

Analysis reveals the Western Sydney suburbs at ground zero of the gambling epidemic

October 20 2023



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

New analysis reveals just three areas in Western Sydney are at the epicenter of gambling related harm in the region, accounting for one-third of all Sydney's poker machine losses.

The Center for Western Sydney's latest paper, "[Luck of the draw? Inside Western Sydney's gambling harm epidemic](#)," for the first time identifies the locations where a concentration of pokies and disadvantage collide to put communities at higher risk of [gambling](#) harm. The paper is the second in a series on the effects of gambling by the Center based at Western Sydney University.

Nearly \$9 million a day is lost gambling in pubs and clubs in Sydney's West.

The Center's analysis shows that despite only making up 16.5% of Sydney's population, just three local government areas—Fairfield, Canterbury-Bankstown and Cumberland—account for one-third of all Sydney's gambling losses.

Fairfield is at ground zero of the gambling harm epidemic, with one poker machine available for every 55 people.

Report author, Mr. Tom Nance said, "The data emphatically shows that Western Sydney is the ground zero of gambling related harm. All thirteen locations of significant concern, where some of the most vulnerable are at significant risk of losing big, are in the region."

"High levels of socio-economic disadvantage are a significant risk factor for gambling related harm," he said. "This continues to play out in [real-time](#) in Western Sydney where the frontlines of the gambling related harm epidemic mirror its most disadvantaged local areas."

The analysis of the latest ABS Census data and data from Liquor and Gaming NSW further reveals:

- Despite only containing 54% of Sydney's population, Western Sydney endures 63% of electronic gaming machine losses.

- There was an increase of 169 electronic gaming machines in Western Sydney in the previous 12 month reporting period, compounding the already high levels of electronic gaming machine saturation in the region.
- The disproportionate number of "mega-clubs" in Western Sydney is a significant contributor to this saturation.
- The frontlines of the gambling related harm epidemic align with locations that experience high levels of socio-economic disadvantage.

Mr. Nance said the identification of the locations at the epicenter of the issue provides an evidence-based rationale for targeted interventions, which are critical to addressing the impacts that communities face due to gambling related harm.

"Over three quarters of these locations are defined as being in the top decile in Sydney for both disadvantage and electronic gaming machine saturation, and are home to at least one pub or club that is in the top decile for profits from gambling," he said.

Mr. Nance added that given the significant proportion of locations of concern situated in Western Sydney, insights from those on the ground will be critical in addressing the epidemic and should inform the Minns Government's cashless gaming technology trial.

More information: Luck of the draw?: Inside Western Sydney's gambling harm epidemic: www.westernsydney.edu.au/_dat... Draw-compressed.pdf

Provided by Western Sydney University

Citation: Analysis reveals the Western Sydney suburbs at ground zero of the gambling epidemic (2023, October 20) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-10-analysis-reveals-western-sydney-suburbs.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.