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| 2017 Gambling Sector  Survey  Summary of findings |
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Foreword

The annual survey of stakeholders in the class 4 sector is a valuable tool for the Department to measure how our strategic direction and work as the gambling regulator is perceived.

This year’s survey results are similar to the 2016 stakeholder survey in many areas, which demonstrates that improvements that the Department has made in our approach as the regulator of the gambling sector continue to be maintained.

These maintained improvements are especially important as we continue to focus on how we collaborate with stakeholders to ensure we develop an understanding of their needs and challenges as we work towards mutual objectives.

These changes include initiatives such as three year licensing, the new venue assessment framework, introduction of online forms and payments, and the Gamble Host initiative.

### Communication of information

In the 2017 survey we introduced a new set of questions relating to information on the Department’s website, to assist with refreshing the website in the future.

Overall the website is well used by the sector and we received a lot of positive feedback. However, we recognise that there are improvements that we can make in terms of the website layout and how information is presented and look forward to working more with our stakeholders to understand how our website can better meet their needs.

There was also an increase in positive responses about the Department’s communication of information – stakeholders generally find it easy to obtain information from us, and believe that the information they receive is of good quality and provided in a timely manner.

The results from this survey did show a decrease in the number of stakeholders who perceived our sector forums as useful. This may be that this is due to the longer length of time since we last held these forums, given that we have undertaken increased sector collaboration on sector initiatives, such as Mystery Shopper. We had a recent round of forums in March 2018 and also held a successful series of regional workshops. We are keen to continuing to work with our stakeholders to better understand how we can improve the value of these types of engagements.

### Class 4 vision and objectives

 

In 2017 we again assessed how stakeholders view our approach to regulation using the class 4 vision and objectives. To do this we used questions that were introduced to the survey in 2016, allowing us to test our progress.

In response to survey questions around our vision, there were increased levels of agreement from the sector from 2016, with the most positive responses relating to the sector working constructively with us to achieve compliance. This reflects the progress we have made to change our approach to engaging with stakeholders so that we collaborate effectively in order to make smarter decisions.

The objective with the highest proportion of “disagree” or “strongly disagree” responses was about striking the right balance between minimising gambling harm, ensuring sustainable funding for communities and sector sustainability. There was a positive increase in those that agreed or strongly agreed to this statement compared to last year. However, we acknowledge that striking the right balance in this area is a complex issue and we are keen to continue to work to support improvements in this area.

Our focus on improvement continues in 2018. We have used the feedback received in this year’s survey to prioritise projects that develop engagement and collaboration with the stakeholders across the gambling system. These projects include holding a number of regional roadshows to build a culture of care in class 4 venues; thinking about external website improvements to ensure that new and existing information that we provide is easy to understand and find; using co-design approach with venues, clubs, societies and gambling harm service providers in the beginning stages of projects such as the Mystery Shopper scenario development.

I would like to thank all of you who continue to participate in the gambling system, with the shared objective of achieving community wellbeing through preventing and minimising harm and facilitating community benefit. I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that community is at the forefront of what we do.

Gareth

Gareth Bostock   
Director Gambling Compliance Group

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# Executive summary

The Department of Internal Affairs’ (the Department) annual survey of its class 4 gambling stakeholders was carried out in September to October 2017. This aimed to build on our previous surveys of stakeholders, as well as introduce some new questions to help understand how information on the Department’s website is perceived by stakeholders.

The responses to this year’s survey reveal that improvements continue to be made in collaboration, partnership and engagement between the Department and the sector.

The survey also shows areas where we could place greater focus to ensure that we are being effective regulators and are responding to the needs of our stakeholders. These include select communication channels and working with the sector to achieve the balance between harm minimisation, community benefit, and sector sustainability.

### Contacting the Department

Of those who responded to the survey, 76 per cent had made contact with the Department in the previous 12 months. As in the 2015 and 2016 surveys, email was the preferred way to contact us and the most common reason for contact was licensing applications.

