

Gamble Free Day: Sept 1 2006

In 2002, NZ had the second highest number of pokie machines per capita in the world. Pokie machines account for 81% of all gambling in this country (see press release below, and CPAG “Our Children, the Priority for Policy” p.58).

Our deregulated gaming industry drains the meagre resources of low-income families and communities. It holds out false promises of prosperity and community reward, while profits go elsewhere, into the hands of a few. Children inevitably suffer.

Child Poverty Action Group supports Gamble Free Day. CPAG does not take funds from gambling related activity.

CPAG supports all groups working to ban pokie machines from their community.

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Joker's bar sucks Manurewa dry

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Press Release

Foodbanks see gambling woes

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Greens back Gamble Free Day

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Press Release: Problem Gambling Foundation

Press Release

Joker's bar sucks Manurewa dry [31.08.06]

"Pokies in Joker's bar are sucking Manurewa dry to fund elite South Island sports," says Pesio Siitia, Health Promotion Worker for the Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand (PGF).

The Joker's bar is situated in Manurewa, one of the lowest socio-economic areas of New Zealand. In the last financial year it had \$1.8 million of profits to distribute to the community through the Trusts Charitable Foundation.

"This bar had almost \$2 million leave Manurewa and not one cent went back into the local Manurewa community. The bulk of the funding went to the South Island with more than a third going to racing. Only a little over \$12,000 went to community activities other than racing or sport," says Ms Siitia.

"The main justification we were given for the introduction of pokies to our communities some years was that profits could be returned for community activities. This is clearly not happening in the case of Joker's," she says.

"This is a very poor community that is being targeted to provide funding for elite sports at the opposite end of the country," says Siitia.

"Pokies in pubs and clubs are the primary mode of gambling for over 81% of problem gamblers, and our Maori and Pacific people are over represented in these figures."

"The pokies aren't only sucking money from Manurewa grants, but they are also taking food off the table, shoes and clothes off children, and making the rent go unpaid."

Problem gambling devastates communities, which has been seen in a large number of gambling-related crimes reported. These include theft, fraud, kidnapping and murder. A 2004 KPMG study found gambling to be the second highest motivator for property crime and the highest motivator for fraud.

"Only this week there was yet another report of a woman stealing from her employer to gamble on the pokies," she says.

Last year:

New Zealanders lost \$2.027 billion through all forms of gambling

\$1.027 billion was lost on non-casino pokie machines

There are 20,739 non-casino pokies in 1701 venues

Pokies were the primary mode of gambling for 81% of clients

2714 new clients (gamblers and their families) sought help in the year ended 30.06.05

Over 60% of problem gamblers live in low socio-economic areas

The picket will be outside Joker's bar, 185 Great South Road, Manurewa from 12 noon on Friday 1st September.

Foodbanks see gambling woes

Thursday, 31 August 2006, 2:34 pm

Press Release: Salvation Army

31 August 2006

Foodbanks see gambling woes

Poverty and gambling remain inextricably tied, with people in poor areas lured by a sense of false hope.

A routine survey of those using Salvation Army foodbanks shows a disproportionately high number of their clients have gambling problems.

Major Lynette Hutson, the Army's national manager for Addictions and Supportive Accommodation Services, said government and the gambling sector continued to under-estimate the extent of the problem among those who could least afford to lose their money.

"If the people we talk with at our foodbanks are in work, they might typically earn \$300 a week. Spending a quarter of that on pokies, at the casino or on Lotto, leaves little if anything to pay the everyday bills.

"It doesn't matter where we are talking about in New Zealand, poverty is always the constant."

Major Hutson said that while there had been a decrease in pubs and clubs with pokie machines, they were still concentrated in poorer areas.

"These are the people who can least afford to gamble. But they are wooed by a faint glimmer of false hope. The problem spirals until it affects all areas of their lives, their jobs, their families, their friends."

The Salvation Army began surveying users of some of its foodbanks in 2003. Of those seeking foodbank help, 14 per cent admitted to gambling problems – against the national average of 1.35 per cent.

Major Hutson said those figures remained largely unchanged and the foodbanks continued to survey clients to identify whether they had a gambling problem, for which they needed help.

"An alarming trend is that the majority of those affected by problem gambling are in families with dependent children. There is also a high prevalence of Maori and Pacific Island women."

Major Hutson is calling on government to increase the problem gambling levy. The Ministry of Health is currently asking for submissions on its Preventing and Minimising Gambling Harm: 2007-2010: Consultation Document. It includes a three-year service plan, problem gambling needs assessment and problem gambling levy calculations. Submissions close September 29.

Under the proposal, gambling outlets will be required to fund the levy to the tune of approximately \$23 million a year over the next three years – compared with player losses of \$5 million a day.

“The levy needs to be increased so we can more actively respond to what has become a huge problem in many communities. Gambling is so insidious and tends to be far more hidden. Addictions to drugs and alcohol emerge more quickly because you can see the effects of abuse.”

