

# No limit to pokies problem

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No chance ... research finds each new poker machine contributes to problem gambling

Problem gamblers are being created at a rate of almost one for every new poker machine introduced, new research has found.

Increasing numbers of poker machines continue to create new problem gamblers, with no "saturation point" ever being reached in a community, new research has found.

Dr Judith Stubbs, an adjunct senior research fellow at the City Futures Research Centre in UNSW's Faculty of the Built Environment, co-authored a paper, published in the journal *International Gambling Studies*, which found that problem gamblers were being created at a rate

of almost one for every new electronic gaming machine (EGM) placed in the community.

The paper also found that there was no evidence that use of gaming machines slowed or plateaued in a community as more machines were brought into use.

"For every additional EGM placed in a community, an additional 0.8 [problem gamblers](#) is created on average," Dr Stubbs said.

"Also, we have not found that we ever reach a saturation point."

Dr Stubbs and co-authors John Storer and Max Abbott based their research on a review of 34 problem gambling surveys conducted in Australia and New Zealand since 1991.

The paper concludes that holding poker machine numbers steady or reducing them could reduce problem gambling issues: "Policies related to restricting or reducing the density of EGMs are likely to play a significant role in containing or reducing gambling-related harms" it stated.

In 2006 there were 200,850 poker machines in Australia, with almost half located in NSW. Figures from Queensland's Office of Economic and Statistical Research which show gambling was worth \$17.6 billion in 2005/06, accounting for 2.9 per cent of Australian household disposable income. Poker machines accounted for 60 per cent of that [gambling](#) expenditure.

**More information:** The paper was produced by Judith Stubbs and Associates and can be viewed [here](#).

Provided by University of New South Wales

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