### Professional performance

Overall we received a positive response about the professionalism of our performance. Stakeholders generally find it easy to obtain information from us, and believe that the information they receive is of good quality and provided in a timely manner. There was an increase in positive ratings for all of these questions compared to last year’s survey.

Eight per cent of respondents rated the speed of response as quite slow or slow, which is a decrease from 10 per cent in 2016. It is also noted that there was an increase in stakeholders from the ‘Other’ category who found it easier to obtain information from the Department in 2017.

### Providing information to the sector

Responses about the Gambits newsletter were very positive. This included ratings about its usefulness, the respondent’s satisfaction with its frequency, the relevancy of the information, and how simple it is to understand.

Questions about the Department’s external website were included in this year’s survey. Most respondents had used the website, and found it easy to access and understand information. A number of comments suggested that there are improvements to be made to the structure of the website and the search function.

There was a sharp decrease in the proportion of respondents who found sector forums useful (34 per cent) in 2017 compared to 2016 (61 per cent). This may be due to the length of time since the last forum (November 2016) or the targeting of the forums. We recently ran a series of regional workshops for venue and club staff and will continue to look at ways we can improve our engagement with stakeholders through forums and workshops.

### Approach to regulation

We asked questions relating to our vision and objectives for the class 4 gambling sector.

Responses to the three questions relating to our vision received increased levels of agreement compared to last year, with the most positive responses relating to the sector working constructively with us to achieve compliance. The comments in this section show that there is still a large amount of concern in the sector about how gambling returns are maximised for community benefit.

Questions about our objectives were introduced in last year’s survey. Clubs and class 4 non-club societies were more likely to agree that the Department is meeting their objectives than other stakeholder groups.

The objectives with the highest proportion of respondents who strongly agreed with the statement were related to grant-making that meets community needs and collaboration and partnership with and across the sector.

The objective with the highest proportion of “disagree” or “strongly disagree” responses was about striking the right balance between minimising gambling harm, ensuring sustainable funding for communities and sector sustainability. The comments relating to this question acknowledged the difficulties involved with finding this balance across the sector.

# Our survey approach

The sections below explain our approach to the 2017 Gambling Sector Survey (the survey).

### Survey purpose

The Department is responsible for the regulation of gambling in New Zealand so that it is safe, fair, legal and honest.[[1]](#footnote-2) Stakeholders in the class 4 gambling sector comprise a diverse range of organisations and individuals. As a responsible regulator, the Department is interested in understanding stakeholder views on their experience engaging and communicating with us.

An annual gambling stakeholder survey has been conducted by the Department since 2009. Over this time the main purpose of the survey has consistently been to measure stakeholder perception of and satisfaction with our professional performance as a regulator. We also want to understand how our approach to regulation is perceived by stakeholders.

### Survey constraints

The survey has been modified from year to year to align with areas of focus and to provide information to help us in our approach as a responsive regulator.

Due to changes in the survey tool and sample in the last two years, longitudinal trends have not been emphasised. In particular, this year some new questions were added to the survey. In 2016 there were changes made to the stakeholder group – a similar stakeholder group was invited to participate in this year’s survey.

### Survey sample

The survey was designed to be answered by a range of stakeholders within the class 4 gambling sector in New Zealand. Territorial authorities and some gambling harm service providers have been included since 2015. We also continued to include class 4 non-club societies and clubs. In 2016 and again in 2017 we asked each class 4 non-club society to fill in only one survey to prevent multiple responses from several people in the same organisation. All responses are anonymous. The inclusion of a question identifying the type of organisation being represented provided us with the option to consider this as part of our analysis.

Stakeholders from the casino and class 3 sector were not included in this survey sample.

### Invitation to participate

Email invitations to participate in the web-based survey were sent to 388 individuals, representing 353 organisations.

