

Gaming Machine Arrangements Review

Submission from:

Noble Park Football Social Club Ltd
V9310131

The Directors of the Noble Park Football Social Club (NPFSC) wholly endorse the position put forward by Community Clubs Victoria (CCV) in responding to the Department of Justice's Consultation Paper. We believe the CCV response represents a fair and objective overview of Victoria's not-for-profit clubs.

Since the Venue Operator Model (VOM) was introduced in 2012, NPFSC has been able to significantly increase our support of local sports, schools, charitable organisations and the wider community. This support is summarised later in this submission.

Notably, the VOM has enabled NPFSC to appoint a full-time Sports & Community Liaison Officer (SCLO) whose role it is to establish and maintain NPFSC's interaction with local schools and colleges; youth and community workers within the City of Greater Dandenong (CoGD); and Council recreational and sports staff. The SCLO also investigates and recommends to NPFSC Board, the provision of support (financial and/or services) for local schools; community; and charitable organisations. The work of our SCLO includes initiating and overseeing a number of school programs, which not only support increasing physical activity, but are designed to provide a wide range of other benefits including personal wellbeing and social accord.

Our SCLO has established an excellent relationship with CoGD sports, recreational and youth services departments. We have partnered with the CoGD's Youth Service, "Y-Stop", to appoint a trainer to work with key stake holders to provide opportunities for members to be engaged within the community. The relationship with Y-Stop has made available a development platform aimed at providing life skills for younger females to help them achieve their full potential at school, in sport and in life in general.

Without hesitation, we can state that without the additional revenues afforded by the VOM, NPFSC would not have been able to finance our SCLO. And the much needed support and local initiatives developed by NPFSC and our SCLO would not have ensued. It is also worth noting that much of the support NPFSC has provided to the wider community since 2012 would not have occurred because such support has not readily been forthcoming from local organisations or government bodies.

NPFSC has 2,140 social members who enjoy the facilities and services provided by the club. Our members enjoy discounted food and beverages in a safe, family friendly environment. Discounted food nights such as 'two for one meals' and 'children eat for free' have proven to be extremely popular not only with our members, but also with the wider community seeking an inexpensive dining experience and an enjoyable and safe night out.

In the past two years, we have renovated and extended the football and cricket clubs' change rooms, located next to our social club facility, at a total cost \$950,000. The change rooms are owned by the CoGD and although they contributed just over \$200,000 to the overall cost, had no plans to renovate the facility. The \$750,000 NPFSC contributed for this renovation and extension would not have been possible had the VOM not been introduced in 2012. The football and cricket clubs compete at elite levels of their sports (Eastern Football League and Victorian Sub-District Cricket) and would have continued to tolerate these third-rate facilities for many years, had they not been redeveloped by NPFSC.

We are currently evaluating a proposal to renovate and extend our current facilities to include construction of a new larger gaming room; a 'neighbourhood cafe'; extending our indoor children's playroom area; creating a relaxing lounge area; a function room; larger member's bar; and extensions to our car parking area, at an expected overall cost well in excess \$5 million.

Not only will an improved facility provide enhanced member amenities, it will likely make NPFSC a 'destination venue' for our community.

However these plans would be shelved if the club was unable to continue to operate gaming. And we would have to reduce our services to members. With a decline in revenue, food and beverage discounts for members and special discounted food nights available to the wider community would have to be reviewed and likely ceased.

Currently NPFSC employs thirty two (32) full and part-time staff. Our staff roster recognises each employee's personal requirements in terms of income and lifestyle. Should we be unable to continue with our gaming operation the total number of our staff would realistically reduce to only twelve (12) or possibly less, thus denying meaningful employment (full and part-time) for at least twenty (20) persons.

On a positive note however, should we continue with gaming and extend our facilities as proposed, we would likely employ at least an additional two (2) or three (3) FTE staff.

