

8 COMMUNITY OPINIONS ON THE NUMBER OF EGMS IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

8.1 Background

The 2005 NT gambling prevalence survey found that 49% of adults would like a decrease in the number of pokies in their local community, while a further 49% said the numbers were about right, and just 2% indicated they would like to see an increase (Young et al. 2006). Similar findings to the NT were also present in South Australia in their most recent gambling prevalence survey (ACIL Allen Consulting, The Social Research Centre & The Problem Gambling Research and Treatment Centre 2015) and in New Zealand, where more than 60% of the community wanted a reduction in EGMs outside of the casinos (Abbott, Bellringer, Garrett & Mundy-McPherson 2015).

The 2015 Northern Territory survey asked respondents, *Thinking about pokies, should the number of pokies in the following places be increased, decreased or stay the same?* With answers collected separately for casinos, clubs and hotels. The closest matching question in the 2005 survey asked respondents, *Do you think the number of poker machines and other gaming machines currently available in your local community should be increased, decreased or stay the same?* The 2005 survey data is broadly comparable with the 2015 data on hotels and clubs.

8.1.1 Chapter contents

This chapter contains information on:

- Comparison of community views on changes in EGM numbers between the 2005 and 2015 surveys.
- Community preferences on changes in number of EGMs in hotels, clubs and casinos in the NT
- Community preferences on changes in number of EGMs in hotels, clubs and casinos for regions, gender, age and EGM gambling frequency

8.2 Chapter highlights

- Fifty-three percent and 50% of respondents indicated that they would like to see a decrease in EGMs numbers in NT clubs and hotels respectively, while 41% said the same about EGMs in the casinos. Results for clubs and hotels were similar to that observed in the 2005 survey regarding EGM numbers in community venues.
- There was significant variation across regions (30% in Regional Towns to 59% in Alice Springs) and age groups (38% for those under 35 years to 61% in those 55 years and over) about community indicating a preference for a decrease in EGM numbers in hotels.
- The age effect present for EGMs in hotels was not observed for clubs or casino EGM numbers.
- There was a significant association between EGM frequency of play and community opinion on EGM numbers in hotels, clubs and the casinos. Specifically, 60% of weekly EGM players indicated a preference for a decrease in EGM numbers in hotels and 52% for clubs.
- The majority of the community opinion indicates a preference for a decrease in EGM numbers in both hotels and clubs, but less so for casinos, and this opinion was more common amongst weekly EGM players.

8.3 Community opinions on EGM numbers in hotels, clubs and casinos

In 2005, just under half of all NT adults thought the number of EGMs should decrease in their local community, and a further 49% said that the number of EGMs should stay the same. The 2015 question posed separately for hotels, clubs and casinos found similar responses for clubs and hotels in 2015, with 53% and 50% stating there should be a decrease in clubs and hotels respectively, and 42% and 49% stating there should be no change to EGM numbers in clubs and hotels respectively. In 2015, for casinos, 41% of respondents said a decrease in EGM numbers and 55% endorsed keeping EGM numbers the same. Five percent said there should be an increase in EGMs in clubs, compared with 2% for hotels, and 4% in casinos, while in the 2005 survey it was 2% of people.



Figure 60: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in the NT by venue type, 2005 and 2015 NT Adult population

8.4 Community opinion on change in number of EGMs by region, age and gender

In 2005, there was a significant association between region and a change in EGM numbers in the local community (Figure 61). In the Rest of the NT a smaller percentage of people answered that they would like to see a decrease in EGM numbers (41%), compared with other regions ranging between 51 and 53%. More also said stay the same in the Rest of the NT (56% cf. between 46 and 48%), and a greater percentage said they would like an increase in EGM numbers (4% cf. 1% or less in other regions).