The Department’s Gambling Compliance Group has regular contact with a number of our stakeholders and as a result holds contact detail information for them. These details, along with publicly available contact information for additional stakeholders, were used to compile a list of potential participants.

### Response rate

Email invitations were sent to 388 individuals and 164 responses were received. This represents a response rate of 42 per cent.

**Figure 1: Response rate, by organisation type**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Organisation Type | Number of organisations | Number of invitations sent | Number of responses | Response Rate |
| Class 4 non-club society | 36 | 42 | 24 | 57% |
| Clubs | 227 | 235 | 87 | 37% |
| Territorial Authorities | 55 | 60 | 34 | 57% |
| Other stakeholders[[2]](#footnote-3) | 36 | 49 | 19 | 39% |
| **Total** | **355** | **386** | **164** | **42%** |

Figure 1 shows the number of invitations sent to stakeholder groups and the response rate for each.

In 2016, 400 stakeholders were invited to participate and 171 responded, resulting in a response rate of 43 per cent. In 2015, 413 stakeholders were invited to participate and 233 responded, which is a response rate of 50 per cent.

### Survey timing

The survey was open for responses for a period of two weeks from 21 September to 4 October 2017. Reminder invitation emails were sent at the mid-point and also the day that the survey closed.

### Survey design and results

The survey had 23 questions. Various question formats were used: fixed, rating scale and multi-choice. Up to 16 questions required selection/s from a choice of answers, a number of these also allowed for specific free-text comments to be added. Four optional, free-text questions provided an opportunity for comment in specific areas. A copy of the survey questions is included on the [Department of Internal Affairs’ website](https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Resource-material-Our-Research-and-Reports-Index?OpenDocument#five)*.*

Thirteen questions use a five-point ‘Likert-like’ agree scale. The middle of the scale is identified as average or neutral, with the extremes indicating either strong agreement or strong disagreement with the question or proposition.

A sample of comments from open-ended questions is included so that where applicable some context may be seen in the answer. While it is impractical for all comments to be included, samples have been selected to show the variety of views expressed. The number of examples and total number of comments are shown in brackets after each question.

# Survey results summary

## Types of organisations

**Question 1: What type of organisation are you completing this survey on behalf of?**

**Figure 2: Organisation type[[3]](#footnote-4)**

Figure 2 shows the percentage of respondents from each organisation type.

The majority of respondents are from clubs (53 per cent), followed by territorial authorities (21 per cent) and class 4 non-club societies (15 per cent). The makeup of organisation type is very similar to 2016.

## Contacting the Department

**Question 2: How do you prefer to contact the Department’s Gambling Compliance Group, should you need to?**

**Figure 3: Preferred contact method**

Figure 3 shows the percentage of respondents who selected each of the contact options.

Respondents were able to choose more than one preference and a total of 264 selections were made by 161 respondents.

Email (87 per cent) is the preferred method of contacting the Department followed by phone (50 per cent). This follows a similar overall pattern to 2016 where email (84 per cent) and phone (53 per cent) were the most popular choices.

The preference for face-to-face contact has risen slightly to 13 per cent in 2017 from 12 per cent in 2016. The preference for a named contact has dropped from 14 per cent last year to 12 per cent this year.

**Question 3: Have you contacted the Department over the past 12 months?**

The majority of the respondents had contacted the Department over the past 12 months (76 per cent). A very small proportion (four per cent) of respondents answered “not sure”.

We asked respondents who answered yes to question three to provide information about their experiences of contacting us (questions 4 to 7).

**Question 4: Tell us why you have contacted the Department over the past 12 months.**

**Figure 4: Reasons for contact**

Figure 4 shows the percentage of respondents who selected each reason for contact.

Respondents were able to choose more than one reason and 214 selections were made by 122 respondents. This indicates that some individuals have contacted us for a variety of reasons.

The two most common reasons for contacting the Department were licensing applications (65 per cent) and general information (46 per cent). The highest number of contacts is received from clubs followed by class 4 non-club societies. Respondents from territorial authorities indicated a variety of reasons for contacting us, although most commonly for policy or legislative advice.

