

# Fact sheet

## Club bingo

This fact sheet outlines the applicable requirements and best practice of club bingo games.

### What is a club bingo game?

Club bingo is the game known as bingo, housie and housie-housie. It includes games like alphy, hoi and wild card. Club bingo can only be conducted at a club registered under the *Registered Clubs Act 1976* for the purpose of attracting patronage to the club's premises.

### Is a permit required?

No. A club does not need a permit for club bingo games. However clubs must comply with the requirements of the *Lotteries and Art Unions Act 1901* and the *Lotteries and Art Unions Regulation 2007*.

### What is a session?

A session is an unbroken period of time during which a series of club bingo games are conducted.

### What is the maximum value of prizes?

The maximum value of prizes in any one game must not exceed \$70. Any single prize must not exceed \$40.

If there is more than one winner in a club bingo game, the prize must be shared equally between the winners.

At the end of a session, a bonus prize valued at \$70 can be awarded as part of a ticket clean-up scheme. In this scheme, patrons of the session write their

name on the back of their used tickets. The tickets are placed in a receptacle, a draw is held, and the winner awarded the bonus prize.

Prize values must be at normal retail value. Prizes cannot jackpot from game to game, or from session to session.

### What prizes are allowed?

Prizes can consist of or include anything except a prohibited prize. Prizes can be goods, wares, merchandise, services, vouchers for goods or services that are not redeemable for money, and tickets for admission to entertainment.

Winners of shopping vouchers can redeem their voucher or store credit up to the value specified for products and services.

### What prizes are prohibited?

The following are prohibited prizes:

- ▲ money prizes (e.g. cash, cheques)
- ▲ tobacco products
- ▲ firearms or ammunition
- ▲ prohibited weapons
- ▲ cosmetic surgery or other procedure designed to improve personal appearance
- ▲ liquor prizes - 20 litres of liquor with an alcohol content not exceeding 20% by volume or 5L of liquor with an alcohol content exceeding 20% by volume.

Tickets for liquor prizes cannot be sold by or to a person under 18. Also, a person under 18 cannot give or collect a liquor prize.

## Is there a maximum price per ticket?

Yes. Tickets cannot cost more than five cents each.

No other charge is allowed – and no other payment can be accepted – for participating in a club bingo game.

## How should ticket sales be managed?

Games must be conducted fairly. A procedure should be adopted which ensures that all game material is secure, is distributed on a purely random basis, and cannot be manipulated.

Tickets must only be issued on a club's premises, and only to members and their guests.

Tickets for liquor prizes cannot be sold by or to a person under 18 years of age. Also a person under 18 cannot give or collect a liquor prize.

## Who can play?

Only members of the host club and their guests can play club bingo.

No person conducting or assisting in the conduct of the game can participate as a player.

It is unwise for club directors, management and employees to participate in club bingo games at their club because involvement arouses suspicion among other players if a director, manager or employee wins a prize.

## Can children play club bingo?

Legislation does not prohibit under 18s from playing club bingo.

Organisers and club management should decide whether children can play bingo in the club, and document the decision in the 'house rules'.

### Quick facts

- ▲ Conducted to promote patronage of a registered club by its members and guests.
- ▲ Can be conducted at any time.
- ▲ Total value of all prizes in any one game capped at \$70.
- ▲ A single prize in a game cannot exceed \$40.
- ▲ One prize valued at \$70 can be awarded each session in a clean-up scheme.
- ▲ Cash prizes not permitted. Vouchers for goods and services acceptable as prizes.
- ▲ Liquor prizes cannot exceed 20 litres with alcohol content not exceeding 20 by volume.
- ▲ The cost of a ticket cannot exceed five cents.
- ▲ Jackpotting of prizes not allowed.

## Are 'house rules' required?

Yes. A club must formulate rules under which persons can participate in club bingo games. The rules must cover:

- ▲ the conditions of entry (including the minimum age of the participants)
- ▲ the charge, if any, to be imposed for participating in the game and the method, if any, for discounting the charge
- ▲ how prizes will be calculated, determined and awarded
- ▲ the place, date, and time of club bingo games
- ▲ how prize winners will be notified
- ▲ the method for claiming prizes (including the course of action to be adopted if a prize is unclaimed)
- ▲ how disputes over the conduct of a game, or claiming a prize, will be resolved
- ▲ a statement banning persons conducting or participating in the conduct of club bingo games from participating as a player
- ▲ a description of the particular arrangement of numbers and symbols that must be covered in order to win a game

- ▲ the course of action to be adopted by the organisers of a game if the caller makes an incorrect call.

The rules must be displayed prominently at the place where club bingo games are conducted.

### How should games be advertised or promoted?

The rules must be clearly advertised and readily available to participants.

Patrons must be fully and clearly informed of the rules, thus minimising the prospect of complaints about the integrity of games and the promoter.

Participants must also be clearly informed of:

- ▲ the cost of tickets
- ▲ details of prizes and their value.