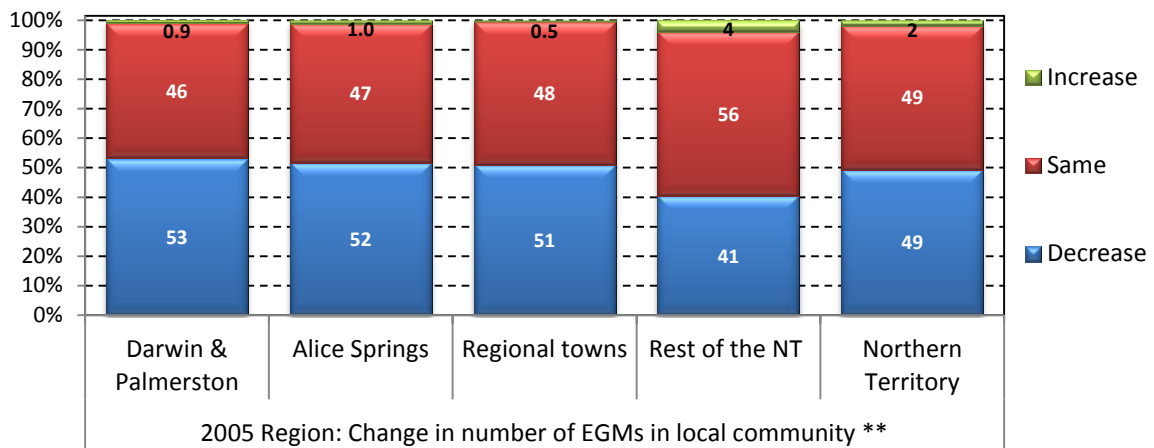


Figure 61: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in the local community by region, 2005 NT Adult population

Significant association between region and change in EGM numbers: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Figure 62 shows 2005 preferences for changes in the number of EGMs in the local community by gender. There was no significant difference between how men and women answered this question, though a higher percentage of women (2.2%) responded that they would support and increase in EGM numbers compared with men (1.3%).

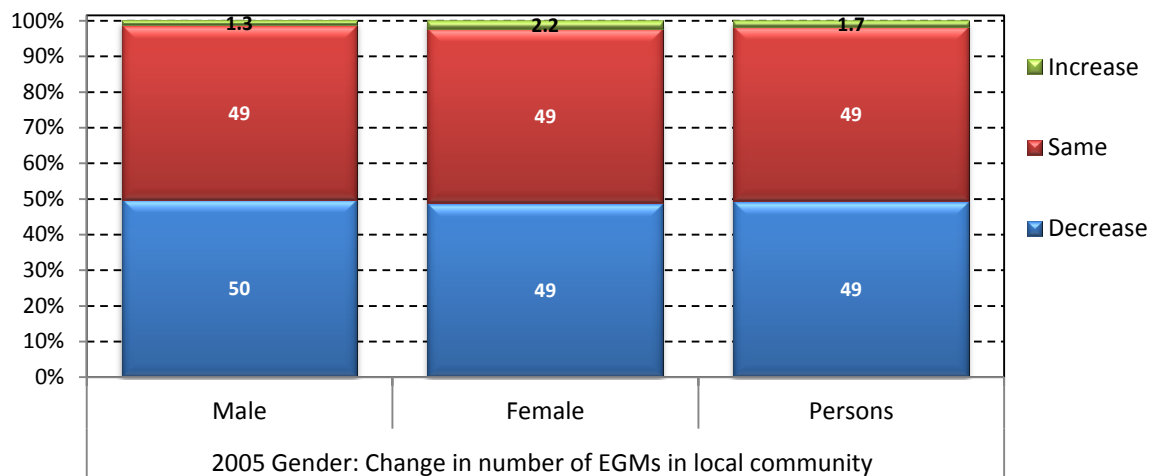


Figure 62: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in the local community by gender, 2005 NT Adult population

Figure 63 shows there was no significant different between age groups in whether people answered that they would like to see a change in the number of EGMs in the local community, though a higher percentage of younger respondents answered keeping EGM numbers the same (53%), compared with those 35 years and over (between 45 and 49%).

