

Media release

26 July 2011

Canterbury at high risk of problem gambling

The Problem Gambling Foundation is concerned about the high risk of problem gambling in Canterbury.

Figures released by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) show spending on pokies in Christchurch City, Selwyn District and Waimakariri District increased by over \$4 million from the previous quarter.

Tony Milne from the Problem Gambling Foundation in Christchurch, says this increase in pokie spending in Canterbury is alarming and reflects the vulnerable situation in Christchurch.

“Pokie venues in Canterbury need to urgently take this dramatic and unprecedented increase seriously. We are calling on venues to be more vigilant with their host responsibility including actively approaching all customers saying they are concerned about people post-earthquake and giving them a flyer with help information as a matter of course”.

“We are expecting that we will see more people experiencing problem gambling in Christchurch,” he says.

“Problem gamblers account for 40 percent of the money lost on pokie machines and based on the significant increase in spending in Canterbury, this is cause for concern,” Tony Milne says.

Figures released by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) show pokie machine spending in the three months to June in Christchurch City was up by \$3,848,346, Selwyn District was up by \$115,082 and Waimakariri District was up by \$232,887 compared to the previous quarter.

Spending on pokies in Christchurch City is up nearly \$4 million compared to the same quarter last year.

The Problem Gambling Foundation calls on the Council to maintain its sinking lid policy and consider all other options to minimise harm to Christchurch residents.

For free, professional and confidential help with your own or someone else's gambling problems: Ph 0800 664 262, Email help@pgfnz.org.nz or visit www.pgfnz.org.nz

Ends

For further information please contact:

Tony Milne

National Public Health Practice Leader
Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand
Ph 021 59 32 59