



## Media Release

11 October 2019

### VCGLR's Ararat hub making its mark

(Quotes attributable to Adam Ockwell, Director Compliance, VCGLR)

Since launching in April 2018, the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VCGLR) Ararat hub has made its mark on the region.

Funded in the 2017 Victorian State Budget, Ararat and Sale, were selected to maximise the VCGLR's coverage across regional Victoria. Between them, the two hubs cover over 2300 licensed venues including 70 pubs and clubs with more than 2800 gaming machines.

As well as allowing the VCGLR to have more oversight throughout the state, the hubs have also improved responsiveness to local community issues and harm related risks.

In the 2018-19 financial year, the Ararat team conducted over 700 liquor and gambling inspections, with numerous high-harm breaches identified.

Director of Compliance for the VCGLR Adam Ockwell said "Having hubs in the east and west of Victoria has enabled our inspectors to better detect high harm breaches in regional areas, including an instance where a venue was found to be selling liquor without a licence".

The Ararat hub has also made a significant impact on local communities through their engagement with stakeholders and licensees. In a recent stakeholder research survey conducted by the VCGLR, Ararat inspectors received a high level of satisfaction by licensees for their inspections of licensed premises.

As well as engagement with licensees through inspections, Ararat inspectors have also been targeting major events in the region. Attendance at events such as race days has identified areas of non-compliance and confusion by licensees. In May 2019, the VCGLR met with the Victorian Bookmakers Association to review obligations and best practice when it came to bookmakers adhering to the Code of Conduct.

Working closely with local council and Victoria Police has strengthened relationships and communications between the regulatory bodies. The Ararat inspectors have regularly taken part in joint operations with Victoria Police as well as assisted in the facilitation of inspector training with liquor licensing officers.

The Ararat hub covers an area of approximately 80,000 square kilometres encompassing Ararat, Ballarat, Central Goldfields, Corangamite, Glenelg, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Moyne, Northern and Southern Grampians, Pyrenees, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack. There are over 1300 licensed premises in this area.

The first year of the VCGLR's regional hubs has been a positive step to increasing the VCGLR's presence throughout Victoria.

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