



Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation  
Level 3/12 Shelley St,  
Richmond  
VIC 3121  
23 December 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

**Re: Licensing application for 70 poker machines at 115 Woods Road, Truganina in the City of Wyndham**

Women's Health West does not support the application to install 70 electronic gaming machines at the proposed entertainment and commercial complex in Truganina. We recommend Wyndham City Council declines the application.

Women's Health West has actively contributed to the health, safety and wellbeing of women in the western region of Melbourne since 1988. Our core business includes the development and implementation of strategies to prevent, intervene and respond to the homelessness, ill-health, dislocation and trauma facing women and children who experience family violence.

Electronic gaming machines cause and exacerbate significant socioeconomic and health problems for communities and especially for women. They contribute to a loss of productivity, poor mental health and wellbeing, tobacco and alcohol misuse, relationship dysfunction, indebtedness and criminal activity.

Gambling can exacerbate economic abuse and family violence (VicHealth, 2016) and limit women's financial independence, reducing their capacity to leave violent men and to fully participate in all aspects of society.

Women's Health West's internal client data shows an increase in the amount of family violence support the organisation is providing to the Wyndham region. In the months from January to October in 2020, we provided nearly double (91% increase) the amount of support in our First Response, Case Management, Court Support and Residency Management teams, compared to the same period in 2019.

Since April 2020 the number of individual clients, as well as the total volume of support (which accounts for providing multiple types of support for a single client) has steadily increased month on more than triple (249% increase) what we provided in October, 2019. This included 198 individual clients (not including children) who received support for their experiences of family violence.

PHONE (03) 9689 9588  
EMAIL [info@whwest.org.au](mailto:info@whwest.org.au)  
FAX (03) 9689 3861  
WEB [www.whwest.org.au](http://www.whwest.org.au)  
ABN 24 036 234 159

317 - 319 Barkly Street  
Footscray VIC 3011



The economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and its restrictions must be noted in this context. The effects of heightened unemployment, financial stress, and poor mental health outcomes pose a serious concern for exacerbating already increased rates of family violence in the Western Metropolitan region of Melbourne. Increased access to gambling will deepen these risk factors and does not contribute to the economic and social recovery needed for the community.

Problem gambling exacerbates existing health inequities and further burdens social services. For these reasons we recommend that Wyndham City Council declines the application for 70 gaming machines at the proposed entertainment and commercial complex in Truganina.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Falconer  
Head of Evidence  
Women's Health West

**PHONE** (03) 9689 9588  
**EMAIL** [info@whwest.org.au](mailto:info@whwest.org.au)  
**FAX** (03) 9689 3861  
**WEB** [www.whwest.org.au](http://www.whwest.org.au)  
**ABN** 24 036 234 159

317 - 319 Barkly Street  
Footscray VIC 3011