General support, key person changes and gaming equipment enquiries were some themes for a number of entries in the “other” category.

## Professional performance

Those respondents who had contacted us in the past 12 months were asked the next three questions about their experiences of contacting the Gambling Compliance Group for information.

**Question 5: In general, how easy have you found it to obtain the information you need from us?**

**Question 6: In general, how would you rate the quality of information provided by the Department?**

**Question 7: In general, how would you rate the speed of our response to you?**

These have been grouped together in our analysis to evaluate our professional performance. The questions use rating scales from 1-5, with 1 being the highest and 5 the lowest.

For example:

1 – Very easy

2 – Quite easy

3 – Average

4 – Quite difficult

5 – Very difficult

**Figure 5: Professional performance**

Figure 5 shows the percentages for selections for each of the three questions rating our professional performance.

The responses across all three questions were all very positive with:

* Eighty-one per cent rating the ease of obtaining information as very easy or quite easy
* Eighty-four per cent rating the quality of information provided as very good or good
* Seventy-six per cent rating the speed of response as very fast or quite fast.

Compared to last year, this is an increase in the positive ratings in all three areas of our professional performance.

It is pleasing to see that only two per cent of respondents rated information provided as being of poor or very poor quality. Although eight per cent did rate the speed of response as quite slow or very slow, this is a decrease from 10 per cent in 2016.

The results show that respondents in the ‘Other’ category found it the easiest to obtain information from the Department, followed by clubs and class 4 non-club societies.

**Question 8: If you have any specific comments about your experience of contacting us please add them here.**

A number of comments reflected that the sector has seen improvements in their contact with the Department, as well as finding it particularly beneficial when they have a liaison officer to contact. Some people also reported that response times vary greatly depending on the method of contact (telephone is particularly slow), or individual workloads of DIA staff.

A sample from the 36 comments received is provided (5/36):

“The staff that I have dealt with over the last year have been very helpful and informative.”

“Having been in the industry for some years I find the DIA much more user-friendly in recent times.”

“The information received is always very good however it is hard to get a person on the phone. Complex or unusual issues are best discussed person to person.”

"My experience is that the response is very slow - as in taking months to reply - or no response at all.”

“I have found all staff very helpful and obliging”

## Providing information to the sector

We are interested in perceptions of how useful our current communications are in providing information to the sector. We asked respondents to indicate which they have used and rate how useful they have found each channel.

### All information sources

**Question 9: The Department provides general information to the sector in a number of ways. Please tell us how useful you have found these sources of information in the past 12 months.**

**Figure 6: Usefulness of information sources**

Figure 6 shows percentages for the ratings of four of the main sources we use to provide information to the sector.

Note: Respondents were also given the option of “haven’t used”. Those who chose this response are not included in the calculation of percentages in this figure.

**Gambits newsletter**

A very high proportion of respondents had received Gambits (85 per cent).

Seventy-four per cent of those found Gambits to be very useful or useful. This is a decrease from 86 per cent in 2016. However, it still appears to be valuable as an information source for the entire sector.

Compared to other sources of information this had the highest percentage of very useful or useful responses, consistent with the 2016 results.

**The Department’s website**

Almost all of the respondents to this question had used the website (92 per cent) and of these, 70 per cent of respondents who used it rated it as useful or very useful. Five per cent of respondents found it either “a bit useful” or “not at all useful” (three per cent and two per cent respectively). However, these results have improved since 2016 (10 per cent and one per cent).

**Sector forums**

Sector forums are regional meetings targeted at class 4 non-club societies and key stakeholders for the purpose of engaging with the sector and exchanging information.

Over 60 per cent of our survey respondents indicated that they had been involved in a sector forum.

