

Local Decisions About Gaming Machines

Background

Every territorial local authority in New Zealand is required, under the Gambling Act 2003 and the Racing Act 2003, to adopt a policy on the location of Class 4 ('pokie' machine) gambling, and to complete a review of these policies at least every three years. Results from the Health Sponsorship Council's (HSC's) *2006/07 Gaming and Betting Activities Survey (GBAS)* show New Zealanders' knowledge about, and satisfaction with, the decisions made about gaming machines in their area.

Research Details

Methodology

All adult respondents (n=1,774) were asked how satisfied they were (out of five responses from very satisfied to very dissatisfied) with the decisions on gaming machines (pokies) in their area. They were then asked for the reason that they were satisfied or dissatisfied, and whether they knew who was responsible for local decisions about gaming machines. These responses were collected verbatim and then each recurring point or theme was identified as a code, with all answers falling sufficiently close to that point or theme being assigned to the code.

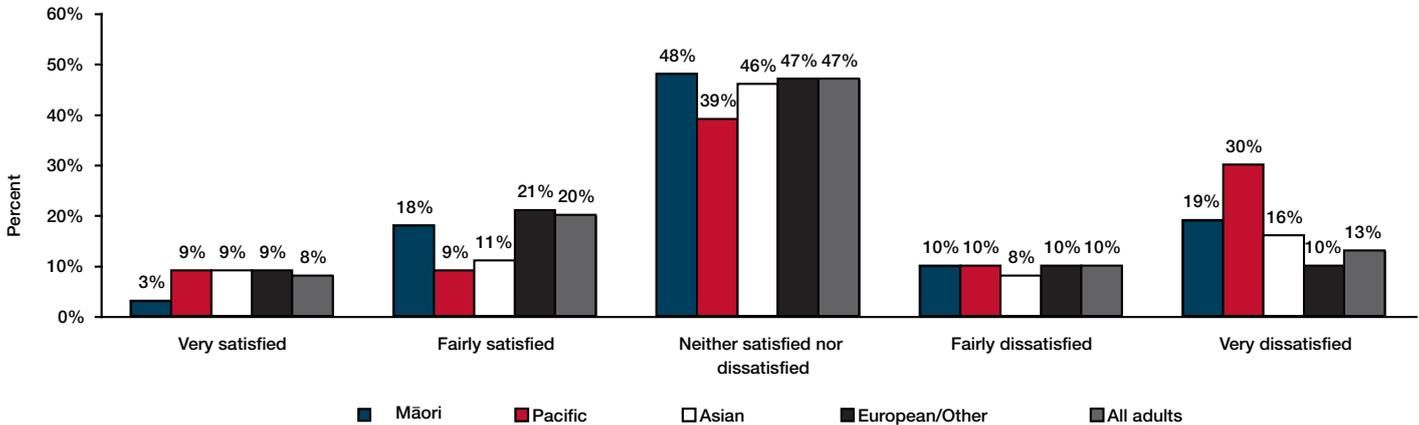
Detailed Findings

Satisfaction with Local Gaming Machine Decisions

- Just over one-quarter (28%) of respondents said that they were satisfied with the decisions made about gaming machines in their area, with 8% saying they were very satisfied. Just over one-fifth (22%) of adults were dissatisfied, with 13% saying they were very dissatisfied. Almost one-half (47%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- Pacific peoples were more likely than people of all other ethnicities to feel dissatisfied with the decisions, while those of European/Other ethnicities were most likely to feel satisfied.
- People living in the most deprived areas were less likely to feel satisfied with decisions about gaming machines in their area, compared with people in other areas.

Local Decisions About Gaming Machines (continued)

Figure 1: How satisfied are you with the decisions on pokies in your area?



Reasons for (Dis)satisfaction

- Of respondents who were satisfied with the decisions made about gaming machines in their area, the most common reasons were that there were **few or limited** numbers of pokies (18%), **no pokies** (12%) or a **sufficient number** (11%) in their area. Around one in 10 (11%) respondents felt that the gaming machines did not cause harm.
- Of those who were dissatisfied about the decisions in their area, the top two reasons were that there were too many machines (27%) or that the person was opposed to gambling and did not want any machines around (27%). Other main concerns were that gambling was being encouraged (20%) and that people would experience negative effects due to gambling (12%).
- Māori were more likely (40%) to feel that there were too many machines. Asian peoples were more likely to say that they were anti-gambling (39%), and Pacific peoples were the most likely to be concerned about possible negative effects, such as addiction or financial trouble, on gamblers.

