

The following information specifies the requirements for running free poker tournaments in Tasmania.

FREE POKER TOURNAMENT

‘Free poker tournaments’ are poker competitions that are conducted where there is no cost of entry and players are involved in a series of poker games essentially ‘for fun’.

These tournaments are often conducted by entertainment companies that are paid by venues to conduct the activities on their premises.

CHARGING FEES IS ILLEGAL

Provided that no money or anything of value is wagered by players (that is, participation in the event is entirely without cost or risk to players), then a tournament is not considered to be a gambling activity and therefore not captured by the provisions of the Gaming Control Act.

The Act states that gaming is “the staking or hazarding of money or something of value upon an uncertain outcome”.

The only operators lawfully permitted to charge a cost of entry to a poker tournament in Tasmania are Wrest Point and Country Club Casinos, therefore any poker tournament requiring a cost of entry that is not conducted at Wrest Point or Country Club Casino is illegal.

Penalties for conducting illegal poker tournaments may include fines up to \$100,000 or imprisonment for a term up to two years or both.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Poker tournaments can legally be operated in a hotel or club providing that no fee or cost of entry is charged to participate in the tournament, **and** no money (or anything of value) is wagered by players.

Requiring compulsory donations, membership subscriptions or the purchase of other goods to gain entry into a poker tournament is not permitted.

If an operator (other than a casino) of a poker tournament requires participants to:

- purchase a product from the operator;
- pay registration either as a one-off or periodic membership fee; or
- pay an entry fee in any way shape or form;

before being eligible to play the game, it will be considered that a cost of entry has been charged and the game is therefore being conducted illegally under the Act.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can chips with no monetary value be used in poker tournaments?

Yes. The use of playing chips or play money when conducting a free poker tournament is permitted providing there is no cost to purchase the chips or play money.

Does the Tasmanian Gaming Commission restrict the location of tournaments?

No restrictions are imposed by the Tasmanian Gaming Commission on the location where tournaments may be conducted, provided they are run lawfully.

Can venues require players to make a donation or purchase some other goods or service, for example the purchase of a T-shirt, in order to play?

No. Where an operator requires patrons to make a compulsory donation or the purchasing of any goods or services, the game is illegal and will be regulated under the Act.