collected and possibly redistributed to other known sites to provide genetic diversity. Collected seed could also be used to create new populations in suitable sites.



Figure SP3
Project site with northern zone (yellow) and southern zone (blue)

There was also the discovery of additional *Geranium sp. 1* plants near the project site. This discovery could create a project beyond the grant-funded project, where the population within the managed fenced area is compared to the adjacent unmanaged *Geranium sp. 1* area. The results may provide insight into how to best manage the species and its habitat.



Figure SP4 (Left)
Prescribed burning

Figure SP5 (Right)
Flowering *Geranium sp. 1*

Beyond this project, Council will continue to manage the high threat weeds within the fenced project area, collect *Geranium* seed, develop a restoration program for the fenced area and develop a detailed monitoring program for *Geranium sp. 1* to compare how the species responds under different management regimes.

In an increasingly urbanised environment, maintaining natural assets such as Broadmeadows Valley Park and working to conserve threatened species such as *Geranium sp. 1* is integral to creating sustainable places within Hume.

Case Study: Hume Energy Savers

From June 2015 to May 2016 Hume City Council partnered with Energy Makeovers, an accredited VEET (Victorian Energy Efficiency Target) business, to promote and deliver free energy saving upgrades to residents through the Hume Energy Savers program.

Hume City Council promoted the program with a letter from the Mayor and flier to all households on the Council rates database. Funding from the Australian Government’s Community Energy Efficiency program covered the cost of distribution. Council’s promotion of the offer increased trust and awareness of the program for residents.

Upgrades included the following VEET approved products:

- efficient LED downlights to replace energy intensive halogen downlights
- compact fluorescent lights
- under-door draught stoppers
- chimney balloons
- water-saving showerheads.

Concession card holders also received a free in-home energy display worth \$100.

More than 1,800 Hume households participated in the program. Through the upgrade of 11,596 downlights alone, participating households are projected to save over \$384,000 per year on electricity bills. Anticipated greenhouse gas savings are 1,290 tonnes per year from all upgrades.

The VEET scheme is designed to make energy efficiency improvements more affordable, contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gases, and encourage investment, employment and innovation in industries that supply energy efficiency goods and services.

The Hume Energy Savers project met and exceeded its objectives of providing free energy efficiency upgrades for Hume households, reducing both electricity bills and household greenhouse emissions.



Figure SP6
Installation of under-door draught stopper

2. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Summary

Council has a role to help the community reduce their environmental impact by helping households, businesses and community groups use resources such as energy and water more efficiently, choose more efficient transport options, increase the growing of food locally, and reduce waste.

To achieve significant reductions in Hume City's environmental impact, initiatives and solutions must make it easy, attractive, and affordable for people to lead happy and healthy lives within a fair share of the earth's resources.

This is a complex challenge that is a shared responsibility with other levels of government, as well as businesses, organisations, families and individuals. Council takes a joint approach to working with the community within current resourcing, partnering with others, basing decisions on evidence and measuring results, focusing on shared and multiple outcomes, and building relationships.

Case Study: Hume Enviro Champions Program

The Enviro Champions Program is now in its fifth year. Over 72 local residents have completed the nine week training program in community leadership and sustainability and there are currently 12 active Hume-based projects run by Enviro Champions from 2016 and previous years.

Participants and facilitators reported the highlights of the 2016 program as:

- Learning about Hume's sites of environmental significance such as the Sunbury Indigenous Ceremonial Rings, Woodlands Historic Park, and Mount Ridley Nature Reserve.
- Advocacy for urban agriculture via the presentation of a petition to Council for a more streamlined permit application process for nature strip plantings.
- The formation of Hume CAN (Climate Action Now), an advocacy group acting to support Hume's diverse community members to minimise the adverse impacts of heat waves in the municipality.

In 2016, 11 new projects were initiated, including:

Childcare centre gardening

Gayani de Silva is a staff member at Council's Sunningdale Children's Centre in Sunbury. As part of her Enviro Champions project, she has transferred her sustainability education skills from the workplace at Sunningdale to the Newbury Child and Community Centre in Craigieburn. Gayani has run a workshop to revitalise the Newbury Community Garden with the Multicultural Women's Group and is organising intergenerational gardening sessions with the pre-schoolers and the local seniors group.



Figure SC1 and SC2
Planting the community garden at Newbury Child and Community Centre



Figure SC3
Groovy Up The Grasslands Workshop

Groovy Up The Grasslands

Stephanie Pontet's project is to revitalise the grasslands at Banksia Gardens, a significant grassland in the heart of Broadmeadows. Broadmeadows owes its name to the vast grasslands that once covered the area but due to the type of development that has taken place locally, and over many years, a lot of indigenous grasses and wildflowers species are now threatened. Stephanie hosted a community workshop with students from the Banksia Gardens School Holiday Program, and community members, to raise community awareness about the grasslands.

Palletable

Michelle Newton sources wooden pallets and uses them to make furniture. She has taught herself to make various pieces of furniture and her project is to teach others in the community how they too can make their own furniture for free using discarded pallets. She has developed a fact sheet for anyone wanting to make a table of their own and plans to run a community workshop.



Figure SC4
Michelle of Palletable in her workshop



Figure SC5
Finished Palletable product

Earth to Earth

Sofie Kremer and Maria Pinto are keen community gardeners. They are collaborating with the Homestead Community and Learning Centre in Roxburgh Park and Hume City Council's Parks Department to create an open kitchen garden where members of the public, school students from the neighbouring Roxburgh Homestead Primary School and families from the Homestead Child and Family Centre can help themselves to fresh, culturally diverse produce.

Maria and Sofie have presented to 130 school children about the uses for different kinds of produce, and how to grow and prepare these foods for a nutritious diet. They have also hosted a community planting day.

Further details on the Enviro Champions Program can be found at www.hume.vic.gov.au/envirochampions.

Indicator 1: Sustainable transport

Greenhouse gas emissions from transport account for 14% of Australia’s total greenhouse gas emissions and personal transport is responsible for the vast majority of greenhouse gas emissions from transport. Hume is large geographically and being situated on the urban-rural fringe many people face a long commute to the CBD. Hume’s large industrial precincts are serviced by major roads such as the Hume Highway and Western Ring Road, and the car is still the most common form of transport. The data shown below is taken from the Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity (VISTA) 2012-13 survey, and is the most recent data available. Figure SC6 shows that 19% of Hume residents use a more sustainable form of transport to get to work, including public transport, car sharing, walking and cycling.