Of the 85 respondents who rated sector forums as a source of information, 41 per cent had not used the meetings during this survey period – the last forum was held in November 2016 (these are usually bi-annual). Only 34 per cent indicated that they found them useful or very useful, which is a large decrease from 61 percent in 2016. Sixty-seven per cent of class 4 non-club societies indicated that they found the forums useful, compared to only 21 per cent of clubs.

Five per cent of those who had attended a forum in the past 12 months rated them as “a bit useful” or “not at all useful”, which is an increase from three per cent last year.

**Face-to-face meetings**

Sixty per cent of respondents had been involved in a face-to-face meeting over the past 12 months. Of those, the majority rated the experience as useful or very useful (78 per cent).

### Gambits newsletter

Further specific questions to find out about the level of satisfaction, relevance and simplicity of the information in Gambits (questions 10, 11 and 12) were asked. Any respondent who indicated in question 10 that they did not receive Gambits was not asked to respond to questions 11 or 12.

Very high levels of positive ratings have been received for all three of these questions.

**Question 10: How satisfied are you with the frequency of the Gambits newsletter?**

Satisfaction ratings for its frequency were high, with 69 per cent of respondents being satisfied or very satisfied. This is a slight decrease from the rating in 2016, which was 74 per cent satisfied or very satisfied. The rating in 2015 was 71 per cent.

**Question 11: Is the information in the Gambits newsletter relevant to you?**

Over 85 per cent of the respondents rated the newsletter as being relevant to them.

**Question 12:** **How simple is it to understand the information in the Gambits newsletter?**

**Figure 7: Simplicity of Information**

Figure 7 shows the percentage of responses for each selection.

Eighty-eight per cent of the respondents found it either very easy or easy to understand the information provided in Gambits. Only a very small percentage of respondents found it difficult or very difficult (one per cent).

### The Department’s website

This is a new section introduced this year to gather further feedback about the Department’s external website, with a view to improve access to online information in future.

**Question 13: Have you used the Department’s website to access information about gambling in the past 12 months?**

The majority of the respondents had used the Department’s website to access information about gambling in the past 12 months (78 per cent). A very small proportion (two per cent) of respondents did not provide an answer.

We asked respondents who answered yes to question 13 to provide information about their experiences of using the website (questions 14 to 16).

**Question 14: How easy was it to find the information you were looking for on the Department’s website?**

**Question 15: How simple was it to understand the information on the Department’s website?**

Those respondents who had used our website to gain information about gambling in the past 12 months were asked to answer these questions about their experiences accessing and understanding the information.

These questions have been grouped to evaluate the overall usefulness of accessing information on the Department’s website.

**Figure 8: Information on the Department’s website**

Figure 8 shows the percentages for the ratings of accessing and understanding information.

Sixty-six per cent of the respondents found it either very easy or easy to find information on the Department’s website. Unfortunately 10 per cent of respondents found it difficult or very difficult to find information.

Seventy-six per cent of the respondents found it either very easy or easy to understand the information that they found on the Department’s website. Only a small percentage (six per cent) found it difficult or very difficult to understand this information.

**Question 16: If you have specific comments of suggestions on how the Department can improve the webpages, please provide them here.**

Sixteen respondents provided comments in response to this question. The majority of these comments related to the structure or format of the website. A sample of the comments is provided (4/16):

“There's a lot of really useful information up on the DIA website and I think I am so used to using it that I know where everything is now. I like the front 'gaming statistics' landing page as it clearly directs you to where you need to go.”

“It seems to be a complicated exercise to get to the area where information is listed.”

“It can sometimes be difficult to find the information required via the website. The search function is not very useful.”

“Once you have used it and understand the format it’s OK, but maybe not for first time users.”

**Question 17: If you have any comments about how the Department communicates information to the gambling sector and/or the content of information provided please add them here.**

In general the comments highlighted that stakeholders appreciate the number of forms that the Department provides information in, but that information could be clearer, especially for those with less knowledge of the relevant legislation and regulations.

