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The Concord Community Club

Local Impact Assessment – Increased Gaming Machine Entitlements

Executive summary

The Croatian Club has purchased the premises of the former Concord RSL Club and plans to reopen this as the Concord Community Club ("the club") under council approved development application DA 2022/0223 for the refurbishment and extension of Club located at 1 Nullawarra Ave Concord in Majors Bay Reserve, Concord. The club is in a Band 1 SA2 area.

The club is defined as a new club, and a Class 1 Local Impact Assessment has been completed to support the application for gaming machine entitlements.

The Concord RSL Club ceased operating in 2019 and is undergoing extensive renovations before reopening as The Concord Community Club mid-2024. The renovated club will provide family-oriented facilities and activities such as dining, live entertainment, children's play areas, local markets, and exhibition spaces for local artists, in addition to gaming machines.

The club originally proposed to apply for entitlements to operate 100 gaming machines, but in response to community consultation has reduced this to 36 entitlements. This entitlement will be reviewed once the club has been operating for a period. Should they wish to apply for additional entitlements further community consultation will occur.

These proposed 36 gaming machines will be housed in a 180m² gaming room which makes up a very small portion of the 2970m² underroof club area and 5470m² total club space including external space.

The current gaming entitlement for the club is zero, and this application is to increase this entitlement to 36. The Concord RSL Club was operating with 46 gaming machines which the Board of The Concord have disclosed were transferred to a venue that operates out of the area. The current application for 36 entitlements is fewer than previously operated at the premises.

Should this entitlement be granted, the club will provide a benefit to the community of around \$1,890,000 over 5 years. This is in addition to the provision of facilities such as dining, live music

venue, entertainment for families, and function area that are not currently available and which will contribute to a sense of community.

The club has a current liquor licence number LIQC330019641 which became operational on 23 May 2023. Allowable operating hours under that licence are:

Monday : 11am – 10pm

Tuesday: 11am – 11pm

Wednesday: 11am – 11pm

Thursday: 11.am – 11pm

Friday: 11am – 12 midnight

Saturday: 11am – 12 midnight

Sunday: 11am- 10pm

with a gaming machine shutdown period from 4am – 10am each day.

The club has been consulting with representatives of the City of Canada Bay Council and is considering an application for increased operational hours to allow the club to support council events, provide a suitable live music venue, and provide breakfast for residents making use of the facilities at Majors Bay Reserve. This will be subject to further consultation.

Gaming machine shut down periods will operate at all times. The club is putting in place a Gaming Plan of Management that exceeds legislative requirements and takes a proactive approach to identifying and managing problem gambling.

The following data and information, including results of community consultation, is provided in support of the club's application for gaming machine threshold increase. It details community demographics, the community consultation undertaken, and the benefit that will be provided to the community.

The Concord Community Club

The Concord Community Club will operate under the auspices of The Croatian Club Ltd, under liquor (club) licence number LIQC330019641, which commenced 23 May 2023.

The club is located in statistical area Concord–Mortlake–Cabarita, and City of Canada Bay Council local government area.

They currently have zero gaming machine entitlements and are applying for a total of 36.

The Club

The Concord Community Club is currently not operating. As the Concord RSL Club it closed in 2019 and is undergoing extensive renovation prior to reopening mid 2024 as The Concord Community Club, under the auspices of The Croatia Club.