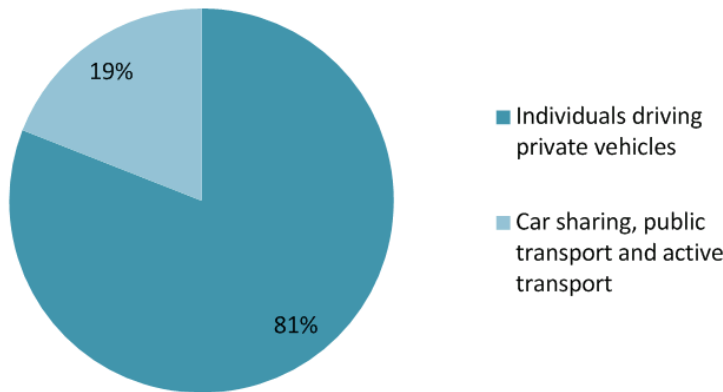


Figure SC6
 How Hume residents get to work (Source: Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity (VISTA) 2012-13, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources)

Figure SC7 shows the various methods of transport used by the 19% of workers who do not travel individually in their own cars to get to work. The two most popular alternatives to car use are the train and car sharing.

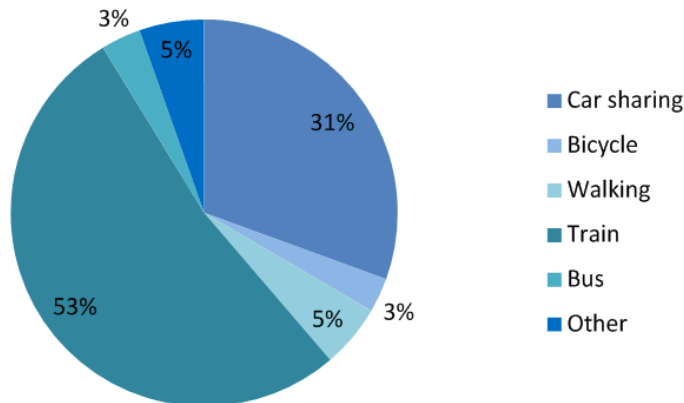


Figure SC7
 How Hume residents get to work more sustainably (non-individual drivers) (Source: Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity (VISTA) 2012-13, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources)

Indicator 2: Community greenhouse gas emissions

The latest data available shows that total residential greenhouse gas emissions in Hume from electricity and gas use in the home decreased by 6,000 tonnes or 1% from 2012 to 2013. Between June 2012 and June 2013, an extra 1,574 homes were built (see Figure SC8 below).

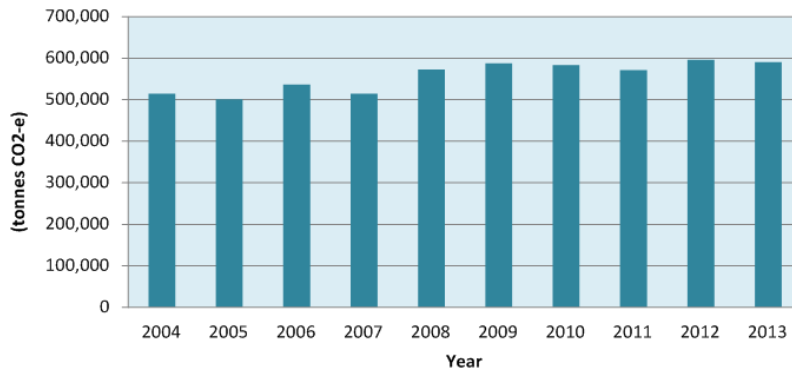


Figure SC8
 Total residential greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent per year) from electricity and gas use in Hume households

On average, a household in Hume emitted 9.87 tonnes of greenhouse gases per year in 2013. This is down from 10.24 tonnes from 2012. The long term trend is declining over the period for which data is available since a peak of 11.26 tonnes in 2004 (see Figure SC9 below).

This positive decrease correlates with trends seen across the nation in response to the price on carbon which was introduced in 2012 and energy efficiency programs such as the Victorian Energy Efficiency Scheme. The municipality has seen a rapid uptake of solar PV systems, with the majority installed on homes. By the end of 2013, cumulative installed systems amount to 16,564 kW (kilowatts) which have the capacity to reduce emissions across Hume by approximately 32,000 tonnes/year. A solar system on a household is typically 2kW.

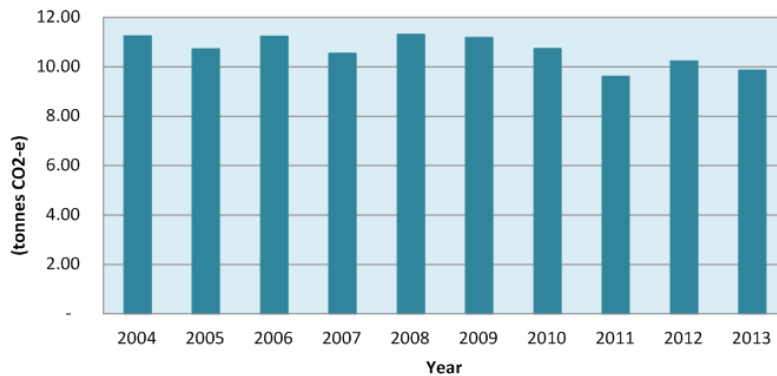


Figure SC9
 Residential greenhouse gas emissions per household (tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent per year)

Indicator 3: Residential water use

Variable rainfall is part of the Australian climate but climate change is resulting in long drought periods, less overall rainfall and more rain falling in heavy storms. Wise use of water is critical for sustainability and increasing the supply and diversity of Melbourne's water sources is necessary to meet the needs of our increasing population. The northwest of Melbourne receives 20% less rainfall than the Melbourne average at only 542mm per annum so planning gardens in Hume City to be low water tolerant and watering wisely is particularly important.

Local rainfall in 2015/16 has been below to very much below average for our region. Mean temperature for the same period has been the highest on record, spring in 2015 being particularly warm. December 2015 in Victoria was the hottest recorded. Autumn began with the hottest March on record and the temperature into winter 2016 continued to be above average, overnight temperatures in particular being higher than normal. (Source: Bureau of Meteorology).

In 2015/16, 18,440 megalitres (ML) [one million litres] of drinking water was used across Hume. Of this, 66% (12,134 ML) was used in homes, an increase of 7% (785 ML) or 314 Olympic sized swimming pools since 2014/15 (see Figure SC10). Population growth in Hume City has been 2.74% for this period indicating that on average, Hume households used more water in 2015/16 than they did the previous year.

