

Ashburton District Council

Report on Class 4 Gambling in Ashburton District

**A social assessment to inform the 2025 review of the Ashburton
District Council's Gambling Venue Policy**

Document Control

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Contents

Document Control.....	2
1. Executive summary	4
2. Key Findings	5
3. Report Purpose.....	7
4. Legislative framework.....	8
4.1. Purpose of the Gambling Act 2003	8
4.2. Controls on class 4 gambling	8
4.3. Statutory limits on machine numbers.....	9
4.4. Role of territorial authorities	9
4.5. Introduction of regulations.....	9
4.6. Gambling (Gambling Harm Reduction) Amendment Act 2013.....	10
4.7. Gambling (Harm Prevention and Minimisation) Amendment Regulations 2023	12
4.8. Proposed Online Gambling Bill.....	12
5. Gambling in New Zealand.....	13
5.1. Gambling participation.....	13
5.2. Gambling expenditure	15
5.3. Gaming machine and venue numbers	20
6. Distribution of proceeds from gaming machines	21
7. Problem gambling in New Zealand	23
7.1. Definition of problem gambling	23
7.2. Prevalence of Gambling harm and problem gambling.....	24
7.3. Social impacts of problem gambling.....	25
7.4. Social impacts of gambling in high deprivation communities.....	27
7.5. Harm minimisation	28

7.6	Problem gambling treatment services in New Zealand	29
8.	Gaming machine gambling in Ashburton District.....	30
8.1.	Gaming machine and venue numbers in Ashburton District	30
8.2	Types of venue and societies operating in the Ashburton District.....	33
9.	Economic effects of gaming machine gambling in Ashburton District.....	35
9.1.	Total expenditure and loss	35
9.2.	Distribution of proceeds and return to the community	37
10.	Grants to Ashburton District from Gaming Proceeds	38
11.	Gambling Harm and Problem Gambling in Ashburton District.....	42
11.1.	High Deprivation areas in the Ashburton District	42
11.2.	Risk Factor Prevalence in Ashburton District.....	45
11.3.	Problem gambling services.....	45
12.	Impact of Ashburton District Council's Gambling Venue Policy.....	47
12.1	Ashburton District Council's Gambling Venue Policy	47
13.	Stakeholders Consulted.....	49
13.1	Summary of Stakeholder feedback on current Gambling Venue Policy.....	49
14.	References	52

Notes

- *The legal gambling age in New Zealand is 18 years and over. Some statistics include those aged between 15-18, this is because the survey used in the report aimed to report on the prevalence of youth gambling in New Zealand amongst other indicators.*
- *Some statistics in this report will be taken from a “quarter” snapshot, these make up a portion of the annual statistics used.*
- *Deprivation is identified as a risk factor for gambling harm and problem gambling; this is measured using census variables.*

Definitions

Class 4: Refers to gaming machines (pokies) located in pubs and clubs which is as classified as high risk, high turnover gambling

Gambling harm: Refers to the harm caused by gambling to an individual, whanau or wider community.

Problem gambling: Refers to high-risk gamblers who experience severe gambling harm – this usually indicates gambling with negative consequences and loss of control.

Expenditure and gross machine profits: Refers to the money “lost” to gambling. E.g. total turnover less prizes paid out.

Offshore gambling: Refers to online gambling organisations that are not based in New Zealand.

Onshore gambling: Refers to the New Zealand gambling industry made up of online operators and venues based in New Zealand.

1. *Executive summary*

This report provides an overview of gambling in New Zealand and the Ashburton District, with particular reference to Class 4 gambling. It focuses on the social effects of “pokie” machine gambling, including problem gambling, and reports on recent changes in the industry and participation over the last 10 years.

Class 4 gambling has both positive and negative impacts for the community. A key benefit generated from class 4 gambling is grant funding for community organisations which is generated from the proceeds of gaming “pokie” machines. Approximately \$1.5 million was returned to the Ashburton District community in grants in the 2023 calendar year.

The district is somewhat unique in that the Braided Rivers Trust Charitable Foundation make decisions on the distribution of funds generated from The Lion Foundation gaming machine venues in the district. Five of the eleven class 4 venues in the district are operated by The Lion Foundation. Machines in these venues generate a significant amount of the available grant funding, this sees the majority of community grants funded from gaming machines in the Ashburton District, staying in the district.

However, gambling harm is a serious social issue, not only for those directly affected but also their network of family, friends, workplaces, and the community at large. While problem gambling rates remain low in New Zealand, reports show that even low-moderate risk gamblers are experiencing harm, with 1 in 5 people experiencing gambling harm in their lifetime.

The Class 4 gambling industry in New Zealand appears to have reached a point of maturity in terms of industry size, with the total number of machines and venues in decline. The introduction of the Gambling Harm and Prevention Minimisation Regulations 2004 appears to have been one of the key factors contributing to this change. Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that users may be migrating to online platforms which has been a growing industry over the last 10 years.

Pub and club pokie machine participation (user) rates have also declined over the last 10 years, dropping by 6.4% since 2014, to 63.8% in 2023/24. While the size of the industry and participation has reduced, annual expenditure has increased by \$792m in the last 10 years indicating that while less people are using pokie machines, those who do are spending more.

The current Ashburton District Gambling Venue Policy appears to be having some impact on controlling the negative effects of problem gambling. The policy does have a cap of 5 machines per venue for new venues, which is lower than the permitted number of 9 under the Gambling Act 2003¹. This cap has some impact in controlling the number of new machines being established in the district.

However, 47% of machines in the district are located in medium-high deprivation areas², with 37 machines located in decile 9 deprivation areas. Additionally, pokie machine spending has been steadily increasing in the district indicating that those who are more susceptible to

² As determined by the socioeconomic deprivation index which measures the levels of deprivation for people in each small area in New Zealand using census variables.

gambling harm are potentially being negatively impacted. The current policy has no controls in place to limit or reduce the distribution of machines in highly deprived areas of the district.

The policy also has no controls in place to limit or reduce the number of venues in the district and currently allows for relocations of existing venue consents under specific conditions.

2. Key Findings

Changes to legislation and case law

- **Gambling (Gambling Harm Reduction) Amendment Act 2013** amended sections 101 and 102 of the Gambling Act 2003, requiring territorial authorities to consider venue relocation policies through the next review after the amendment, and during any review thereafter.
- **Court of Appeal Ruling (February 2025)** declared that "Waikiki" relocations of Class 4 venues are no longer permitted without territorial authority consent.
- **Gambling Harm Prevention and Minimisation Regulations 2023** introduced monitoring procedures at venues to identify signs of harm earlier and more consistently.

National gambling participation rates

- Participation in offshore online gambling has increased by 2.7% since 2014. Onshore gambling participation has declined by 6.4% over the last 10 years, with 63.8% of New Zealanders participating in onshore gambling activity in the last 12 months.
- Pokie machine gambling participation in clubs and pubs has increased by 2.3% since 2020 (the last review).
- Class 4 pokie machine gambling is the 3rd most popular form of gambling behind Lotto and TAB (both offering online portals).

Gambling expenditure

- Total gambling expenditure (nominal amount) has increased by \$792 million over the last 10 years, despite an overall decline in participation rates. In 2024, expenditure reached \$2.792 billion. However, when adjusted for inflation and population growth, expenditure only increased by 2.69% in the last 10 years.
- In nominal terms, pokie machine expenditure has stabilised since the introduction of the Gambling Act but has not reduced. New Zealanders spent more on pokies in 2023 and 2024 than they have in any other year since 1991.
- **Ashburton District:** Total pokie machine expenditure for the year ending December 2024 was \$6.884 million, an increase of 6.6% compared to the previous report (2020/21).

Number of venues and machines

- The number of gaming machines has declined from 22,646 in March 2004, to 13,812 in March 2025. Venue numbers have also decreased from 2,007 in March 2004, to 967 in March 2025.
- **Ashburton District:** As of December 2024, there were 11 venues and 131 pokie machines, a decrease from 12 venues and 135 machines in September 2015.

Distribution of proceeds

- In 2024, the rate of return was 43.4%, or \$386 million, one of the largest return rates since 2013.
- **Ashburton District:** Approximately \$1.5m was returned to the community in grants in the 2023 calendar year. This is \$644,150 less than the previous year.

Social impacts of class 4 gambling

- One in five New Zealand adults (22%) experience harm related to their own or someone else's gambling at some point in their lives.
- Studies have found that those living in high deprivation areas, along with other risk factors, are more likely to be at risk of gambling harm. Currently, 61% of class 4 venues in New Zealand are located in high deprivation areas.
- **Ashburton District:** Currently, 47% of machines are located in medium-high to high deprivation areas, with 32 machines in the highest deprivation areas within the district.

Gambling harm and problem gambling prevalence

- The prevalence of problem gambling is low, with 2.4% of the population being moderate-risk and problem gamblers. This equates to 17,000 problem gamblers nationally.
- 55.4% of the population are concerned about the level of gambling in the community, with 46.2% indicating that raising money through gambling does more harm than good.
- **Ashburton District:** Five people in the Ashburton District sought intervention for problem gambling in 2023. While this number is low, the district has a slightly higher intervention rate compared to national figures, with 1.1 clients per 10,000 people seeking assistance for gambling problems compared to 0.87 clients per 10,000 people nationally.

Gambling Industry Stakeholder views³

Effectiveness of the Current Policy: 43% of stakeholders indicated that the policy is completely effective in achieving its intended objectives, while 57% found it somewhat effective.

- Comments included that the policy balances all purposes of the Gambling Act and is fine the way it is, but the district doesn't need more venues.
- Some stakeholders believe adopting a more restrictive policy is unlikely to reduce problem gambling.

Consideration of Additional Class 4 Venues: 71% of stakeholders supported the idea of continuing to consider additional Class 4 venues.

- Some stakeholders suggested a slightly more restrictive policy, such as a capped policy.
- There were concerns that reducing the local gaming machine offering might lead to a migration of gambling spend to offshore internet and mobile-based offerings.
- Others felt that the Ashburton area has sufficient gaming machines to meet the requirements of those gambling.

Relocation of Existing Venues: 57% of stakeholders supported allowing relocations for existing venues.

- Suggestions included expanding relocation provisions to include moves out of earthquake-prone buildings, relocations to more modern buildings, and moves due to exorbitant rental fees.
- Some stakeholders emphasized that venue relocation is a harm minimisation tool, especially if it involves moving venues out of high deprivation areas.

³ As part of pre-engagement Council engaged with stakeholders to gauge their views on the effectiveness of the current policy, potential policy controls and their experience related to the positive and negative social impacts of class 4 gambling in the Ashburton District. Eight responses were received in total.

3. Report Purpose

This report has been prepared as part of the review of Ashburton District Council's Gambling Venue Policy. The Gambling Act 2003 (s.102(5)) requires all Councils to review their Class 4 Gambling Venue Policy within three years of the adoption of the policy, and every three years thereafter.

The review must consider whether the social impacts and risk of harm from gambling in the district requires mitigation through greater regulation. As part of the Gambling (Gambling Harm Reduction) Amendment Act 2013, territorial authorities were required to consider whether to include a relocation policy as part of the first review following the implementation of the Act (s.101(5)), or as part of any review thereafter.

The original policy was adopted by Council in March 2004, and reviewed every three years thereafter, with the last review carried out in 2022. Reviews carried out since 2012 have resulted in policy rollovers with no changes. Because of this, the community have not been consulted with for the last 13 years. However, key stakeholders have been invited through each review to provide information to help inform previous social impact reports.

Ashburton District Council's Gambling Venue Policy covers both Class 4 "pokie" gambling and TAB venues. However, this report focuses on pokie machine gambling, as the district does not have any stand-alone Totaliser Agency Board (TAB) stores. It is of note that the current policy does allow for a new stand-alone TAB venue to be established provided it meets the policy conditions.

This report provides background information to inform the 2025 policy review process. It provides stakeholders and the Ashburton District community with information about Class 4 gambling within a district context.

The report provides the following information:

- An overview of the Gambling Act 2003 (including relevant amendments) and the requirements on territorial authorities
- An overview of the gambling industry and gambling in New Zealand, with particular reference to Class 4 gambling (gaming or pokie machines)
- A review of information available on the social effects of pokie machine gambling, including problem gambling
- An assessment of Class 4 gambling in the Ashburton District
- An assessment of the social effects of pokie machine gambling in the Ashburton District, including problem gambling
- Information on changes in Class 4 gambling within Ashburton District since 2012.

4. Legislative framework

The [Gambling Act 2003](#) (“the Act”) covers all gambling in New Zealand, including Class 4 or gaming machine gambling. The [Racing Industry Act 2020](#) covers betting on horse and greyhound races and other sporting events.

4.1. Purpose of the Gambling Act 2003

In summary, the purpose of the Act is to:

- Control the growth of gambling
- Prevent and minimise the harm caused by gambling, including problem gambling
- Facilitate responsible gambling
- Ensure modes of gambling are fair and transparent
- Ensure that money from gambling benefits the community
- Enable community involvement in decisions about the provision of gambling ([s.3](#)).

4.2. Controls on class 4 gambling

The Act categorises gaming (pokie) machines and race and sports betting as Class 4 gambling. The Act specifies that Class 4 gambling may only be conducted by a corporate society (a trust which distributes grants to community organisations) which holds a:

- Class 4 gambling venue consent, issued by the relevant territorial authority ([s.30-33](#))
- Class 4 gambling operator’s licence, issued by the Department of Internal Affairs, and
- Class 4 gambling venue licence, issued by the Department of Internal Affairs.

A Class 4 venue consent will be granted by the territorial authority if the application meets the requirements of the territorial authority’s Class 4 Gambling Venue policy.

A Class 4 venue licence is granted by the Secretary of Internal Affairs if an application meets the requirements of a venue licence prescribed in sections [65](#) – [84](#) of the Gambling Act 2003.

A Class 4 gambling operator’s licence is granted to approved corporate societies by the Secretary of Internal Affairs if the applicant has been granted a venue consent by the relevant territorial authority and the application meets the requirements of the Act, including:

- Details of the purposes for which net proceeds will be distributed
- A statement of how the applicant intends to minimise the risks of problem gambling
- Information about the financial viability of the proposed operation and the means to maximise the net proceeds to be distributed for authorised purposes and how those proceeds will be distributed

- Information on key personnel including financial circumstances
 - Any other information the Secretary may request to ascertain the suitability of the corporate society and its key personnel
 - The gambling equipment to be used meets relevant minimum standards
 - The venue is not used mainly for operating gaming machines.
- For further information see [s.50](#) – [64](#) of the Act.

4.3. Statutory limits on machine numbers

The Act limits the number of gaming machines permitted at a venue. Venues which held a Class 4 venue licence on 17 October 2001 can operate up to 18 machines, while venues with a Class 4 venue licence issued after 17 October 2001 but before the commencement of the Gambling Act 2003 are able to operate up to nine machines as long as the Council venue policy allows this ([s.89](#) – [97](#)).

There is the option of applying for ministerial discretion to permit more than nine machines at some sites provided, amongst other things, the territorial authority has issued a consent that is consistent with its Class 4 gambling venue policy ([s.95](#) – [96](#)).

4.4. Role of territorial authorities

Territorial authorities are required to adopt a Class 4 Gambling Venue Policy, with the policy being required to have been through a special consultative procedure (as detailed in s.83 of the Local Government Act 2002). The Act requires territorial authorities review their Gambling Venue Policy at least every three years.

The requirement for territorial authorities to maintain Class 4 gambling venue policies is intended to provide communities with the opportunity to have some influence over Class 4 gambling in their community, and in particular to be able to control where venues may be established and the permitted number of gaming machines at each venue. The Act, however, only provides limited ability for a local authority policy to influence venues established prior to 2001.

During the 2016 review, amendments to the Gambling Act required consideration of whether or not to have a relocation policy (see section 4.6 of this report). Council determined the current relocation provisions in the policy were sufficient, which until now has been aligned with the Waikiwi case law criteria.