A sample from the 27 comments received is provided (4/27):

“We would prefer the Department was upfront and clear on matters.”

“Always very efficient in response and the quality of the information provided is helpful”

“Generally the communication and information provided by DIA is good. There are some issues where it would be valuable for DIA to engage with the sector on projects at earlier stages … to ensure sector input to test ideas.”

“Website could be clearer in terms of being able to find relevant information”

## Approach to regulation

We wanted to gauge sector perceptions of our approaches to some key areas for us as a regulator. The following three questions relate to our vision for the sector.

**Question 18:** To what extent do you agree that the sector is **actively protecting gamblers and communities from gambling harm**?

**Question 19:** To what extent do you agree that the sector is **working constructively with the regulator to achieve compliance**?

**Question 20:** To what extent do you agree that the sector **maximises gambling returns to benefit community need**?

**Figure 8: Vision statements**

Figure 8 shows the percentage of selections for each rating option for all three questions asked.

In general responses were similar for all three questions.

The most positive responses related to the sector working constructively with the regulator to achieve compliance, with 72 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This compares with 70 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing that the sector actively protects gamblers and communities from gambling harm, and 66 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing that the sector maximises gambling returns to benefit community need.

The highest percentage of “disagree” or “strongly disagree” responses related to maximising gambling returns to benefit community need (13 per cent). The majority of these responses (60 per cent) were from territorial authorities.

Responses to questions 19 and 20 were more positive than last year. Both questions had a combined increase of over four per cent in the “agree and “strongly agree” categories.

The opportunity to provide specific comments relating to these questions was offered.

**Gambling Harm**

Twenty five comments were received in relation to gambling harm. A number of comments referred to individual societies and venues having good tools and support to minimise harm. However, in general the comments referred to the sector as a whole still not doing enough to comply with obligations on venues.

A sample from the 25 comments received is provided (3/25):

“The sector is working hard to actively protect gamblers and communities; it does however take time to develop skills in this complex area.”

“The work being done within venues and in partnership with entities such as HPA and Salvation Army/Oasis is very proactive and it is easy to see progress.”

“As much as I would like to believe that all operators have concern for gambling harm, I am not so sure … especially when gaming can play such a significant role in revenue generating.”

There were also a number of comments about the Mystery Shopper exercise in 2016/2017. A sample of these is provided (3/25):

“I think there has been progress but more needs to be done. The Mystery Shopper exercise needs to continue.”

“The secret shopper results from 2016 confirmed what we already knew and have seen in our own District - venues are not identifying problem gambling and acting upon it.”

“I agree that gamblers are being protected, however I don't know if Mystery Shoppers is the way to go as our staff felt it was a form of entrapment in an industry which is already difficult enough … The Staff in general do a great job and in a lot of cases should be commended for their vigilance to comply with everything that is required of them”

**Partnership**

There were mostly positive comments in relation to this question, although some raised the concern that the Department is not willing to cooperate with the sector to achieve resolutions.

A sample from the 15 comments received is provided (2/15):

“The regulator is very proactive and the sector is aware that they regulated and monitored on their operations.”

“…I am not convinced we have gone past the attitude from the department of let's find something wrong rather than let's work together so there is nothing wrong.”

**Community Benefit**

The range of comments relating to this question reflected the different points of view of the stakeholders surveyed. Some common themes included the impact of costs on returns to communities and that more money should go back to the local communities in which the gaming machines are located.

A sample from the 19 comments received is provided (4/19):

“If gambling returns maximised community benefit it wouldn't be known as gambling. It would be a not-for-profit organisation.”

“Our work indicates that the proceeds are coming from the lower socio economic areas and being returned to higher socio economic areas/groups. The proceeds coming from communities are not being returned - more work needs to be done to ensure that this is returned to the community it has come from and that groups are assisted to apply and be accepted for distribution of funds, particularly Maori.”