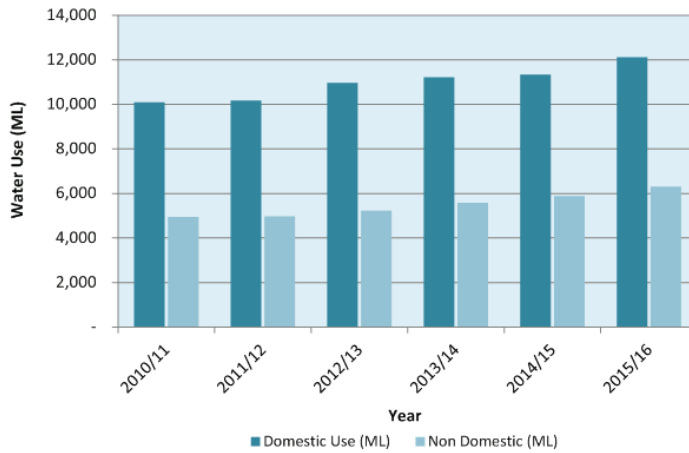


Figure SC10
Total water use in Hume

On a per household basis, annual consumption increased by 4% compared to the previous year to 185 kilolitres (KL) [one thousand litres]. There has been a 3.7% average increase per household since 2010/11.

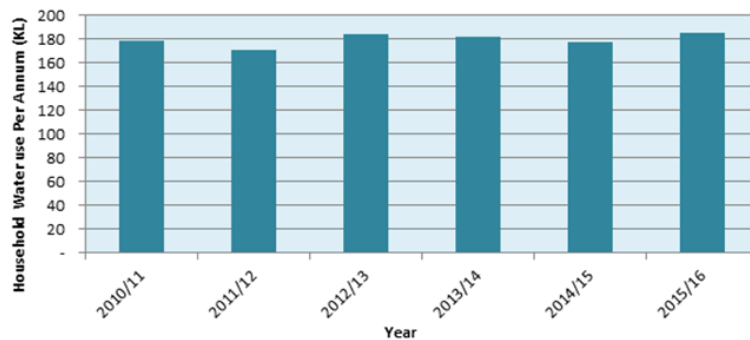


Figure SC11
Water use per Hume household

Indicator 4: Commercial water use

Commerce and industry (non-domestic) consumed 34% of the Hume total (6,306 ML). Council used 3.9% of the commerce and industry total (246 ML).

In the last twelve months, water use per business in Hume has increased from an average of 468 KL per business to 480 KL, an increase of 2.5% (see Figure SC 12). Since 2010, there has been an average increase of 51 KL or 11.9% per business.

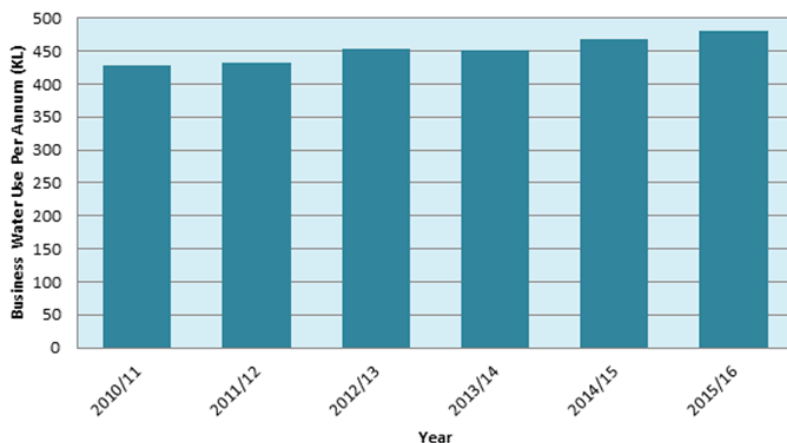


Figure SC12
 Water use per Hume business

Indicator 5: Waste generation per household

Hume City's total waste generation has risen slightly since last year, increasing 2.7% or 1,809 tonnes. This increase is due to population growth and the number of households increasing in Hume by 1,654 (2.74%). The amount of waste generated by each household over a year has increased very slightly by 2 kilograms (0.2%), from 1,027 kilograms per home to 1,029. The long term trend in waste generation by households is shown in Figure SC 13.

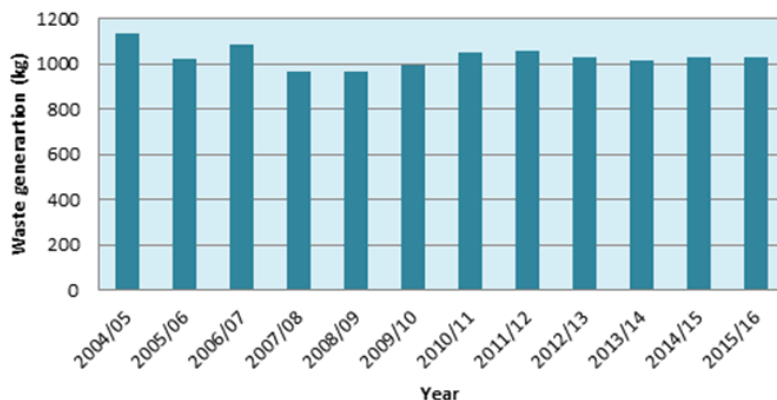


Figure SC13
 Waste generated per Hume household

Indicator 6: Community recycling

The proportion of waste diverted from landfill has fallen slightly for the second year running. Waste diverted from landfill is now 32.9%, down from 33.2%. This is due to a small decrease in recyclables collected. Figure SC14 shows the long term trends in waste management in Hume since 2004/05.

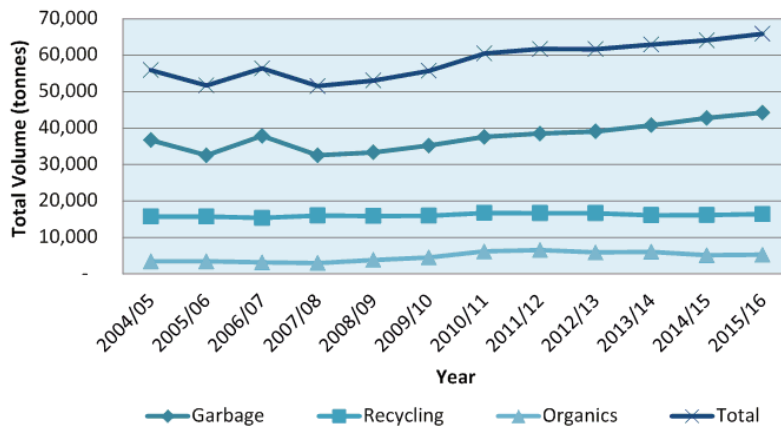


Figure SC14
Waste management trends in Hume

Case Study: Live Green

Council’s educational workshop series, Live Green, has continued to prove to be extremely popular, along with a range of other environmental engagement activities. This year’s Live Green program has enabled around 2,500 Hume community members to ‘live greener’ and save money through participation in 65 practical workshops and seven festivals. Growing your own vegetables, keeping chickens, composting and growing gourmet mushrooms all proved to be popular topics.

Walking in a wicking wonderland

Interest in water wise gardening, has continued to grow this year in Hume, with many more wicking (or self-watering) garden beds becoming established across the City. Wicking beds need far less water and maintenance than conventional raised beds as the plants are watered from below, reducing evaporation and water lost through drainage. And vegetables flourish as the soil is always moist!