4.5. Introduction of regulations

The Harm Prevention and Minimisation Regulations 2004 includes a list of unsuitable Class 4 gambling venues, including:

- A venue at which the primary activity is anything other than onsite entertainment focused on persons 18 years and over, including (without limitation):
 - o Food outlets such as dairies, supermarkets, fast food outlets or similar venues

- o Offices, private residences, sports stadiums, circuses or fairs, amusement parlours, or other similar venues
- o Internet cafes or other venues where the primary activity is electronic media
- o Libraries, art galleries, museum, theatres, cinemas or similar premises
- o Places of worship or venues that are not fixed permanent structures, including tents or vehicles.

The regulations require additional controls on gaming machines to interrupt play and provide information on the duration of play, how much the player has spent, net wins or losses, the odds of winning the game and ask whether the player wishes to continue to play.

Information must be provided by law at the venue about problem gambling and there are requirements to provide problem gambling awareness training to personnel employed at the venue in order to approach persons they consider may have problems.

The regulations also specify that venues must not have pokie machines and jackpot information visible from the outside of the venue and must not place an automatic teller machine (ATM) within the gaming machine area. Instead, the ATM must be visible to venue staff in the main bar / customer service area.

It is also a requirement that the gaming machines are operated by someone on site that has undertaken harm minimisation training. In some cases, the venue manager may ban the player from the gambling area of a venue for two years.

4.6. Gambling (Gambling Harm Reduction) Amendment Act 2013

The Gambling (Gambling Harm Reduction) Amendment Act 2013 amended sections 101 and 102 of the Gambling Act 2003. The amendments require that the first time a territorial authority commences a review of its gambling venue policy after 14 September 2013, the territorial authority must consider whether to include a venue relocation policy (see s.102(5A) of the Gambling Act 2003).

Relocation policy

The purpose of a relocation policy is to help address the concentration of Class 4 venues in high deprivation areas. S.101(5) of the Gambling Act 2003 defines a relocation policy as a policy setting out if and when the territorial authority will grant consent in respect of a venue within its district where the venue is intended to replace an existing venue (within the district) to which a class 4 venue licence applies (in which case section 97A applies).

A relocation policy could permit Class 4 venues to re-establish at new sites with Council's consent. The policy could specify circumstances that would allow relocation. These could include but aren't limited to:

- expiration of lease,
- acquisition of property under the Public Works Act,
- site development, and/or

- natural disaster making the venue unusable
- relocation to a lower deprivation area

Alternatively, Council could adopt a relocation policy that states Council does not permit relocations under any circumstances.

Council does not currently have a relocation policy, as clause 6.1 of the current policy only references transfers of existing Class 4 venues under the *Waikiwi* case law criteria. Clause 6.1 is set out below:

6.1. Where an existing class 4 gambling venue is moving to a new address and meets the following criteria, it will not be considered as a new venue or a relocation, and the existing consent and conditions will remain:

- *The new building will be in a site that is very close to the existing site;*
- *The class 4 venue's name will be the same;*
- *The ownership and management of the venue will be the same; and*
- *For all intents and purposes, the patrons and public will regard the venue as being the same venue, even though its physical location will change in a relatively minor way.*

The above criteria are based on the 2013 High Court ruling in *ILT Foundation v The Secretary for Internal Affairs* [2013] NZHC 1330 (known as the 'Waikiwi' decision after the name of the venue involved). The High Court in *Waikiwi* decided that the following circumstances amounted to a minor change in the location of class 4 premise and therefore did not amount to a change of venue requiring consent from a territorial authority:

- a) The change in location is minor;
- b) The name of the premises would remain the same;
- c) The ownership and management of the venue would not change; and
- d) Patrons and the public would regard the tavern as being the same venue.

Soon after the High Court's *Waikiwi* decision, the Gambling Act was amended to specifically enable a Council's gambling policy to cover relocation, that is, if and when a class 4 venue may change its location. Council consent was required for any relocations, in addition to DIA consent.

However, the Secretary of Internal Affairs continued to apply the *Waikiwi* decision to minor changes in Class 4 venue locations, determining that such changes were not changes in "venue" for the purposes of the Act and therefore Council consent to these minor relocations was not necessary.

Until now, Councils policy has reflected the Secretary of Internal Affairs' interpretation and application of the *Waikiwi* decision and allowed venue consent holders to change the location of the premises without having to apply for a new consent, provided the change meets the above criteria.

As Council does not have a relocation policy outside of the *Waikiwi* 'transfer' conditions, any venues that wished to move location, but did not meet the criteria in clause 6.1, needed to apply for a new class 4 venue consent from Council.

Changes to the consideration of Waikiwi case law 2024

In February 2024, the High Court declared that “Waikiwi” relocations of class 4 venues are no longer permitted within the Court’s interpretation of the Gambling Act. This decision was appealed, and the decision was upheld by the Court of Appeal in February 2025 (*Gaming Machine Association of New Zealand Incorporated v Feed Families Not Pokies Aotearoa Incorporated [2025] NZCA 16*). The Court determined that the Department of Internal Affairs cannot grant relocations in accordance with the *Waikiwi* precedent without Council consent, even if the relocation is only a minor change in venue. For venues to relocate to any new location, consent from the relevant territorial authority will be required.

With the Court of Appeal’s decision, Council’s current policy is not compliant with the Gambling Act 2003, as it does not require Council consent for minor changes in venue

4.7. Gambling (Harm Prevention and Minimisation) Amendment Regulations 2023

These amendments strengthen the 2004 regulations. The changes create clear and consistent standards that apply to all venues. A key amendment being the introduction of monitoring procedures at venues to support venue managers and staff identifying signs of harm earlier and more consistently. They also set out clear rules for how staff must respond when signs of harm are identified.

New responsibilities for venue managers:

- The monitoring of gambling rooms through regular sweeps
- Keeping records of each sweep
- Taking reasonable steps to identify players present for 9 sweeps in a row
- Considering if any player is showing signs of gambling harm
- Have conversations with those that display signs of gambling harm and record those conversations.

4.8. Proposed Online Gambling Bill

Online casinos based in New Zealand are illegal, but it is legal for New Zealanders to gamble on offshore online casino websites.

Online casino gambling is currently an unregulated activity and there are no guarantees of player safety. Currently, the only control in place is section 16 of the Gambling Act which makes it illegal to advertise offshore online gambling in New Zealand.

The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) is developing the online casino gambling legislation and building a new regulatory system, with the intention of channelling

customers towards up to fifteen licensed platforms who must meet a range of regulatory requirements.

DIA will regulate the new system, and it will be illegal for unlicensed operators to operate or advertise in New Zealand. It is expected that the bill will be enacted by early 2026.

Unlike onshore gambling operators, the online licenced operators will not have to return any money back into the community.

5. Gambling in New Zealand

5.1. Gambling participation

The Gambling Act 2003 classifies gambling based on the amount of money spent and the risk of problem gambling associated with an activity. Classes of gambling range from Class 1, representing low-stake, low-risk gambling, to Class 4, which represents high-risk, high-turnover gambling.

Gambling has evolved in the last 10 years, with participation in offshore online websites becoming more prevalent in New Zealand. Use of these sites including online pokies, online poker, other casino games, esport betting and overseas lotteries has increased by 2.7% since 2014.⁴

While participation in offshore gambling continues to rise, gambling participation in New Zealand is still concentrated on onshore gambling, with 63.8% of New Zealanders having participated in New Zealand based gambling activities in 2023/24.

However, the number of New Zealanders participating in onshore gambling has been in steady decline over the last 10 years, dropping by 6.4% since 2014 (Health Promotion Agency, 2025).

Table 5-1 – Annual Gambling participation numbers in New Zealand 2023/24

Number of people who have participated at least once in the previous 12 months	
Purchased a Lotto NZ product	2,378,000
Placed a bet - TAB	520,000
Played a pokie machine at a class 4 venue	514,000
Played a table or electronic game at a casino	323,000
Participated in overseas online gambling activity	156,000
Played housie or bingo	95,000

Source – Health Promotion Agency (2025)

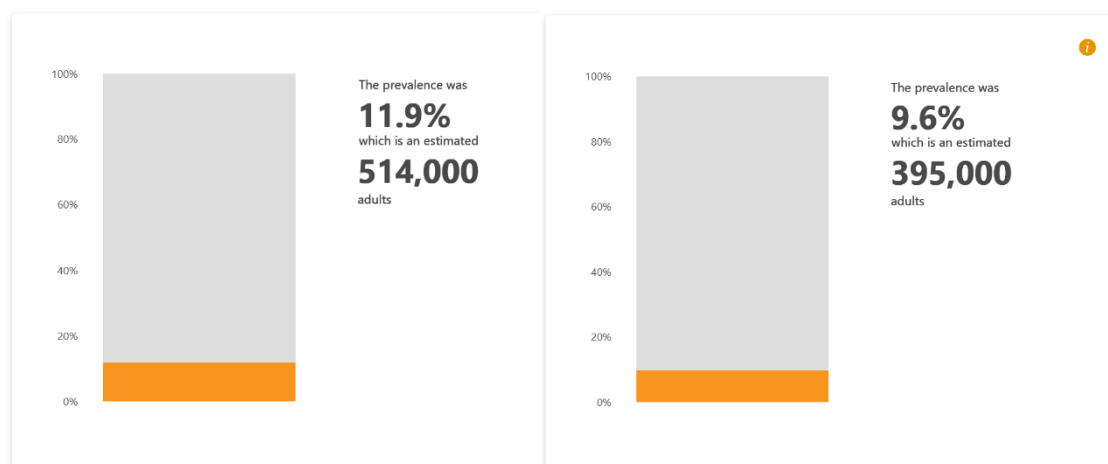
Class 4 gambling is a common form of entertainment in New Zealand, with the third highest participation rate. In 2024, it was found that approximately 514,000 (or about 1 in 10) New Zealanders aged 15 years and older played a pokie machine at a class 4 venue at

⁴ Calculated using the statistics provided from the Ministry of Health in 2018 and 2025.

least once in the last 12 months. Of those, 25,000 (1 in 200) played every week for the last 12 months (Health Promotion Agency, 2025).

Compared to the last review in 2022, the prevalence of pokie machine gaming in pubs and clubs has increased from 9.6% to 11.9%, this represents 119,000 more people participating than at the time of the last social impact report as shown in figure 5-1. It is worth noting that Covid-19 lockdowns likely impacted participation rates in 2020 due to pokie venues being closed.

Figure 5-1 – Prevalence of New Zealanders who have played an electronic gaming machine at a pub or club (class 4 venue) in the last 12 months 2023/24 vs 2020.



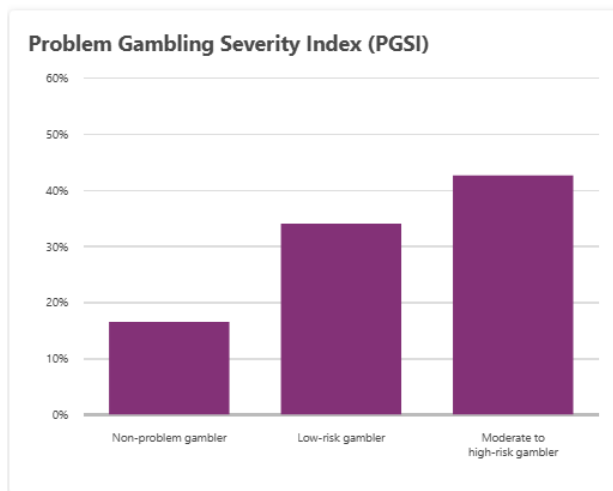
Source – Health Promotion Agency (2025a and 2020)

Those who participate in pokie machine gambling are more likely to:

- be male
- be under the age of 24
- identify as Māori
- be a moderate to high-risk gambler
- live in a high deprivation area

Figure 5-2 - Indicator: Played an electronic gaming machine at a pub or club (class 4 venue) in the last 12 months





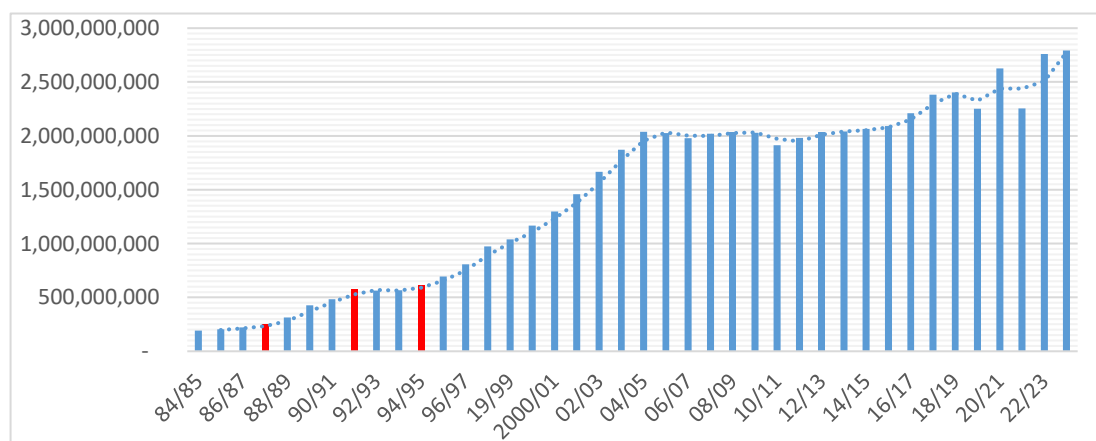
Source – Health Promotion Agency (2025a)

5.2. Gambling expenditure

Total gambling expenditure⁵ increased dramatically when Lotto, TAB betting, gaming machines, and casinos all became regulated activity in New Zealand throughout the 1980s and 90s.

As shown in figure 5-3, from 1984-1987, gambling expenditure was relatively stagnant at around \$200m per year. The introduction of Lotto in 1987, gaming machines in 1991, and casinos in 1994 saw gambling expenditure steadily increase year on year until it reached a peak in 2004 (\$2,039m). The introduction of the Gambling Act in 2003 appears to have had some impact, with expenditure figures stabilising around the \$2 billion mark since 2004.

Figure 5-3 - Gambling Expenditure (nominal) in New Zealand (All forms from 1984 to 2023)



⁵ 'Expenditure', as discussed here, refers to turnover less the amount paid out or credited (prizes) – also referred to as gross profit.

Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2018, 2025a)

It is important to note that these figures include online gambling expenditure through the My Lotto app and the TAB app who both offered online portals in New Zealand from around 2012.

Offshore gambling expenditure is not included and is less reported due overseas sites currently being unregulated in New Zealand. However, it is estimated that New Zealanders spend between \$300-500 million per year on overseas gambling websites (Stewart, E., 2021). Kiwibank reported that their customers are spending around \$30 million per month on online gambling websites, 80% of which is offshore (Stuff, 2025).

Expenditure trends since last social impact report in 2022

The last report in 2022 included expenditure data up to 2020/21 year. Up to this point, gambling expenditure had been relatively stable. However, 2020/21 year saw a significant spike in gambling expenditure, increasing by \$373 million compared to the previous year – the largest year-on-year increase since 2001/02 - 2002/03.

The Ministry of Health New Zealand suggests this surge may have been due to a rise in online gambling during the Covid-19 lockdown (26 March 2020 – 27 May 2020). During this period, online gambling increased from about \$4.1 million per week at the start of 2020, to \$6.25 million per week during level 3 and 4 lockdowns, representing a 51% increase from the same period the previous year. Of those who gambled online during the lockdown, 65% reported using MyLotto (Ministry of Health, 2021).

In the following year, gambling expenditure returned to within \$2 million of pre-Covid levels, dropping to \$2,254 million in 2021/22, from \$2,252 million in 2019/20. However, the last two years have seen another sharp increase in gambling expenditure, rising by half a billion dollars from \$2,254 million in 2021/22 to \$2,792 million for the year ending 2024 (Department of Internal Affairs, 2025a)

Despite the notable increase in expenditure, participation rates have remained relatively stable, indicating that the gambling market has likely reached a point of maturity. While minimal growth in participation numbers is expected, those who do continue to participate may proceed to spend more.

