

# Poisonous pokies

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By MARK FLACK

THE economic downturn has done nothing to slow Logan's spiralling gambling problems with punters continuing to pump record amounts into the city's poker machines.

In the first nine months of 2009, more than \$91 million was lost on Logan's one-armed bandits.

Last year's total expendi-

ture of \$123 million is set to be eclipsed, with the busy Christmas period ahead.

This year's losses came as Logan's workforce felt the full effects of worsening financial conditions.

Latest estimates from the Federal Government show the city's unemployment rate increased over the first three months of the year.

In some areas it jumped to 17 per cent, or four times

higher than the state figure. State Member for Beaudesert and vocal anti-poker machine campaigner Aidan McLindon said the number of poker machines had to be capped before the problem worsened.

"If we fast forward 10 years from now, who's to say that (losses) won't be \$200 million," he said.

"It could quite easily double and that comes

straight out of the local economy and that's what cripples the local economy.

"With \$100 million we're talking 20 per cent of (Logan City's) budget, that is the amount that is being sucked out of the community and that has to have a flow-on effect on businesses and industry in the area."

This year poker machine numbers in Logan increased from 1878 to 1904.

An application for another 200 poker machines to be installed in the city is currently before the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation.

In September, each of Logan's poker machine earned an average of \$5297.

During the same period, pokies in Brisbane took an average of \$3768 while machines in Ipswich collected \$3752 each.