

Fact Sheet: Conducting Poker Games in Tasmania

Who can run a poker game?

Only a licensed casino operator can run a poker game or tournament that involves wagering of money or anything of value. This includes running an event where an entry fee is charged and prizes are won. Running such an event without a licence is illegal.

Poker games or tournaments involving prizes can legally be operated providing that **no fee** or cost to participate is charged to play, **and** no money (or anything of value) is wagered by players.

Aside from a licensed casino operator, a lawful poker game can only be conducted where there is no cost to participate, and players are involved essentially 'for fun'.

What is an unlawful poker game?

A poker game or tournament involving prizes (of monetary or other value) is unlawful if an operator (other than a licensed casino operator) 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. If this occurs, it is considered that a cost of entry has been charged and the game is being conducted illegally under the *Gaming Control Act 1993* (Act).

Penalties

Under section 5A of the Act, the penalty for conducting an illegal poker game or tournament is a fine of up to 600 penalty units¹ for a first offence, and a fine of up to 1 000 penalty units, or imprisonment for a term of up to two years or both, for a second or subsequent offence.

¹ The value of a penalty unit can be located at:

https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/about/legislation/value_of_indexed_units_in_legislation

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 poker game involving prizes is permitted providing there is no cost to purchase the chips or play money, or to participate in the game.

Does the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission restrict the location of tournaments?

No. Restrictions are not imposed by the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission on the location where poker tournaments may be conducted, provided they are run lawfully.

Can venue operators 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 payment to participate in a game involving prizes, by way of compulsory 'donation' or the purchasing of any goods or services, the game is illegal.

Can I conduct a game or tournament that does not offer any prizes?

Yes. A game or tournament that does not involve any prizes (of monetary or other value) may be conducted.