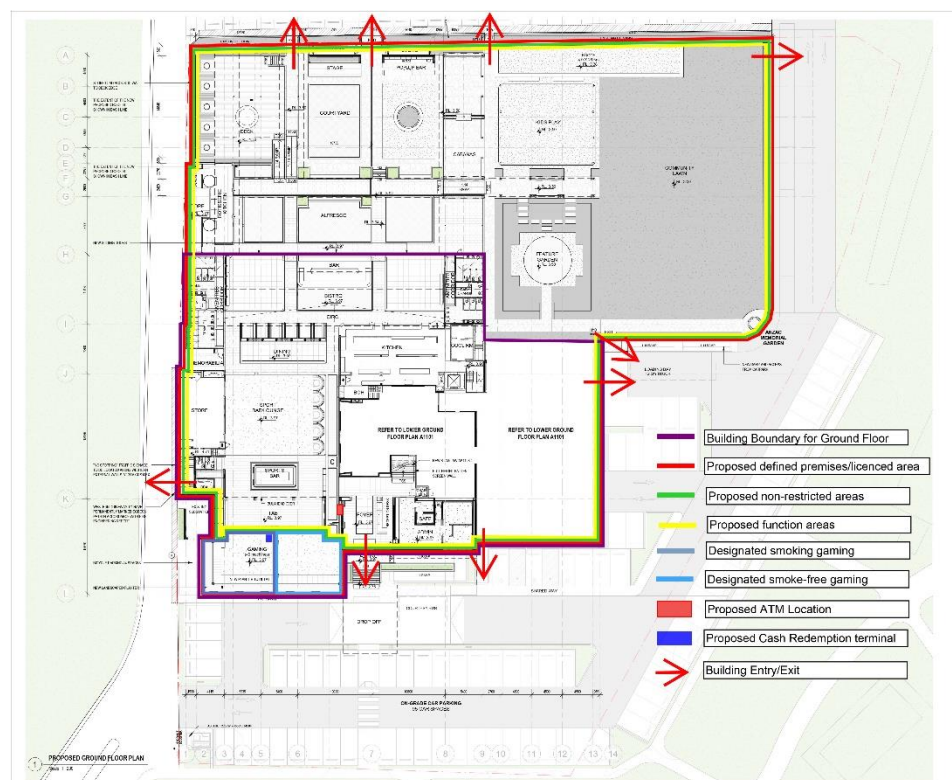
The Croatian Club originally opened in Surry Hills in 1951 as a place for (mainly) Croatian families to gather and celebrate their culture. It moved to Marrickville in 1972, and to Punchbowl in 1983. It has now secured the premises of the Concord RSL Club at 1 Nullawarra Avenue.

The club's vision is:

Bringing the community together and celebrating our history, ensuring the community grows stronger with each generation.

As the club is currently not operating, information on clientele is not available. However, with a family and community focus the club aims to provide a place for families to meet and celebrate community. They will do this by providing a variety of options for dining, activities for children, community events, a function space, and entertainment. Demographics of the local community follow.

The club occupies a total of 2,970sqm, and will provide indoor and outdoor dining areas with a focus on European style foods, play area for children, function room for entertainment including shows and live music and pop-up style exhibitions to promote local artists, outdoor space for local markets including fresh produce and local artisan goods.



Location

The Concord Community Club is located in the suburb of Concord, in the City of Canada Bay Council local government area in the inner western suburbs of Sydney. The City of Canada Bay LGA is the club's local area.

