

Poker machines

Topic summary from the NSW Gambling Survey 2024

This summary highlights key findings about poker machines from the NSW Gambling Survey 2024, with some comparisons to the 2019 survey results.

Poker machine use remains common

Fewer people used poker machines in 2024 compared to 2019, but the activity remains common. 14.3% of adults used poker machines in the past year, down from 15.7% in 2019. It is the second most common gambling activity, behind lotteries (40.9%).

Who plays poker machines?

Men were more likely to play poker machines (17.8%) than women (11.1%), especially men aged 18–24 (31.5%). Poker machine use was also more common among:

- People in regional NSW - 18.5% compared to 12.2% in Greater Sydney
- Employed people - 16.0% compared to 11.6% of those not working
- Aboriginal people - 31.6% compared to 13.8% of non-Indigenous people
- People without tertiary qualifications - 20.7% compared to 8.3% of tertiary educated people
- People who speak English at home - 15.8% compared to 56% of people who speak another language at home.

Poker machines cause more harm than other forms of gambling

Poker machines are responsible for more harm than all other forms combined. They are responsible for 54.8% of total gambling harm in NSW. Poker machines are higher risk than other types of gambling. Almost one in five people who use poker machines experienced moderate- or high-risk gambling (18.5%), compared to 5.8% of all gamblers.

Longer sessions and regular use increases the risk

Over a third (35.0%) of people who used poker machines at least once a month experienced moderate- or high-risk gambling. The risk also increases with session length, with moderate- or high-risk gambling experienced by:

- 25.4% of people whose usual session lasted 1-2 hours.
- 35.0% of people whose usual session lasted 2-3 hours.
- 61.1% of people whose usual session lasted 3 hours or more.¹

Research referenced

Browne M, Rockloff M, Hing N, Russell A, Boyle CM and Rawat V (2019) *NSW Gambling Survey 2019*, Central Queensland University. Commissioned by the NSW Responsible Gambling Fund. Report available at: <https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/check-out-our-research/published-research/nsw-gambling-survey-2019>

Browne M, Russell AMT, Dellosa G, Rockloff M and Hing N (2024) *NSW Gambling Survey 2024*, Central Queensland University. Commissioned by the NSW Responsible Gambling Fund.

¹Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI). This study uses the term 'high-risk gambling' instead of 'problem gambling', and 'minimal-risk gambling' instead of 'non-problem gambling'.

Report available at: <https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/check-out-our-research/published-research/nsw-gambling-survey-2024>