Breakdown of expenditure – four main forms of gambling

The regulation of different forms of gambling in New Zealand has changed the way gamblers spend when participating.

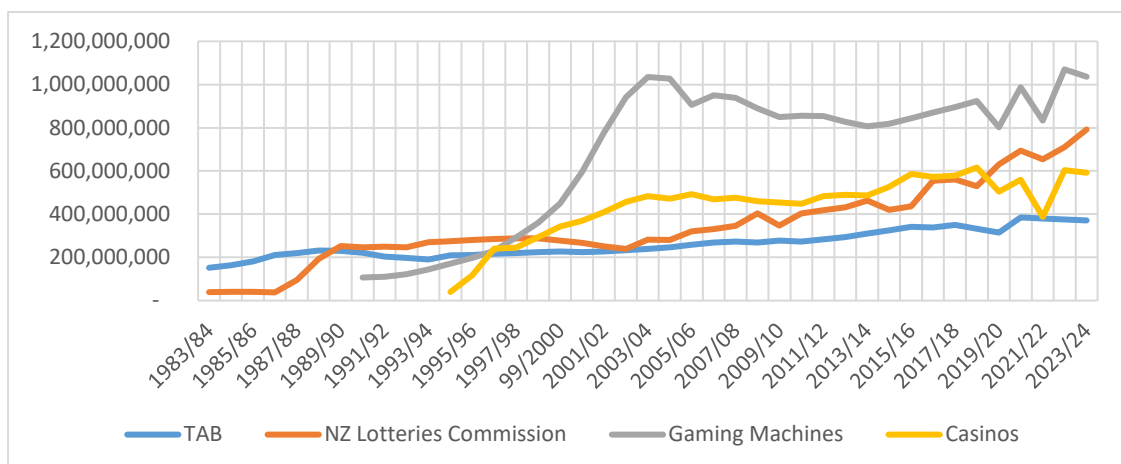
Betting expenditure through the TAB has been relatively stable since 1984, with an average annual increase of 2.1%, growing from \$152m per year in 1984 to \$371m per year in 2024.

Lotto, while having the highest participation rate of the four forms, does not attract the greatest expenditure. After becoming regulated in 1987 there was a 60% increase in expenditure from \$2m in 1987, to \$57m in 1988, this stabilised to an average annual increase of 4.9% to reach annual expenditure of \$792m in 2024.

Gaming machines were introduced to pubs and clubs in 1991, recording expenditure of \$3m in the first year of operations. From 1992 to 2004, pokie machine expenditure grew

substantially as show in figure 5-4, growing on average by 15.8% year-on-year during this period, reaching \$1b in expenditure in 2004. Pokie machine expenditure has stabilised since the introduction of the Gambling Act but has not reduced. Nominally, Kiwis spent more on pokies in 2023 and 2024 than they have in any other year since 1991.

Figure 5-4 – Gambling expenditure (nominal) by four main forms (1984-2024)



Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2018, 2025a)

Casinos were the last form of gambling to be regulated in New Zealand with the first casino being opened in Christchurch in 1994. Casino expenditure increased 65% from \$40m in 1994 to \$117m in 1995. Since this point, the industry has experienced steady year-on-year growth, averaging 4.2%. There was a notable drop in casino expenditure from 2020 – 2022, this was likely an impact of Covid 19 lockdowns. Expenditure peaking again to reach \$592m in 2023/24.

Impact of pokie machines on gambling expenditure

While pokie machine expenditure has stabilised since the enactment of the Gambling Act 2003, it continues to be the top earning form of gambling in New Zealand. As shown in table 5-2, expenditure from pokie machines makes up around 35% of the total expenditure across the four main forms of gambling. This has been consistent over the last 10 years. Currently, pokie machines account for 37.1% of gambling expenditure in New Zealand.

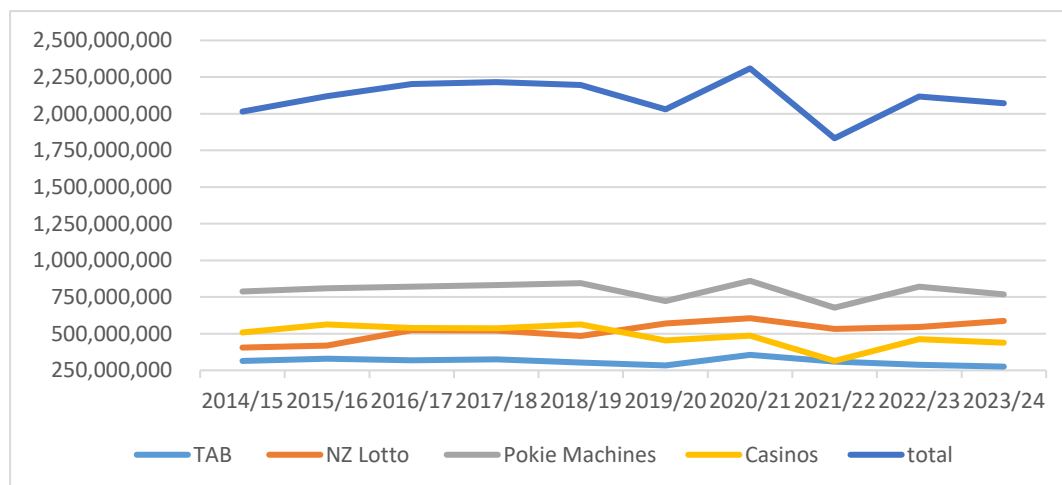
Table 5-2– Gambling expenditure (nominal) comparison of the main forms (2014-2024)

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
TAB	325m	342m	338m	350m	332m	315m	385m	380m	376m	371m
NZ Lotto	420m	437m	555m	561m	530m	631m	694m	654m	710m	792m
Pokie Machines	818m	843m	870m	895m	924m	802m	987m	833m	1,070m	1,037m
Casinos	527m	586m	572m	578m	616m	504m	559m	387m	604m	592m

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total	2.09b	2.2b	2.33b	2.38b	2.40b	2.25b	2.62b	2.25b	2.76b	2.79b

Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2025a)

Figure 5-5- Inflation and population adjusted expenditure comparison of the main forms (2014-2024)

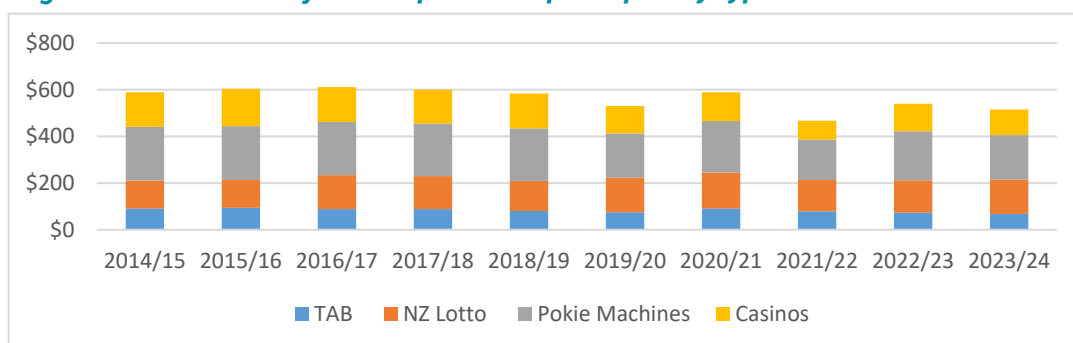


Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2025b).

Expenditure per capita

Adjusting for the effects of both inflation and changes to New Zealand's population (18 years and older), gambling expenditure has increased by 2.69% in the last 10 years, increasing from \$2.01m in 2014/15 to \$2.07m in 2023/24. However, per capita spending has decreased, dropping from \$589 per capita in 2014/15 to \$515 per capita in 2023/24.⁶ this information is shown in Figure 5-6.

Figure 5-6- Inflation adjusted expenditure per capita by type from 2014 to 2024



Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2025b).

As shown in figure 5-6, pokie machine expenditure represents the largest proportion of per capita spending over the past 10 years. On average, pokie machine expenditure accounts for 38% of the total inflation adjusted spend per capita each year. In 2023/24,

⁶ Inflation adjustment methodology was revised by DIA in July 2022 (after the last social impact report was completed) to incorporate adjustments from the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and set a base year of 2010/11. Past methodology has applied adjustments incorrectly, resulting in misleading representation of inflation over time. Based on this, a comparison from the last review has not been completed.

pokie machine expenditure made up 37%, or \$191 of the \$515 total per capita spend. This is followed by NZ lotto with \$146, casinos with \$109, and TAB with the lower of the four main types at \$68 per capita.

Expenditure by territorial authorities

As shown by Table 5-3, gross machine proceeds or gaming machine profits (GMP) (the money left after paying out prizes) for Ashburton District for the March 2025 quarter was \$1,698,215.86 (Department of Internal Affairs, 2025c).

Nationally, Ashburton ranks 33rd out of 63 territorial authorities for the loss per head of population⁷. This is calculated by dividing the latest expenditure figures published by the DIA for that quarter by the population 18 years and over. The population figures come from the 2023 census (usually resident population) and the expenditure for the period is taken from the DIA statistics (March quarter 2025).

Table 5-3 Quarterly nationwide gaming machine proceeds by territorial authority, and loss per person 18 or over (March 2025 quarter)

	District	GMP	Pop>18	Loss/person
1	KAWERAU DISTRICT	\$663,082.63	5,139	\$129.03`
2	THAMES-COROMANDEL DISTRICT	\$3,002,423.06	25,539	\$117.56
3	ROTORUA DISTRICT	\$5,695,253.07	49,869	\$114.20
4	NAPIER CITY	\$5,273,326.75	46,287	\$113.93
5	WHAKATANE DISTRICT	\$2,817,704.15	25,728	\$109.52
6	GORE DISTRICT	\$1,002,912.46	9,174	\$109.32
7	SOUTH WAIKATO DISTRICT	\$1,784,930.76	16,887	\$105.70
8	INVERCARGILL CITY	\$4,169,875.02	39,816	\$104.73
9	GREY DISTRICT	\$1,061,234.07	10,266	\$103.37
10	LOWER HUTT CITY	\$7,526,827.58	75,633	\$99.52
11	TAUPO DISTRICT	\$2,737,756.93	29,055	\$94.23
12	HOROWHENUA DISTRICT	\$2,493,906.43	26,715	\$93.35
13	HAURAKI DISTRICT	\$1,468,970.32	15,756	\$93.23
14	WAIROA DISTRICT	\$532,533.55	5,931	\$89.79
15	UPPER HUTT CITY	\$2,847,045.97	32,562	\$87.43
16	PALMERSTON NORTH CITY	\$5,231,299.74	60,111	\$87.03
17	PORIRUA CITY	\$3,455,833.02	39,906	\$86.60
18	WAITOMO DISTRICT	\$561,470.12	6,579	\$85.34
19	WANGANUI DISTRICT	\$2,899,884.88	34,092	\$85.06
20	GISBORNE DISTRICT	\$2,863,093.24	34,218	\$83.67
21	MACKENZIE DISTRICT	\$310,820.89	3,765	\$82.56
22	CHRISTCHURCH CITY INCLUDING BANKS PENINSULA WARD	\$23,156,070.49	286,896	\$80.71
23	TAURANGA DISTRICT	\$8,635,721.94	107,856	\$80.07
24	HASTINGS DISTRICT (December 2024 INCD. Central Hawke's Bay)	\$5,635,294.36	70,632	\$79.78
25	FAR NORTH DISTRICT	\$4,015,166.04	50,871	\$78.93

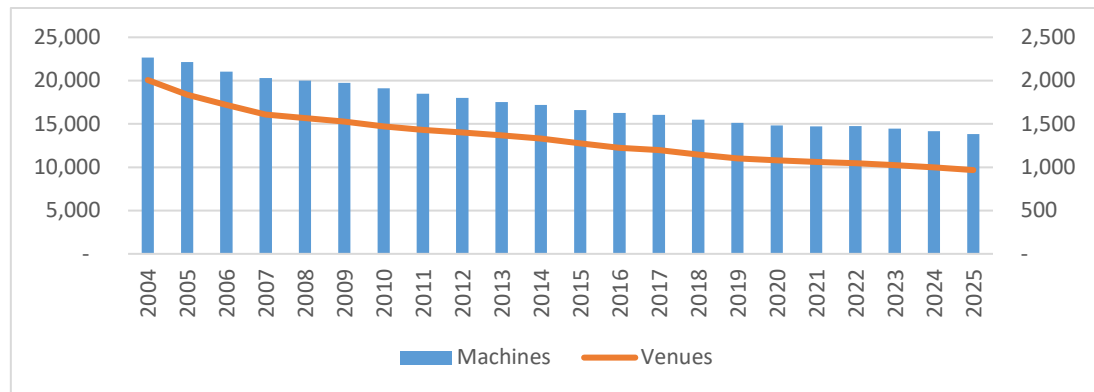
⁷ In the context of gambling expenditure, "loss per head" would represent the average amount of money lost by each person who participates in gambling activities.

	District	GMP	Pop>18	Loss/person
26	OPOTIKI DISTRICT	\$532,273.89	6,960	\$76.48
27	TIMARU DISTRICT	\$2,600,529.78	34,707	\$74.93
28	NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT	\$4,504,517.30	61,584	\$73.14
29	MARLBOROUGH DISTRICT	\$2,690,845.21	36,921	\$72.88
30	BULLER DISTRICT	\$594,010.80	8,208	\$72.37
31	SOUTH TARANAKI DISTRICT (MARCH 2021 INCD. STRATFORD)	\$1,933,212.36	27,195	\$71.09
32	RANGITIKEI DISTRICT	\$783,098.06	11,103	\$70.53
33	ASHBURTON DISTRICT	\$1,698,215.86	24,276	\$69.95
34	MATAMATA-PIAKO DISTRICT	\$ 1,776,814.86	26,211	\$67.79
35	TARARUA DISTRICT	\$ 881,961.66	13,134	\$67.15
36	CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT	\$1,220,999.30	18,441	\$66.21
37	NELSON CITY	\$ 2,581,135.37	39,054	\$66.09
38	RUAPEHU DISTRICT	\$ 591,898.20	9,045	\$65.44
39	WHANGAREI DISTRICT	\$4,374,475.52	68,430	\$63.93
40	WELLINGTON CITY	\$9,057,872.91	146,877	\$61.67
41	AUCKLAND CITY	\$68,583,347.36	1,124,842	\$60.97
42	KAPITI COAST DISTRICT	\$2,474,540.28	42,417	\$58.34
43	HURUNUI DISTRICT (JUNE 2019 INCD. KAIKOURA)	\$777,493.95	13,389	\$58.07
44	WESTLAND DISTRICT	\$390,365.18	6,831	\$57.15
45	WAITAKI DISTRICT	\$984,061.54	17,373	\$56.64
46	MASTERTON DISTRICT	\$1,114,030.49	19,869	\$56.07
47	MANAWATU DISTRICT	\$1,270,845.95	22,830	\$55.67
48	WAIPA DISTRICT	\$ 2,278,521.05	41,349	\$55.10
49	TASMAN DISTRICT	\$2,337,898.92	43,353	\$53.93
50	HAMILTON CITY	\$ 6,245,701.46	116,445	\$53.64
51	WESTERN BAY OF PLENTY DISTRICT	\$ 2,045,820.72	41,112	\$49.76
52	DUNEDIN CITY	\$4,814,815.05	97,311	\$49.48
53	WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT	\$2,402,816.33	48,627	\$49.41
54	SOUTH WAIRARAPA DISTRICT	\$ 412,235.07	8,865	\$46.50
55	CARTERTON DISTRICT	\$338,074.41	7,557	\$44.74
56	SOUTHLAND DISTRICT	\$ 913,167.07	22,368	\$40.82
57	KAIPARA DISTRICT	\$734,737.87	19,146	\$38.38
58	OTOROHANGA DISTRICT	\$244,029.08	7,167	\$34.05
59	CLUTHA DISTRICT	\$ 427,762.20	13,149	\$32.53
60	WAIMATE DISTRICT	\$177,032.13	6,099	\$29.03
61	QUEENSTOWN-LAKES DISTRICT	\$933,958.06	33,798	\$27.63
62	SELWYN DISTRICT	\$1,451,442.51	53,889	\$26.93
63	WAIKATO DISTRICT	\$2,542,983.80	105,840	\$24.03

5.3. Gaming machine and venue numbers

Gaming machine numbers in New Zealand are naturally declining. In June 1994, there were 7,770 pokie machines in New Zealand, this increased to a peak of 25,221 machines in 2003. Since then, the number of machines has declined slowly but steadily from 22,646 on 31 March 2004 (Department of Internal Affairs, 2025d) to 13,812 in March 2025 (Department of Internal Affairs, 2025b).