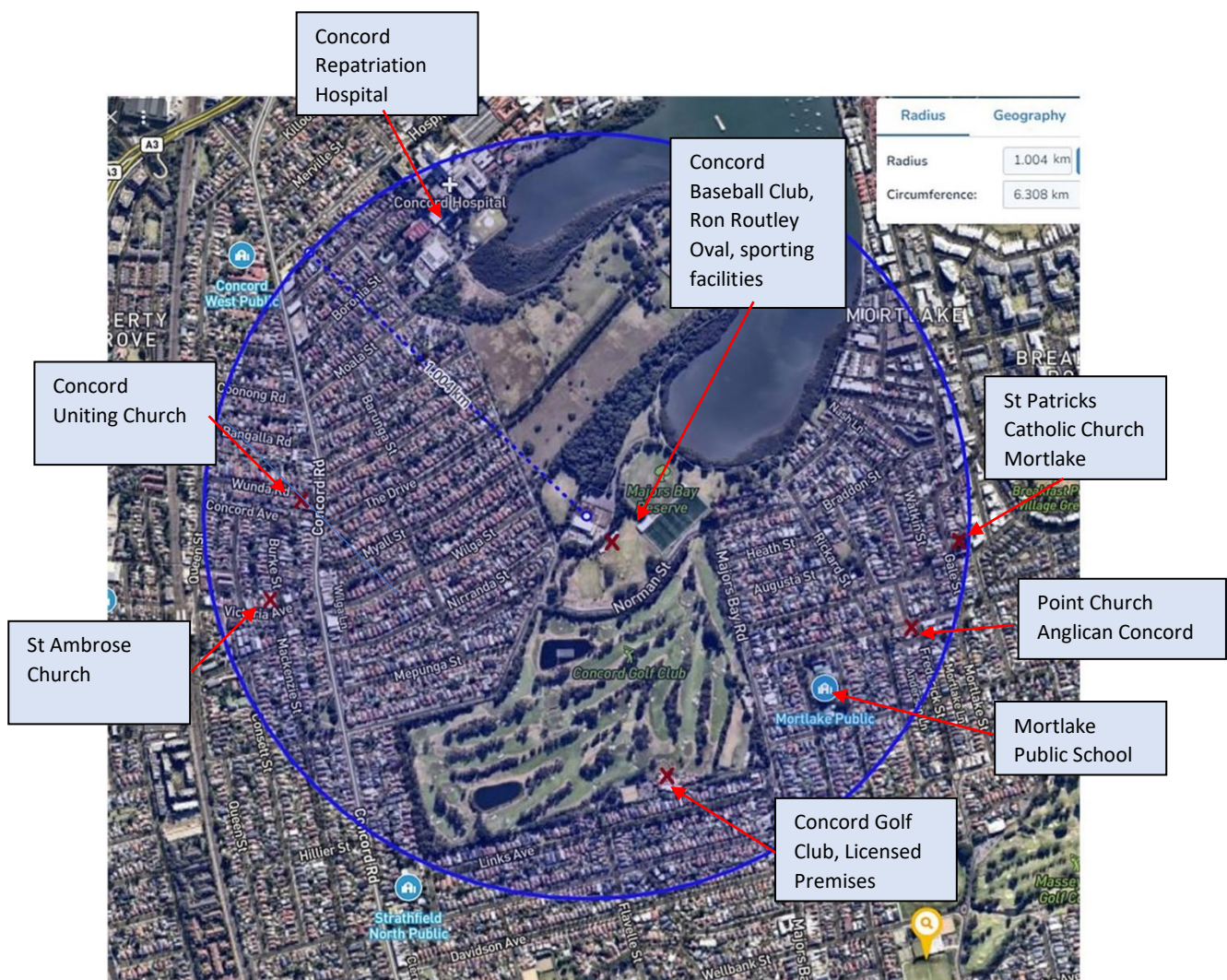
The club is in Majors Bay Reserve, surrounded on the north, south and east sides by Concord Baseball Club, Ron Routley Oval (sports field), and Arthur Walker Reserve. Majors Bay Reserve fronts onto Yaralla Bay on the Parramatta River.

The nearest residences are around 90m away from the club entrance on the western side of the club.

The nearest school is Mortlake Public School, around 700m in a straight line or 1.5k by road to the south-east.

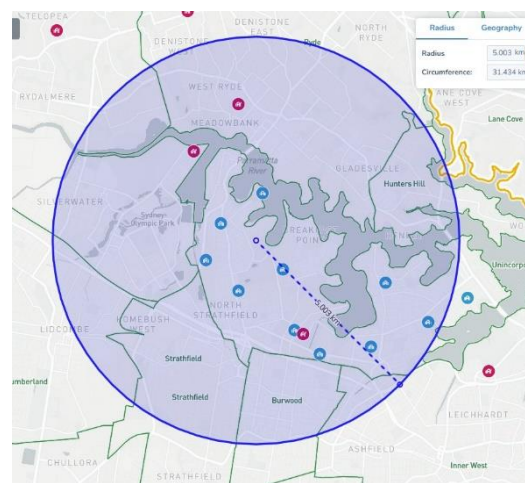
The nearest church is Concord Uniting Church, around 700m in a straight line or 1.1k by road to the west. The church is located within a residential area, and on the other side of a major road, being Concord Road.