Figure SC15 and SC16
Students creating wicking beds at Youth Central, Broadmeadows

Students enrolled in education programs at Youth Central, Broadmeadows came together to create eight wicking beds as part of a program to transform the under-utilised, concrete yard at Youth Central into a green and welcoming, food producing garden. As part of this program, the students learned how to design and build the garden themselves.

The above installation builds on the growing number of wicking beds around Hume including at the Sunbury Memorial Hall, O'Shannassy Street Sunbury, Macedon Street Sunbury, the Hume Global Learning Centre Broadmeadows, Dallas Community Church, Broadmeadows Disability Services and Connections@Craigieburn.

If you are interested in building your own wicking garden bed, follow our instructions on Hume City Council's [Resources and Gardening Fact Sheets](#) page.



Figure SC17 and SC18
Kids Winter Veg was a popular Live Green workshop. Held at Connections@Craigieburn

Community Orchard, Homestead Child and Family Centre, Roxburgh Park

A more sustainable space in Hume City has been created at the Homestead Child and Family Centre in Roxburgh Park. A community orchard has been created out of an unloved and unused space to spruce up the area. The area, featuring 12 pole apple trees, will serve as an educational space for the 126 children who attend preschool and long day care. The orchard also complements the veggie patches that each classroom already has. And once the trees start fruiting, the apples will be used as a tasty addition to the children's meals.



Figure SC19 (Left)
A disused space at Homestead Child and Family Centre, Roxburgh Park

Figure SC20 (Right)
Conversion of the disused space at Homestead Child and Family Centre to be utilised for food production

Case Study: Business Efficiency Network (BEN)

The BEN is a partnership between Council, businesses located in Hume and beyond, government, education and private organisations. Partners have a joint commitment to supporting competitive and resource efficient enterprises. BEN activities focus on the key areas of resource and energy efficiency, and resource recovery. The purpose of the Business Efficiency Network is to:

- Stimulate a diverse and resilient economy
- Facilitate low carbon and innovative businesses
- Support business learning.

Business efficiency is simply smart business, and key to becoming more resilient and competitive in light of changing financial, environmental and global markets.

BEN membership now numbers almost 700 businesses from across Hume.

Business efficiency network forums

BEN forums cover a range of sustainable business topics across industry sectors, and are usually held quarterly in February, May, August and November. For further information, please visit [Sustainable Business News & Events](#).

Hume Light\$mart energy efficient lighting program

Based on the City of Darebin’s successful Light\$mart Program, BEN is working with businesses in Hume helping them to replace inefficient lighting with more energy efficient lighting in conjunction with reputable lighting specialists. The process involves:

- A simple audit of your business to determine the number of lights and their power consumption
- Accessing your electricity bills to determine your costs so that we can accurately measure your energy, greenhouse emissions, financial savings and payback period.

To help businesses proceed with a lighting replacement, Council will provide a subsidy based on the number and type of lights involved.

A wide range of businesses across industry, retail, professional services and hospitality have taken up the Hume Light\$mart offer, and are now collectively saving over \$154,000 on their electricity bills each year, and around 1,366 tonnes of greenhouse gases annually.



Savings on lighting

\$15,565
per annum

Emissions reduction

227 tonnes CO2-e
per annum

BEN Case Study: Peuker and Alexander, Campbellfield

Peuker & Alexander is a family owned business manufacturing roof trusses and timber and has been supplying the building industry for over 60 years.

Their large industrial space in Campbellfield was using over 415,000 kWh in energy per annum with 100,000 kWh from lighting alone — equivalent to an enormous \$88,148 every year.

Peuker & Alexander were interested in undertaking a total energy “makeover”, involving the installation of LED lighting, the installation of a solar PV system, energy monitoring software and the assessment of energy bills.

Peuker & Alexander opted to retrofit 150 existing lights. This involved replacement of 42W, T8 lights with 15W and 32W LEDs and 400W Metal Halide Globes with 150W High Performance LED Globes. The LED lights alone are estimated to reduce Peuker & Alexander’s lighting usage by 62% and with their lifetime of over 50,000hrs, will reduce maintenance costs by over \$15,000.

With the installation of the energy monitoring system, Peuker & Alexander will be able to monitor and control their electricity usage. A further \$4,500 per year has been saved by negotiating a better energy deal via an energy broker.

The project was part of Hume City Council’s successful Light\$mart program. Cherry Energy supplied and installed the LEDs, solar panels, and energy monitoring software and also provided the energy brokerage.

In addition, Peuker & Alexander have identified possible cost reductions in waste management so have now also registered on the recently developed ASPIRE website, where the waste resources of one business are potentially matched with inputs for another business.



Figure SC21
New energy efficient lighting at Peuker and Alexander, Campbellfield



BEN Case Study: CJD Equipment, Campbellfield

CJD Equipment Pty Ltd supplies trucks and construction equipment including earthmoving machinery since forming in 1974 and has grown into Australia’s leading privately-owned equipment supplier.

Lighting is one of the best opportunities for businesses to reduce their energy bills because it accounts for a significant portion of energy use. In a typical small or medium sized business, lighting contributes to around 38% of all energy used. After installing energy efficient LED lighting, CJD will now be saving 62% on their lighting energy use, with a payback of roughly three years. LEDs also last many times longer than halogen, fluorescent or metal halide lights, so their maintenance and replacement costs will also be substantially lower.

Each year, CJD Equipment is now saving:

- \$17,320 on energy costs
- 133,000 kWh of energy
- 173 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions

“At CJD Equipment we recently replaced lights in our offices and warehouse with a range of smart LED lighting and immediately benefited from improved lighting outcomes and significant energy and cost savings. The installation was very well managed, with limited interruption to our business activities. Our thanks to Cherry LED and the Hume Light\$mart Program.”

Grant Standfield, National Warehouse Manager, CJD Equipment

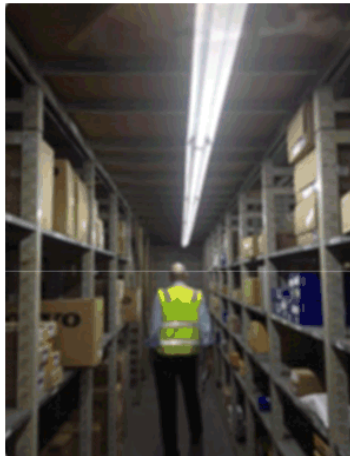


Figure SC22
CJD Equipment facility lighting

3. SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP

Summary

Sustainability leadership requires a consistent, whole-of-Council approach supported by Councillors, Council staff and the Hume community. Hume City Council’s planning and decision making is guided by a commitment to a sustainable Hume and a desire to both minimise Council’s own environmental impact and to influence and inspire sustainability across the municipality. Council supports and empowers staff to embed sustainability considerations into day-to-day decisions and actions. Council’s commitment to sustainability is active and evident across a range of Council services.

