Monaco, Macau, Australia…
gambling meccas of the world

ONE POKIE
FOR EVERY
110 OF US

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THERE is now one poker machine for every 110 people in Australia, putting the nation in the top 10 of international gambling meccas, alongside Monaco and Macau.

Australia also has the eighth-highest total number of gaming machines, with 186,344 in pubs and clubs, industry figures show.

Anti-gambling activists are urging the Federal Government to adopt a “stop, revive, survive” style approach – similar to the safe driving campaign – to pokie reform and introduce a mandatory cut-off period to help people break their habits.

“The player logs in with his or her personal code and the machine stops after, for example, two hours’ playing,” researcher Charlotte Fabiansson said in research provided to the Government by the Social Justice and Social Change Research Group at the University of Western Sydney.

“The player can choose to take a 15 or 30 minutes’...
Number is up as problem gambling back on agenda

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has declared he hates pokies and the damage they do to families, and wants to crack down on problem gambling.

But he faces fierce opposition from the states and territories, and the powerful gaming industry.

The Productivity Commission has proposed cutting cash payments down to $250 from the present $2000 limit, banning automated teller machines from all venues and increasing the present shutdown limit for poker machines from six hours a day in an attempt to fix problem gambling.

The major banks have also joined the campaign against many of the changes.

They wrote to the Federal Government last week saying a plan to limit withdrawal amounts and move ATMs further away from gaming areas would not work.

Anti-pokies campaigner and independent Senator Nick Xenophon called on the Federal Government to bypass the states and take action on its own.

“It shouldn’t be underestimated what a powerful vested interest the pokie machine industry is from clubs to casinos to manufacturers. Of course they are squealing,” he said.

Senator Xenophon said the Federal Government should use its taxation powers to make pokie machines unprofitable.

“It’s a question of political will. I believe Kevin Rudd was genuine when he said he hated the pokies and the damage they did to families. But how will those strong words translate into action?

“He has talked the talk and now he has to walk the walk,” Senator Xenophon said.

A final report on gambling from the Productivity Commission will be handed to the Federal Government next month.

Federal and state ministers are due to meet in April to discuss what action should be taken on problem gambling.