

Gambling addiction

Playing the pokies, the crack cocaine of the gambling industry, is strongly addictive.

The evidence, including the insightful story of addiction and recovery in the *Weekend Herald*, is totally clear. We have no need to go through a protracted debate as we did before the unhealthy nature of cigarette smoking was accepted.

Playing the pokies to the point of addiction ruins lives. It ruins families. In the long term, the player cannot win. If the machine is set for 85 per cent random success, on average, the player will get back \$85 for every \$100 spent.

Everything about the experience is structured to reinforce the thrill of winning and entice a player to win back losses.

To fund a convention centre, in a crowded international field of competing centres with low occupancy, using pokies profits is like putting a very low tax on cigarette sales, thus encouraging smoking, in exchange

for tobacco companies funding a new hospital.

That is just silly. Any politician who cares about people will vote against the proposal.

— Kevin Broughan, Hamilton.

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