The level of support provided to the organisations and schools identified below would not have been possible without our gaming operating under the VOM. And we would have to severely curtail and reduce this support should we be unable to continue operating our gaming facility.

The charitable organisations, schools, clubs and other recipients listed here are only a snapshot of the overall community support provided by NPFSC during 2015.

Support has included significant cash donations to the following organisations and schools:

Springvale Multicultural Men's Shed; Noble Park CFA; Noble Park Football Club; Noble Park Community Centre Art Show; Harrisfield Hurricanes Soccer Club; Noble Park Cricket Club; Noble Park Juniors Football Club; Make a Wish Foundation; Noble Park Rotary Charity Golf Day; Noble Community Tennis Club; St. Kilda Mums; Noble Park Bowling Club; Bully Zero Australia; Noble Park FSC Social Golf Club; National Breast Cancer Foundation; Keysborough Freedom Club; Noble Park Rotary Club's Children's Imagination Library; Noble Park Anglers Club; Cancer Council Dream Team; Calypso Cricket Club; Very Special Kids; Wallarano Primary School; St. Anthony's Primary School; Springvale Heights and Springvale Rise Primary Schools; and Harrisfield Primary School.

NPFSC's on-going involvement with local schools in our community has also included managing a number of very successful 'Active After Schools' programs (e.g. tennis, golf, football, bowls) involving over 700 primary school students in total; the provision of much needed sporting equipment; and volunteers from NPFSC's affiliated clubs, which in turn has enabled schools to better administer their sports programs. Our SCLO has been instrumental in starting and managing these successful programs with the following schools:

Wallarano Primary School; Harrisfield Primary School; St. Anthony's Primary School; Yarraman Oaks Primary School; Dandenong West Primary School; Springvale Heights and Springvale Rise Primary Schools; and Noble Park Primary School.

Also in the past year NPFSC has provided on-going support and services to:

National Seniors; Probus Club of Sandown; Pink Ribbon Breakfast for Breast Cancer Research; Probus Club of Noble Park; Nissan 4WD Club; Noble Park Football Club; Noble Park FSC Business Club; Noble Park Bowling Club; Sudanese Australian Integrated Learning (SAIL); Noble Community Tennis Club; Noble Park Cricket Club; Keysborough Freedom Club; Noble Park Juniors Football Club; Noble Park FSC Social Golf Club; Harrisfield Hurricanes Soccer Club; and Noble Park Anglers Club.

In summary, the Directors of NPFSC are concerned that arrangements for the gaming environment post 2022 may change and severely impact our business to such an extent, that we would be unable to continue to provide meaningful support to our members; the local sporting community; charitable organisations; and the wider community.

In particular, should we be unable to continue to operate gaming, the financial support we currently provide to our affiliated sporting clubs and the community would revert to the pre-1990's. We would immediately see a decline in the affiliated sporting clubs' memberships and their support. This would have a domino effect where, with no income from gaming, NPFSC would struggle to remain financially viable and unable to support our community at the levels we have over the past few years.

We believe not-for-profit clubs with gaming, must have a stable gaming environment to remain viable in the future and it is important that the costs and tenure be reasonable and reflect the substantial investments already made by these clubs. For NPFSC to undertake our proposed \$5 million plus facility development we need to be operating in a stable gaming environment and have sufficient tenure to enable us to satisfy the requirements of both our bank and our landlords, the CoGD.

Finally, with all this in mind, we firmly believe there must be a logical and reasonable approach to gaming by the State Government that will allow present clubs with gaming to proceed confidently toward and beyond 2022. We need to be able to move forward with the knowledge and reassurance that existing conditions will be maintained or expectantly improved, in recognition of the valuable work achieved over the years by the not-for-profit club industry in Victoria and in particular, progressive clubs such as NPFSC.

This submission prepared by:

Barry Bradshaw
President / Nominee
Noble Park Football Social Club Ltd
Moodemere Street
Noble Park