

The Gambling (Gambling Harm Reduction) Amendment Bill (The Flavell Bill)

This Bill has been introduced by the Maori Party and is supported to Select Committee stage by the National Government as part of the confidence and supply agreement it has with the Maori Party. The Bill has come about because of concerns held by the Maori Party about class 4 gambling in New Zealand.

Key points of the Bill:

All current Class 4 venue licenses will be cancelled (Class 4 gambling takes place in Pubs and Clubs throughout NZ)

All societies like TTCF will be phased out and replaced with local council and community board committee's that will have the power to eliminate gaming machines altogether in a relatively short space of time

Local council and community board committee's will control the conduct of gambling and distribute the funds

80% of these funds must be spent within the local council or community board area where the funds are raised

Any remaining gaming machines would be fitted with player tracking and pre-commitment technology, which is very expensive and yet to be proven

Racing related activities/projects would no longer be considered authorised purposes

What is the Maori Party concerned about?

Class 4 gambling societies "targeting" Maori and Pasifika communities - this is in fact not the case as gaming machines can only be placed where local authorities have issued liquor licenses to venues (According to Statistics New Zealand the places with the highest density of gaming machines are Kaikoura, Thames Coromandel, McKenzie District, Waitomo and Grey District and Porirua, Manukau and Waitakere are amongst the lowest density areas for gaming machines).

Problem Gambling is a serious issue in New Zealand - the numbers of problem gamblers has remained static for many years. The class 4 gambling sector is levied to provide financial resources to undertake research minimize harm and treat problem gamblers. For the years 2010 - 2013 that amount amounted to nearly \$55.5m.

Not enough money is being given back to Maori or within the community where the money is raised. TTCF and other responsible operators return the majority of funds back to the local communities where the funds were raised (TTCF already returns 95% into the regions in which the funds are derived from). There is no discrimination as to who may apply for funds and in fact many Maori or Pasifika groups currently access funding.

TTCF is very efficient and effective at distributing money to many worthy causes that provide invaluable support to their local communities. Our percentage distributed in the last financial year was 46.06% whereas the mandatory limit set by Government is currently 37.12%.

Communities do not have their concerns heard and acted upon. All Local Authorities are required to have a gambling policy in place which is reviewed every three years.

According to the Problem Gambling Foundation's website currently 57% of Local Authorities have a cap on machines or venue numbers or both, 27% have a sinking lid policy and only 16% have an open policy

What could this Bill mean for Grant Recipients?

There will be less funding available to community organisations as one of the aims of this Bill is to reduce or eliminate gaming machines from New Zealand.

If funding decisions are made by local councils and/or community board committee's there is a high probability the grants process will become politicised and funds will be diverted to replace or subsidise funding for community activities and infrastructure Local Authorities already support or it could be seen as a source of funds to help keep rates from rising.

There will be a requirement for Local Authorities to set up new systems and to employ and house staff to replicate the systems and processes organisations like TTCF has already developed and operates successfully.

There is a likelihood that the authorised purposes definition will be somewhat narrowed which will mean that a large number of organisations that do great work in the community will no longer be eligible for funding.

What can you do?

Do your own research and become better informed about the implications of the proposed Bill

Talk to your local Member of Parliament

Educate fellow members of your organisation

Make a submission

All the information you need is on the website <http://flavellsbill.weebly.com>

THIS MATTER IS TOO IMPORTANT TO YOUR COMMUNITY FOR YOU TO IGNORE; THE 'SILENT MAJORITY' NEEDS TO BE MOBILISED, INVOLVED AND ENSURE THAT YOUR VIEWS ARE HEARD!

Submissions close 21 June 2012