Local Decisions About Gaming Machines (continued)

Table 1: Top reasons for satisfaction with gaming machine decisions

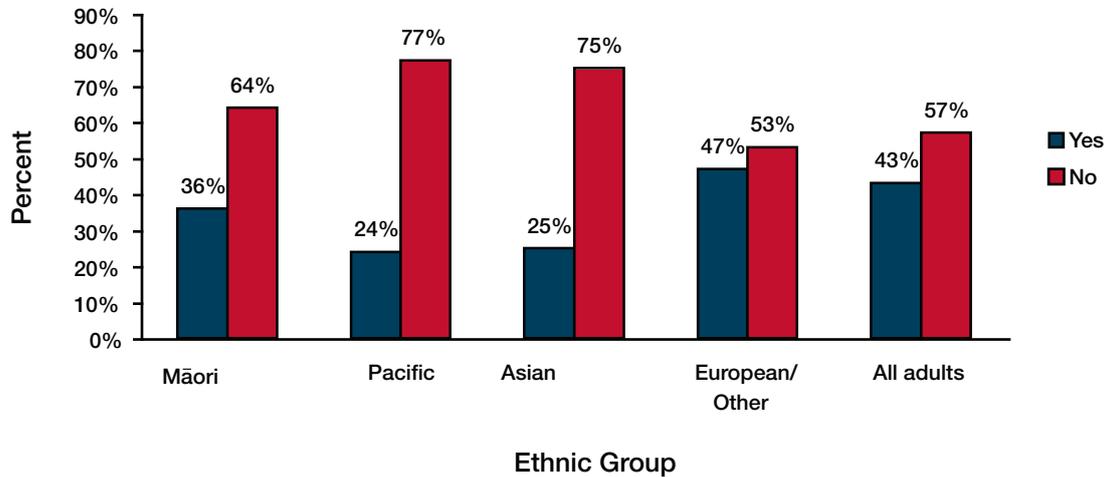
	Māori	Pacific	Asian	Euro/Other	Everyone
Limited number of pokies	13%	17%	39%	17%	18%
No pokies	2%	30%	16%	12%	12%
Sufficient number of pokies	23%	5%	6%	10%	11%
Pokies cause no harm	6%	7%	6%	12%	11%

Responsibility for decisions about gaming machines

- Around two in five (43%) respondents said that they knew who was responsible for decisions on gaming machines in their area, while 57% said that they did not know.
- Adults of European/Other ethnicities were more likely (47%) to say that they knew who made the decisions, while Pacific (24%) and Asian (25%) peoples were least likely to say they knew.
- Of respondents who said that they knew who made the decisions (n=661), over three-fifths (62%) said that their local government or council made the decisions. The next most commonly mentioned organisation, by 15% of those asked, was central government (including MPs and unspecified government departments). Other commonly mentioned organisations were the Department of Internal Affairs (9%), a gaming authority, board or trust (9%) and the Lotteries Commission (6%).
- Out of all the adult respondents (not just those who said they knew who made the decisions on gaming machines), just over one in four (27%) said correctly that they knew the local government or council made the decisions.

Local Decisions About Gaming Machines (continued)

Figure 2: Do you know who is responsible for deciding whether places in your area can start operating gaming machines, and for deciding whether existing places can add more machines?



About the Survey

- The findings provide a ‘benchmark’ for developing and evaluating public health initiatives. The survey contributes to New Zealand’s public health approach to addressing gambling harm.
- The GBAS is a nationwide face-to-face survey of 1,774 adult New Zealand residents aged 18 years and over. The survey also included a sample of 199 young people aged 15 to 17 years, resulting in 1,973 people taking part in the survey.
- The sample, with a response rate of 66.3%, included 876 people of European/Other ethnicities, 495 Māori, 267 Pacific peoples and 335 Asian people.
- The data have been adjusted (weighted) to ensure they are representative of the New Zealand population.
- A full description of the 2006/07 GBAS survey methodology and full report can be found online at www.hsc.org.nz/researchpublications.html

The HSC is a crown entity that uses health promotion initiatives to promote health and encourage healthy lifestyles, with a long-term focus on reducing the social, financial and health costs of a number of health behaviours.

Citation

Gray, R. (2010). *Local Decisions about Gaming Machines* [In Fact]. Wellington: Health Sponsorship Council.

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April 2011