

Media release

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Alignment of gambling venue policies not considered by Auckland City Council

The Problem Gambling Foundation says Auckland City Council's decision to adopt a different gambling venue policy from other regions in Auckland will not help the move towards the new Super City.

Auckland City's new policy replaces a 'sinking lid' policy, as now held by Waitakere City and Manukau City, with a 'sinking lid with relocations' approach for gaming machine and New Zealand Racing Board (NZRB) venues.

Graeme Ramsey, CEO of the Problem Gambling Foundation, says consideration should have been given to the alignment of gambling venue policies with the transition to the Super City.

"Waitakere and Manukau City Councils have 'sinking lid' policies which are in line with Auckland City's previous policy. In the interests of consistency and ease of transition to the new Auckland Council, we have to ask why Auckland City have chosen to adopt a very different policy altogether?"

"No other New Zealand Territorial Local Authority has used this relocation component of a sinking lid policy so it has not been 'tested' in any way," Graeme Ramsey says.

The Problem Gambling Foundation believes a sinking lid policy is the best way to keep the number of pokie machines down in communities and minimise the harm caused by these dangerous machines.

Graeme Ramsey says Auckland City Council should have stuck with their sinking lid policy.

"Not only does the sinking lid with relocations policy mean there will be a much slower reduction of gaming machines in the city but the administrative and processing costs involved in establishing this new policy could potentially cost Auckland City ratepayers," he says.

"Auckland City already has 1482 pokie machines and nearly 10% of the money lost in New Zealand is lost here. Skycity Casino has got another 1647 machines so there is a need to reduce machine numbers in the city," Graeme Ramsey says.

"The money from these machines comes disproportionately from the pockets of those that can least afford it."

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