The Northern Territory Government will reform the gaming industry with the introduction of a cap on the number of community poker machines in licensed venues.

The Gaming Minister Chris Burns introduced the amendments into Parliament today.

“Many Territorians enjoy playing the pokies – and don’t experience any problems – winning is really about knowing when to quit. But for about 1 per cent of Territorians gambling can become an issue,” Dr Burns said.

“Playing the pokies excessively can seriously affect many aspects of someone’s life. Gambling may also affect family and friends.

“Placing a cap on the number of poker machines will help build better Territory communities.”

The reforms will:

- cap the number of pokies in community licensed venues at 1190 – no more poker machine licences will be issued above this number
- maintain the current cap on pokies in pubs at 10 and 45 in clubs
- raising the tax threshold on poker machines for pubs and clubs. This will reduce Government’s revenue from the machines by $5.3 million to $23.7 million – an 18% decrease
- work with industry to develop a plan allowing pubs and clubs to trade poker machines, within the set cap, to provide an income stream for smaller businesses
Dr Burns said the Territory Government's levy on the operation of electronic gaming machines in Territory hotels is not affected by the reform and will continue to fund grants to non-profit organisations through the Community Benefit Fund.

The gaming levies have resulted in more than 500 organisations receiving Community Organisation grants since 2002.

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