Concord Repatriation Hospital is around 1k north. Concord Golf Club is south of and across the road from Majors Bay Reserve. The entrance to the golf club is on Majors Bay Road or Links Avenue, both around 1.8km by road.



Within a 5km radius of The Concord Community Club are parts of Ryde and Hunters Hill on the north side of the Parramatta River, the south-eastern corner of Parramatta (including Sydney Olympic Park), Strathfield, Burwood, and small section of Cumberland and Inner West LGAs. Key social and economic data for these areas are over the page.

Statistical areas (SA2) and bands within 5km of the Concord Community Club are:



SLA	Band
Concord-Mortlake-Cabarita (SA2 of The Concord Community Club)	1
Concord West-North Strathfield	1
Five Dock-Abbotsford	1
Strathfield East	1
Homebush	2
Burwood	2
Putney	1
Gladesville-Huntleys Point	1
Wentworth Point-Sydney Olympic Park	1
Rhodes	1
Lidcombe	3

The local community

<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA11520>

The Concord Community Club is in the Concord-Mortlake-Cabarita SA2, and the City of Canada Bay local government area.

Residents in the City of Canada Bay have a higher-than-average education level, with 43% of the population over the age of 15 having attained a bachelor's degree or higher. This compares to the national average of 26%.

Median weekly household income is \$2,371, compared to \$1,829 for New South Wales as a whole, and \$1,746 for Australia.

DEMOGRAPHIC	CITY OF CANADA BAY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA	CONCORD -MORTLAKE-CABARITA SA2
Population	89,177	23,152 (adult population)
Number aged 15-19	4,102	1,261
Number aged 20-24	5,395	1,206
Number aged 60+	19,817	6,176
Indigenous population	503 0.6%	131 0.6%
Country of birth	Australia 49,941 (56%) China 6,992 (7.8%) Italy 3,425 (3.9%) Korea 2,532 (2.8%) England 2,124 (2.4%) India 2,105 (2.4)	North-east Asia 10.1% Southern & eastern Europe 7.4% Western Europe 4.3%
Population who did not complete year 12	9,918 13.2%	6,719 29%
Unemployment rate	4.1%	3.7%
Number employed as labourers	2,002	880
Numbered employed as administrative and support service workers	6,615	1,279
Equivalised total household income		
\$1-\$499 per week	2,366	11.1%
\$500 - \$999 per week	3,564	17.4%
\$1000 - \$1999 per week	6,891	33.1%
\$2,000 - \$2,999 per week	6,263	17.7%
\$3,000 or more per week	13,106	13.9%
Nil income	787	2.5%
Not stated	1,722	4.6%
SEIFA index of disadvantage rank within NSW	14	8
SEIFA Score	1,116	
Household makeup		
Couples with children	10,889	3,009
Couple families without children	10,004	2,818
One parent families	3,076	848
Other families	486	87
Group household	1,551	n/a
Lone persons	8,520	n/a
Other	1,002	n/a

Harm minimisation policies and procedures

The problem of gambling addiction was the primary concern of respondents to the survey. The Concord Community Club is developing their Gaming Plan of Management to ensure that they can not only address any problem gambling that arises, but also put in place measures to prevent it in the first place.

In response to community concerns the club has reduced its proposal from 100 gaming machine entitlements to 36. While the club might apply for additional entitlements in the future, this will be reviewed after a suitable operating period, and will be subject to further community consultation.

The Gaming Plan of Management (GPM) aims to not only meet, but exceed, its legislative obligations, and to provide the highest level of duty-of-care to patrons. It will include all legislated requirements for signage, no ATMs in the gambling area, restrictions on cash payments, self-exclusion and advice on gambling help services.

The GPM will be reviewed regularly by the Chief Executive Officer to address any ongoing concerns as they arise. It will be reviewed twelve months from the date of GPM sign off in conjunction with the club's Board of Directors and the Burwood Police Area Command Licensing Unit.

