Media Release

Peter Styles
Minister for Business

Electronic gaming machine reforms

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The Territory Government is introducing reforms to the regulation of electronic gaming machines in pubs and clubs from January 1 next year.

“With introduction of this new system, there will no longer be a need for an arbitrary Territory-wide cap number on gaming machines,” Business Minister Peter Styles said.

“The current cap of 1190 machines has been in place since 2008 and has recently been reviewed and found to be outdated.

“According to the ABS, since 2009 the Territory’s population has grown by 20 000 and there have been many new licensed venues opened that may wish to pursue the option of offering gaming machines in their venues.

“With the cap in place, they have been prevented from doing so and we are restoring an even playing field so that new entrants aren’t competing at a disadvantage.

“The Government has decided to lift the cap but to address concerns regarding more machines in pubs and clubs we are introducing a one-off fee, payable by each venue, for every additional gaming machine approved.”

Pubs and clubs will be required to pay $10 000 per machine and hotels $50 000. The levy will be payable as a one-off payment per machine at the time of application.

From 1 July 2015, the number of electronic gaming machines available to individual venues will also increase.

“Clubs will be allowed a maximum of 55 machines per venue. Pubs will be allowed a maximum of 20 per venue. They are currently limited to 45 machines and 10 machines respectively,” Mr Styles said.

All applications for new gaming machine licences and applications for an increase in the number of electronic gaming machines at a venue will be subject to a tough community risk-based assessment process.

“I believe we have struck an appropriate balance by responsibly managing growth in machine numbers,” Mr Styles said.
“I want to assure the public that there will be a rigorous process before any new electronic gaming machines are approved. This will include community consultation, examination of socio-demographic densities and an independent community impact statement.

“Northern Territory taxpayers could expect to receive several million dollars in increased taxation revenue and entitlement fees.

“As a result of these changes, there will also be an increase in funds available to non-government organisation through the Community Benefit Fund.

“We have been working with Amity House and Somerville Community Services to ensure that an appropriate portion of these funds is channelled into programs for problem gamblers.”

The Community Benefit Fund receives money from levies imposed on the operation of electronic gaming machines operated by licensed hotels throughout the Northern Territory.

In 2012-13 the CBF provided more than $800,000 in gambling amelioration grants.

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