Hutson cites the case of one client who worked 72 hours a week to support his wife and three children.

“He was looking for a way to ease the burden and gambling gave him an illusion that he was going to make some money. He felt hopeful. But in reality, he lost his home, his wife, access to his children, his job and his health.”

Hutson said it was not uncommon to go into the homes of those who admitted gambling problems and find they had sold everything of value, including children’s beds, the fridge and the washing machine.

* Source: Department of Internal Affairs, www.dia.govt.nz

Ministry Welcomes Gamble Free Day

Thursday, 31 August 2006, 10:06 am

Press Release: Downtown Community Ministry

Ministry Welcomes Gamble Free Day

Balloons representing the 100 000 New Zealanders affected by problem gambling will be released at Parliament this Friday and Downtown Community Ministry will be there to show its support.

The event will coincide with many others around the country marking the 2nd annual Gamble Free Day.

In Wellington, a pokie machine will be wrapped up in chains and displayed in Manners Mall. Onlookers will be told that Gamble Free Day saves \$5.5 million, the amount spent each day in New Zealand.

DCM takes a stand against problem gambling by not accepting funds from gambling.

Pokie machines are the biggest problem area for DCM clients and others with gambling addictions.

Foodbank use has also been connected to gambling.

In Auckland, a study has shown that areas with high concentrations of pokie machines also tend to be areas with high numbers of foodbank users.

“Evidence about the links between gambling and poverty, crime and social exclusion are overwhelming, we commend any efforts to make people more aware of its impact,” says DCM Director Stephanie McIntyre.

Greens back Gamble Free Day

Green Party MP Sue Bradford is encouraging New Zealanders to join together tomorrow to show their concerns over the harm problem gambling does to individuals, families and communities.

Spokesperson for Gambling Issues Ms Bradford will take part in a rally at Parliament at 9am to mark Gamble Free Day. At the event 1000 helium balloons will be released in recognition of the estimated 100,000 problem gamblers in New Zealand

Other events are being held around New Zealand including a picket in Auckland at midday, outside the Jokers Bar, 185 Great South Rd, Manurewa. The aim is to protest about the way pokie proprietors are sucking money out of the local area, one of the poorest communities in New Zealand.

Last year \$1.8 million of community funding from the Jokers Bar went to organisations outside Manurewa. Of this \$1.18 million went to South Island organisations. A total of \$5.4 million was lost by Manurewa gamblers at Jokers Bar last year.

“We believe we should continue to reduce the number of non-casino gaming machines available in this country as speedily as possible. Pokies inflict huge harm - they are the primary form of gambling for 81 percent of people who use problem gambling services,” Ms Bradford says.

“The impact of problem gambling can be seen in the ever increasing numbers of people who come before the courts and end up in jail because of their addiction.

“It also disproportionately impacts on low-income families, with over 60 percent of problem gamblers coming from low socioeconomic areas.

Pokie proprietors deliberately target low income districts like South Auckland, and at a minimum we believe the proceeds of gambling that come from these areas should go back to the local district rather than being siphoned off to other, more affluent, areas,” Ms Bradford says.

“We call on other political parties to support the Greens in demanding amendments to the Gambling Act which would enable local councils to have more control over pokies in their districts, and to reform the way pokie profits are distributed to make it more accountable.

“Problem gambling has become so serious in this country as a result of the proliferation of pokies that I believe MPs from all parties should support these and other measures to reduce and mitigate the harm being done every day.”

Press Release

PGF makes a difference on Gamble Free Day [30.08.06]

"Problem gambling has harmed too many New Zealanders and 1st September is the day to make a difference," says Kawshi De Silva, Public Health Director for the Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand (PGF).

"This is the second annual Gamble Free Day and PGF is marking it with events up and down the country, from a CD release to a picket in Manurewa, to the release of 1000 balloons from Parliament steps in Wellington, to a joint agency Hui in Invercargill. It is very exciting that many communities will be involved in recognizing the harm gambling causes, and especially the damage done by pokies," says Dr De Silva.

Pokies account for over 81% of gambling problems because of their accessibility and availability in communities and \$1.027 billion was lost on pokies in pubs and clubs last year. However, only 12% of problem gamblers in New Zealand are seeking help which means a further 88% are not accessing the help that is available.

Problem gambling devastates communities, which has been seen in a large number of gambling-related crimes reported. These include theft, fraud, kidnapping and murder. A 2004 KPMG study found gambling to be the second highest motivator for property crime and the highest motivator for fraud.

"Only this week there was yet another report of a woman stealing from her employer to gamble on the pokies," she says.

"New Zealanders need to know what is going on in their communities and how much problem gambling can harm them, their loved ones and their wider community.