The club will appoint a Responsible Gaming Manager to ensure that all policies and procedures to manage gambling (gaming machines, TAB / Keno) within the club are adhered to, and that staff are encouraged to take a proactive approach to managing real or perceived problem gambling.

The proactive approach to managing gambling will include encouraging staff to engage with patrons to monitor for any risk of problem gambling. Staff will be trained to recognise signs of patrons at risk of or exhibiting problem gambling behaviours, as well as training on how to approach patrons perceived to be at risk. Training will be updated regularly.

Closed circuit televisions will be in operation to assist staff to monitor the gaming room and identify any patrons at risk of problem gambling.

Robust systems will be in place for staff to do welfare checks, encourage breaks in play and suggest alternatives to gambling available in the venue or beyond. Self-exclusions measures will be in place and adhered to.

The City of Canada Bay raised a concern about sections of the community residing close to the club displaying problem gambling behaviours. To address this concern the club will continue to work with the council to identify those in the community at risk, and to monitor their gambling behaviour.

In order to ensure minors do not have access to gaming, the gaming room is located at the front of the venue with a very distinct separate entry, and separated and not accessible from the areas open to children. Signage will be in place to identify areas which are prohibited to persons under the age of 18. Staff will be trained to identify people who appear to be under the age of 25, and how to approach them to ask for identification. All visitors will be required to provide valid identification and members must provide a valid identification to join, if this cannot be produced, they will be removed from the premises.

At all times the club will take a proactive approach to minimise risks of problem gambling and encourage and reward staff to be vigilant to behaviours demonstrating risk of, or indulgence in, problem gambling.

A copy of the draft Gaming Plan of Management is attached.

Community benefits

The club will contribute to the Responsible Gambling Fund in accordance with section 36A of the Act and as prescribed by the Class 1 Local Impact Assessment process guidelines for new hotels (Community Benefit).

Our advice from Liquor and Gaming NSW is that the latest estimate of gaming machine net profit for the LGA is approximately \$70,000 per machine. At the prescribed portion of 15%, for 36 machines this would amount to around \$1,890,000 over 5 years.

In addition to Responsible Gambling Fund contributions, the Concord Community Club is undergoing extensive renovations to provide a focal point of community life in the Concord area. There is no similar club, or place for families to gather, within a 5km radius of the club.

By providing entertainment, including live music, theatre, and pop-up exhibitions, the club is planning to support and promote local musicians and artists by giving them a place to display their talents.

The club's vision is *bringing the community together and celebrating our history, ensuring the community grows stronger with each generation*, and it promises to

- Be a key stakeholder in the local community.
- Support local support clubs and charities, including football and baseball.
- Have an RSL memorial to honour the history, with annual Anzac Day commemorations. This has been approved by the RSL
- Work together with local charities by providing space and support for their activities.
- Provide kids playground areas, synthetic fields for children's sport, community gardens and Croatian language and dancing school.

These are activities and facilities currently not available in the area, and which will provide opportunities to strengthen local connections and a sense of community.

Through activities such as a community garden, local markets, celebrating important cultural events, local residents will have opportunities to make important social connections, reduce loneliness, and make friends and contribute to providing a sense of culture and connection. The Croatian community, although a small, will receive support to strengthen its culture through language and dance classes, and community celebrations.

The Concord Community Club wants to carry on the good work of the RSL club which occupied the premises previously, through supporting the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare, and Soldier on Org. These organisations provide important support to veterans.

The club has a strong focus on supporting families and children, including through local sporting organisations. Other organisations identified for support are:

- Interlions Football Club
- Hurstville Zagreb Soccer Club
- Concord Juniors Soccer Club
- Concord Comets
- Mladi Frankopani
- Croatian Folkloric Ensemble
- Rotary Club of Concord
- Concord Chamber of Commerce

In response to concerns raised by community respondents to the survey, the club will work with the local council to identify and, when possible, provide support to organisations providing support to those in need in the community such as domestic violence and homelessness organisations. A sponsorship strategy is being developed.

