

# **Gambling and Gambling Harm in New Zealand**

TE RŌPŪ ĀWHINA MATE PETIPETI O AOTEAROA  
**Problem Gambling Foundation  
of New Zealand**



## Choose me not Gambling

I am only a little child, without a voice  
Dad and Mom you've made your choice,  
You choose gambling over me  
You choose your happiness and Yes! you both agree,  
You might think that I'm young and I don't understand  
Of course I do, it's just that I'm not given a chance,  
I wish I can say something and tell you both how I feel  
How much this gambling has affected my mind is so real,  
I have been having problems sleeping because you argue a lot  
And all I can hear, is that you have lost the jackpot.

There's no money left to buy my lunch the next day  
And I know exactly what you are going to say,  
"Son! you're not going to school, you have to stay"  
"There's no food, we will wait for the next pay day",  
I cried in bed until I sleep at night  
I'm sad, because it's not my fault and I can't say my right,  
I suffered a lot because of your selfish decision  
You both gamble all because of the wrong reason,  
You want to become millionaire straight away  
But that's not going to happen, the machine ate all your pay.

I wonder how life would be like without these machines  
A happy life, happy family, it's the best thing,  
But if you can't stop gambling or choose me  
Then it looks like my life, is only a dream,  
Dad I miss your voice reading me stories at night  
Mom I miss your cuddle that squeeze me so tight,  
I wish we can be a happy family again  
I don't want to lose you both until the end,  
Stop gambling and choose me please  
I promise I'll give back, as long as you both live.

*Written by: Jiroh Tam Robert Junior Mamea, 9yrs, Otahuhu Primary School*

This was submitted as an entry in the Mapu Maia/Radio Samoa Gamblefree Day Children's Poetry Competition 2011.

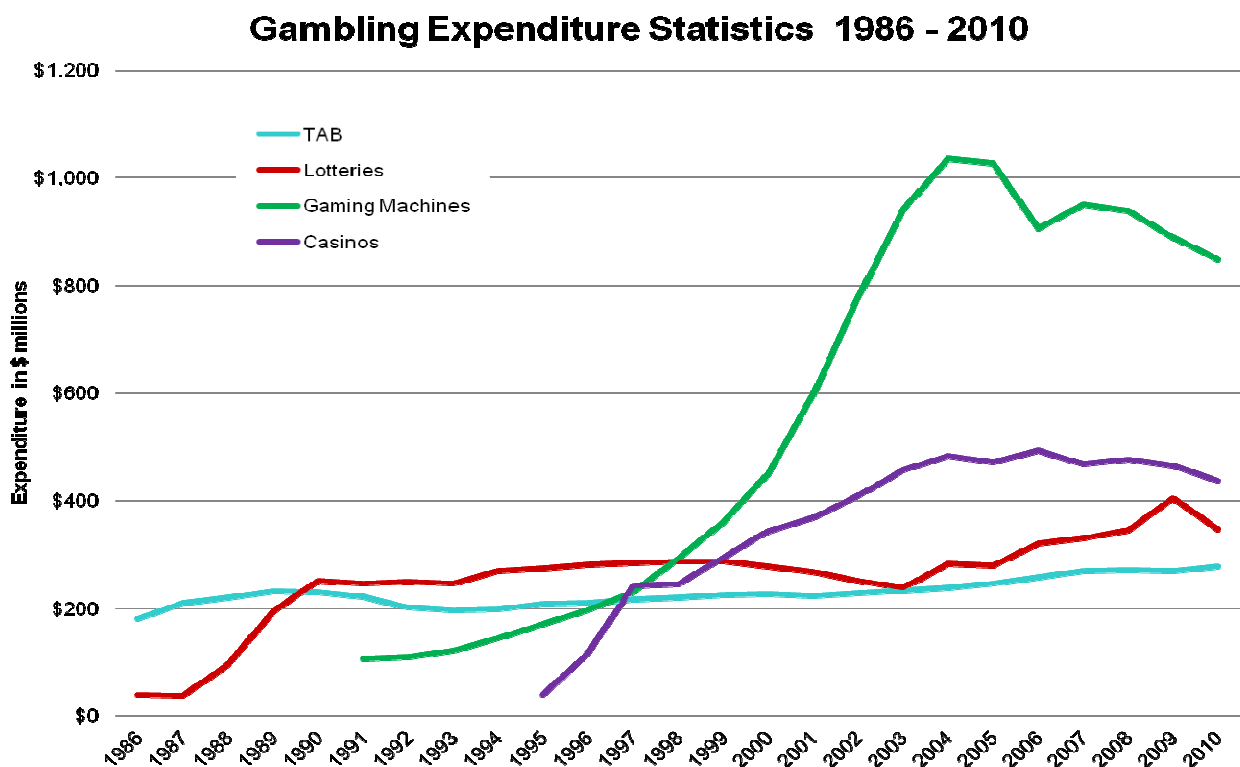
## Gambling in New Zealand

\$1.9 billion is lost to gambling annually in New Zealand<sup>i</sup>. Of that amount:

- \$5.2 million is lost gambling each day in New Zealand.
- \$2.3 million is lost on non-casino pokies each day in New Zealand.

