



Research says keep pokies cap

We spend \$562 each

By **EMMA GUMBLETON**

THE number of pokies in Territory pubs and clubs should continue to be capped, a new study recommends.

The one-year baseline study, led by Charles Darwin University researcher Martin Young, surveyed 1800 people across NT to create the most accurate snapshot of our gambling.

Dr Young said that on average every Territorian lost \$562 a year on poker machines – but 75 per cent of all losses could be attributed to just a small group.

Regular gamblers make up 7-8 per cent of the population but were responsible for three quarters of spending. And problem gamblers, about 1.1 per cent of the population, made up for a third of the expenditure – blowing more than \$30,000 a year.

“Seventy per cent of the adult population gamble and most without harm,” Dr Young said.

“But it’s usually a small group of people who are suffering the harm, and these tend to be people who are socially disadvantaged – they are more likely to have low education, low income and have English as a second language.

“So what we see is an enormous amount of expenditure by a small minority.”

More than \$270 million was spent on pokies alone in the past financial year.

Annual pokie losses have increased from \$45 million to \$114 million in eight years, helped by growth in machines.

Hotels are not allowed to have more than 10 machines, while clubs can have up to 45.

Dr Young said the caps should be maintained.

The report has been submitted to the Community Benefit Fund, which funded the research, and handed to the Territory Government.