“This is the most enjoying part of my role, having the opportunity to maximize funds to the Community & receiving the wonderful thank you’s of being a part of helping the Community.”

“I believe there is too much compliance, administration and software updating costs that is taking money from the community.”

**Question 21:** **To what extent do you agree that the following objectives for the gambling sector are being met by the Department?**

This question was introduced in 2016 to gather views on how we are tracking against meeting our objectives, which were rolled out in late 2015. These six objectives help to guide our work in the gambling sector.

**Objective One:** Establish licensing as an **effective gateway** to the gambling sector

**Objective Two:** Promote and recognise **best practice** in the gambling sector

**Objective Three:** Support **grant** making that meets **community** needs

**Objective Four:** Foster **collaboration** and **partnership** with and across the gambling sector

**Objective Five:** Deliver consistent **regulatory actions** and robust **regulatory decisions**

**Objective Six:** Strike the right **balance** between **minimising gambling harm**, ensuring **sustainable funding** for **communities** and **sector sustainability**

**Figure 9: Meeting Objectives**

Figure 9 shows the combined percentage of respondents who selected “agree” or “strongly agree” for each objective.

**Figure 10: Meeting Objectives**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Objective | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| **1: Licensing as an effective gateway** | 14% | 64% | 20% | 3% | 0% |
| **2: Promote and recognise best practice** | 15% | 54% | 26% | 4% | 1% |
| **3: Grant making that meets community needs** | 16% | 45% | 30% | 5% | 3% |
| **4: Collaboration and partnership with and across sector** | 16% | 40% | 38% | 6% | 1% |
| **5: Consistent regulatory actions and robust regulatory decisions** | 14% | 38% | 38% | 7% | 3% |
| **6: Balance between minimising harm, sustainable funding for communities and sector sustainability** | 14% | 41% | 30% | 11% | 3% |

Figure 10 shows the percentage for selection for each objective.

The response patterns across all objectives were quite similar. The most common response for each was “agree” followed by “neutral”. Clubs and class 4 non-club societies were more likely to agree that the Department is meeting their objectives than other stakeholder groups.

The objectives with the highest proportion of respondents who strongly agreed with the statement were related to grant making that meets community needs and collaboration and partnership with and across the sector. While the objective with the highest proportion of “disagree” or “strongly disagree” responses was about striking the right balance between minimising gambling harm, ensuring sustainable funding for communities and sector sustainability.

The opportunity to provide specific comments was offered. A number of comments referred to the difficulties of balancing harm minimisation with funding for communities and sector sustainability.

A sample from the 20 comments received is provided (3/20):

“On line gambling sector appears to be untouched by any regulatory control which is unfortunate as it circumvents the best intentions of the DIA relating to gambling.”

“While there is greater collaboration in the sector now, there are still instances where this does not happen.”

“There is a lot more that could be done around harm minimisation … There will always be a conflict between harm minimisation, sustainability for communities and the sector”

**Question 22: In general the Department’s decisions are clearly communicated to my organisation.**

**Figure 11: The Department’s decisions**

Figure 11 shows the percentage of selections for each rating option.

Three quarters of individual respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” (75 per cent), while only a small number of respondents “disagree” or “strongly disagree” (seven per cent). This is similar to last year when 68 per cent responded “agree” or “strongly agree” and five per cent “disagree” or “strongly disagree”.

The opportunity to provide specific comments was offered. A sample from nine comments received is provided (3/9):

“Different answers from different people, no consistency”

“I suggest your communications are put before a panel of novices in the first instance to ensure they are written in a manner which is free of "legislatativise" and unfriendly language. I cannot be bothered in reading any communication emanating from DIA.”

“Gambits is great and I always read it. We usually receive press releases in advance too which is helpful.”

## Areas of interest or concern

**Question 23: Please tell us about any areas of interest or concern that you feel are currently overlooked but you would like the Department to consider focusing on in future**.

This final question was optional, requiring a free text response. Thirty-seven respondents provided a comment.