Where Council has responsibility for managing the environment, sustainability considerations will guide Council decisions, planning and actions. Where Council does not have direct responsibility, we will seek to influence the decision-making of others and advocate on behalf of the community to improve environmental outcomes.

Indicator 7: Council water use

Council’s potable water use in 2015/16 was 246 ML, 16 ML (7%) higher than last year. This is due to increased usage at some existing facilities and reserves due to lower rainfall and service changes (e.g. the establishment of warm season grasses takes two seasons of irrigation to establish) including Seabrook Reserve, Broadmeadows Town Park and Hackett Reserve. Increased irrigation at sports grounds can make a substantial difference to Council’s water use. During the period between June 2015 to July 2016 rainfall was below to very much below average for the region, requiring additional watering. In addition, the average recorded temperature for the same period was the highest on record (source: Bureau of Meteorology). The long term water use trend is shown in graph SL1 below.

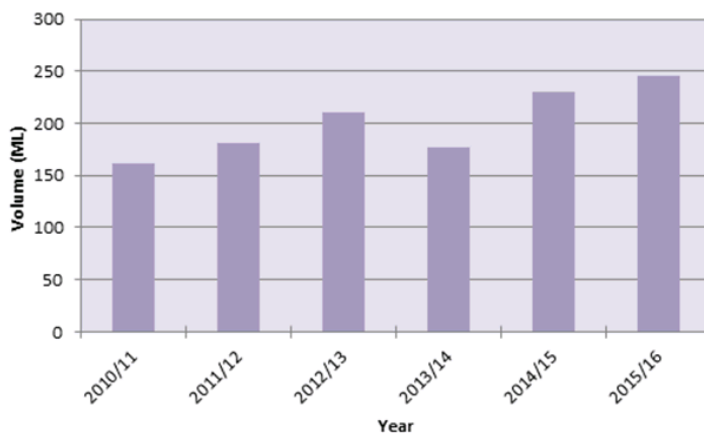


Figure SL1
Council’s water use

Figure SL2 below shows Council’s target for potable water use in Council operations of a 10% reduction in water use per person in Hume by 2016, based on 2011 usage. This type of target acknowledges that as the population of Hume grows, so too does the number of new facilities to service and sporting grounds to water, so Council’s total water use also increases. This target aims to increase Council’s water use efficiency and equates to 849 litres of water per resident per year.

This year Council’s potable water use was 1,268 litres per resident, up from 1,218 litres (a 4.1% increase on last year). The 2016 target was not achieved and 2011 usage was in fact exceeded by 34.4%.

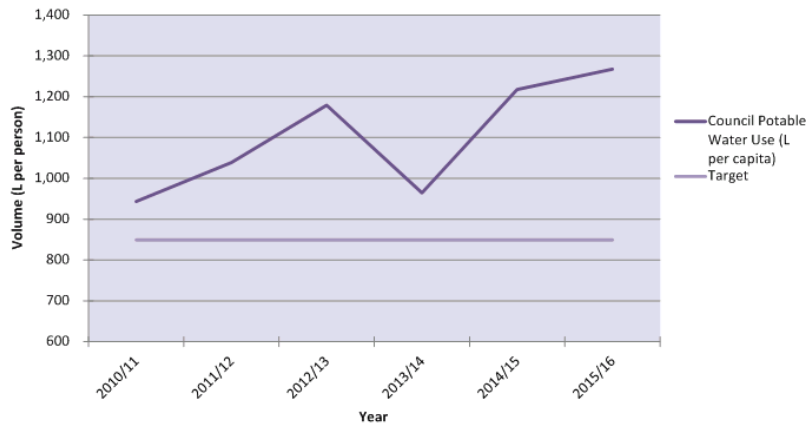


Figure SL2
Council's water use per person

Bureau of Meteorology weather records indicate that both 2010 and 2011 were very wet years, the fifth wettest and 12th wettest years on record respectively (from 112 years of records). So achieving a 10% reduction in water use on a very wet year when sports grounds and landscaping would require significantly less watering may not have been an achievable target.

The large increase in 2014/15 following lower per resident usage in the previous year was due to a number of significant service changes including the new 50m pool at the Broadmeadows Aquatic and Leisure Centre, and irrigation of additional ovals at John Ilhan Reserve and Greenvale Recreation Reserve.

Indicator 8: Council greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

Figure SL3 shows Council's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by source. The waste disposed of at the Sunbury landfill contributes the largest source of GHG emissions. Emission levels from the Sunbury landfill have remained relatively constant in the last few years.

Overall there has been a 3.7% reduction in GHG emissions in 2015/16 compared to the previous year and this builds on the decrease of nearly 2.1% achieved in 2014/15 compared to the year before. These reductions are mostly due to the upgrade of residential street lights to energy efficient T5 fluorescent lights from older and more inefficient mercury vapour lights. It is also important to note however that the greenhouse coefficient for Victorian electricity has decreased in the last two years and this is also contributing to Council's overall reduction in emissions (the Victorian greenhouse coefficient expresses the quantity of greenhouse gases produced to generate a kWh of electricity in Victoria).

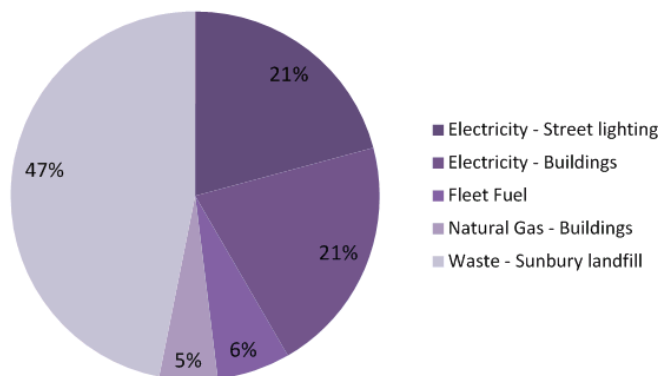


Figure SL3
Council's 2015/16 greenhouse gas emissions by source

Figure SL4 shows Council's total greenhouse gas emissions (excluding landfill) by source over the last four financial years. The upgrade of 8,798 residential street lights to energy efficient T5 lighting has reduced electricity consumption by street lights by nearly 18% in 2015/16 compared to 2014/15. In total, this project has reduced emissions by around 3,000 tonnes per year, but the total number of streetlights in Hume (and therefore electricity use and emissions) is continuing to rise as Hume's population grows. All new residential street lights are now energy efficient LEDs or T5 lights.