Figure 5-7 Total machine and venue numbers in New Zealand from 2004 to 2025



Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2025b and 2025d).

Likewise, the number of gaming machine venues in New Zealand has decreased in recent years with venue numbers falling from 2,007 in March 2004, to 967 in March 2025 (Department of Internal Affairs, 2025d).

The total number of venues is currently made up of 816 pubs/commercial premises and 161 clubs/non-commercial premises (Department of Internal Affairs, 2025b). Increased compliance costs associated with new gaming regulations and a seemingly mature gaming market means it is unlikely there will be any significant increase in either total gaming venues or the number of machines in the future.

6. Distribution of proceeds from gaming machines

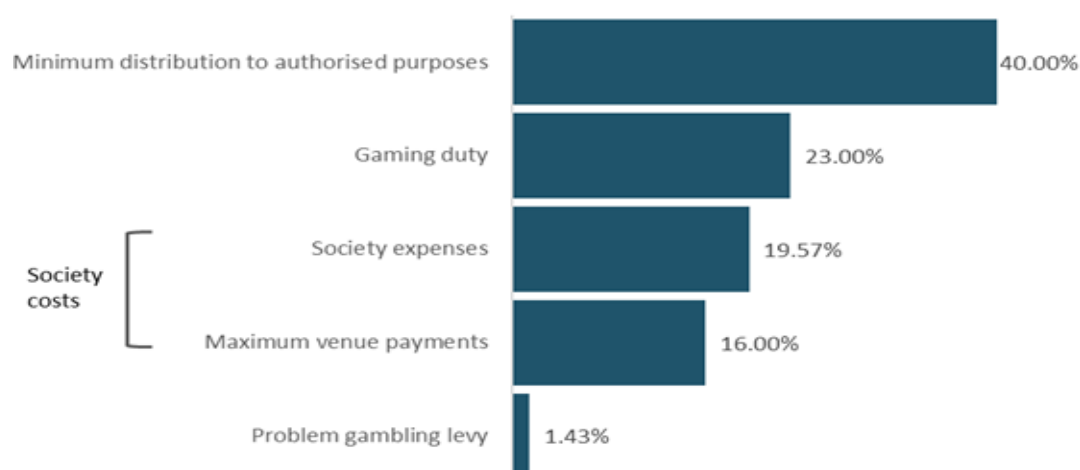
New Zealand is one of the few countries where Class 4 gambling is a not-for-profit activity. The Gambling Act provides for Class 4 gambling to be permitted only where it is used to raise funds for authorised purposes. Section 4 of the Act defines authorised purposes as:

- A charitable purpose,
- A non-commercial purpose that is beneficial to the whole or a section of the community
- Promoting, controlling, and conduction rate meetings under the Racing Act 2003, including the payment of stakes
- Classes 1-3 gambling can also raise money for electioneering purposes.

Gaming machine societies are required under the Gambling Act and the Gambling (Class 4 Net Proceeds) Regulations 2004 to distribute a minimum amount of 40 per cent of their proceeds to the community. However, there is no requirement for these funds to go back into the local communities where they came from.

Corporate societies must provide information on how to apply for a grant at each venue and must publish details of grant availability at least every three months. Societies must also publish details of both successful and unsuccessful applications for grants at least annually and detail the amount(s) given to successful applicants (see s.110 of the Gambling Act).

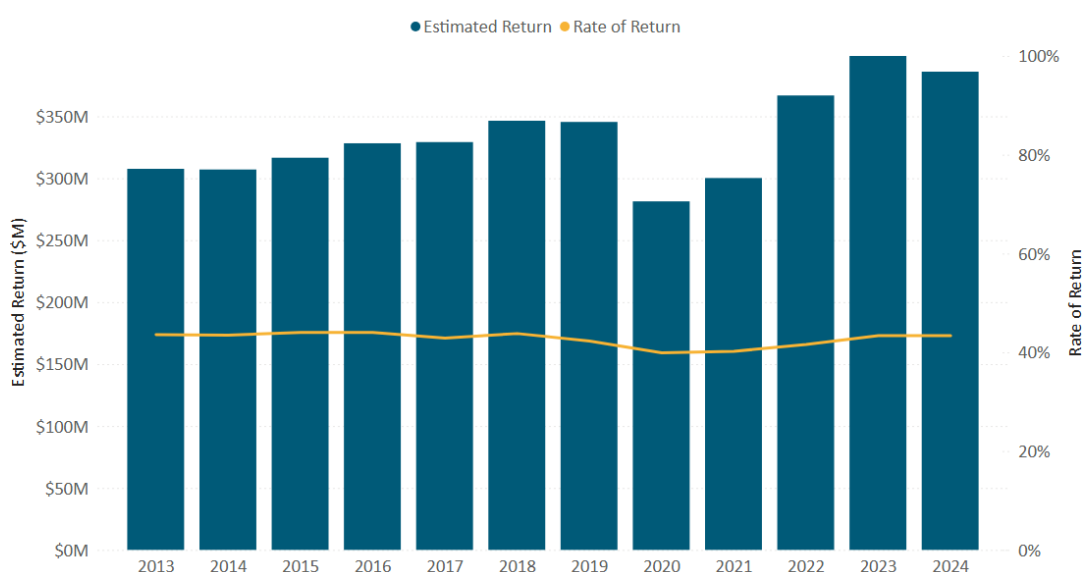
Figure 6-1 - Allocation rate of Class 4 gaming machine gross proceeds (excluding GST)



Source: Department of Internal affairs, personal communication, 2025.

In 2024, the rate of return in New Zealand was 43.4%, or \$386m. This represents one of the largest return rates in New Zealand since 2013 as shown in figure 6-2.

Figure 6-2 – Rate of return of Class 4 gaming machine gross proceeds over the last 10 years (2013-2024)



Source: Department of Internal Affairs (2025b)

7. Problem gambling in New Zealand

7.1. Definition of problem gambling

While most people who gamble do not develop problem gambling behaviour, for some, gambling can have negative impacts. Section 4 of the Gambling Act 2003 defines a problem gambler as “a person whose gambling causes harm or may cause harm”. In this context gambling-related harm:

- (a) *means harm or distress of any kind arising from, or caused or exacerbated by, a person’s gambling; and*
- (b) *includes personal, social, or economic harm suffered –*
 - (i) *by the person; or*
 - (ii) *the person’s spouse, partner, family, whanau, or wider community; or (iii) in the workplace; or (iv) by society at large.*

In New Zealand, gambling behaviour is primarily assessed using the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) which categorises gamblers into four categories:

- Non-problem gamblers
- Low-risk gamblers
- Moderate risk gamblers
- Problem gamblers

The PGSI is a 9-item scale whereby participants rate their own gambling behaviours on a scale from 0 (never) to 3(almost always), in response to the following questions:

- Have you bet more than you could really afford to lose?
- Have you needed to gamble with larger amounts of money to get the same feeling or excitement?
- Have you gone back another day to try and win back the money you lost?
- Have you borrowed money or sold anything to get money to gamble?
- Have you felt that you might have a problem with gambling?
- Has gambling caused you any health problems, including stress or anxiety?
- Have people criticised your betting or told you that you had a gambling problem, regardless of whether or not you thought it was true?
- Has your gambling caused any financial problems for you or your household?
- Have you felt guilty about the way you gamble, or what happens when you gamble?

Total scores range from 0-27, with scores of 0 indicating non-problem gambling, 1-2 indicating low-risk gambling, 3-7 indicating moderate-risk gambling and 8-27 indicating problem gambling (Health Promotion Agency, 2025b)

It is important to note that there is a difference between “harmful gambling” and “problem gambling”. Harmful gambling categorises the broad definition of “harm” under

the Gambling Act 2003 which can be experienced by all gamblers. Problem gambling refers to those who experience severe harm from gambling (Problem Gambling Foundation, 2024)

7.2. Prevalence of Gambling harm and problem gambling

A study undertaken in New Zealand by Abbott and Volberg (2000) found the prevalence of problem gambling varies significantly according to demographic variables. The variables identified were age, ethnicity, highest qualification, labour force status, occupation, household size and household income. In summary, the highest risk demographic groups identified were:

- People aged between 25 and 45 years
- People who identify as Māori and Pasifika
- People with no formal qualification
- People who are unemployed
- People who work in elementary occupations and/or plant and machine operators
- People living in households with five or more people
- People who live in households with an income of \$20,000 to \$30,000⁸.

As shown in figure 5-2, some of these risk factors we present in the results from the Health Promotion Agency (2025b) gambling harm survey. In addition to these risk factors, results of the survey also indicated males and those living with a disability, mental health or neurological conditions were also more at risk of developing problem gambling behaviours.

Gambling Harm

Some forms of gambling present higher risk than others, evidence shows that harm is far more likely to be associated with continuous forms of gambling like pokie machines where users can immediately reinvest their winnings to continue gambling. It has been reported that 54% of people accessing gambling-harm intervention services cite pub or club pokies as the primary problem gambling mode (Ministry of Health, 2024).

While most New Zealanders who gamble do so without developing problem behaviours, research shows that one in five New Zealand adults (22%) experience harm related to their own or someone else's gambling at some point in their lives. Harm includes financial harm, relationship disruption, conflict, psychological distress, damage to health, cultural harm, reduced participation at work or study and criminal activity. Around 381,000 adults reported second-hand gambling harm in their wider families or households in the past year (Health Promotion Agency, 2025).

It is important to note that nearly 50% of all gambling harm is experienced by people who participate in low-risk gambling. Data from the Health Promotion Agency gambling harm survey (2025) shows that in 2023/24, 8.3% of New Zealanders experienced some level of gambling harm in the past 12 months, 5.9% of which was experienced by low-risk gamblers.

⁸ Equivalent to income of \$37,794 to \$56,691 in 2025. Information retrieved from Reserve Bank of NZ inflation calculator.

Gambling harm is inequitably distributed in New Zealand. The survey also found that Māori, Pacific, some Asian communities, and young people are more likely to be affected.

Problem Gambling

The prevalence of problem gambling in New Zealand is low compared to other countries. Data from the Health Promotion Agency gambling harm survey found that 2.4% of the population are moderate-risk and problem gamblers. The New Zealand Community Trust made an official information request to the Ministry of Health to clarify what percentage of this number was made up of problem gamblers. The Ministry advised that 1.9% are moderate-risk gamblers with the remaining 0.5% were problem gamblers, this equates to around 17,000 adults in New Zealand.⁹

7.3. Social impacts of problem gambling

The impacts of problem gambling can occur to the individual, their whanau and friends, as well as the wider community. These impacts are often categorised into the following domains (Browne et al., 2017):

- Health and morbidity
- Emotional or psychological harm
- Financial harm
- Productivity harm
- Relationship / interpersonal conflict
- Criminal activity

Health and Morbidity

There is a significant body of evidence indicating that problem gambling is strongly associated with a number of other comorbidities such as addiction to alcohol, nicotine and other substances. At a national level, evidence suggests there is a relationship between problem gambling and poorer physical health. Browne et al. (2017) indicates that a self-reported study found that reporting of good health decreased with increased gambling risk, with only 22% of problem gamblers reporting good health compared to 57% of non-gamblers.

Emotional or Psychological Harm

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (n.d.) advise that mental health conditions are often comorbid for individuals who experience gambling related harm. It is suggested that these individuals are more predisposed to feelings of guilt, shame and risk of suicide. The Health Promotion gambling harm survey (2025b) found that 4.2% of the population felt guilt about the way they gamble, or what happens when they gamble. 1.6% indicated that gambling has caused them health problems including stress and anxiety.

Financial Harm

⁹ This can be found in the submission in appendix 1.

In the 2023/24-year, New Zealanders spent \$11.5b on pokie machines, with prize returns of \$10.5b, resulting in \$1 billion dollars in losses.

For individuals and whanau, financial harm does not only refer to crisis level harm such as bankruptcy or loss of major assets but includes escalating harm such as the erosion of savings, juggling or failure to pay bills, borrowing money or a decline in living standards. In the last 12 months, 3.6% of the population indicated they bet more than they could really afford to lose, with 2.3% indicating they had gone back another day to try win back money they had lost (Health Promotion Agency, 2025b)

Workplace and Education Harm

Browne et al. (2017) reports the impact of preoccupation with gambling on studying and/or working relationships, resulting in poorer work performance, increased absenteeism, theft of resources and in some cases termination. Rockloff et al. (2021) suggest that problem gambling can have intergenerational impacts, finding that children of problematic gamblers may experience educational harm as a result of attendance and achievement issues.

Relationship and interpersonal conflict

According to Browne et al. (2017), there is a strong connection between problem gambling and the breakdown of family and personal relationships. Research indicates that people experiencing problems with gambling are more likely to be separated or divorced. Data from the Health Promotion Agency gambling harm survey shows that 8.2% of the population have experienced household harm in the last 12 months e.g. had an argument about time or money spent gambling, had to go without something they needed and/or had to take time of study or work because of someone else's gambling.

Criminal Activity

Problem gambling has been found to be associated with criminal behaviour, most commonly property crimes and fraud. Browne et al. (2017) report a study whereby 32 gamblers (26 classified as problem gamblers) were interviewed, the results indicated that a third of participants reported that their gambling had led to problems with the police or to a conviction for crimes related to gambling. According to SHORE (2008), those who engaged in pokie machine play in bars were significantly more likely to be involved in criminal activities compared to those who never gamble.

Community Impact

The Health and Lifestyle survey measured how gambling affects local communities. Figure 7-1 shows that 55.4% of the population are concerned about the level of gambling in the community, with 46.2% indicating that raising money through gambling does more harm than good.

Figure 7-1 -Results from Health Promotion Agency Community Harm: New Zealand Gambling Survey

Indicator	%
Raising money through gambling - does more good than harm	8.3
Raising money through gambling - does equal good and harm	28.9
Raising money through gambling - does more harm than good	46.2
Concerned about the level of gambling in the community	55.4
Experienced household level harm	8.9

Source: Health Promotion Agency, 2025c

7.4. Social impacts of gambling in high deprivation communities

Community deprivation in New Zealand is measured through the Deprivation Index which takes into account a number of variables from the 2023 Census, as displayed in table 7-1.

Table 7-1 - Community deprivation dimensions and variables

Dimension of deprivation	Description of variable (in order of decreasing weight in the index)
Communication	People with no access to the Internet at home
Income	People aged 18-64 receiving a means tested benefit
Income	People living in equivalised ¹⁰ households with income below an income threshold
Employment	People aged 18-64 unemployed
Qualifications	People aged 18-64 without any qualifications
Owned home	People not living in own home
Support	People aged <75 living in a sole parent family
Living space	People living in equivalised households below a bedroom occupancy threshold (i.e overcrowding)

Source - Atkinson et al. (2024).

A score of 10 on the index indicates that the community is in the most deprived 10% of areas in New Zealand and a score of 1 indicates the least deprived areas.

Living in an area that has a high socio-economic deprivation-score is a major risk factor for problem gambling (Ministry of Health 2008). People who live in lower socio-economic neighbourhoods (generally those with a higher deprivation index score) are more likely to be exposed to gambling and suffer gambling related harm.

