



SMOKEFREE LEGISLATION LINKED TO DROP IN GAMBLING

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The Smokefree Coalition is welcoming figures from Internal Affairs showing that New Zealanders are spending less on gambling. The reduction in expenditure is thought to be linked to the December 2004 ban on smoking in indoor workplaces, including bars, clubs and gaming venues.

Figures out today for 2004/05 show that spending on the main forms of gambling fell by 0.6 percent from a record high of \$2.039 billion in 2003/04, to \$2.027 billion last year. It is only the second time in 25 years that total spending has fallen from the previous year.

Smokefree Coalition Director Mark Peck says that the gambling decrease is an unexpected, but positive, spin-off from the smokefree legislation.

"We know that smokefree bars, clubs and casinos have saved lives by reducing people's exposure to second-hand smoke. Now it seems there has been another benefit – helping keep money out of pokie machines, and in the pockets of families."

He said that having to go outside for a cigarette probably gave gamblers time to think about whether they really wanted to go on feeding the machines.

"Reducing gambling was certainly not one of the aims of the smokefree legislation – but we'll take it. Having to go outside to smoke has also

encouraged people to cut back on their smoking or quit – another bonus for the family budget.”

For more information:

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