

# HAMILTON CASINO FACTS

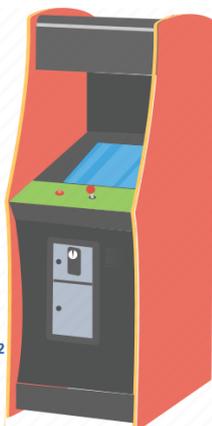
How SKYCITY's application might affect your community

SKYCITY wants to add

# 60

**MORE POKIE MACHINES**

- May lead to 50 more severe problem gamblers<sup>1</sup>
- Likely to negatively impact 500 more friends and whānau<sup>2</sup>
- Plus many more people moderately impacted



There are already 763 gaming machines (pokies) in Hamilton City. An 8% increase of 60 machines will mean that there will be **one machine per 206 people** – more than any other city in NZ.<sup>3</sup>

## ***Pokie machines are the most dangerous form of gambling***

When somebody has a gambling problem, it is usually with the pokies. Casino and non-casino pokie machines account for over **60% of presentations to gambling treatment services**.<sup>4</sup> This is despite the fact that only a small number of New Zealanders play them.<sup>5</sup>

These machines have a number of characteristics which make them addictive:

- They exploit weaknesses in logic and mistaken beliefs about probability
- They stimulate reward pathways in the brain in addictive ways
- It is easy to gamble continuously and rapidly
- Even SKYCITY admits that “it is easier for people to gamble without being noticed, because gaming machine gambling involves very little interaction with staff compared to table games”<sup>6</sup>

## ***“Not an increase in gambling opportunities”***

Section 11 of the Gambling Act 2003 prohibits any increase in casino gambling.

SKYCITY argues that the proposed increase in gaming machines is lawful because it will be offset by the removal of three gaming tables, and each table can seat up to 21 players.

But this reduction is not equivalent, because **pokies are a drastically different product**.

They take in more money, and cause more harm, than casino table games.

**NZ loses over \$1 billion per year** to casino and non-casino pokies combined – **over four times the amount lost to casino table games**.<sup>7</sup>

Between 22 and 60% of these losses are coming from **problem gamblers**.<sup>8</sup>

SKYCITY has provided no assessment of the impact that adding 60 machines will have on gambling harm, beyond stating that the changes will not detract from their “endeavours” to mitigate the risk of harm.

## ***Hamilton Council has a ‘sinking lid’ gambling policy***

This means that the Council will not grant consent for the establishment of any new pokie venues or machines.

While this policy does not control casino gaming machines, it represents a clear intent from the Hamilton community and the Council for there to be **no increase in gaming machines**.

## References

1. Research suggests that each pokie machine creates 0.8 problem gamblers (source: Storer, J., Abbott, A., & Stubbs, J. (2009). Access or adaptation? A meta-analysis of surveys of problem gambling prevalence in Australia and New Zealand with respect to concentration of electronic gaming machines. *Int J of Gambling Studies*, 22: 225-244)
2. The Ministry of Health suggests that each gambler affects up to 10 other people (source: Ministry of Health (2010). *Preventing and Minimising Gambling Harm: Six-Year Strategic Plan 2010/11-2015/16*. Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Health).
3. One machine per 206 people figure calculated using Department of Internal Affairs (2018) regional gaming machine data and Statistics New Zealand (2018) population data.
4. According to MoH client intervention data.
5. New Zealanders' Participation in Gambling: Results from the 2016 Health and Lifestyles Survey meta-analysis.
6. Excerpt taken from SKYCITY Hamilton's Problem Gambler Identification Policy ([https://www.skycityhamilton.co.nz/media/2254234/scham\\_2016.pdf](https://www.skycityhamilton.co.nz/media/2254234/scham_2016.pdf)).
7. Taken from DIA expenditure data for 2017/2018 and the Ministry of Health Strategy (2010).
8. Australian Productivity Commission. (2010). *Gambling: Inquiry Report*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia. (The report defines a "problem gambler" as someone who is experiencing harm from gambling at a level that is intense and damaging to themselves, their families, and other related parties. In New Zealand (according to the Ministry of Health Strategy (2010)), about 0.7% of people fall into this category, with many others experiencing harm in the low to moderate range of the spectrum (6.8%).)

## More information

- If you would like to make a submission to the Gambling Commission on the proposed changes to Hamilton casino, go to <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/get-help/gambling-support> to find our submission-writing guide and other resources.
- To read more about the proposed changes to Hamilton casino, including the Gambling Commission's public notice, please visit [http://www.gamblingcommission.govt.nz/gcwebsite.nsf/wpg\\_URL/Casino-Licence-Conditions-Application-by-Skycity-to-substitute-gaming-machines-for-gaming-tables-at-the-Hamilton-casino!OpenDocument](http://www.gamblingcommission.govt.nz/gcwebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Casino-Licence-Conditions-Application-by-Skycity-to-substitute-gaming-machines-for-gaming-tables-at-the-Hamilton-casino!OpenDocument).
- The Salvation Army Oasis provides free and confidential support for anyone affected by gambling harm, from gamblers themselves to whānau and loved ones affected by someone else's gambling. If you or someone you know is affected, please give us a call on the number below.
- The Salvation Army Oasis can also help you have your say. Please get in touch if you would like to learn more about SKYCITY's application and how you or your organisation can make a difference.

Phone: **(07) 839 6871** (Waikato) / **0800 53 00 00** (Nationwide)

Email: [waikato.oasis@salvationarmy.org.nz](mailto:waikato.oasis@salvationarmy.org.nz)



Te Ope Whakaora

**Oasis**  
Reducing Gambling Harm