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# Junior gamblers battle addiction



## Threats to kill D'Arcy

CHILDREN as young as 10 are battling serious gambling problems, a major study has revealed.

And they have few difficulties side-stepping the law.

The first national study of the gambling habits of Australia's youth has found a tenth of kids aged 10-14 fit definitions of "at-risk" or "problem" gamblers.

And a third have adults willing to place bets on their behalf.

Anti-gambling campaigner the reverend Tim Costello said "every parent should be very concerned" by the report, released by the Australian Council for Educational Research.

"Essentially the long arms of the gambling industry reach into our youth," Mr Costello said. "It softens them up, even when they are children, because they always need a new

**Vonnie Barry**  
education reporter

generation (of addicts)." The study, based on surveys with 5600 Australians aged 10-24, found widespread experimentation with gambling.

While many just dabbled in footy tipping competitions or sweeps, others claimed to be sneaking into casinos and playing table games, and competing in online gambling sites.

Almost a third of kids aged 10-14 said they had played pokies in the previous year, more than half had purchased scratchies, and about 30 per cent claimed to have punted on horse or dog racing.

The study found "problem gamblers" typically had a positive attitude to gambling, low self-esteem, friends who gambled, and

delinquent behaviour. Study co-author Dr Gabrielle Matters could not explain the rates of self-reported casino wagering: "Either it's bravado, or the question has to be asked: How are they getting in?"

"We're not at all sure whether kids know probability theory (and their chances of winning), or whether they are being influenced by (advertising in the media," she said.

A spokeswoman for Gaming Minister Michael O'Brien said: "The Government is very concerned about the prospect of children engaging in gambling."

She said Mr O'Brien had "sought and received" advice from the Responsible Gambling Ministerial Advisory Council on minors in gaming venues, and had set up a working party to implement various recommendations.



### WHAT KIDS PUT THEIR MONEY ON

Football tipping/sweep	52.8%
Scratch cards	50.1%
Cards (at home)	40.4%
Bet via someone else	33.1%
Lottery	30.3%
Horse/dog racing	27.5%
Bingo	27%
Sports betting	24.7%
On-line gambling	16.3%
Casino games (not cards)	7.6%
Pokies	6.7%
Card games (casino)	5%

Source: Australian Council for Educational Research

SWIMMING bad boy Nick D'Arcy (above) has allegedly been menaced by a man who threatened to kill him. A Gold Coast retiree has been charged with threatening to murder the swimmer and with stalking him and his Sunshine Coast-based parents, Susan and Justin D'Arcy.

Philip Stevenson, 59, was granted bail in the Southport Magistrates Court on Friday.

While D'Arcy, 24, was surprised the man had been released, he said nothing would shake his focus on competing at the London Olympics.

Police will allege Mr Stevenson delivered a letter containing threats to kill D'Arcy to a pool where he trains.