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EDITORIAL

NT News

Profits should be kept local

TERRITORIANS love a punt and for most of us having a flutter is an exciting and harmless pastime.

We are stereotypically known as the big-drinking, big-gambling capital of Australia. Figures released exclusively to the *NT News* today show we are spending less on gambling. Perhaps this is driven by floundering economic times or maybe we are just finding other ways to spend our hard-earned dollars these days.

It may be surprising to some but we are resisting the temptation to play the one-armed bandits and the traditional scratchies are really falling out of favour.

However, we are punting more on online gambling sites and at the racing track. While the amount punted by Territorians, and the gambling participation figures are interesting, they are a side note to the issues that matter.

The first is that gambling organisations which redirect significant profits back into our community, rather than siphoning them overseas or down south, should be prioritised over all others.

Outlets which have a presence in the Territory, employ local people at shopfronts, donate to local sports groups and advertise here are welcome in our community.

But the most pertinent thing we should look at when assessing reports, such as today's by the Menzies School of Health Research, is the number of Territorians considered "at risk" of problem gambling problems.

Almost 12 per cent of adult Territorians are classified as "at-risk" gamblers. That means more than one in 10 of us gambles to excess, causing significant stress on the household income.

While the right for the rest of us to have a harmless bet should never be taken away, it is this 12 per cent who need to be provided with all the help they need to live a financially healthy life.