Camden Residents' Action Group

Incorporated

Camden – Still a Country Town

Website: http://www.crag.org.au/
Face Book: https://www.facebook.com/CRAG-Camden-Residents-Action-Group-Inc-1805705173088888/

PO Box 188
Camden NSW 2570
Email: admin@crag.org.au
Ph: 0415 617 368
31 October 2026

Liquor and Gaming NSW
GPO Box 7060
Sydney NSW 2001

RE: Macarthur FC Sport and Recreation Club Ltd
Oran Park Sports Club
2 Mack Place, Oran Park 2570
Application: 150 EGMs
APP: 0016753984

Camden Residents' Action Group opposes this application for 150 electronic gaming machines (EGMs).

We dispute the claim of that poker machines in a yet to be established club will result in a positive community contribution (Local Impact Assessment, Section 6). Whilst there may be potential benefit in promoting soccer for boys and girls, the costs to community are well established.

The social costs, particularly for vulnerable residents and families, need to be weighed against the claimed benefits of the proposal. Poker machines are not simply another form of entertainment. They are a form of gambling associated with financial hardship, psychological distress, relationship breakdown and harm to family members, including children.

A 2024 NSW Gambling Survey[1] found that gambling participation had not reduced, that EGMs were the source of most gambling harm in NSW with 20% of survey respondents having experienced gambling harm, including harm resulting from another person's gambling.

[1] Browne M, Russell AMT, Dellosa G, Rockloff M and Hing N 2024 *NSW Gambling Survey 2024,* Central Queensland University. Commissioned by the NSW Responsible Gambling Fund. Available at

The NSW Audit Office[2] in June 2025 also referred to this gambling survey and further reported:

- Gaming machines generated more than $8.4 billion in profits for NSW clubs and hotels in 2023–24, representing money lost by patrons.

- Gaming machines accounted for more than half of the estimated gambling harm experienced by gamblers in NSW.

In a 2017 study[3], an analysis of data from 42 studies from 1994 to 2015 commissioned by state and territory governments to measure the levels of gambling consumption and gambling-related harm found:

.

- Australia had more poker machines per person than any country in the world, excluding casino-tourism destinations like Macau and Monaco. It had nearly 200,000 machines – one for every 114 people;

- the losses by Australians on pokies outside of casinos dwarf those of any other comparable country. They are 2.4 times greater than those of our nearest rival, Italy. Australians lose three times more than New Zealanders, 4.1 times more than Canadians, 6.4 times more than the Irish, 7.5 times more than the British, and 9.8 times more than Americans;

- poker machine losses per adult in New South Wales have remained around 50% higher than the national average.

These findings demonstrate that the potential consequences extend well beyond the individual sitting at a poker machine. They can affect household budgets, housing security, family relationships, mental wellbeing and children's living conditions.

We also seriously question the relevance of complying with s37A of the Gaming Machines Act and the nominated local community of Oran Park SA2 (LIA, Section 4) in relation to assessing local impact. Such compliance does not indicate anything about the likely catchment of the proposed club and the availability of existing gaming-machine venues throughout the surrounding Macarthur area.

---

https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/-/media/nsw-gambling-survey-2024-report.ashx?rev=94d18ccb266b434e9c8f9e391ea1cf1b

[2] NSW Audit Office 12 June 2025 *Regulation of gaming machines* Available at https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/regulation-of-gaming-machines

[3] Young M and Markham F (2017) *Three charts on: Australia's addiction to poker machines* The Conversation 27 June 2017 Available at http://theconversation.com/three-charts-on-australias-addiction-to-poker-machines-78353

Local impact assessment limited to an isolated "suburb" from a social cost perspective raises a number of questions:

- What demonstrated unmet community need would the 150 machines satisfy?
- Has the applicant established that the existing supply of gaming machines is inadequate?
- Would the proposal primarily generate new gambling expenditure, or divert expenditure from existing venues?
- What assessment has been made of the additional gambling harm that could result from introducing another 150 machines?
- Why should the community accept the potential additional social costs when gambling facilities are already available elsewhere in the area?

There are many registered clubs and hotels within easy reach of Oran Park. The Oran Park proposal would not be filling a geographical gap where residents have no access to existing club facilities. This application if approved would add another substantial gambling facility to a local area already more than sufficiently served by established venues.

The Local Impact Assessment (Section 3) claims that Oran Park is a relatively socio-economically advantaged area, but the risk factors listed do not seem to support that, particularly given the percentage of mortgagee and renting households.

A recent ANU study[4] which examined NSW gaming machine and domestic violence data between 2017 and 2023, identified a clear association between EGM density and police-recorded domestic violence rates, independent of geographical and other contextual factors. The report also identifies the substantial consequences of gambling harm for families, including financial abuse, coercive control, family conflict, relationship breakdown and adverse impacts on children. These consequences extend well beyond the individual gambling participant and affect the wider community. The researchers recommend that their findings inform gaming machine licensing decisions and standardised social impact assessments. We submit that this application does not, or has not been required to, adequately address the social impact.

In light of authoritative research findings, the proposal to introduce 150 additional poker machines at Oran Park should not be considered simply as an expansion of club facilities. It

[4] Suomi, A., Perry, J., Rehill, P., Boxall, H., Rees, S., & Noble-Carr, D., & Cowlishaw, S. (2025). *Family and domestic violence and gambling harm in NSW*. Australian National University. Canberra. Available at https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/-/media/family-and-domestic-violence-and-gambling-harm-in-nsw---developing-the-evidence-base-report.ashx?rev=084fe3d4690348169580f0dbf2e7d6c8

represents a substantial increase in gambling availability with potentially significant consequences for the surrounding residential community.

The Local Impact Assessment should address the cumulative concentration of existing and proposed gaming machines, the socioeconomic characteristics of the surrounding population, potential impacts on families and children, and the capacity of local gambling support and domestic violence services. Approval without adequately addressing these matters would be difficult to reconcile with the research and the stated NSW policy objective of reducing gambling-related harm.

The community cannot rely on general assurances of responsible conduct of gambling and harm minimisation (LIA, Section 5). Reference to a Gaming Plan of Management without providing any detail provides little comfort.

The harm caused by poker machines is well-documented and is clearly not managed by the operators of clubs and hotels with EGMs. The social consequences and burden of harm are borne by individuals, their families and the wider community.

In summary, and as corroborated by research we see only harm resulting from the introduction of more EGMs into the Camden LGA and Oran Park specifically. The community does not suffer from any lack of access to club-like facilities and services.

We have explained why no net benefit to the community has been demonstrated through the Local Impact Assessment. We see nothing but detriment to families and community welfare. We urge the Liquor and Gaming NSW to reject the application on behalf of the community.

Yours sincerely,

Glenda Davis



President