

Did you know?

- Every day \$5.5 million is lost by people gambling in New Zealand. That adds up to about \$2 billion in a year.
- Every year it is estimated approximately \$450 million is returned to communities from profits of pokie machines in clubs and pubs, the Lotteries Commission, and casinos.
- Children of problem gamblers are more likely to develop a gambling problem themselves in the future.
- It is estimated that in some areas, one in three people seeking help from food banks do so because of their own or another's gambling.
- Most people who seek help for gambling have a problem with pokie machines in pubs and clubs.
- The legal age for buying an Instant Kiwi, placing a bet at the TAB, and playing the pokies in pubs and clubs is 18 years. It is illegal to buy an Instant Kiwi for someone under 18. The legal age for playing in a casino is 20.

Want to know more?

This pamphlet is one of three in a series. The others are *Problem gambling affects us all – how to make a difference* and *Is there a problem – concerned about your own or someone else's gambling?*

For more information about problem gambling, or if you'd like to talk to someone about your own or someone else's gambling, phone **0800 654 655**. The Gambling Helpline is open every day and all calls are free.

Government agencies, community and health organisations, and gambling operators around New Zealand are working to reduce the harms caused by gambling. If you would like to know more about what is being done, visit www.ourproblem.org.nz or call **0800 654 655**.

Sources:

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Note:

The images that appear in this pamphlet are everyday New Zealanders who agreed for their images to be used as a reflection of kiwi lives.

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Problem gambling

Our families, our communities, our problem



What is problem gambling?

Gambling has been around for a long time in New Zealand. Many of us have bought a Lotto ticket, played the pokies, put a bet on the horses, or played housie at the local hall.

Gambling can be fun. It can be an entertaining time out with friends and family. But it can also cause problems for some people and their families and can have harmful consequences for communities.

Problem gambling is when people, and often their families or communities, experience harm or distress as a result of gambling. Problem gambling can affect our health, our relationships, our finances, our employment, our children, and the community we live in.

What are some of the effects of problem gambling?

What can problem gambling look like?

Problem gambling can affect us in many different ways. Sometimes, we might not even think that we have a problem.

Sometimes people think constantly about gambling. They might start skipping work to gamble, or steal to pay for it.

Gambling can affect families when bills are not being paid because the money has been spent on gambling. Families may experience guilt, anger, hurt, stress, shame, and arguments in the home. Sometimes a family member is spending less time at home, relationships and children are being neglected, or family items like TVs suddenly disappear.

The impacts of problem gambling can include families not having food on the table, crime, people not turning up to work, or bankruptcy.

"I didn't reckon I had a problem for a long time. I thought that I could stop if I wanted to. And I kept up with the rent and my kids' birthday presents. I thought that if I could afford it, I couldn't have a problem. I even thought that it was my partner who had the problem. Just shows that gambling was affecting my family – I just didn't see it at first."

"I see the effects of problem gambling in our community every day. I see families who are struggling to make ends meet at our food bank." *Major Lynette Hutson, Salvation Army.*

"Everybody in the community suffers with problem gambling – rents are not paid, rates not paid, children's clothes are not bought, food is not bought. Businesses suffer as well." *Bill Aston, Ngāti Porou Hauora in Gisborne*

Problem gambling affects us all...



"I had always enjoyed gambling. A TAB bet on the horses, cards with friends or going to the races. There was a fun social aspect to all these activities. But over time the fun went out of gambling for me. I thought I had health problems I could not face, and soon I had financial problems."

"He distances himself from everybody. The world could blow up and he wouldn't notice. It's almost as if he's having an affair with somebody." *Val, whose partner has a gambling problem.*

Problem gambling affects us all

While it is estimated that about 50,000 New Zealand adults may have a serious gambling problem or be at risk, it is also estimated that at least five other people are directly affected by one person's problem gambling.

Many families and communities around New Zealand are affected by problem gambling. Problem gambling can lead to, or is associated with:

- relationship breakdown, divorce and separation
- decreased work productivity
- strained or ruined friendships
- crime
- depression
- suicide
- alcohol and drug abuse
- other health problems
- debt and loss of assets
- violence in the home
- isolation from a person's culture, family and community
- neglect of children
- poverty.

Problem gambling affects our economic well-being, our health and our whānau.