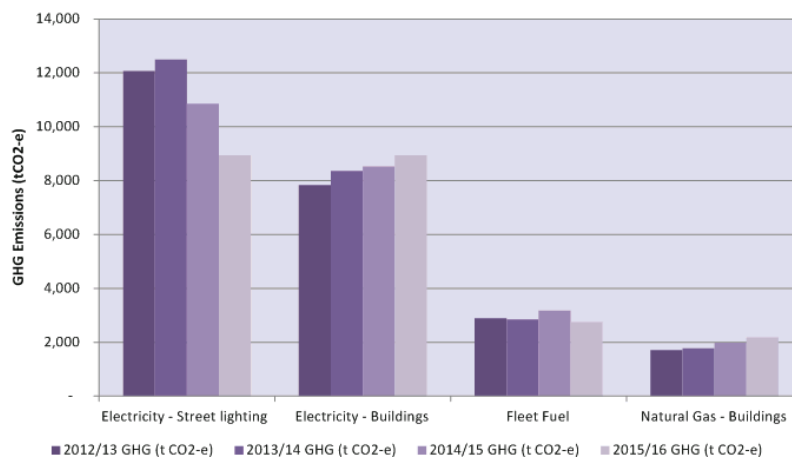


Figure SL4
Council's greenhouse gas emissions by source (excluding landfill) from 2012/13 to 2015/16

Electricity and gas use in Council buildings is the biggest contributor to Council's greenhouse gas emissions, after landfill. Emissions from both gas and electricity in buildings have increased steadily over the last four years. This is due to a number of new Council facilities being built, major redevelopments and extended services in existing Council facilities. These new and upgraded facilities are necessary to meet the needs of Hume's growing communities.

Emissions from Council buildings would have been higher without the following programs:

- Energy efficiency upgrades including: lighting upgrades at sports stadiums; pool blankets at Broadmeadows Aquatic and Leisure centre; variable speed drives at aquatic centres and a new efficient gas boiler at Sunbury Aquatic and Leisure Centre
- Purchase of 10% GreenPower* for all Council buildings

Council has also installed 137 kW of solar panels on Council buildings (as of June 2016). Council receives a financial discount for the solar system and in return relinquishes the renewable energy certificates to the supplier. These renewable energy certificates can then be purchased by electricity retailers (liable entities) that have obligations to surrender a certain number of certificates based on the amount of electricity they purchase each year.

The following buildings had solar panels installed in 2015:

- Lynda Blundell Centre, Dallas (25kW)
- Craigieburn Early Childhood Services (10kW)
- Broadmeadows Community Hub (11kW)
- Craigieburn Education and Community Centre (Selwyn House) (5kW)
- Craigieburn Child and Family Centre (29kW).

Council will continue to install more panels including a large 99kW array at the Hume Global Learning Centre Broadmeadows in 2016/17.

* [GreenPower](#) is a government accredited program for purchasing electricity from renewable sources such as solar and wind power.

Case Study: Craigieburn Child and Family Centre

The Craigieburn Child and Family Centre located on Cleveland Drive was redeveloped in 2010. It is a large facility of over 1,250 square metres and houses various facilities including a preschool/kindergarten, children’s services and maternal and child health services. A 29 kW solar system was installed in mid-2015 to reduce conventional electricity use at this busy centre.

Since then, energy bills have decreased by up to 60% in summer with overall savings of around \$5,000 per year. These savings will cover the cost of the system in around seven years. Staff at the centre are proud of this initiative and take pride in their renewable energy production.



Figure SL5
Craigieburn Child and Family Centre

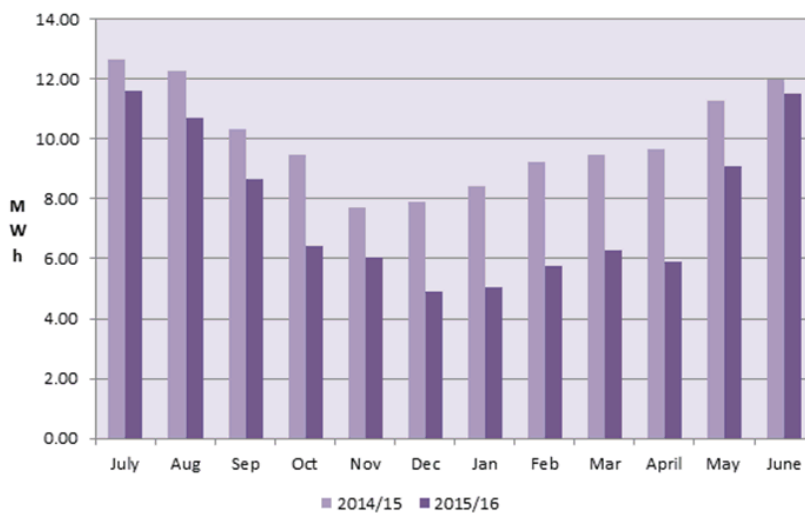


Figure SL6
Billed electricity at Craigieburn Child and Family Centre before and after the installation of the solar system



Figure SL7
Craigieburn Child and Family Centre solar panels

Indicator 9: Council waste and recycling

Figure SL8 shows how Council manages its waste at five main sites combined: the Broadmeadows Offices; Hume Global Learning Centre Broadmeadows; Maffra Street Depot Coolaroo; Sunbury Offices, Library and George Evans Museum; and the Sunbury Depot.

The latest figures represent a significant improvement in waste management; the proportion of waste diverted from landfill has increased from 55% to 70%, a huge increase in one year. Previously, 45% of all waste was being sent to landfill and this has been reduced to 30%.

This result demonstrates that the staff engagement activities, conducted two years ago to improve how waste is managed at Council facilities, has had a lasting effect in changing waste disposal habits.

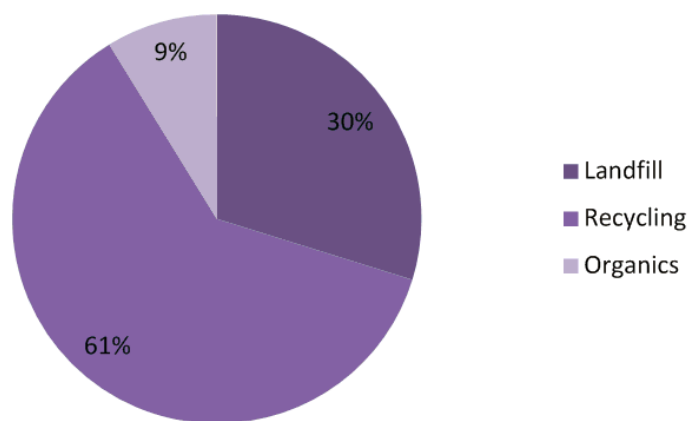


Figure SL8
Council's waste stream

Case Study: Live Green Work Green

Celebrating the switch to 100% recycled copy paper

Hume’s Green Team is celebrating the successful switch to 100% recycled paper. Until recently all printers were stocked with paper with only 20% recycled content. The remaining 80% was sourced from managed forests that could come from plantations and/or native Australian forests. The Green Team successfully advocated to senior management and in July 2016, Council’s main office building in Broadmeadows made the switch.

