

# ECCV Position Paper on gambling harm prevention in culturally diverse communities

December 2017

1. The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) appreciate the pressures facing both governments and communities when addressing the devastating costs of gambling addiction including the loss of homes, family breakdown and most tragically, the loss of lives.
2. Victorians have lost \$2.6 billion gambling at the 'pokies' - or \$7,149,397 every day – from 2016 to 2017 and a total loss of \$50 billion on pokies over the past 25 years.
3. Since ECCV's 2014 community forum *Let's Talk about Gambling in Multicultural Communities*, the number of stories of gambling addiction and harm reaching the ECCV reinforces that gambling harm has become a serious public health issue.
4. While minor gaming and leisure plays a role in the cultural fabric of some communities, ECCV clearly distinguishes between large commercial gambling operators, addictive poker machine technology; and minor gaming exemptions in *The Gambling Regulation Act 2003 (Vic)* (the Act) that allow not for profit organisations to fundraise using bingo and raffles events at schools and community fetes.
5. The Victorian Government passed the *Gambling Regulation Amendment (Gaming Machine Arrangements) Bill 2017 (Vic)* (the Bill) on the 30 November 2017. This extends the licences for gambling machines for another 20 years, 5 years before the current licences expire. Other amendments focus on cashless gaming, electronic funds transfers, a \$500 day cap on EFTPOS withdrawals and ban on static betting advertising in and around 150 metres of schools.
6. ECCV supports the following recommendations proposed by the Alliance for Gambling Reform
  - a. Reduce opening hours of gambling venues - close venues for at least ten hours per day.
  - b. Target mandatory reduction of the number of 'pokie' machines in LGAs with the highest losses.
  - c. Appoint a parliamentary inquiry into gambling regulation, so people who have experienced harm from gambling can be heard.
  - d. Reduce maximum bets from \$5 to \$1.
  - e. Limit access to cash EFTPOS withdrawal to \$200 in any 24 hour period.

7. ECCV supports key research findings in *Gambling in culturally and linguistically diverse communities* by Marissa Dickins and Anna Thomas published by the Australian Gambling Research Centre in October 2016.
  - a. New migrants may particularly be at-risk of gambling harm, due to lack of experience and knowledge about gambling products.
  - b. International students, older people and women are particularly vulnerable to experiences of gambling harm within culturally diverse communities.
  - c. Culturally diverse communities are at greater risk of gambling harm due to increase access to gambling in Victoria.
  - d. Depending on attitudes towards gambling, stigma and shame can create barriers to help seeking in culturally diverse communities
  - e. 'Help-seeking' is complicated and requires culturally sensitive and responsive services to managing gambling harm within culturally diverse communities (Dickins and Thomas 2016)
8. ECCV is currently funded by the Victorian Foundation for Responsible Gambling to conduct a two-year Gambling Prevention Project: BREAK IT to proactively raise awareness of gambling harm among culturally diverse communities.
9. The BREAK IT project will facilitate discussions with experts and community leaders; gather evidence about the impact of gambling harm on culturally and linguistically diverse ethnic communities; promote safe recreation messages in local ethnic media; promote local support for communities and co-design information on gambling harm with ethnic specific leaders.
10. ECCV believes that gambling advertising should be banned and gambling sponsorship of sporting teams ended.
11. ECCV recommends that clearer health literate in-language information be provided to culturally diverse communities on the addictive design of electronic gambling machines.
12. ECCV advocates for more gambling harm information in languages other than English to community members who attend local pokie venues.
13. Examples of current successful in-language gamblers help services include community help services in Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese and Vietnamese.
14. ECCV support more in-language gamblers' help services for high loss/ low Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Filipino, Burmese and Pashto.
15. ECCV advocates that the Victorian Government resources the accreditation of in-language financial counselling services, including ethnic specific workers primarily employed in ethnic specific organisations.
16. ECCV advocates allocating gambling industry resources toward high loss/low SEIFA LGAs with significant culturally diverse communities such as Brimbank, Casey, Greater Dandenong, Greater Geelong, Monash, Whittlesea, Hume, Wyndham and Kingston.