Last year New Zealanders lost \$2.027 billion through all forms of gambling

- \$1.027 billion was lost on non-casino pokie machines
- There are 20,739 non-casino pokies in 1701 venues
- Pokies were the primary mode of gambling for 81% of clients
- 2714 new clients (gamblers and their families) sought help in the year ended 30.06.05
- Over 60% of problem gamblers live in low socio-economic areas

Auckland

- Release of CD, "We Gotta Stop" at Dawn Raid studios (133 Kolmar Road, Papatoetoe) 10-11.30am. Song written by Lil' Tyrone, a 16 year old from Northcote, about gambling and the effects it has on him and his peers, speaking from personal experience. *Contact: Catherine Fitzsimons, PGF Auckland on (09) 369 0621, (027) 354 6588 or email catherine.fitzsimons@pgfnz.org.nz*
- Picket at 12 noon outside Joker's bar (185 Great South Road, Manurewa). Jokers distributed \$1.8 million in gamblers losses last year but none of it went to the local community. *Contact: Bill Bradford, PGF Auckland on (09)369 0610, (027) 346 2372 or email bill.bradford@pgfnz.org.nz*

Whangarei

- A table will be set up at 12 noon in the middle of Whangarei mall giving out stickers and balloons. *Contact: Diane Matthews on (09) 430 2033, (027) 489 4802 or email diane.matthews@pgfnz.co.nz*

Hamilton

- Display with other service providers (10am-3pm) in the centre of Garden Place. *Contact: Catherine O'Kelly, PGF Hamilton on (07) 834 0014, (027) 489 4801 or email Catherine.okelly@pgfnz.co.nz*

Wellington

- One thousand balloons representing the 100,000 people affected by problem gambling are being released at Parliament steps at 9am. Hon. Damien O'Connor, Minister for Problem Gambling will be available for comment and Green MP Sue Bradford will meet the delegation. *Contact: Kawshi De Silva, PGF Auckland on (09) 369 0613, (027) 489 4804 or email kawshi.desilva@pgfnz.org.nz*
- Gamble Free Day activities in Manners Mall (Cnr Manners and Cuba Streets) from 11:30am-2pm. A pokie machine wrapped in chains will be the centerpiece. Staff will be wearing a green T-shirts with the key message GAMBLE FREE DAY SAVES \$5.5 MILLION. The activity is in conjunction with Oasis. *Contact: Terry Taumaa, PGF Wellington (04) 473 4360 or email terry.taumaa@pgfnz.co.nz*

Nelson

- PGF and Maori Social Service are doing a joint community awareness raising exercise Te Kahui Haurora are doing a joint effort with a focus on the newspaper. A full page in the lifestyle section with interviews with two consumers and a large advert of our joint service. *Contact: Phil Townshend, PGF Nelson (03) 546 1994, (027) 229 0088 or email phil.townshend@pgfnz.org.nz*

Christchurch

For all Christchurch events please contact David Coom, PGF Christchurch on (03) 379 2824, (027) 459 4722 or david.coom@pgfnz.co.nz

- Linwood – A community expo (177 Linwood Avenue) which will feature static displays, films and media displays, quiz's, interactive games and refreshments between PGF, Salvation Army and He Waka Tapu 10am–2pm. The event features invited guest, Hon. Ruth Dyson, Minister of Senior Citizens, Disability Issues and ACC
- Christchurch City – display and speakers in Christchurch Square, outside the Cathedral
- Christchurch Korean restaurants – 19 Korean restaurants are giving a 10% discount for customers on Gamble Free Day
- Hornby – joint community event with Presbyterian Church, PGF and Heartlands project with youth focus – involving workshop panel, invited community agencies 12 noon–2pm. Held at Heartlands Services, 25 Shands Road
- Aranui – Barbeque and information dissemination 12 noon–2pm as a joint project with Aranui Community Trust (Aranui Community Trust, Hampshire Street)

Greymouth

- PGF in partnership with social service agency 'Family Focus' are hosting a lunch with displays and speakers – targeting mainly health and social service providers 12 noon–2pm (Family Focus Services, 18 Tasman Street)
Contact: Ian Newcombe, PGF West Coast (03) 768 0369 or iannewcombe@familyfocus.co.nz

Invercargill

- PGF in partnership with Nga Kete Matauranga Pounamu are planning a Hui 12 noon–2pm with other stakeholders (83 Don Street)
Contact: David Coom, PGF Christchurch (03) 379 2824, (027)459 4722 or david.coom@pgfnz.co.nz

Asian Services

For all Asian Services activities please contact: Wen Li Zhang, PGF Asian Services, Auckland (09) 369 0618 or wenli.zhang@pgfnz.org.nz

- Distributing pamphlets and stickers to promote Gamble Free Day in Britomart 8–10am and along Queen Street, Auckland City from 10am-1pm

PGF provide free and confidential services to anyone with – or affected by – problem gambling. All

you have to do is call us free on 0800 664 262.

For more information please contact Dr Kawshi De Silva on (09) 369 0613 or (027) 489 4804.

Eliminating harm caused by gambling
0800 664 262