Hume staff can feel proud that Council’s paper use is not contributing to the destruction of habitat for significant native animals such as the Spot-tailed Quoll, Powerful Owl, Sooty Owl and the Long Footed Potoroo. Buying recycled products also helps ‘close the loop’ by creating markets for products made from recycled materials, making collection services more cost effective.

Waste paper from Council’s Broadmeadows office is now being increasingly reused too; non-confidential printed documents are being reused as drawing and craft paper at 26 Hume children’s centres.



Figure SL9
Members of the Hume staff Green Team, instrumental in helping to make the switch to 100% recycled paper

Green Travel Breakfast

On Thursday 27 October 2016, 54 staff members from Hume City Council’s Broadmeadows Office attended Hume’s annual Green Travel Day Breakfast. Organised by Hume’s Green Team, the Green Travel Breakfast encouraged staff to ride a bike, catch public transport, walk, run or car pool to work both on the day and on an ongoing basis.



Figure SL10
Local bike mechanic Keith Blake presenting to Hume staff on how to change a bike tyre

4. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Summary

Hume is a large and diverse place with about 65% of land rural or semi-rural in nature. The landscape has changed dramatically since European settlement but significant remnants of native habitat still remain. Biodiversity values (native plants and animals), relatively good quality waterways and places of Aboriginal and European heritage can also be found.

Emu Bottom Wetlands, Holden Flora and Fauna Reserve, Evans Street Wildflower Grasslands, Kalkallo Common and Maygar Grasslands are just some of Hume's valuable sites. The Organ Pipes National Park and Woodlands Historic Park are reserves of State significance in and bordering Hume. Waterways including the Jacksons, Merri and Deep creeks are regionally significant and should be protected from the impacts of urbanisation and the threats of introduced pest plants and animals. Efforts are ongoing to protect, enhance and connect these threatened environments involving Council, community and government organisations.

Case Study: Indigenous vegetation

Hume City Council's Conserving our Rural Environment (CoRE) grant provides support and funding to rural landowners and community environmental groups for on-ground works and capacity building activities relating to sustainable land management and natural environment conservation. Eligible landowners can apply for a small (\$300), medium (\$301-\$5,000) or large (\$5,001-\$10,000) grant.

CoRE Case Study: Oaklands Park, Oaklands Junction

The Conserving our Rural Environment (CoRE) program has provided funding to Oaklands Park, a privately managed conservation area of over 100 hectares with three kilometres of Deep Creek frontage.

Assets and threats

The property contains a considerable number of large old River Red Gum trees along Deep Creek with hollows that provide habitat for many birds and arboreal (tree-dwelling) mammals, including the threatened Eastern Bent-wing bat. Large patches of native grasslands also exist throughout the property, particularly on the river flats and escarpment areas.

A number of high threat environmental weeds found in escarpment areas with difficult accessibility pose a large threat to the conservation and biodiversity values of the property. The landowners have been experimenting with grazing and herbicide application to manage the weeds but have been grappling with the size of the problem.



Figure ES1 and ES2
Private property in Oaklands Junction containing River Red Gums



Outcomes

Funding through the CoRE program has assisted the landowners with undertaking aerial spraying of broadleaf weeds, in particular Artichoke Thistle, to reduce this threat.

The CoRE program has also supported the development of a land management plan to improve the conservation values on the property. The development of this plan will offer advice on land management practices and prioritise management actions to reduce threats. This will assist the landowners to better focus future management efforts to ensure the best ecological outcomes.

The property also participated in Hume’s private property monitoring program which commenced in 2016 to map changes in weeds and native vegetation cover over time.



Figure ES3 (Left)
Artichoke Thistles

Figure ES4 (Right)
Treated weeds



Figure ES5
Oaklands Junction
property landscape

CoRE Case Study: Redstone Hill Road, Sunbury

The CoRE program has also funded two adjacent properties that extend from the frontage of Redstone Hill Road, south towards Jacksons Creek, Sunbury. The area of these properties combined equates to approximately 200 hectares and are owned by the same developer. The properties will eventually contribute more than 90 hectares to the future Jacksons Creek Regional Park.

Assets and threats

The site contains an extensive remnant Yellow Gum and Yellow Box Woodland. Noxious weeds pose one of the greatest threats to remnant native vegetation along Jacksons Creek. Prior to weed management works conducted as part of the CoRE funding, boxthorns were covering the base of the gums reducing their health as well as the aesthetics and usability of the site in the future.

The property owner had a grant approved for controlling noxious weeds such as Serrated Tussock, Artichoke Thistle and the removal of large Boxthorns through the high conservation area.



Figure ES6 and ES7
Private property on Redstone Hill Road, Sunbury with indigenous eucalypt woodland and invasive boxthorn and artichoke thistles (Left) and invasive serrated tussock grass (Right)

Outcomes

The onsite farm manager has complemented the funded works, contributing time and labour to the project by controlling noxious weeds surrounding the project area including Blackberry, Serrated Tussock and Artichoke Thistle, and burning the removed Boxthorn piles onsite. This contribution will add value to the funded works by buffering to reduce re-establishment of wind borne weed species in the high conservation area.



Figure ES8
Contractor carrying out weed removal works

Indicator 10: Wildlife diversity

Council commenced an extensive annual surveying program for wildlife across its conservation reserves in 2012. The program aims to determine the presence of species over time to assess changes in species diversity. The wildlife surveying program is designed to assess the effectiveness of site management and provide Council with an indication of whether or not it is meeting its target of 'no further loss of species' as identified in the *Land & Biodiversity Plan 2015-2019*.

The substantial increase in species diversity in 2015/16 is largely due to an increase in the number of reserves surveyed (17 reserves, up from five in each of the previous two surveys).