Gambling expenditure<sup>ii</sup> has expanded rapidly in New Zealand during the last 20 years. Gambling expenditure nearly quadrupled from \$482 million in 1990 to \$1.913 billion in 2010.<sup>iii</sup>

44% of current gambling expenditure is from non-casino electronic gaming machines (pokies),<sup>iv</sup> making it the largest of the four main gambling sectors.



Source: Department of Internal Affairs

**With the introduction of the Gambling Act 2003 pokie machines have reduced. As machines have reduced, so too have pokie losses.**

## Pokies are the Major Cause of Gambling Harm

Pokies are the main gambling mode of problem gambling clients seeking help (74% of new clients seeking face-to-face counselling in 2010)<sup>v</sup>:

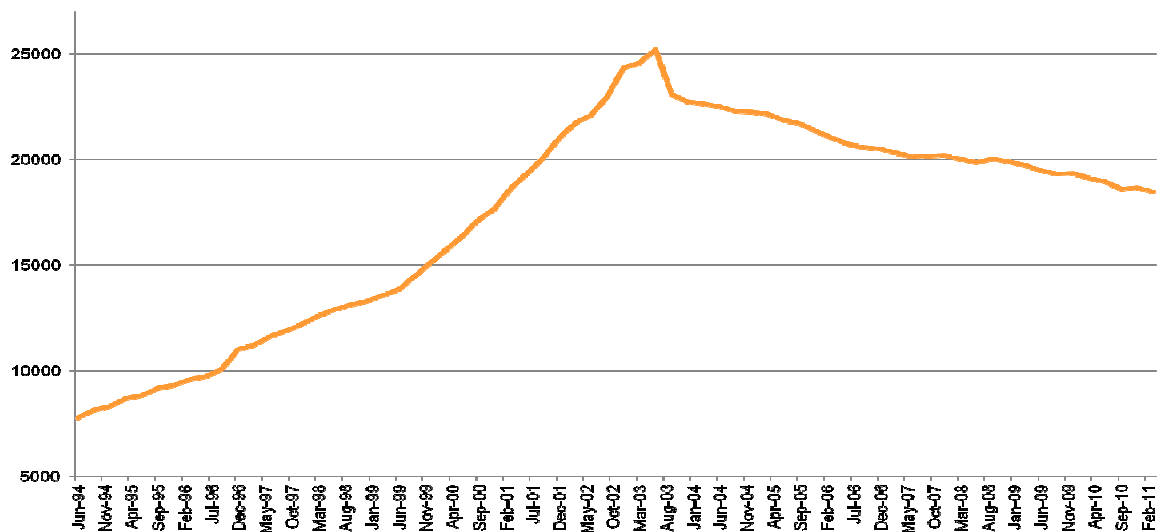
It is estimated that:

- 1 in 4 (25%) regular pokie machine players (participates weekly or more) will experience a problem at some point.<sup>vi</sup>
- 1 in 5 (20%) regular pokie machine players have current problems.<sup>vii</sup>
- Each pokie machine takes on average \$46,000 each year.

Over 74,000 people in New Zealand (2.4% of the population) would expect to have a better state of mental health if there were no gambling.<sup>viii</sup>

- **1,107 pokie venues and 323 clubs venues = 18,484 pokie machines**
- **6 Casinos = 2,818 pokie machines**

**Number of pokie machines in NZ, 1994 - 2011**



Source: Department of Internal Affairs

**The number of non-casino pokie machines has reduced following the introduction of the Gambling Act 2003 and City and District Council' introducing "sinking lid" policies. Numbers are still very high.**

## Problem Gambling in New Zealand

Estimates are that between 0.3% and 1.8% of adults in New Zealand are problem gamblers at any particular time.<sup>ix</sup> That is up to 60,000 people nationwide.<sup>x</sup>

There are also a significant number of people who are harmed by someone else's gambling. It is estimated that approximately 5-10 people are adversely affected to varying degrees by behaviour from a person experiencing problem gambling.<sup>xi</sup> **This could be 300,000-600,000 people harmed from others gambling in New Zealand.**<sup>xii</sup>



