

Chief Executive
Dunedin City Council
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Attention Kevin Mechen

I would like Dunedin City Council to support Alternative Option 2 a “sinking lid” policy on gambling machines.

Pokie machines are causing harm to Dunedin, not just to individuals with gambling problems but our whole community.

Gambling is in oversupply

- Over \$16 billion was gambled in New Zealand in 2008 - \$38 million a day
- \$938 million was lost on pokies outside casinos in 2008 (this was the same amount spent on the entire NZ Police Force).
- Dunedin has 605 gaming machines in 49 venues.
- \$22 million was lost in pokies in Dunedin in 2008.
- \$60,288 is lost each day in pokies in Dunedin.
- Each pokie machine in Dunedin averages \$34,865 takings annually.
- Dunedin currently has a density of 1 machine per 155 people over 18.

How do pokie machines affect our communities?

- Machines are most likely to be sited in vulnerable communities. Dunedin has 425 machines in poor decile 7-10 areas (70% of Dunedin's machines).
- Prevalence studies indicate that approximately 562-1,687 people in Dunedin could be problem gamblers and 3,934 to 28,679 people could be directly affected from others problem gamblers in Dunedin.
- 10,000 people in New Zealand committed illegal activities due to their gambling in the last year.
- The latest New Zealand research indicates that pokies result in net loss of economic output, employment, and household income. Pokies could be costing the Dunedin economy 200 full-time equivalent jobs each year.
- Problem gamblers suffer from increased rates of bankruptcy, arrest, imprisonment, unemployment, divorce and poor physical and mental health.
- One in five regular pokie players has a gambling problem. Approximately 70% of problem gambling is attributed to pokies (outside of casinos).

Community funding

- There is no good evidence of decline in community funding as a result of sinking lid policies. Record amounts of money were distributed in recent years. The Department of Internal Affairs report that fewer operators should mean that overall costs go down, there are economies of scale and a good return to the community.
- Currently Pokie Trusts give over \$20 million a year to horse racing prize money and each year use around \$150 million (in admin costs) to distribute around \$350 million. A fairer and more efficient system could mean greater returns to the community.

By introducing a moratorium on pokie machines, Council can limit some of the harm caused by gambling, and in doing so help to protect the health of some of its most vulnerable citizens.

Yours truly