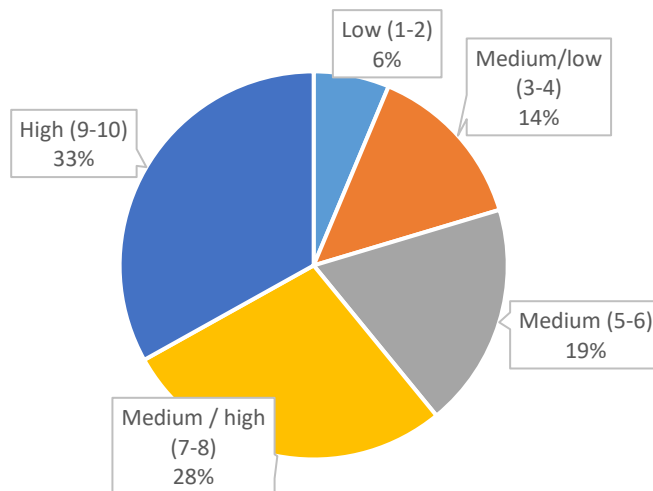
Research from the Ministry of Health (2008) suggests that people in lower income groups contribute a disproportionately greater amount of their income to gambling than people in a higher income bracket.

¹⁰ **Note:** Equivalisation is a method used to control for household composition.

Health Promotion Agency gambling participation survey data indicates that of the 514,000 New Zealanders who played a pub or club pokie machine in the last 12 months, 168,000 resided in high deprivation areas. Of the 104,000 moderate risk and problem gamblers in New Zealand, 41,000 resided in high deprivation areas.

Venue location impacts these trends, with 61% of venues in New Zealand being located in medium-high to high deprivation areas, as shown in figure 7-2.

Figure 7-2 -Distribution of Class 4 venues by deprivation areas in New Zealand



Source: Department of Internal Affairs, 2025c

Problem Gambling Foundation New Zealand (n.d.) reports that in 2023, 74% of the amount lost in New Zealand came from areas of high deprivation. However, the same areas only received 12% of the available grants.

7.5. Harm minimisation

In 2023, the Government announced new gambling harm prevention and minimisation regulation to strengthen gambling harm minimisation in class 4 venues. These regulations place large onus on class 4 venues, particularly operators and managers to identify and address gambling harm in their venues.

Pubs, clubs and TAB venues must operate in accordance with the following inclusions within the Act and regulations:

Licencing

- All class 4 venues must renew their licence yearly
- All licence holders must have a harm minimisation policy which includes how to identify problem gamblers, and a statement about how harm will be minimised at the venue.

Venue design / layout

- No automatic teller machines (ATM) are permitted in gambling areas of venues.
- Any ATMs in the venue must be in line of sight from bar staff working at the main bar or customer service area.
- Pokie machines must not be visible from outside the venue.

Advertising restrictions

- Jackpot advertising must not be visible or audible from outside the venue.
- The word “jackpot” or similar branding must not be published in a way that gives the impression there is a gaming machine jackpot at the venue.

Training / Venue practices

- Managers and staff who supervise the gambling duties must be trained in problem gambling awareness before they commence supervising duties.
- Pamphlets must be available at the venue to give information to players whose gambling may be causing harm.
- Venue staff must actively monitor gambling areas on a regular basis to observe player behaviour and to look for any signs that a player’s gambling may be causing harm. Gambling areas are wherever the gaming machines are located. This is called a “sweep”.
 - Sweeps of gambling rooms must be conducted at least three times per hour and at least 10 minutes apart.
 - Staff must keep track of how long individual players have been gambling. Gambling for nine sweeps in a row (about 3 hours) is a sign that harm is or may be occurring.
 - Venue staff must have a conversation with a player if a sign of harm is identified. Staff must make records of all these conversations.
 - Venue staff must take appropriate action and provide assistance where harm is or may be occurring.
 - Venue staff and managers must follow up if the player continues to show signs of harm.
- Venues must keep records of all sweeps, signs identified and a summary of all conversations, including the outcome of those conversations and interventions.

7.6 Problem gambling treatment services in New Zealand

Problem Gambling Levy

The Ministry of Health has responsibility for managing the funding of problem gambling support services. The funding comes from a levy on the gambling industry regulated through the Gambling Act 2003, which reimburses the government for the costs associated with preventing and minimising gambling harm.

The levy is collected on the profits of New Zealand’s four main gambling operators: gaming machines in pubs and clubs, casinos, the New Zealand Racing Board and the New Zealand Lotteries Commission; and is set every three years, with the formula used for calculating the levy rates for each sector specified by the Gambling Act 2003.

The current levy for gaming machine operators is 1.24% (as of 1 July 2025) of gross gambling profits, established under the Gambling (Problem Gambling Levy) Regulations 2019. This has decreased from the 2013 levy which was 1.48% but increased from the levy rate of 0.78% at the time of the last social impact report (2022).

Telephone Helpline Services

The Gambling Helpline service provides a free 0800 contact service and acts as a first point of contact for people experiencing some form of gambling-related harm, either directly or as a result of a significant other's gambling.

Intervention Services

At the time of the last review, there were two national providers of problem gambling services – the Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand and the Salvation Army's Oasis Centre for Problem Gambling – as well as a number of regional or local providers.

As of 2024, the Salvation Army's Oasis centre is no longer operational. This service has been replaced by two targeted providers, Mapu Maia which is a Pasifika focussed support service and Asian Family Service, both of whom are based in Christchurch.

The total number of clients receiving intervention services for problem gambling in New Zealand from July 2022 to June 2023 was 10,386. This is an increase of 703 clients from the previous year (Ministry of Health, 2024). In Ashburton District, 7 clients were assisted¹¹ which is 0.067% of the overall total number of clients assisted in New Zealand (Ministry of Health, 2024).

8. Gaming machine gambling in Ashburton District

8.1. Gaming machine and venue numbers in Ashburton District

As of 31 December 2024, there were 11 venues and 131 pokie machines in the Ashburton District. This compares with 12 venues and 135 machines in September 2015, a decrease of 0.7% in the number of machines in the district over the past 6 years (Department of Internal Affairs, 2025d).

The number of pokie machines in the district has been gradually decreasing since December 2004, when there were 162 pokie machines. The number of venues in the district decreased to 12 in December 2015 with the closure of The Shed (which housed 18 machines) in June 2015.

In March 2016, an application was received from Robbies to add an additional two machines (which is the maximum number of machines possible under the current policy of seven machines). This venue is now known as the Phat Duck. In 2018, the Railway Tavern Rakaia also added an additional machine.

There has been a net loss of 3 machines and 1 venue in the district since the last social impact report (2022). This has resulted from the closure of Arcadia Bar and Restaurant which housed 7 machines and the addition of 4 machines at the Blue Pub in Methven.

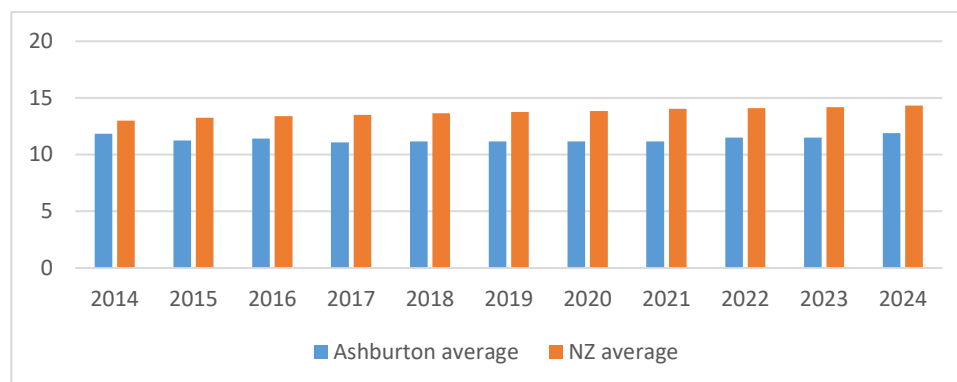
Nationally, both venue and machine numbers are dropping, with machine numbers dropping at a faster rate than the Ashburton District. However, when the average number of machines per venue is compared, the district remains below the national average.

¹¹ This includes all intervention types including brief interventions.

Table 8-1 - Change in number of Class 4 gaming machine venues and machine numbers, 2021-24

	Change in number of venues	Change in number of machines
Ashburton District	-1 (8.3%)	-3 (2.2%)
New Zealand	-73 (-6.9%)	-758 (-5.1%)

Figure 8-1 - Average number of machines per venue 2014- 2024



Department of Internal Affairs, 2025d)

This translates to 35.6 gaming machines per 10,000 residents in the Ashburton District. This has dropped from 37.3 in 2021, and 46.9 in 2014, which shows that the growth of the district's population is not being reflected in the growth of class 4 gaming machines.

The national average is 26.3 gaming machines per 10,000 residents. Ashburton District has, therefore, a higher than the national average ratio. However, both the district and national averages have decreased since 2014, showing that Ashburton District is following the national trend. It should be noted that rural territorial authorities tend to have a higher-than-average machine to resident ratio due to lower population densities and greater dispersal of venues.

In 2005, territorial authorities with more than 100 machines per 10,000 residents were all rural authorities. By contrast cities tended to be under 50 machines per 10,000 residents (Ministry of Health, 2006).

The following graphs give an indication of the comparative density of venues and number of machines for neighbouring territorial authorities in the Canterbury region. It is important to note that since 2014, most areas have been in decline.

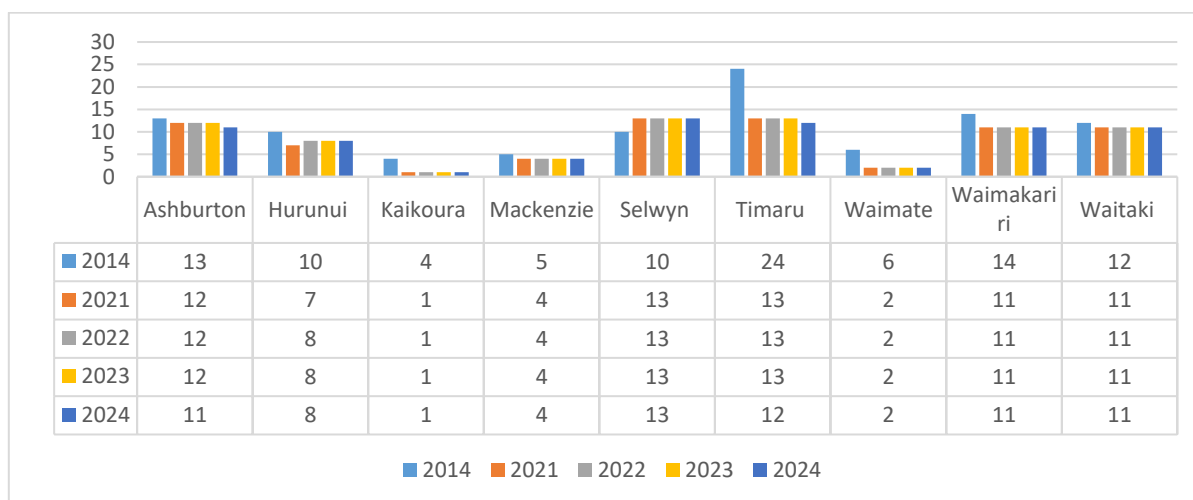
Since the last social impact report in 2022, venue numbers and machine numbers have declined slowly across the region, the outlier being Selwyn District where machine numbers have been increasing since 2014.

As of December 2024, Mackenzie District has the highest number of machines per 10,000 people with 65.5 machines.¹²

¹² Based on the districts estimated population as at December 2024 of 5,500 and 36 machines.

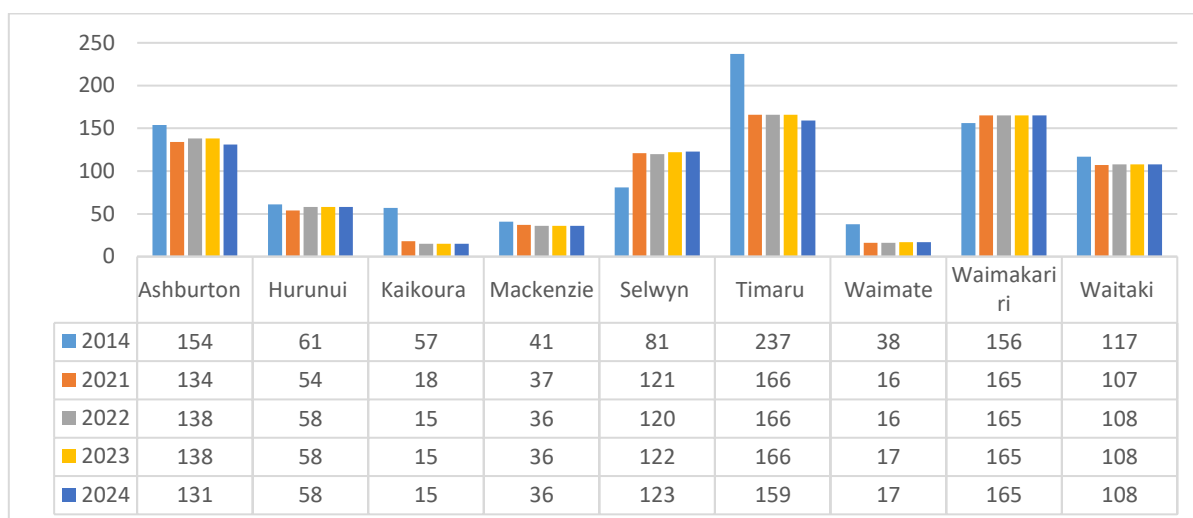
Selwyn has the lowest number of machines per 10,000 people at 14.4. Ashburton has the third highest number of machines per 10,000 people in the Canterbury region.

Figure 8-2 - Number of venues per territorial authority in the Canterbury Region 2014-2024¹³



Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2025d)

Figure8-3 - Number of machines per territorial authority in the Canterbury Region 2014-2024¹⁴



Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2025d).

¹³ Christchurch has been excluded from this graph as the much higher venue and machine numbers skews the data.

¹⁴ Christchurch has been excluded from this graph as the much higher venue and machine numbers skews the data.

8.2 Types of venue and societies operating in the Ashburton District

All gaming machines in Ashburton District are in licensed premises, with 9 commercial venues such as pubs, taverns, and hotels. The remaining 2 are located in non-commercial venues such as the MSA and RSA.

The two clubs in the district with gaming machines (the Ashburton MSA and the Ashburton Returned Services Association (RSA)) operate as societies and use the funds generated primarily for club related capital expenditure, typically building and equipment purchases.

The Lion Foundation is the largest gaming society in the district and operates machines in five licensed premises, including the Devon Tavern, The Brown Pub, Hotel Ashburton, Tinwald Tavern, and the Railway Tavern. The remainder of the societies operating gaming machines in the district are other national operators, namely, Air Rescue Services, New Zealand Community Trust, The Trusts Community Foundation Limited and Youthtown Incorporated.

Table 8-2 shows gaming machine venues in the Ashburton District over the last 12 years (2012-2024), the society which holds the gaming license for each venue, the number of machines at each venue, and whether the venue was licensed before October 2001. Please note, those in grey are no longer current gaming machine venues.

As of December 2024, Ashburton township had 93 machines housed across 6 venues, followed by Methven with 21 machines housed in 2 venues, Rakaia with 14 machines across 2 venues and Hinds with 3 machines all located in 1 venue.

Since 2014, Methven's total number of machines has increased by 3, while Ashburton township and Rakaia have decreased by 20 and 1 respectively. Hinds gaming machine numbers have remained the same since 2012.

