Proposed Gambling Venues Policy 2026

Summary of Information

Consultation under the Special Consultative Procedure | 29 October – 29 November 2026

Prepared in accordance with the requirements of section 83 of the Local Government Act 2002

Have your say on our proposed Gambling Venues Policy 2026

We're reviewing our Gambling Venues Policy and we'd like to hear from you. We propose to:

- keep our "sinking lid" on pokie venues (class 4) and;
- add one new rule: **no new TAB venues**.

We're not proposing any other significant changes.

The policy decides whether new gambling venues can open in the District and where. Your feedback helps us make sure it reflects what matters to our community.

Key dates

Submissions open	Thursday 29 October 2026
Submissions close	Sunday 29 November 2026
Verbal submissions to Councillors	17th February 2027
Councillors decide on the policy	2027 (date to be confirmed)

What we're proposing

1. Keep the sinking lid

A sinking lid means no new venues or machines, so numbers may fall over time. We'll keep refusing consent for:

- new pokie (class 4) venues
- extra gaming machines at any venue
- venues moving to new premises

2. New: no TAB venues

We won't grant consent for any new stand-alone TAB venue in Tasman District.

There are no stand-alone TAB venues in the District now, but our current policy still lets us consider applications for them. Refusing consent makes our approach consistent with our sinking lid on pokies.

Club mergers. The 2019 policy says club mergers involving gaming machine licences aren't permitted. We no longer repeat that, because refusing consent for additional gaming machines already covers it: clubs can merge, but we won't approve any increase in machines.

Options we considered

Option 1: Keep the existing sinking lid — In our proposal

Advantages

- Continues the gradual fall in venue and machine numbers
- Fits our aim of reducing gambling harm
- Clear and easy to administer
- Generally supported by community feedback, public health stakeholders and elected members

Disadvantages

- Gives existing venue operators limited flexibility
- May gradually reduce community grant funding – but at present community grants are increasing

Option 2: Let existing venues move — Not proposed

Advantages

- Gives flexibility where premises become unsuitable or need redevelopment
- Responds to requests from some gambling sector stakeholders

Disadvantages

- Makes the policy more complex
- May weaken the sinking lid
- May move gambling around rather than reduce it
- Not supported by public health and community wellbeing agencies

Option 3: No new TAB venues — In our proposal

Advantages

- Consistent approach across all venue-based gambling
- Avoids future growth in gambling venues
- Fits our aim of reducing gambling harm
- Reflects that no stand-alone TAB venues operate in the District

Disadvantages

- Removes TAB New Zealand's future ability to set up a stand-alone venue in the District

We also looked at other options too: allowing new gambling venues, capping venue or machine numbers, and deciding TAB venue applications case by case. We didn't take these further because they would allow future growth in venue-based gambling, respond less strongly to gambling harm than the current policy, or add complexity and uncertainty.

Our preferred approach is options 1 and 3. On balance, the evidence we reviewed, community feedback, stakeholder engagement and elected member discussions did not show a compelling case for relaxing existing controls.

How to have your say

Submissions close **Sunday 29 November 2026**. Tell us what you think about:

- keeping the sinking lid on pokie venues and gaming machines (no new venues, no extra machines, no venue moves)
- refusing consent for any new stand-alone TAB venue in the District
- anything else about how venue-based gambling should be managed in our District

Send us your submission

Online	Shape Tasman: Gambling Venue Policy Review | Shape Tasman
Post	Tasman District Council, Private Bag 4, Richmond 7050, addressed to *Gambling Venues Policy – Community Policy*
Deliver	Any of our offices: • Golden Bay, 78 Commercial Street, Tākaka 7142 • Motueka, 7 Hickmott Place, Motueka 7143 • Murchison, 92 Fairfax Street, Murchison 7007 • Richmond, 189 Queen Street, Richmond 7050
Email	haveyoursay@tasman.govt.nz, with the subject *Gambling Venues Policy*

Making your submission count

- Include your name, address, phone number and email address.
- **Tell us if you'd like to present your views to Councillors in person**. You can speak or use New Zealand Sign Language, and we'll contact you to confirm the time, date and venue.
- We'll make submissions available to the Mayor, Councillors and the public after submissions close, with contact details removed. Councillors will consider every submission before deciding whether to adopt the policy.

You can read the Statement of Proposal – Draft Gambling Venues Policy 2026, the Summary of Information and the Submission Form (this document) on Shape Tasman and at our offices during normal opening hours.

More about the policy

Why we're reviewing it

We've combined our pokie (class 4) and TAB venue policies into one Gambling Venues Policy. The Gambling Act 2003 requires us to have a policy on pokie venues, and the Racing Industry Act 2020 requires one on TAB venues. Both Acts require us to review the policy every three years and to consider the social impact of gambling in the District.

Our review began in 2025. We looked at legislation, gambling research, local trends and the social impact of gambling: participation and harm, community wellbeing, where venues are, community grants and effects on communities. We heard from gaming societies, venue operators, public health organisations, community groups and the wider community, and held elected member discussions. The Online Casino Gambling Act 2026 now sets rules for online casino gambling by New Zealanders, which is outside this review.

What the policy covers

The policy covers **class 4 gambling venues** ("pokie" venues, which have gaming machines) and **TAB New Zealand venues** (betting venues run by the national racing and sports betting operator). It doesn't cover casinos, Lotto outlets, online gambling, venue opening hours, or how gaming societies allocate grants.

Our role is limited. We decide whether venues can increase their gaming machines, whether new venues can be set up, and where venue-based gambling can go in the District.

How things stand

We adopted the current policy in 2019. Its sinking lid means no new class 4 venues, no additional gaming machines, no venue moves, and no club mergers involving gaming machine licences. Since then, pokie venues in the District have fallen from 13 to nine and gaming machines from 166 to 129.

Under the Gambling Act 2003 **40%** of gaming machine profits must be returned to the community as grants. These grants are distributed nationally and support local and national charities, clubs and community organisations.

The remaining profits go towards government levies and duties, venue costs, and the operating expenses of the corporate society.

At present approximately **20%** of pokie machine profits are returned to Tasman District in the form of direct community grants.

Need support? If gambling is affecting you or someone close to you, the free Gambling Helpline is available 24/7 on **0800 654 655** (gamblinghelpline.co.nz).

Questions, or need this document in a different format? Call us on 03 543 8400 or email info@tasman.govt.nz and we'll do our best to help.