### Are there advertising restrictions?

Yes. A club must not publish, or cause to be published, any lottery advertising that:

- ▲ encourages a breach of the law
- ▲ depicts children participating in a club bingo game
- ▲ is false, misleading or deceptive
- ▲ suggests that winning will be a definite outcome of entering or participating in a club bingo game
- ▲ suggests that entering or participating in a club bingo game will definitely improve a person's financial prospects
- ▲ is not conducted in accordance with decency, dignity and good taste.

'Publish' means disseminate in any way – whether by oral, visual, written or other means (e.g. cinema, video, radio, television or the Internet).

Advertising or other publicity must not state or imply that club bingo games are authorised or approved by the Government or by any government agency.

### How should games be conducted?

Club bingo games cannot be advertised or conducted in aid of a charitable organisation.

No person conducting or assisting in the conduct of the game should participate as a player.

Games must be conducted in the presence of, and under the supervision of:

- ▲ two or more persons involved in the organisation of the games; or
- ▲ two or more persons involved in management of the club.

Any method may be used to allow players to win a game. A game may be won, for example, by a person being the first to complete one or two lines, or a full house, or a 'racetrack' (all outside numbers), or all numbers on the diagonal, or five numbers ending in seven.

Any number of separate games can be played on one bingo ticket provided the total value of the prizes in each game does not exceed \$70, and any single prize does not exceed \$40.

Whatever method is adopted, and before a game commences, organisers should announce a description of the particular arrangement of numbers or symbols that are required to be covered in order to win the game. The announcement should be capable of being heard by all participants present at the game.

All numbers drawn must be clearly announced to all the players present at the game.

When a player claims a win in a club bingo game, the numbers appearing on the ticket(s) must be verified by the person conducting the game, in the presence of at least one independent person.

No jackpot games can be conducted.

If there is more than one winner in a game, the prize must be shared equally between the winners. If this is impractical, the prize must be awarded to one of the prize winners by drawing lots.

## Can other lotteries be conducted with club bingo games?

Yes. One fundraising raffle can be conducted during each session provided a minimum profit of 40% is attained. There is no maximum value of prizes.

For more information refer to the 'Raffles' fact sheet at [fairtrading.nsw.gov.au](http://fairtrading.nsw.gov.au).

Trade promotion lotteries conducted by the club can include a club bingo game component. This is permitted only if we have issued a permit authorising the trade promotion lottery and if the club bingo game component is not the dominant part of the trade promotion lottery. This means there must be at least one other means of entry into the trade promotion lottery. For example, purchasers of a meal at the bistro could obtain a ticket in the trade promotion lottery as well as anyone playing bingo.

Other lotteries and games of chance (including promotional raffles, lucky door prizes, free-entry raffles and other competitions) are not permitted before, during or after a club bingo session.

## What records must be kept?

Proper and prudent records must exist. This means keeping all receipts, invoices and other records concerning costs and outgoings, and amounts received as payments for tickets.

The income and expenditure records must show:

- ▲ the gross proceeds of club bingo games and
- ▲ any costs and expenses of the games.

The income and expenditure records can be kept for a session of club bingo games rather than for each game in the session.

## How long must records be kept?

Ticket butts, draw documents and corresponding computer-generated documents must be kept for at least three months after the winner(s) are determined.

## Who is responsible?

The club's management must accept full responsibility for all aspects of the conduct of club bingo games and for ensuring that prizes are awarded.

The club can authorise other persons to conduct the game. Where this occurs, club management should satisfy itself as to the good standing and competence of the persons organising the games.

## Can the records be inspected?

Yes, by our authorised officers or police.

## Do penalties apply?

Yes. There are penalties for conducting a club bingo game contrary to requirements, including:

- ▲ failing to award the winner the prize
- ▲ conducting the game fraudulently
- ▲ misappropriating funds or prizes
- ▲ making false statements
- ▲ failing to keep books and records
- ▲ awarding prohibited prizes
- ▲ unlawful advertising
- ▲ hindering or obstructing authorised officers or police.

## Health regulations

The offer of perishable items such as green groceries, meat and fish as prizes is regulated under the *Food Act 2003*.

Such prizes must satisfy the same requirements that apply to food sold through normal retail outlets. These include:

- ▲ the manner of handling and packaging the food
- ▲ the manner of labelling packages of food
- ▲ the temperature at which food must be kept.

Contact NSW Health for more information.

Fish prizes must also comply with the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* and the *Fisheries Act 1935*.

A special permit is required.

Contact the NSW Department of Primary Industries for more information.

## For further information

This guide is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered, and with the understanding that NSW Fair Trading, part of NSW Department of Finance, Services and Innovation, is not passing legal opinion or other professional advice. If you require a more detailed understanding of the legislation, it is recommended that you contact a specialist adviser.

The law governing the conduct of this lottery or game of chance is the *Lotteries and Art Unions Act 1901* and the *Lotteries and Art Unions Regulation 2014*. Online access to the legislation is available at [legislation.nsw.gov.au](http://legislation.nsw.gov.au)