The club is dedicated to becoming an employer of choice in the local community and will provide training and apprenticeships to address current skilled hospitality staff shortage crisis.

Community engagement

The club elected to engage a broad section of the community as possible, and to a higher degree than required. The local community were engaged through a variety of means:

- Written notifications were mailed directly to all neighbouring properties in a 180m radius of the club, advising them of the proposal and providing a link to a survey or asking them to provide a written submission. This totalled 29 properties at
 - 2-10 and 1-13 Nirranda Street (13 properties)
 - 1 Quandong Place (1 property)
 - 2-10 and 1-7 Wilga Street (9 properties)
 - 4 units at 19 Norman Street (4 properties)
 - 217 and 219 Majors Bay Road (2 properties)

The last two itemised properties, while over 200m away are directly across the park so were included in the mailout.

A copy of the written notification is attached.

- Emailed notification to community groups identified as being recipients of funding from the Responsible Gambling Fund with presence in the local community. Eleven organisations were identified, with three not having an advertised email address. These organisations were contacted directly via a phone call, followed up with a text message pointing them to the survey. A copy of the email is attached. All organisations were invited to complete a survey or provide a written submission.
- Email to other key stakeholders inviting them to complete a survey or provide a written submission. Stakeholders are as below:
 - City of Canada Bay Council
 - Burwood Police LAC
 - Sydney Local Health District (Concord Repatriation Hospital)
 - Burwood Community Welfare Services
 - Drummoyne Community Centre
 - Salvation Army
 - Warringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre

In addition, attempts were made to contact the Aboriginal Mental Health Service at Camperdown Community Mental Health Services with no success.

- A notification on the Facebook pages of local news and community groups. This was preferred to an advertisement in printed newspapers as having a greater reach, and a more engaged audience. Notifications were placed on:
 - North Strathfield-Concord West Community News (3,300 members)
 - Concord Residents and Community (864 members)
 - Concord Mums Unite (4,200 members)
- Notification on the website of The Concord Community Club

The survey was open for 92 days from the date of notification. A reminder email was sent to community groups and other key stakeholders 3 weeks before the close of the submissions and of the survey.

A total of 150 survey responses were received. No written submissions were received.

In addition to the above, the Licencing Team at Burwood Police LAC and the Strategic Social Planner at City of Canada Bay council were contacted directly by phone and offered the opportunity to have a face-to-face meeting to discuss any concerns they might have. The Burwood Police LAC declined a meeting, but through a telephone discussion advised that they had no concerns about the club obtaining up to 100 gaming machines beyond ensuring that responsible gaming regulations were followed.

The club has reviewed their responsible gaming practices to ensure that they are complete and compliant with this request.

A meeting was held with representatives of City of Canada Bay Council. The council raised concerns about pockets of disadvantage in their area, and community members who might be at risk of problem gambling. The club will continue to work with council to identify those community members who might be at risk, and to monitor their gambling behaviour.

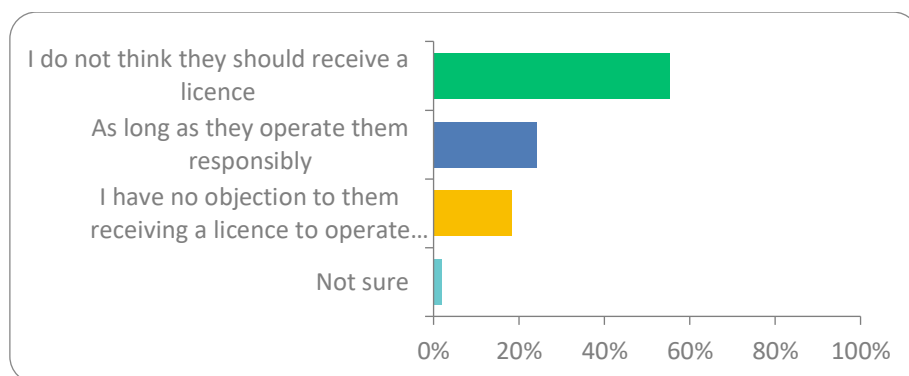
A copy of the LIA and application will be provided to both Burwood Police LAC and Canada Bay Council once lodged.