Table 8-2- Ashburton District venue and machine numbers 2012-2024

Venue name	Society name	Approved prior to 2001	Dec 2012	Dec 2015	Dec 2018	Dec 2021	Dec 2024	Change since 2021
Arcadia Restaurant & Bar	Four Winds Foundation Ltd	No	0	7	7	7	0	-7
Ashburton Club & MSA	Ashburton Club & MSA	Yes	18	18	18	18	18	-
Ashburton RSA	Ashburton Returned Services Assn. Inc.	Yes	18	18	14	14	14	-
Blue Pub	NZ Community Trust	Yes	9	8	8	8	12	+4
Devon Tavern	The Lion Foundation (2008)	Yes	18	18	18	18	18	-
Hinds Tavern	The Lion Foundation (2008)	Yes	3	3	3	3	3	0
Hotel Ashburton	The Lion Foundation (2008)	Yes	18	18	18	18	18	-
Phat Duck Ashburton (previously Robbie's Bar & Bistro)	Air Rescue Services Limited	No	5	5	7	7	7	-
Railway Tavern Rakaia	The Lion Foundation (2008)	Yes	6	6	7	7	7	-
Revival Sports Bar	The Lion Foundation	No	5	0	0	0		-
South Rakaia Hotel	Trust Aoraki Limited	Yes	7	7	7	7	7	-
The Brown Pub	NZ Community Trust	Yes	9	9	9	9	9	-
The Shed (Somerset Tavern)	The Lion Foundation	Yes	18	0	0	0		-
Tinwald Tavern	The Lion Foundation (2008)	Yes	18	18	18	18	18	-
TOTAL gaming venues – Ashburton District			13	12	12	12	11	-1
TOTAL gaming venues – New Zealand			1,381	1,238	1,117	1,050	977	-73
TOTAL gaming machines – Ashburton District			152	135	134	134	131	-3
TOTAL gaming machines – New Zealand			17,670	16,393	15,257	14,743	13,985	-758

Source – Department of Internal Affairs (2025d).

9. Economic effects of gaming machine gambling in Ashburton District

9.1. Total expenditure and loss

‘Expenditure,’ also known as ‘net proceeds’, ‘revenue’, or ‘losses’, refers to the amount put into machines (turnover) which is not returned through prizes. The total expenditure for the district for the year ending December 2024 was \$6,884,141.81 or around \$18,912 per day. This is an increase of 6.6% on the level of expenditure compared to the previous report (2020/21).

Table 9-1 - Total gaming machine expenditure in Ashburton District 2013/14 -2023/24 (nominal population adjusted)¹⁵

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total expenditure (class 4)	\$5.831m	\$6.126m	\$5.963m	\$5.933m	\$6.165m	\$6.042m	\$5.510m	\$6.425m	\$6.971m	\$7.341m	\$6.884m
Expenditure per head of total population*	\$223.95	\$231.09	\$220.28	\$216.17	\$223.07	\$218.06	\$195.53	\$227.68	\$246.61	\$252.28	\$233.04
Average expenditure per week per head of population	\$4.31	\$4.44	\$4.24	\$4.16	\$4.29	\$4.19	\$3.76	\$4.38	\$4.74	\$4.85	\$4.48

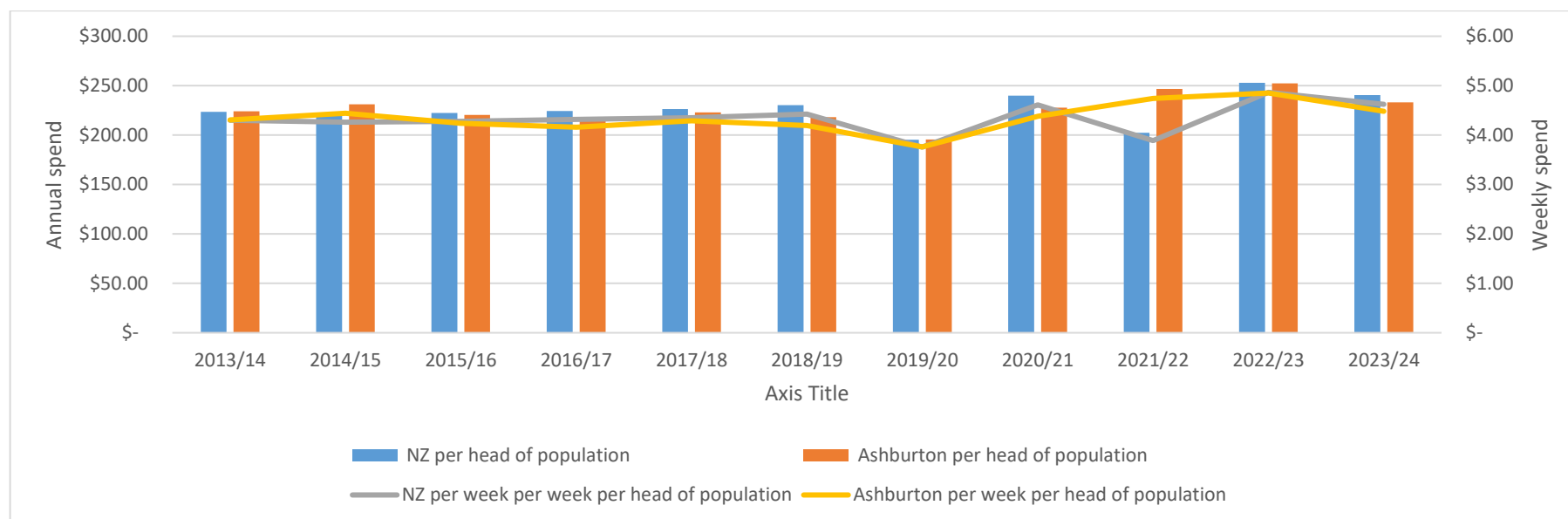
Source - Department of Internal Affairs (2025b)

As shown in table 9-1, Ashburton District has a slightly lower per head of population spend compared to New Zealand. However, in the year 2021/22 the per head spend in Ashburton was \$44.33 more than the New Zealand per head spend, this results in a higher per week spend in the Ashburton District in the same year.

¹⁵ Population adjusted for Ashburton District population over the age 15. Note, the legal gambling age in New Zealand is 18 year and over but subnational data for individual ages is not available – this information has been populated using age composition data from Informetrics NZ.

There has been minimal change in Ashburton districts per head spend in the last 10 year, averaging around \$225 a year since 2014. Since the last report in 2022, there has been some fluctuations in our district's per head spend, increasing from \$227.68 in 2020/21 to \$252.28 in 2022/23, returning to \$233.04 for the previous year end December 2024.

Figure 9-1 - Gaming Machine annual expenditure per head and per head per week for Ashburton District compared to New Zealand (population adjusted)



Source - Department of Internal Affairs (2025b) *Statistics New Zealand Total Population Estimates

Ashburton District ranks 33rd of 63 territorial authorities in terms of gross machine proceeds (the money left after taking out prizes) for the March 2025 quarter (as shown in table 4-3 on page 18). The monetary loss per head of population to pokie machines in the Ashburton District is \$69.95 for the March 2025 quarter.

9.2. Distribution of proceeds and return to the community

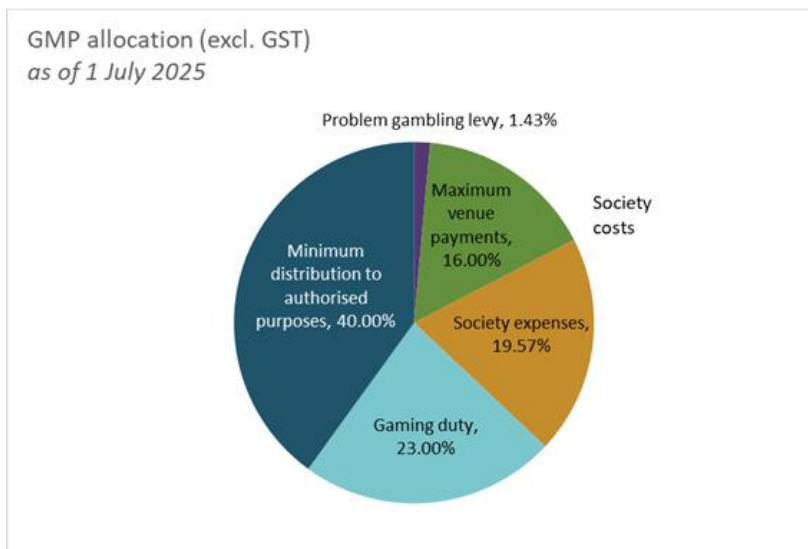
Regulations prescribe how proceeds may be applied. Societies that operate gaming machines fall into two categories:

1. Clubs – operating gaming machines in their own premises such as chartered clubs, sports clubs, or Returned Services Associations (RSAs)
2. Public societies – operating gaming machines in commercial venues such as hospitality businesses including pubs, hotels and restaurants.

Clubs are permitted to use all profits (following deductions for tax and the gambling levy) to benefit the Club provided those purposes are recognised as authorised purposes (including mortgage repayments, club operating costs, members' welfare, courtesy vehicles and charitable activities).

As shown by Figure 9-2, corporate societies are legally required to return a minimum of 40% of the proceeds from non-casino gaming machines to the community in the form of grants. The remainder of the gross proceeds go to the government in taxes and duties, operating costs which are incurred by the corporate society operating the machines. Corporate societies have an obligation to minimise costs and return the maximum amount possible to the community and are often able to distribute more than 40%.

Figure 9-2 - Allocation of Class 4 gaming machine gross proceeds



Source: Department of Internal Affairs, personal communication (2025).

In the Ashburton District, the distribution of available grant funding generated from machines operated by The Lions Foundation continues to be locally controlled. The Braided Rivers Community Trust (BRCT) administer grant funding for the district on behalf of The Lions Foundation. Decisions on grant funding applications are made by the Grants

Distribution Committee consisting of the six elected Ashburton BRCT Board members, the Mayor of Ashburton District, and two independent community representatives.

Any proceeds generated by other gaming societies operating in the district do not have to be returned to the Ashburton District.

10. Grants to Ashburton District from Gaming Proceeds

According to the Department of Internal Affairs data, the total grants to the Ashburton District for the 2023 calendar year was \$1.565m¹⁶.

The table below outlines the grants received by the Ashburton District community for the 2023 year. The table does not include profits from machines that are registered to Ashburton Club & MSA and Ashburton Returned Services Association Inc., as those profits go directly to the organisations.

Table 10-1 - Gaming Machine Trust Grants to Ashburton District 2023

Gaming Machine Trust Grants to Ashburton District	
Trust	Amount granted
The Lion Foundation	\$1,288,479
One Foundation	\$115,511
Air Rescue Services	\$70,615
New Zealand Community Trust	\$63,241
Aotearoa Gaming Trust	\$20,000
Mainland Foundation	\$5,000
Redwood Trust Incorporated	\$2,500

Source – Te Tari Taiwhenua. (n.d.)

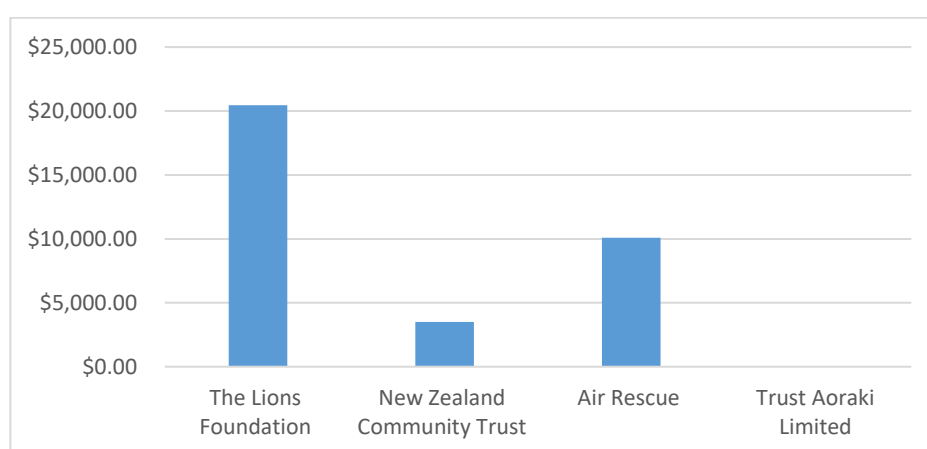
The Lion Foundation generated \$36.5m in grants in 2023, the Ashburton District received 3.53% of the total grant funding available from this trust. It is worth noting that One Foundation does not currently operate any machines within the district but returned the second highest value to the community in 2023, representing 0.8% of their GMP. Aotearoa Gaming Trust, Mainland Foundation and Redwood Trust Incorporated also do not operate any machines within the Ashburton District but collectively returned \$27,500 to the Ashburton Community in grant funding.

¹⁶ Note - there is room for error with this figure due to grants that may have been missed, or grants which do not specify the region to which they are granted or are granted to national organisations.

Trust Aoraki Limited who operate nine machines in the district did not feature in statistics available from DIA. According to their website, for the 2023/24 financial year, Trust Aoraki distributed \$1.64m into the local communities of Timaru, Temeka, Kurow, Twizel, Omarama and Fairlie indicating that no grants were return to the Ashburton District from the machines operated.

In considering the distribution of proceeds, the Lion Foundation will always be the largest monetary contributor as they operate 63 machines across five venues in the district. On a per machine basis, the Lion Foundation returned \$20,452 from every machine they operate in the district, compared to Air Rescue Trust who returned \$10,087 per machine, NZCT who returned \$3,513 and Aoraki Trust Limited who did not return any money per machine as indicated in figure 10-1.

Figure 10-1 – Grant return per machine by each corporate society operating in the Ashburton District.



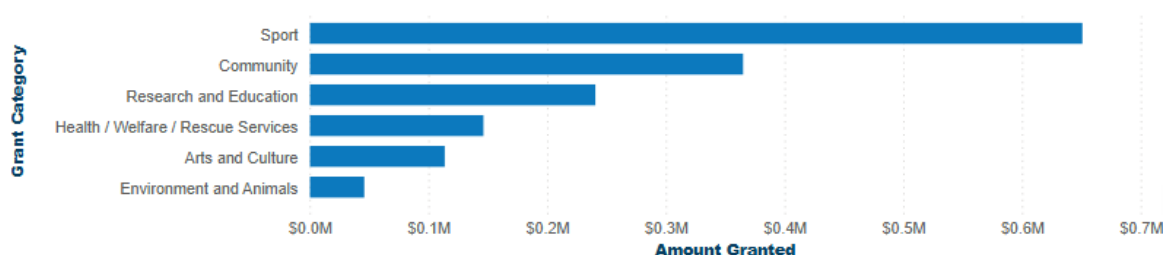
Source – Te Tari Taiwhenua. (n.d.)

In 2023, sports organisations received the largest proportion of grant funding totalling \$650,897, equalling 41% of the total grants returned to the community. Notable recipients include Rakaia Rugby who received \$213,500, Tinwald Family Sport and Recreation Association who received \$70,000 and Tennis Mid Canterbury who received \$40,000.

Community organisations made up the second largest proportion of grant allocations, collectively receiving \$365,097 or 23% of the total grants returned to the district. This included Staveley Campsite Committee who received \$93,000 and Community House Mid Canterbury who received \$61,513.

Figure 10-2 demonstrates how the \$1.5m of grants returned to the Ashburton District was allocated.

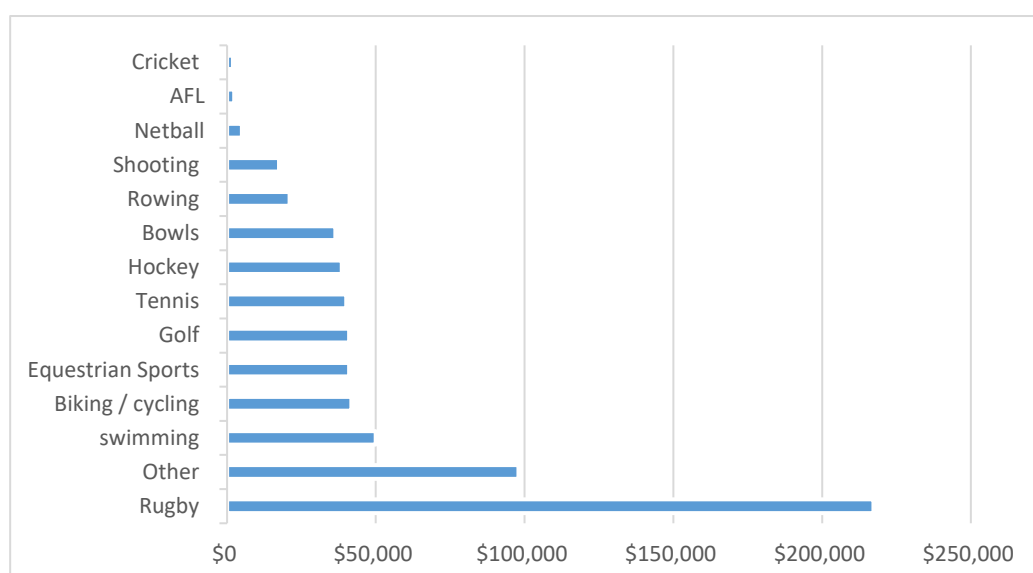
Figure 10-2 – Class 4 Grants to Ashburton District sorted by category – 2023



Source – Te Tari Taiwhenua. (n.d.)