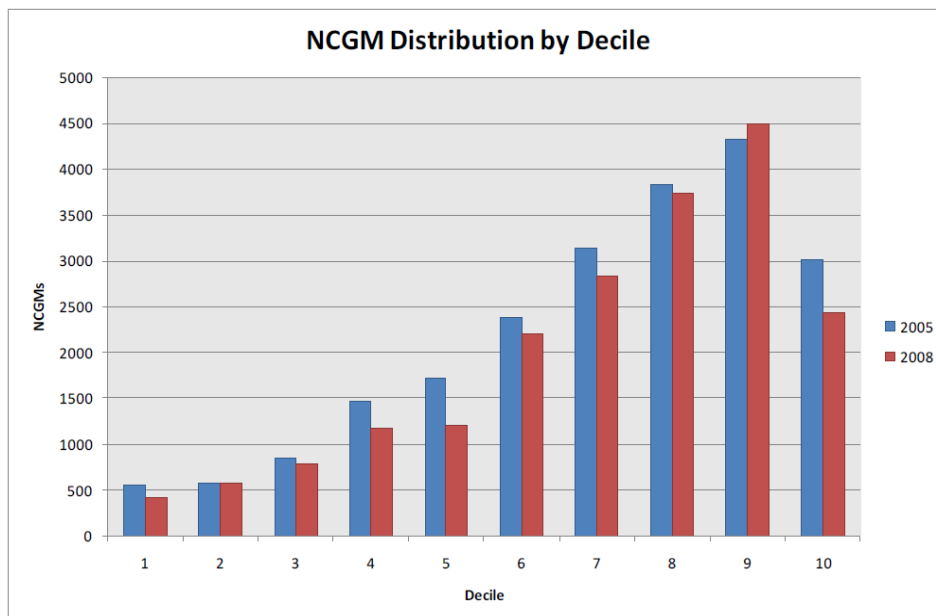
Source: Ministry of Health

## Gambling and Vulnerable Populations

Certain population groups are more vulnerable to gambling problems in New Zealand.

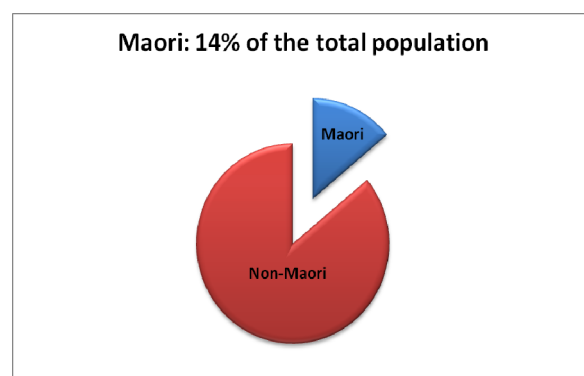
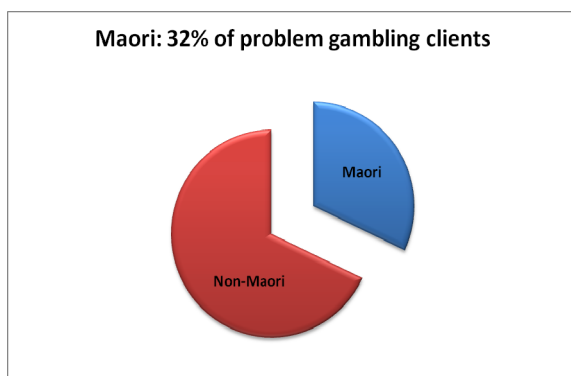
- Maori and Pacific adults are approximately four times more likely to be problem gamblers compared to the population.<sup>xiii</sup>
- Most pokies are located in highly deprived socio-economic areas.<sup>xiv</sup> Census area units with a deprivation decile rating of 8 or above accounted for 56% of all pokie expenditure.
- Maori and Pacific peoples are over-represented in these deciles, which may contribute to making them more vulnerable.

There is increasing concern about the vulnerability of youth populations to gambling as well.



Source: Department of Internal Affairs

**Pokies are concentrated in more deprived areas. Most pokies are in decile 8-10 areas – our lowest income communities.**



Source: Ministry of Health and Statistics New Zealand

## **The Big Challenges**

### **Pokie Trusts**

We need a more efficient and transparent system to end the rorts, the lack of compliance, and the illegal activity associated with current pokie trusts system. Just 12% thought the distribution of gambling profits should stay with people who operate gambling activities, such as pokie trusts.

### **Community Funding Model**

Many groups have ethical issues with taking pokie funding, but have few alternatives. This funding model is a barrier to reducing pokies, as there is a strong incentive to maintain this funding stream.

### **The Community does not have a Significant Say on Pokies**

Communities have no ability to reduce the number of pokies in their neighbourhood. Councils do not have the power to reduce or abolish pokie venues, only the power to prevent additional pokie venues and machines.

### **More Gambling Availability and Accessibility**

There is pressure from some to expand gambling opportunities: more casino pokies, scratchie tickets online, other online gambling opportunities and more advertising. Gambling is being normalised. Evidence suggests that additional availability and accessibility will lead to more harm.

### **Online Gambling**

While participation in online gambling is currently much lower than other forms of gambling, the potential for expansion and for harm is significant.

## Where to get more Information

A full list of references listed in this booklet is available at  
[www.pgfnz.org.nz/references](http://www.pgfnz.org.nz/references)

## Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand

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