Survey results

A total of 150 completed surveys were received, 146 from individuals and 4 as representatives of organisations. Respondents were asked several questions about their attitudes to gaming machines, and to the club itself. A copy of the survey is attached.

Attitudes to gaming machines

Of all respondents 55%, or 82 respondents, said they do not think The Concord should receive a licence to operate gaming machines. 25% (36) responded as long as they operate them responsibly, and 18% (27) had no objection. 2% (3 respondents) were not sure.



The primary reasons for objecting to the grant of a licence for gaming machines was problem gambling. Comments included.

Poker machines are scourge on society. New licences should not be granted, especially for local communities.

There are already too many people with gaming addiction. We don't need any more gaming machines in our community.

Absolutely appalling that they are applying for gaming machines. Should not be granted a license as I'm completely opposed to a so-called family club adding to the misery of gambling addiction.

It will bring in low socioeconomic patrons with poor behaviour and bring down the value of this community.

Others opposed felt that 100 gaming machines were too many.

I feel that 100 is too many. Maybe only 50 machines?

Although some gaming at The Concord wouldn't be an issue for me, the number of machines seems excessive. Limiting the machines to a smaller number would be a more responsible way to promote The Concord as a family-friendly, community place to be.

100 gaming machines brings the wrong type of a crowd to what should be a family friendly environment. I would think twice about attending a venue with such a large gaming room.

The less of a focus on gambling the better. Ideally the club won't have any machines, but I understand that it may be necessary.

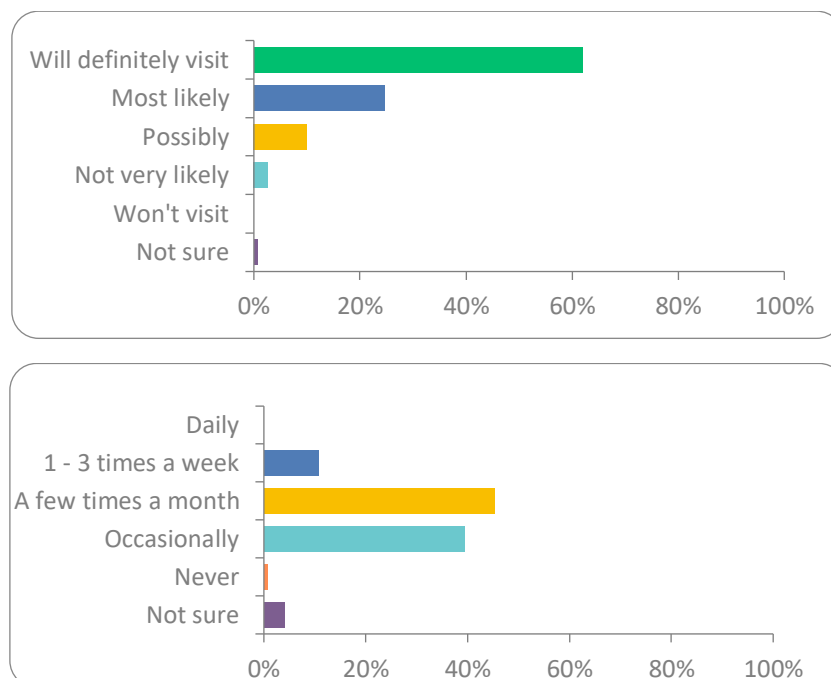
Respondents who wanted to ensure responsible gaming were concerned about maintaining a family atmosphere, and keeping gaming machines were away from children.

As long as the gaming rooms don't smell like cigarettes and spilt alcohol, I will be ok with the gaming room. They should also be out of sight to children.

Ensure responsible gaming and limit operating hours. This is a suburban community, and the club will be located in an area with children and families.