Of these 37 comments, five indicated that they did not have any specific area of interest or concern that they would like the Department to focus on, and that they were happy with the work of the Department. A sample of these comments is provided:

“The information available is very informative, and I have no concerns, in relation to my business”

“In general DIA is doing a much better job than they did say 2-3 years ago.”

From the 32 comments which included suggestions, one of the most common themes related to how DIA works with the sector and communicates regulatory requirements with the sector and how this relationship can be improved (16 comments). A sample of these comments is provided:

“Maybe a face to face meeting on site on a regular basis would be proactive.”

“A cultural shift at certain levels within the department has been observed over the past two-three years albeit, there is still a long way to go at middle and below levels. Whilst some recent industry challenges have been dealt with very successfully with the C4 Working Party it is strongly viewed this was because of a true collaborative approach taken from the start of the process, along with taking an evidential approach to reaching solutions. Other projects that were not as successful were not undertaken in the same vein and with the same senior leadership overview.”

“The best training sessions I have been to are not the ones that go over the legislation and the ideology of gaming and gambling but go through the different types of clientele we can come across and how to interact within these scenarios. …”

“Care needs to be taken to not over load administrative requirements for Societies. Care needs to be taken to ensure face-to-face meetings across the sector including venues is encouraged.”

The other common theme among the comments related to the different needs to clubs, especially in the harm minimisation and sector sustainability spaces:

“I would like DIA to consider recognition of the role Clubs play in the promotion of responsible gambling to their members and guests”

“Allow Clubs to survive in the Auckland region by allowing them to amalgamate their  
machines when the Clubs amalgamate”

There were also a number of comments suggesting changes to process or legislation. These included:

* Making changes to control online gambling in New Zealand
* Reducing the cost of key persons information applications
* Changes to machine licensing renewal fees – based on turnover rather than number of machines to account for venues in more remote areas compared to cities
* Simplifying the process of renewing venue and machine licences.

Other comments related to our approach to compliance and dealing with unethical or non-compliant entities. Here is a sample of these comments:

“DIA is often demanding in its regulatory approach … whilst being rather tardy at times in delivering outcomes.”

“Too many societies allowed to operate motivated by and for personal gain not community interest.”

“DIA needs to put some resources into looking at the grant recipients and how or if they are spending monies granted to them … One thing that may be beneficial is for all grants approved to be put on a centralised online database where info regarding the grants, the organisations details etc. can be seen and searched in one place.”

# Conclusion

This annual survey provides the Department with useful information about how the gambling regulator is perceived by others in the class 4 gambling sector. The responses help guide our focus and inform us about areas that may need tweaking or improving.

We have been making significant changes to how we engage with the sector in recent years. These changes continue to be received positively by the sector which is well illustrated by the responses to the survey.

This year we introduced questions about the Department’s website, and the availability and quality of the information available on it.

This year we are particularly pleased to note that:

* ratings of our professional performance (ease of obtaining information, quality of information, and speed of response) remain high and have improved in all sections since the 2016 survey.
* Gambits continues be considered a great resource for the sector (usefulness, satisfaction with frequency, relevancy of information and being simple to understand.)
* overall the Department’s website is well used by a large number of stakeholders, and
* responses to questions about our vision for the sector have all improved compared to the 2016 baseline. Comments in this section reflect the improved relationship with the sector.

We are looking forward to continuing to make improvements in the way that we engage with the sector, using our vision and objectives to drive the way that we work. We hope to see continued improvements to our practices reflected in future surveys.

## Appendix A: Survey questions

[A copy of all survey questions is available here](https://www.dia.govt.nz/Resource-material-Our-Research-and-Reports-Index#GS2017).

1. [Gambling Act 2003](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2003/0051/latest/DLM207497.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Includes management companies, service providers, government departments and others [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Service Provider refers to “Problem Gambling Service Providers”; “Management Company” refers to Management Service Providers. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)