

West Auckland Local Community Business Gaming Review  
Glen Eden  
Waitakere City

In April of 2007 a number of business managers (or representatives of the business) in the Glen Eden (Auckland) area were approached to participate in a survey around the impacts they felt had occurred as the result of gaming venues being placed in their community.

**Rational**

To create a beginning study indicating what positive or negative changes local business had seen in the community that they attributed to gaming venues placement in their area. Nationally little or no community study or research has been done on the subject since the introduction of community electronic gaming. It is hoped this research would contribute to the knowledge base around gaming in the community.

**Limitations of research.**

The research is an initial pilot study. Findings from the survey indicate more research is valid, particularly from the town planning and public health perspective with regard to the community placement of electronic gaming and vendor host and public responsibility. Validation of these research findings could be achieved by extension and replication of research.

**Issues around the pilot research**

Of those businesses approached approximately half participated in the research. Constraints given were not enough time to do it or were not prepared to comment. There are approximately 100 small businesses in the area and not all businesses were asked to participate. All businesses in the GlenMall strip were approached. Eleven businesses participated. Of those 11 one business was not included in the findings because of a conflict in interest with gaming revenue that was later established. The other ten stated they had no direct or indirect financial interest in gaming.

The median time period that people had operated businesses in the Glen Eden area was 11yrs. From this perspective they were more qualified to comment on community change because of their length of time in the area (as opposed to a short term business owner who may not have able to comment on changes over time).

**Extent of gambling facilities in the Glen Eden community area.**

Glen Eden has a number of Lotto/Keno outlets. It has three electronic machine outlets: two facilities: an eighteen machine facility and a nine machine facility are in GlenMall. The other nine machines are in an RSA club adjacent to Glen Mall.

**Construction of the questioner.**

The survey consisted of ten questions designed to capture the length of time the person had been in the area as a business person and to capture their observations: positive or negative: around gaming in their area from a perspective external to the industry.

**Results from Questioner.**

All commented they had seen change in the area since non casino gaming had been introduced.

**Response to whether the changes seen were positive or negative.**

On the positive side; most, but not all, were aware a percentage from gambling profits came back into the general community. The RSA, its local social service delivery and the work of their welfare officer was singled out and acknowledged by three long term business owners as being especially relevant to the local community.

Most said they were aware a transfer of wealth out of the area was occurring through gambling but could not say how much. All felt most comfortable in addressing behaviors and community change they had noted and contributed to the placement of community gaming in their area.

Negative comments were directed at electronic gaming facilities directly in the Glen Eden Mall. By far the majority view was localized gambling had brought disruption, unwanted threat and hardship to the community. These views were completely focused on the two electronic machine venues in Glen Eden Mall (because of their high visual impact and the fact that other people had to go about their day to day business around them). No critique of the RSA or Lotto/keno shops was offered by any business representative. The reason why there was no critique offered against electronic gaming in the RSA was given as it was club run, strict codes of conduct were applied and strictly controlled, it was away from the business hub and did not interfere with the rest of the community (2 business owners). One business owner said it was not gambling that had brought unwanted behavior but it was placing an alcohol venue/bar in the middle of the Mall and then expecting the general population to cope with negative behavior arising from it.

**Specific behavior local business people saw and experience are:**

Begging (people begging on the streets for money then going back inside the facilities after they got some money) Child neglect (children/babies left in cars while parent/caregiver inside). Fighting (people fighting outside facilities). Domestic violence = (Male Female fights outside venues). Community nuisance: people standing outside the venues smoking/loitering. Community threat (people feeling unsafe walking past venues). Males urinating in Mall after leaving facilities. Intimidation (shop owners and general public feeling intimidated by people standing around or activities going on around the bar). Parking being used up. Nuisance or criminal behavior not monitored by police (Police can't be there all the time and people have given up phoning them).

**General effect on Glen Eden Business**

None of the behaviors mentioned were wanted by business owners. All felt public threat had been introduced from having the bar or machines in GlenMall. Many said this had changed the people who came to GlenMall over time. Some felt people spent less money

in longer term bigger spend items and more money on short term disposable items such as gambling/alcohol/fast food.

**Trends over time.**

Over half of long term business owners believed GlenEden had suffered as the result of gaming venues; (specifically electronic gaming) being introduced to the area. The major concerns were unwanted behaviors and threats arising from the location of the venues and the general public's reaction to that. Most believed this had contributed to people shopping less in the area. Issues of safety and personal comfort and intimidation were consistently flagged by business owners. Many believed this had contributed to the general public going to larger Malls because of the security and added safety features.

**Answers or solutions set out by the business people.**

Most interviewed believed the locations of the venues was inappropriate. Reasons given for this was they had high visual impact and had brought undue harm to the business and general community because of the conflict of intention of use for the Glen Eden and GlenMall area. Most felt an unwanted imposition had been placed on shoppers (which is the primary businesses of Glen Eden) by the introduction of electronic gaming or a bar which had a detrimental effect on the community and culture of Glen Eden.

Three owners independently suggested shifting the electronic gaming venues to commercial or industrial zones would achieve clarity and solve the community issue that presented them: IE: those who wanted to enjoy the shopping and community of Glen Eden could and those who chose to gamble could without causing stress on others day to day living.

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