Within the sports organisations, rugby groups received 33% of the funding for this category. Other sports organisations such as the Tinwald Family Sport and Recreation Association made up the “other” category in figure 10-3, totalling \$97,959. Cricket groups received the least amount of grant funding, receiving \$2,000 in 2023.

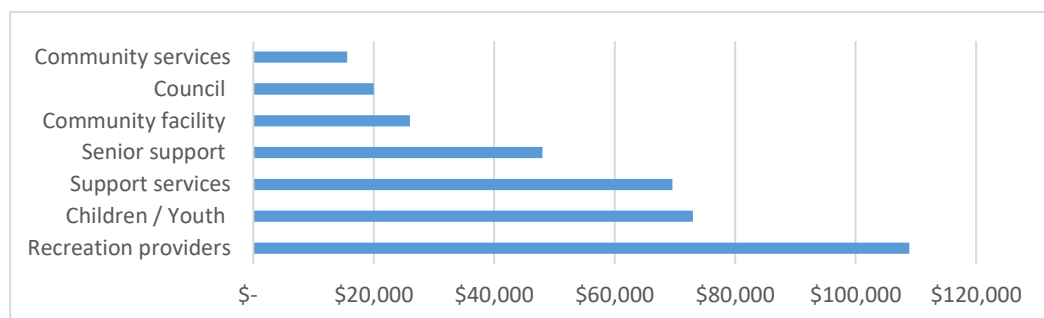
Figure 10-3 – Distribution of Grant Funding Within the “Sports” Category– 2023



Source – Te Tari Taiwhenua. (n.d.)

Community organisations collectively received \$365,097 in 2023 as shown in Figure 10-4, with the largest contribution being received by recreation providers such as the Staveley Campsite Committee who received 26% of the total grant funding received by community groups.

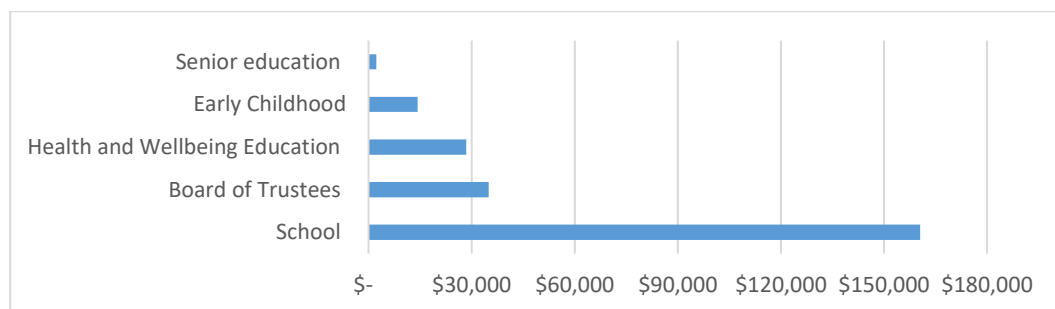
Figure 10-4 – Distribution of Grant Funding Within the “Community” Category– 2023



Source – Te Tari Taiwhenua. (n.d.)

Education and research providers collectively received \$240,652 in grant funding, most of which was received by schools in the district, as shown in figure 10-5.

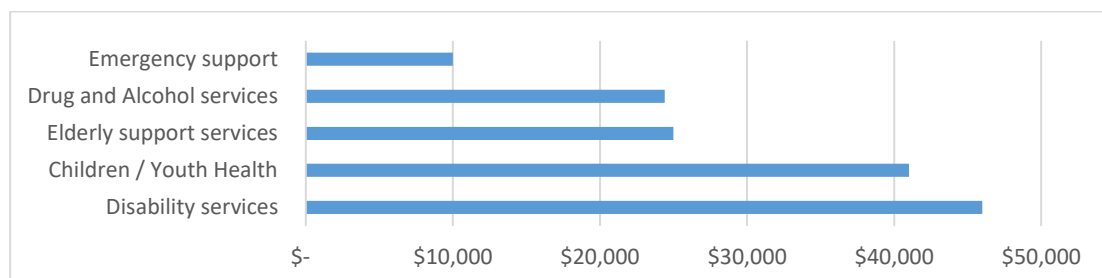
Figure 10-5 – Distribution of Grant Funding Within the “Education and Research” Category– 2023



Source – Te Tari Taiwhenua. (n.d.)

\$146,399 was granted to health, welfare and emergency services, with disability services receiving 31% of that funding. As shown in figure 10-6, Children and Youth services such as Plunket and Youthline received \$41,000 collectively.

Figure 10-6 – Distribution of Grant Funding Within the “Health, Welfare and Emergency” Category– 2023



Source – Te Tari Taiwhenua. (n.d.)

Within the Arts and Culture category, cultural groups received 70% of the \$113,800 allocated to this category. The remaining \$44,000 was granted to arts organisations.

The Ashburton A&P Association received the majority of grant funding allocated to the Environment and Animals category, receiving \$40,000 in 2023.

Overall, sixty-five community organisations received grant funding in the Ashburton District for the 2023 year.

11. Gambling Harm and Problem Gambling in Ashburton District

11.1. High Deprivation areas in the Ashburton District

As of 2023, The Ashburton District Council had an average socioeconomic deprivation score of 5.1 indicating medium level deprivation. Deprivation scores range from 1 (least deprived) in Ashburton North to 6 in Allenton South (moderate deprivation) to 8 in Hampstead (high deprivation).

Table 11-1 shows where the 11 current venues are placed relative to the deprivation score of the area. Currently, 5 of the 11 venues are located in areas with a deprivation score higher than 7 meaning 47% of the machines in the district are located in higher deprivation areas, with 32 machines located in the highest deprivation areas in the district.

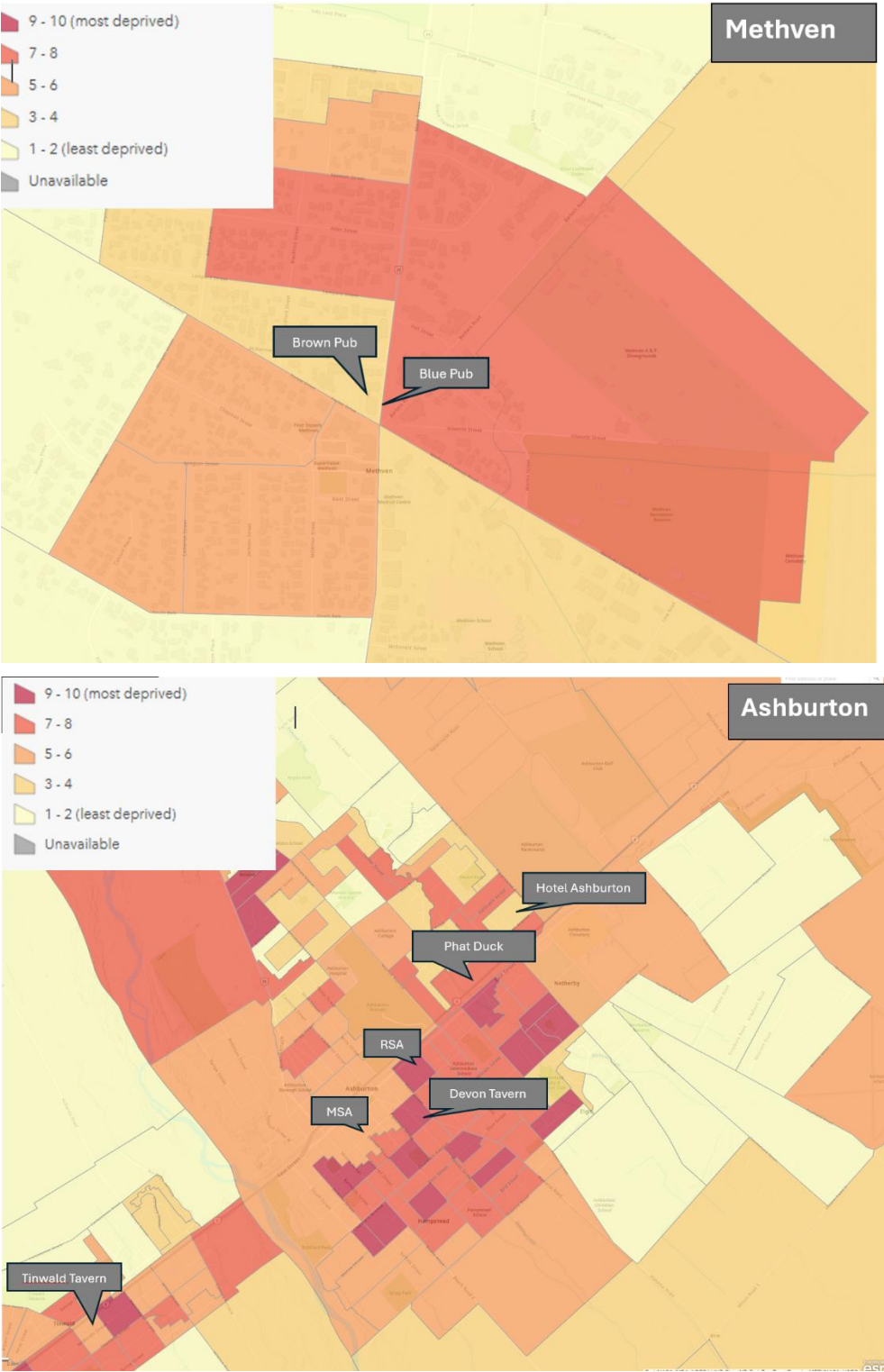
Table 11-1 - Number of machines by area (2024) and deprivation score (2023)

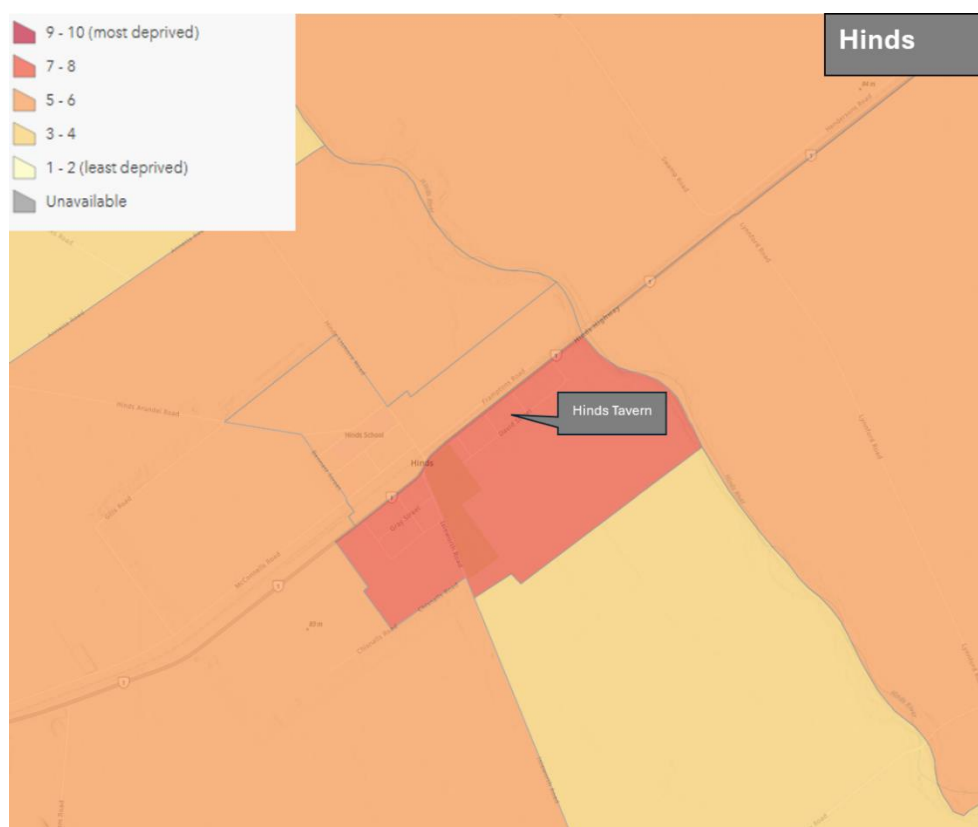
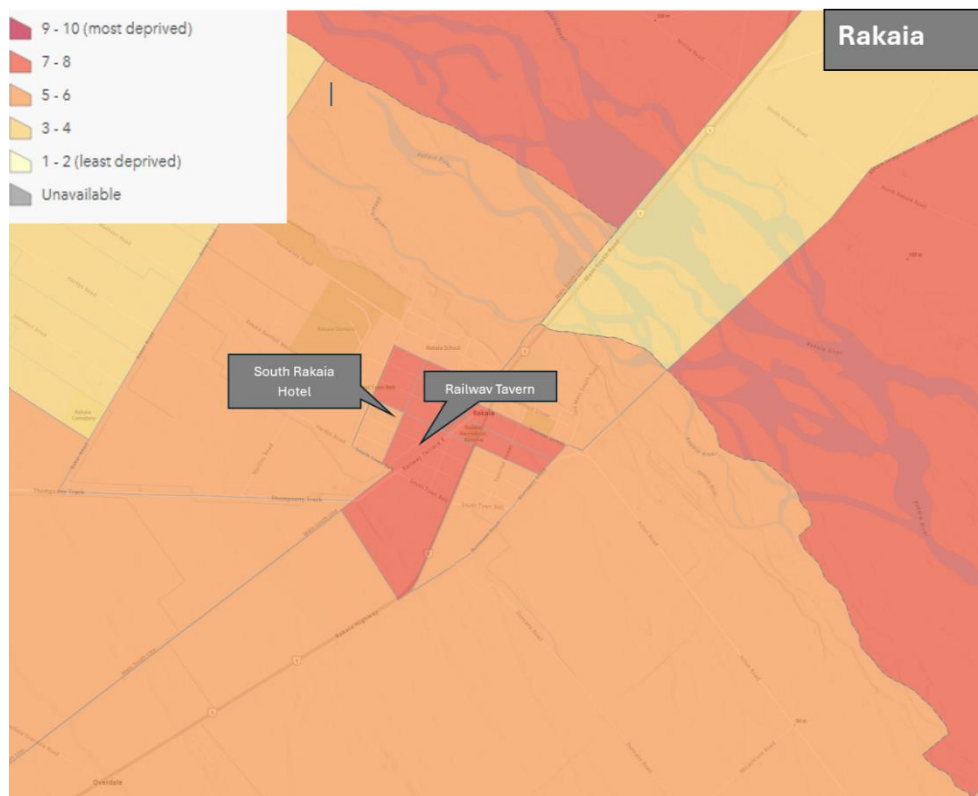
Venue	2024 Number of machines	Area (SA2)	2023 Deprivation score
Ashburton Club & MSA	18	Ashburton Central	6
Devon Tavern	18	Ashburton East	9
Phat Duck Ashburton	7	Allenton East	8
Hotel Ashburton	18	Allenton East	3
Hinds Tavern	3	Ealing-Lowcliffe	7
The Blue Pub, Methven	12	Methven	7
The Brown Pub, Methven	9	Methven	3
Ashburton RSA	14	Ashburton East	9
South Rakaia Hotel	7	Rakaia	6
Railway Tavern, Rakaia	7	Rakaia	8
Tinwald Tavern	18	Tinwald South	5

Source: Environmental Health Intelligence New Zealand, n.d

Figure 11-1 provides a view of venue locations relative to the deprivation areas for each town in the district.

