

# Support a Sinking Lid on Pokies in Hamilton

In 2013, Hamilton City Council will vote on whether or not to change the local policy on pokie machines. To minimise harm from problem gambling and protect our community, a 'sinking lid' policy is the best choice. **You will have a chance to tell the Council what you think about pokies in Hamilton.**

There are 460 pokies in 31 venues in Hamilton. The current policy allows venues to merge and transfer machines.

The Council's proposed policy is not a true sinking lid. The Problem Gambling Foundation of New

Zealand supports a sinking lid on pokies - no new venue licences being granted under any circumstance. This will ensure a safer and healthier Hamilton.

## What is a 'sinking lid'?

A sinking lid policy means no new licenses for pokie machines can be issued, and pokie machines cannot be transferred to a new pub or owner if the venue closes. **It is a way to gradually reduce the destructive harm caused by pokies, the most dangerous form of gambling.**

All submissions must be received by Council by 4pm on Monday, 12 August 2013.

Submission hearings scheduled for 29 August 2013.

Find out more on the Problem Gambling Foundation website: [www.pgfnz.org.nz](http://www.pgfnz.org.nz)

Nearly \$2.4 million is lost every day on pokies in pubs and clubs in New Zealand.<sup>1</sup>

Over 40% of the money lost on pokies comes from people experiencing gambling harm – that's nearly half the money lost on pokies coming from people who have a gambling problem.<sup>2</sup>

Māori and Pacific adults are about 3.5 times more likely than adults in the total population to develop gambling problems.<sup>3</sup>

One in ten New Zealanders say a family member has gone without something they needed or a bill has gone unpaid because of gambling. Overwhelmingly, pokies were the reason why.<sup>4</sup>

Regular pokie players are at risk of developing a gambling problem as two in five (40%) of regular pokie gamblers will experience problems.<sup>5</sup>

Expenditure on pokie machines is high. In 2012, nearly \$23 million was lost on pokies in Hamilton – that's \$241 per adult.<sup>1</sup>

Pokies are dangerous, addictive machines and the most harmful form of gambling. Between 66 and 80% of people who seek help for gambling problems use pokies the most.<sup>6</sup>

Our vulnerable communities suffer as pokie machines are concentrated in the more deprived areas of New Zealand.<sup>7</sup>

Kids whose mums or dads are addicted to pokies have reported feeling neglected, ignored, unloved, and unable to trust their parents.<sup>8</sup>

In poorer areas the ratio of pokies to people is one to 75 whereas in our wealthy areas, the ratio is one pokie machine to 465 people.<sup>8</sup>

Every person with a gambling problem affects between five and ten other people.<sup>9</sup>

Social costs of gambling are out of proportion to the numbers of problem gamblers. Gamblers may commit crimes to finance their gambling, causing harm to their victims, their families and themselves, and incurring costs in the criminal justice system.<sup>10</sup>

1 Sourced from DIA data.

2 Productivity Commission. (2010). Gambling. (50). Canberra. Corroborated with data from Centre for Social and Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation & Te Ropu Whariki. (2008). Assessment of the Social Impacts of Gambling in New Zealand. Auckland: Ministry of Health.

3 Ministry of Health. (2009). A focus on problem gambling: Results of the 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey. Wellington.

4 Health Sponsorship Council. (2012). New Zealanders' Knowledge, Views and Experience of Gambling and Gambling Harm: Results from the 2010 Health and Lifestyles Survey.

5 Gray, R (2011). New Zealanders' Participation in Gambling: Results from the 2010 Health and Lifestyles Survey. Wellington: Health Sponsorship Council.

6 Ministry of Health. (2011) Service User Data.

7 Wheeler, B, Rigby, J., & Huriwai, T. (2006). "Pokies and poverty: Problem gambling risk factor geography in New Zealand." *Health & Place*, 12(1).

8 Darbyshire, P., Oster, C., & Carrig, H. (2001). The experience of pervasive loss: Children and young people living in a family where parental gambling is a problem. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 17(1).

9 Ministry of Health. (2010). Preventing and Minimising Gambling Harm: Six-year strategic plan 2010/11–2015/16. Wellington.

10 Centre for Social and Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation & Te Ropu Whariki. (2008). Assessment of the Social Impacts of Gambling in New Zealand. Auckland: Ministry of Health.