

6 May 2012

HorizonPoll Casino Issues Survey – SkyCity proposal

65% yes for convention centre, 57% no to SkyCity deal

Putting aside the issue of who should operate it, **65%** of New Zealanders **want an international convention centre** built at Auckland.

18% oppose, while 17% don't know.

However, **56.9%** **oppose the idea of Government passing special legislation** to provide SkyCity with additional gaming machines, tables and other benefits in return for building a \$350 million convention centre.

24.6% **support** this trade off, while **13.4%** are **neutral** and **17%** **don't know**.

57.6% believe there have **behind-the-scenes discussions** between the Prime Minister, John Key, and SkyCity while a competitive tender process was under way.

If that has occurred, **68.4%** find that **unacceptable**, **13.5%** find it **acceptable** while **17%** are **neutral** on the issue.

57.6% think there should be an **independent inquiry into the tendering process**.

Asked if, **in principle**, any company should be able to secure **special changes to the law** in return for the economic benefits it might provide through a development

- **24.6%** support this
- **59.8%** oppose, while
- **19.2%** are not sure.

Results are from an HorizonPoll survey of 2,326 respondents aged 18+, conducted between April 24 and 27, 2012. Weighted the maximum margin of error is +/- 2%.

Survey Results

3pm 24 April to 7 15 27 April 2012

N 2,326 weight by age, gender, ethnicity, region, personal income and party vote 2011.

Maximum margin of error +/- 2%

Convention centre proposal

Firstly, some brief background to help you answer the next few questions...

The Government is considering passing special legislation which reportedly may allow the company which runs the SkyCity casino in Auckland to install more gaming machines and gaming tables, provide for more cashless gambling, and renew its operating licence.

In return SkyCity would build and operate a \$350 million international convention centre at Auckland.

SkyCity and the Government say the convention centre would provide up to 1000 jobs during its construction and 800 jobs when operating and the centre will be good for the New Zealand economy.

SkyCity currently provides 4000 jobs, 3,500 of them in Auckland, pays 2.5% of net profit to a community trust to go to charities, pays \$45 million in rates to Auckland Council and is Auckland's largest hotel operator with 660 rooms.

The Prime Minister, John Key, as Minister of Tourism, is reported as saying the idea of allowing SkyCity more gambling machines and tables in return for building the centre was his.

Those who oppose the proposal say special law changes should not be made to benefit individual companies.

Auckland Council is reducing the number of gaming machines allowed in the city. It is argued that any increase in gaming machines for SkyCity means the number of machines other trusts may use must be reduced, along with the profits they can distribute to charities.

Opponents also argue additional gaming machines will increase social harm.

5. Putting aside the issue of who should operate it, do you think New Zealand should have an international convention centre at Auckland?

A. Yes		65.3%
B. No		18%
C. Don't know		16.7%

6. Do you support the idea of Government passing special legislation to provide SkyCity with additional gaming machines, tables and other benefits in return for building a \$350 million convention centre at Auckland?

A. Strongly support		9%
B. Support		15.6%
C. Neutral		13.4%
D. Oppose		18.4%
E. Strongly oppose		38.5%
F. I really don't know		4%
G. Comment		1.2%

Decision making process

The Prime Minister in 2009 asked Ministry of Economic Development officials, managing a tender process to find organisations to build a convention centre in Auckland, to stop work on this until SkyCity had submitted a proposal.

Later five tenders were submitted, though one tenderer said the tender documents did not ask about funding.

The Government says SkyCity's was the only proposal which would build the centre without the need for Government financial support.

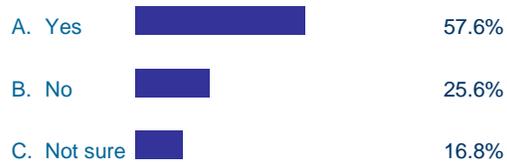
7. Do you believe there were behind-the-scenes discussions between Prime Minister John Key and SkyCity while a competitive tender process was under way?

A. Yes		57.4%
B. No		8.8%
C. Don't know		32.4%
D. Comment		1.3%

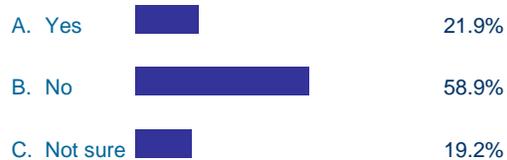
8. If there were behind-the-scenes discussions between Prime Minister John Key and SkyCity while a competitive tender process was under way is this acceptable to you?



9. Should there be an independent inquiry into the tendering process?



10. In principle, should any company be able to secure special changes to the law in return for the economic benefits it might provide through a development?



Respondents are members of Horizon Research's HorizonPoll online panel, recruited to match the New Zealand adult (18+) population at the 2006 census. A weighting system is used to ensure respondent samples represent the population surveyed. Qualitative results are available to Horizon clients through the Horizon Research online results system.

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