Figure 11-1 – Location of venues in towns across the Ashburton District





Source: Environmental Health Intelligence New Zealand, n.d

11.2. Risk Factor Prevalence in Ashburton District

Given the variable risk factors, it is difficult to predict how much of district's population is at risk of developing problem gambling behaviours. Table 11-2 indicates what percentage of the population represents each risk factor. Based on this, it is estimated that approximately 21.5% of the district's population may be at risk of developing problem gambling behaviours.

However, it is important to note that this just an estimate and may vary due to the likelihood that individuals may fall into multiple risk categories. For example, 3% of the district's population fall into the top three risk indicators – males aged 25-45 who live in high deprivation areas.

Table 11-2 – indicators

Indicator	Population Percentage
Aged 25-45 years	30%
Māori and pacific island ethnicity	8.2%
No formal qualification	20%
Unemployed	4.5%
Elementary occupations	15%
Households with more than 5 people	10%
Household income of \$37,000 - \$56,000	25%
Male	50.9%
Disability	24%

Source: Stats NZ

11.3. Problem gambling services

At the time of the last social impact report (2022), there were two main providers of counselling to problem gamblers in Ashburton District, the Problem Gambling Foundation and the Salvation Army Oasis Centre. Both organisations provided services as an outreach from Christchurch and conduct counselling services in Ashburton District on an 'as required' basis.

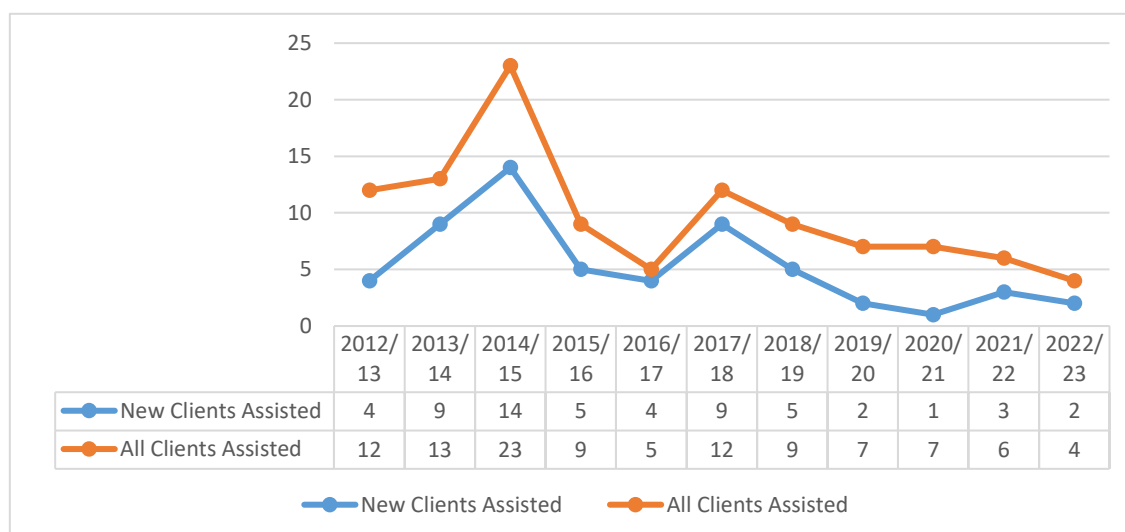
As of January 2024, Salvation Army Oasis Centre no longer provides support services and has now been replaced by targeted serviced including Mapu Maia who provide support to Pasifika and Asian Family Services (AFS), both have offices located in Christchurch.

The Ministry of Health collates gambling service intervention data throughout New Zealand. Figure 11-2 shows the number of new and repeat clients in Ashburton District for the last 10 years.

It is important to note that the total number of clients excludes brief interventions. These interventions are often administered at large group events and fairs where people

affected by gambling harm are likely to be in attendance. Because of the nature of these interventions, the numbers can fluctuate. Therefore, excluding brief interventions from the data set provides a more accurate depiction of the change in the number of clients.

Figure 11-2 - Number of clients (excluding brief interventions) in Ashburton District 2012/13 – 2022/23



Source - Ministry of Health (2024) (excluding brief intervention type).

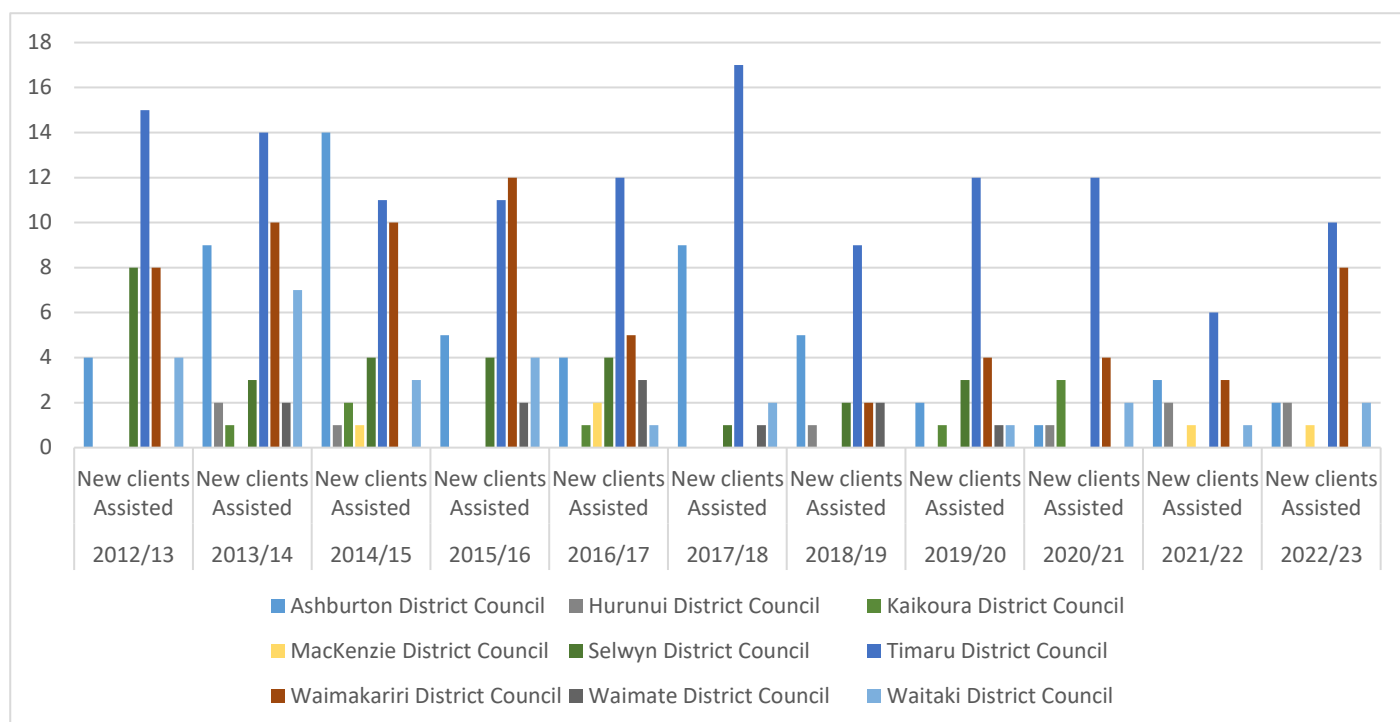
The number of new clients presenting for intervention in the Ashburton District has remained stable over the last 5 years, with only two new clients presenting in the 2022/23 year.

Feedback received by the Problem Gambling Foundation (n.d) indicates that intervention data doesn't accurately measure the prevalence of gambling harm, citing that the Ministry of Health's need assessment and outcomes monitoring reports show that only 16% of potential clients for gambling support services (that is, people who reported harm results in a moderate to high PGSI score) actually access or present at these services.

Comparatively, the number of people seeking assistance for gambling problems in Ashburton District is higher than the national figures. As of 2023, Ashburton District had 1.1 clients per 10,000 people in the district compared to 0.84 clients per 10,000 people nationally. As a percentage, Ashburton District accounts for 0.9% of the total number who accessed gambling intervention services in 2022/23.

Compared to other districts in the Canterbury region Ashburton has lower client intervention rates. As show in Figure 11-3, Timaru and Waimakariri have the highest intervention rates in the region. For the 2022/23-year, Ashburton District had the same number of presentations as Hurunui and Waitaki but more than Kaikoura, Selwyn and Waimate districts.

Figure 11-3 – Number of new clients for each district from 2012/13 to 2022/23



Source - Ministry of Health (2024) (excluding brief intervention type).

12. Impact of Ashburton District Council's Gambling Venue Policy

12.1 Ashburton District Council's Gambling Venue Policy

Ashburton District Council's Gambling Venue Policy has been in place since 2004 and has remained unchanged since 2012. The policy has the following provisions:

Where Racing Board venues may be established:

TAB gambling venues may be established in Ashburton District subject to:

- Meeting application and fee requirements set by the Council from time to time and by the relevant legislation administered by the Department of Internal Affairs;
- The venue being controlled by TAB New Zealand or a venue owned or leased, and operated by TAB New Zealand for the purposes of race and sports betting
- The venue being located within a Business Zone of the Ashburton District Plan or otherwise permitted by way of resource consent;
- All necessary resource consent(s) having been granted and complied with;

- The venue not being one where the primary activity of the venue is associated with family or children's activities and is not on a site listed as a “designated site” within Appendix A.1 of the Ashburton District Plan.

Where Class 4 gambling venues may be established:

- Meeting application and fee requirements set by the Council from time to time and by the relevant legislation administered by the Department of Internal Affairs;
- The primary activity of the venue being for the sale of liquor or for liquor and food, and the location of gaming machines within the venue being in an area where under 18-year-olds do not have free access to; or the venue being a TAB New Zealand venue;
- The venue being located within a Business Zone of the Ashburton District Plan or otherwise permitted by way of resource consent;
- All necessary resource consent(s) having been granted and complied with;
- The venue not being one where the primary activity of the venue is associated with family or children's activities and is not on a site listed as a “designated site” within Appendix A.1 of the Ashburton District Plan.

Numbers of gaming machines to be allowed:

- New venues shall be permitted a maximum of 5 gaming machines.
- Existing venues, with licences issued before 17 October 2001, operating 9 or more gaming machines on 22 September 2003, shall be permitted to increase the number of machines operated at the venue to a maximum of 18 machines.
- Existing venues with licenses issued after 17 October 2001 and operating 7 or less gaming machines on 22 September 2003, shall be permitted a maximum number of 7 machines.
- No venue shall operate more than 18 gaming machines.

Transfer of existing Class 4 gambling venue conditions:

- Council’s policy allows the transfer of existing class 4 gambling venue conditions provided that the Waikiwi case law criteria is met, as at the time the policy was created, this was not considered a ‘relocation’ for the purposes of the Act.
- This criterion is that:
 - o The new building will be in a site that is very close to the existing site;
 - o The class 4 venue’s name will be the same;
 - o The ownership and management of the venue will be the same; and
 - o For all intents and purposes, the patrons and public will regard the venue as being the same venue, even though its physical location will change in a relatively minor way.

13. Stakeholders Consulted

The following stakeholders were invited to participate in a stakeholder survey from 14 May – 16 June 2025. The survey focussed on the following areas of interest:

- Effectiveness of the current policy in achieving its objectives.
- Feedback on policy inclusions including number of venues, machines and relocation policy.
- Negative and positive social impacts of class 4 gambling in the Ashburton District.

Four Winds Foundation Ltd	Arowhenua Whanau Services	He Waka Tapu	Ashburton RSA
New Zealand Community Trust	CAP (Christians against poverty)	Community & Public Health Ashburton	Braided Rivers Community Trust Ashburton
Air Rescue Services	Hakitere Marae Komiti	Presbyterian Support	Ashburton Club & MSA
Pub Charity	The Phat Duck	New Zealand Racing Board	Blue Pub
Youthtown Incorporated	Tinwald Tavern	Oasis Centre	Brown Pub
Trust Aoraki Limited	Armadillos	Pegasus Health	Devon Tavern
Family Mental Health Services	Food and Health New Zealand	Community House Mid Canterbury	Problem Gambling Foundation
The Lion Foundation	Railway Tavern	Hinds Tavern	Hotel Ashburton
Safer Gambling Aotearoa	Salvation Army	Safer Ashburton District	South Rakaia Hotel
	Gaming Machine Association New Zealand	Hospitality Association New Zealand	

13.1 Summary of Stakeholder feedback on current Gambling Venue Policy

Seven survey responses were received from stakeholders, most of whom were either corporate societies or class 4 venue holders. One late submission was received from an intervention service after stakeholder engagement closed. Officers have opted to include the feedback as it helps provide balanced feedback to inform this report. A summary of feedback can be found in appendix 1.

Key findings from the feedback received included:

- **43% of stakeholders indicated the policy is completely effective in achieving the intended objectives, the rest indicated it is somewhat effective.** Stakeholder feedback included:
 - The policy does balance all purposes of the Gambling Act
 - Your current policy is balanced

- Fine the way it is but don't need any more venues
 - Adopting a more restrictive policy is unlikely to reduce problem gambling
- **71% of stakeholders indicated that Council should continue to consider additional class 4 venues.** Stakeholder feedback included:
- We would not be opposed to a slightly more restrictive policy - that is a capped policy.
 - This Health NZ data clearly shows there is no correlation between sinking lid policies and a reduction in gambling-related harm.
 - Any reduction in the local gaming machine offering may have unintended consequences, as this may simply lead to a migration of the gambling spend to offshore internet- and mobile-based offerings
 - The Ashburton area has sufficient gaming machines to meet the requirements of those gambling
 - There are sufficient venues already
- **57% of stakeholders indicated that Council should allow relocations for existing venues.** Stakeholder feedback included"
- Council could consider a more flexible relocation clause. Possibly, the relocation provisions of the existing policy could be expanded to specifically include: -
 - relocations out of earthquake prone buildings to more suitable / stronger buildings;
 - relocations to more modern and refurbished buildings;
 - to allow venues to relocate in circumstances where landlords are demanding exorbitant rental fees
 - Venue relocation is a harm minimisation tool. If a venue wishes to relocate out of a high deprivation area to a lower deprivation area, the policy should permit this. There is no good policy reason for taking steps to restrict this option. Restricting the option to relocate simply entrenches venues in high deprivation locations.
- **Of the negative impacts derived from class 4 gambling, stakeholders indicated that financial hardship and mental health issues were the two most prevalent in the Ashburton District.**
- **Of the positive impacts derived from class 4 gambling, stakeholders indicated that community funding through grants and employment opportunities provided the greatest benefit to the Ashburton District.**
- **Two stakeholders provided additional feedback in the form of a written submission with the following additional points:**
- New Zealand's rate of problem gambling is low by international standards.

- If the policy was to be available for formal consultation, it would be requested that the limit of 5 machines for new venues be replaced with the national limit of 9 machines and a more comprehensive relocation policy be adopted.
- The 2021 TBS advisory report found that gambling in New Zealand had a net positive wellbeing benefit totalling around \$1.74b to \$2.16b per annum.

➤ **One late submission was received which provided the following feedback:**

- Class 4 gambling (pokies in pubs, clubs and TABs) is the most harmful form of gambling in Aotearoa.
- In 2023, \$7.3m was lost to pokies in the Ashburton District, an increase in previous years despite a drop in gaming machine numbers.
- It is estimated that 1 in 5 people in New Zealand will experience harm in their lifetime.
- Reports show that only 16% of potential clients for gambling support services actually access or present at these services.
- Sinking lid policies are one of the most effective policies for reducing pokie spending, resulting in a 13% reduction for districts that have one in place.
- Reports from the Ministry of Health reveal that pokies in the most deprived areas provide over half of the total Class 4 gambling expenditure.

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