Attitudes to The Concord Community Club

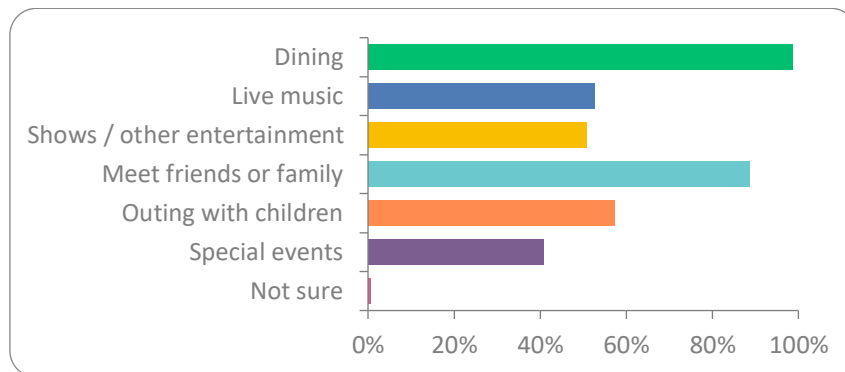
Respondents were asked if they were likely to visit the club, and how often. Despite the opposition to gaming machines, 62% (93) of respondents said they would definitely visit the club, 25% (37) most likely, 10% (15) would possibly visit. 3% (4) respondents said they were not very likely to visit, and 1 respondent was unsure. No respondents said they wouldn't visit the club.



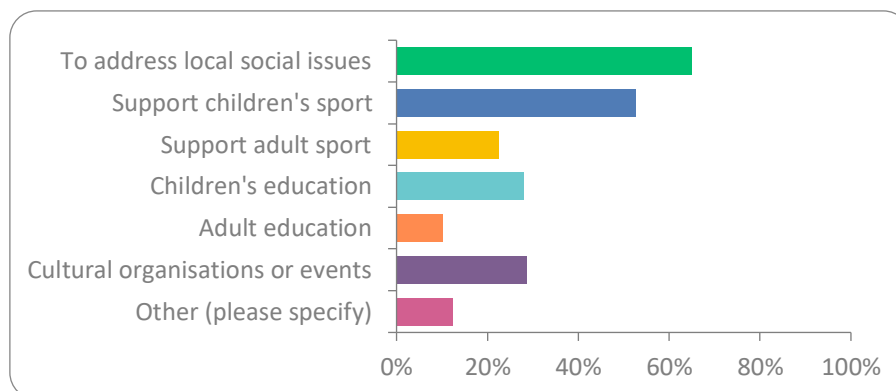
When asked why they would visit the club, respondents were keen to have a family-oriented club where they could meet friends, dine, take their children, and see shows, live music or other entertainment. One respondent identified this as particularly lacking in the community.

Please have plenty of live entertainment. Live music is lacking in this area. Targeted events like a Retro Dance Party night with a live band would be fantastic. Everyone is dying to get out and have a dance. Kids discos once a month would be a great idea too.

Looking forward to see how we can have events supported by the club that support the community.



Respondents were asked how they felt responsible gambling funds should be spent, if the club were to obtain a gaming licence. Local social issues, children's sport, and cultural organisations or events were the top 3 answers.



People identified local social issues specifically as:

Homelessness, domestic violence, supporting low-income families with daily living expenses

Philanthropic organisations

Homelessness, women's shelters, providing support to those in need.

More funding is needed for community-based preschools in the area that are being outnumbered by private profit making long day care centres

Local seniors groups, neurodiverse programs, after school IT youth programs, cooking programs, afternoon discos, kids/tween/teenager programs

Notification of the survey was sent to those organisations identified as to be supported by The Concord Community Club. Respondents were keen to have that support and develop partnerships for the benefit of the community. The Concord Baseball Club is located next to the Concord Community Club and said:

The Concord Baseball club had a strong long term strong relationship with the Concord RSL and often partnered to support out mutual goals. We look forward to partnering with the new Concord Club that we believe can revitalise the location.