MEDIA RELEASE

Natasha Fyles
SHADOW MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

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SNEAKY CLP PLAN TO EXPAND POKIES

Shadow Minister for Government Accountability, Natasha Fyles today, said industry rumours are rife that the CLP are planning to sign off increasing poker machines on January 1 without any consultation with the community.

“According to industry sources the CLP will triple the number for machines in pubs to 30 and raise the number by 25 to 70 for clubs,” Ms Fyles said.

“This expansion triples the number of pokies in pubs and adds another 25 machines to club venues.

“Under the changes the Government will set the Electronic Gaming Machine license purchase price at $50,000 per machine.

“A cap was placed on pokie machines in 2008, capping the total number of machines at 1190 across the Territory.

“Under current arrangements pokie machine numbers are capped at 10 for pubs and 45 for clubs.”

Ms Fyles said the CLP Government’s planned expansion of pokies comes despite significant concerns in the community about the impact on problem gamblers and their families.

“Any increase in the numbers of pokie machines should involve community consultation and an independent assessment of social impacts,” Ms Fyles said.

“Territorians lost in excess of $68 million on pokie machines in pubs and clubs alone in 2013-14 across 1181 machines, equating to $57,627 per machine, up 12.6 per cent on the previous year.

The Territory already has the highest proportion in Australia of pokie machines per 1000 people, at 12.9 compared to the national average of 11. *

The NT Gambling Prevalence Survey undertaken in 2006 found 90 per cent of respondents believed the numbers of gaming machines should be reduced or stay the same. This is the only comprehensive report documenting community attitudes towards gambling in the NT. *

“Research shows problem gamblers are more likely to play pokie machines over any other form of gambling,” Ms Fyles said.

“The CLP Government is not taking the wellbeing of the community into account and can only see the revenue generated from gambling.”

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(* Amity Community Services Discussion Paper, August 2014.)