



**ACT**  
Government



# Social impact assessments

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## Purpose of the document

The objective of the Social Impact Assessment Guidelines (the **guidelines**) is to ensure that potential social and economic impacts of the operation of gaming machines are robustly considered in Social Impact Assessments (**SIA**). These guidelines will assist applicants with preparing a SIA that meets legislative requirements and helps frame the consideration of community needs.

The guidelines should be read in conjunction with the *Gaming Machine Act 2004* (the **Act**) and the *Gaming Machine Regulation 2004* (the **Regulation**).

## Target Audience

These guidelines are aimed at supporting gaming machine licensees and the community in understanding the preparation of and consideration of SIAs.

## What is a Social Impact Assessment?

A SIA is a systematic approach to predicting and managing the potential positive and negative social and economic impacts on individuals, groups and communities resulting from changes arising from the operation of gaming machines under a proposed authorisation certificate<sup>1</sup> or proposed amendment to an authorisation certificate.

It considers the intended and unintended consequences of the proposal across a whole range of impacts, including health and wellbeing, capacity of individuals to engage in economic development, the cohesion of local communities and the impact on community services.

The SIA for an application will be available for inspection by members of the public at a stated premises and on the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission (the **Commission**) website.

## When is a Social Impact Assessment needed?

A SIA is required for the following:

- an authorisation certificate application<sup>2</sup>;
- an authorisation certificate amendment application seeking relocation of gaming machines operations to a new premises in another suburb<sup>3</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> An authorisation certificate is granted by the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission under section 23 of the *Gaming Machine Act 2004* and authorises a gaming machine licensee to have a maximum number of gaming machines at a stated premises.

<sup>2</sup> Section 21 of the *Gaming Machine Act 2004*.

<sup>3</sup> Section 33(1)(b) of the *Gaming Machine Act 2004*.

- an authorisation certificate amendment application to increase the maximum number of authorisations under the authorisation certificate<sup>4</sup>; and
- an application for an in-principle authorisation certificate<sup>5</sup>.

These applications must be submitted with a SIA.

## Content of a Social Impact Assessment

### General requirements that must be satisfied

A SIA must provide an objective analysis<sup>6</sup> of the likely economic and social impacts of the operation of gaming machines under the proposed authorisation certificate, the authorisation certificate as proposed to be amended or the in-principle authorisation certificate. The assessment must identify and provide an analysis of the positive aspects or benefits of the gaming machine proposal, for example monetary or in-kind contributions to community programs or organisations, as well as negative aspects or detriments of the proposal, for example potential propensity for gambling harm suffered by vulnerable community members.

All statements and material included in the SIA must be based on identifiable factual information.<sup>7</sup> The sources must be clearly identified in the SIA.

### Information to be given

A SIA provided to the Commission must identify entitles and institutions such as nearby residents, shops, businesses, schools, places of worship etc. in the local community<sup>8</sup> and broader Canberra community which may be affected by the proposal. The location of affected entitles and institutions within the local community must be marked on a map and provided in the SIA.

In addition, to the extent the information is available a SIA must include:

- the number and location of existing gambling outlets in the local community. This information can be obtained from the Commission website<sup>9</sup>;

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<sup>4</sup> Section 33(1)(c) of the *Gaming Machine Act* 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Section 38B of the *Gaming Machine Act* 2004.

<sup>6</sup> An analysis that is free from any direct subjective influences resulting from human experience, interpretation, or bias.

<sup>7</sup> Examples include Australian Bureau of Statistics publications, ACT Gambling and Racing Commission reports or peer reviewed journal articles.

<sup>8</sup> Regulation 9 of the *Gaming Machine Regulation* 2004 provides that 'local community' for a SIA means the community within 3 km of the relevant premises.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gamblingandracing.act.gov.au/industry/gaming-machines>

- demographic information about the local community including, but not limit to, the number of adults and average incomes; and
- the expected gaming machine revenue<sup>10</sup> and community contributions<sup>11</sup> for the next 3 years if the application is approved.

It is also sensible for an applicant to engage in consultation with key stakeholders (including the local community) regarding their proposal and provide the results in the SIA. This can guide the applicant to better define the positive contributions to the community and mitigate any risks or detriments identified.

The Commission may at any time request additional information not provided as part of the SIA, for example current peak gaming machine usage rates or evidence of future expansion plans to assist in making a decision. Licensees should provide the Commission with all substantive information which may be relevant to the decision in the SIA.

### Matters to be addressed – Analysis

A SIA must include an objective analysis of the proposal and how it will affect the existing level of gaming activity being conducted in the local community. Consideration must be given to the current and projected demographics of the local community (including rate of population growth, age and average income of people living in the local community) and how they may be impacted of the proposal. Data to assist in the analysis can be obtained from the *Australian Bureau of Statistics*.

The SIA must address the positive economic and social aspects or benefits and negative economic and social aspects or detriments of the gaming machine proposal to the local community and broader Canberra community. Additionally, the applicant must provide an analysis of the likely overall net economic and social impact of the gaming machine proposal.

The SIA must also specifically address the gambling harm minimisation measures proposed to be taken.

### Positive economic and social aspects or benefits

The SIA must address the positive economic and social aspects or benefits of the gaming machine proposal.

Positive economic and social aspects or benefits may include, but are not limited to:

- investment in, or expansion of, infrastructure which can be used by the local community such as sporting fields, community centres or restaurants;
- additional community contributions being made to organisations within the local community;

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<sup>10</sup> Gaming machine revenue means all expected revenue derived from the operation of gaming machines.

<sup>11</sup> Community contribution means a contribution made by a gaming machine licensee that is approved as a community contribution under section 164 of the *Gaming Machine Act 2004*.

- increased patronage of nearby businesses created by those visiting the premises will stimulate the local economy;
- increase employment opportunities available to local community or the broader Canberra community; and
- provide structured opportunities for members of the community to socialise and engage with their peers.

### Negative economic and social aspects or detriments

The SIA must address the negative economic and social aspects or detriments of the gaming machine proposal<sup>12</sup>. Negative economic and social aspects or detriments may include but are not limited to:

- potential gambling related harm to people within local community caused by additional gaming machines in the area.;
- greater potential for antisocial behaviour caused by addition of a premises of more gaming machines in the local area;
- inadequacy of current community infrastructure in the local area, for example, carparks, which may impact patronage by clients of local businesses.

The SIA should indicate what harm minimisation measures will be taken to address the identified negative economic and social aspects or detriments.

### Gambling harm minimisation measures proposed to be taken

The SIA must address the gambling harm minimisation measures proposed to be taken. Examples of harm minimisations measures which may be taken include, but are not limited to:

- undertaking to exceed the legislated harm minimisation requirements, for example by: introducing mandatory breaks in play; engaging a third party to monitor problem gambling in the venue; and introducing pre-commitment;
- undertaking to make contributions to organisations which assist in preventing gambling harm or treat those that have suffered gambling harm.
- engaging in ongoing communication with community groups and community leaders; and
- providing better avenues within the venue and in the local area by which problem gamblers can seek assistance.

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<sup>12</sup> Peer reviewed journal articles as well as gambling research or reports commissioned by gambling regulators such as the report *Gambling Expenditure in the ACT* (2014) can assist in clarifying and analysing the community risk profile and potential negative social aspects or detriment related to gambling.