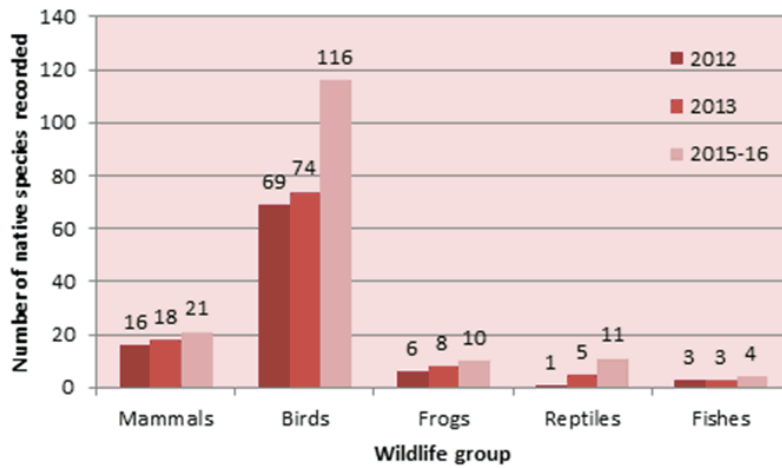


Figure E59
Number of native species recorded in Hume reserves



Figures E10-E513
(Clockwise from top left)
Golden Sun Moth;
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo;
Growling Grass Frog;
Australian Wood Duck

Reserve	Birds	Mammals	Reptiles	Frogs	Fishes	Invertebrates	Total
1. Mt Ridley Nature Reserve	60 (7)	18 (6)	2	3	0	0	83 (13)
2. Kalkallo Common Grassland	41 (8)	5 (3)	4	5	0	0	55 (11)
3. Malcolm Creek Parklands	48 (10)	4 (1)	0	4	3	1	60 (11)
4. Broadmeadows Valley Parkland	56 (9)	11 (4)	3	5	2	1	78 (13)
5. Maygar Grey Box Woodland	32 (7)	4 (1)	0	0	0	0	36 (8)
6. Greenvale Recreation Reserve	49 (6)	7 (2)	0	4	0	0	60 (8)
7. Bulla Hill and School Hill	54 (7)	11 (2)	3	5	6 (2)	0	79 (11)
8. Sunbury Pop Festival Site	43 (7)	17 (4)	3	3	5 (2)	0	71 (13)
9. Wanginu Park	43 (9)	7 (4)	3	5	0	0	58 (13)
10. Blind Creek Parklands	40 (6)	11 (5)	0	3	0	0	54 (11)
11. Mt Holden Reserve and Sunbury Landfill	55 (9)	14 (4)	5	3	0	0	77 (13)
12. Kismet Creek Woodlands and Spavin Lake	71 (8)	12 (5)	0	5	0	0	88 (13)
13. Albert Road Nature Reserve	52 (6)	15 (4)	1	5	0	0	73 (10)
14. Emu Valley Reserve	65 (9)	11 (5)	4	4	3 (1)	0	87 (15)
15. Emu Bottom Wetlands Reserve	63 (8)	15 (5)	2	4	7 (3)	0	91 (16)
16. The Nook and Correa Escarpment	60 (10)	13 (6)	3 (1)	4	0	0	80 (17)
17. Gellies Road Roadside Reserve	51 (3)	5	3	4	0	0	63 (3)
All reserves combined	132 (16)	29 (8)	12 (1)	10	8 (4)	2	193 (29)

Figure ES14

Total species per fauna group per reserve from 2015/16 survey. Number in brackets represents non-native, introduced species

Atlas of Living Australia

The Atlas of Living Australia contains 40 million records of flora and fauna species, and these records of Australia's biodiversity continue to grow. For the Hume region, the Atlas lists 39 mammals, 280 birds, 31 reptiles, 13 amphibians, 7 fish, 2 crustaceans and 174 insects.

The Atlas of Living Australia encourages citizens to add their own species sightings to the database, as well as upload their own photographs, video and audio records of species. Go to the [Atlas of Living Australia](#) to view species in your own area and across Australia.

Case Study: The Eastern Barred Bandicoot, Woodlands Historic Park, Greenvale

One species making a very welcome return to Hume, with the help of Conservation Volunteers Australia, Parks Victoria and partner organisations, is the Eastern Barred Bandicoot. Once widespread across Victoria’s grasslands, they are now critically endangered in Victoria and extinct in South Australia. Widespread clearing of its habitat for farming and introduced predators such as foxes and feral cats has led to its decline.

Since the first bandicoots were introduced to their predator proof enclosure at Woodlands in 2013, numbers have gradually grown. In October 2014, 57 individual bandicoots were recorded by the monitoring program conducted by Conservation Volunteers Australia.

In October 2015, this figure was almost doubled with the recording of 110 bandicoots. In April 2016, 101 individuals were caught when monitoring. This gives an estimate of around 300 – 400 bandicoots on site. Zoos Victoria staff have been on-site for species monitoring activities and have confirmed the population is healthy and thriving in their new home in Hume.



Figure ES15
The Eastern Barred Bandicoot reintroduction and monitoring program, Woodlands Historic Park, Greenvale



Figure ES16
Eastern Barred bandicoot, Woodlands Historic Park

Case Study: Sunbury Rabbit Action Group

Summary

Through Council’s CoRE grant program, 16 landholders collaborated to concentrate their efforts to improve rabbit control in an area under pressure from high rabbit numbers. Receiving funding to erect rabbit proof fencing, and for warren fumigation and baiting, the landholders succeeded in reducing rabbit numbers significantly and increased their knowledge of good rabbit management.

The problem

Rabbits are a pest animal in Hume and have significant environmental and economic impacts on the community. Council is committed to managing rabbits and supporting the community to do so. Successful rabbit control needs careful and targeted planning as recolonisation from adjacent areas can occur rapidly in locations where rabbits have been controlled. Therefore collaboration with surrounding landholders is very important for the long-term success of management programs.

It was determined through internal and independent monitoring that rabbit numbers across properties in the Sunbury peri-urban area were significant and contributing to soil erosion, suppression of native vegetation, damaging infrastructure and competing with native animals for food and habitat.



Figure ES17 (Left)
Sunbury Rabbit Action Group

Figure ES18 (Right)
Wild rabbits

The approach

In total, 16 residents joined together and developed a project for rabbit proof fencing and fumigation of warrens. Their CoRE program application was successful with Council agreeing to fund warren fumigation by a professional contractor and materials for rabbit proof fencing.

In conjunction with the funding, Council provided support and advice to the landholders by:

- working closely with the group leader helping them to manage the project and order materials.
- organising information sessions to help the group build their knowledge and capacity with regards to rabbit management.
- being accessible to the group for questions and enquiries.
- investing more resources and planning into pest animal management on Council owned and managed land in surrounding areas.

Results

As a result of the project the landholders have increased their knowledge of rabbit biology and effective control methods. They understand the importance of working together to reduce numbers and the positive effects it has had on their individual properties by removing rabbits from the landscape. The landholders have now formed an action group and are well equipped to conduct their own control programs together.

Throughout the project, monitoring was undertaken to assess the results and a significant decline in numbers was found. On Council managed land, pre-program spotlight counts found 25 rabbits per km compared to 1 rabbit per km counted afterwards.

Council will continue to work closely with the group to provide advice and support as necessary. The project so far has been deemed a success but the overall longevity of the group will determine the real success story.

	Pre Project	Post Project
Landholders involved in active Rabbit Management	0	16
Rabbit Proof Fencing (Metres)	0	3,741m installed
Area Protected from Rabbits	0	121,751m ² or 12.18ha
Spotlight Count Rabbits present across project area	51	9
Rabbit warrens present	39	0

Figure E519 Some of the Rabbit Action Group program results



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