Anti-gambling Initiatives Receive Funding Boost

The Northern Territory Government has provided almost $700,000 to community groups to tackle gambling abuse.

The Racing, Gaming and Licensing Minister Chris Burns said the funding is available under the Community Benefit Funds’ Gambling Amelioration Grant program, which is funded through levies imposed on the operation of electronic gaming machines in Territory hotels.

“A lot of Australians gamble – whether it’s on the lotto, scratchies, pokies, the horses or dogs,” Dr Burns said.

“Most people enjoy themselves. But about 1 per cent of Territorians find it hard to know when to stop.

“The Gambling Amelioration Grant program was established to support interventions that reduce problem gambling and minimise the harm that can result.

“The latest round of successful grant applicants includes worthy recipients who provide important community services.”

The grant recipients are:

- **Sommerville Community Services**
  $184,746 for two years to expand their financial counselling services in Darwin and Palmerston

- **Menzies School of Health Research**
  $300,000 over three years to fund the *Gambling Worries* project – a three-way partnership involving the Australian Integrated Mental Health Initiative, Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi Aboriginal Corporation in Central Australia and Amity Community Services. The project measures the impact of gambling interventions in remote communities

- **isee-ilearn** (sponsored by the Arts and Education Institute of Central Australia)
  $210,000 over three years for their *Word of Mouth* project, which involves interactive CDs and DVDs in language and supported by local community story tellers

Since 2002, the Northern Territory Government’s levy on pokies in hotels has provided more than $2.5 million in amelioration grants.

The Northern Territory Government has implemented a cap of 1190 on pokies and raised 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 per cent decrease.

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