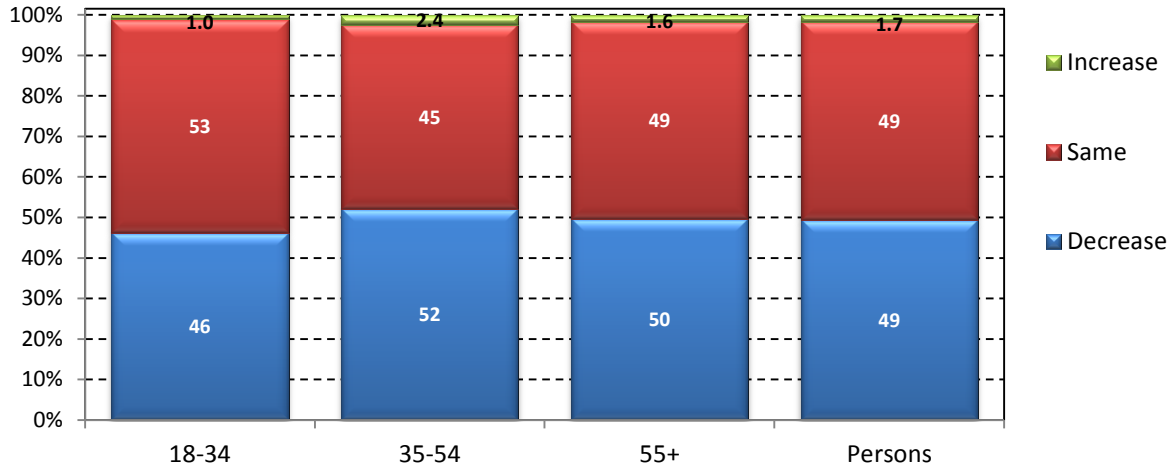


Figure 63: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in the local community by gender, 2005 NT Adult population

In 2005, there was a significant association between EGM frequency of play and opinion on the number of EGMs in their local community (Figure 64). EGM gamblers who played EGM monthly or more regularly were more likely to say they would like to see an increase in EGMs in the local community (7 to 12%), compared with less than monthly players (0.8%), gamblers who did not play EGMs (0.7%), and non-gamblers (1.9%). Monthly or more EGM gamblers also differed substantially from other groups in stating that they would prefer decreases in EGM numbers (33% each), compared with less than monthly EGM gamblers (39%), gamblers who did not play EGMs (51%) and non-gamblers (61%).

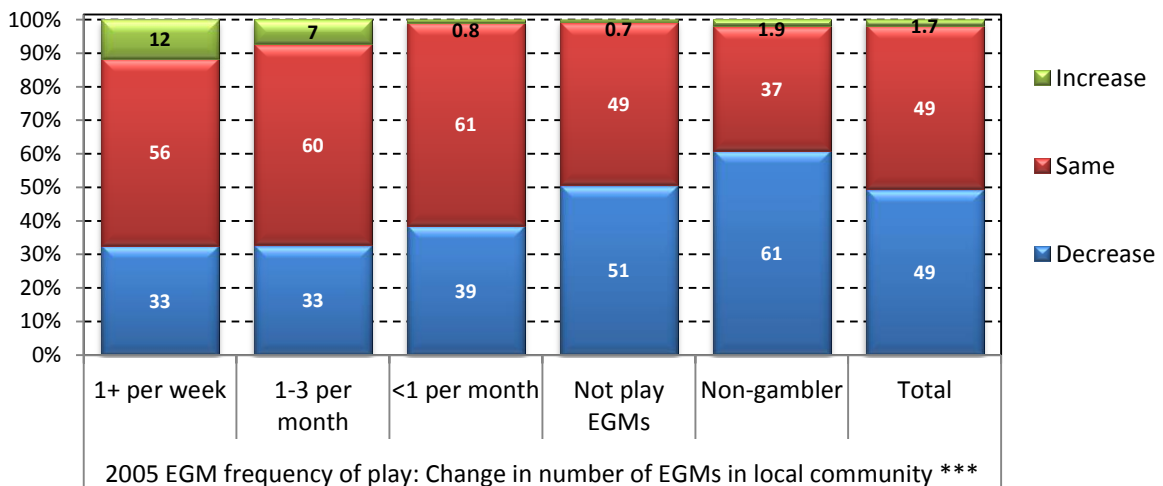


Figure 64: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in the local community by EGM gambling frequency, 2005 NT Adult population

Significant association between EGM frequency of play and change in EGM numbers:
 *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

8.5 Community opinion on change in number of EGMs in hotels in 2015

There were significant differences between where a respondent lived, and their preference for change in EGM numbers in hotels (Figure 65). Specifically, respondents from Regional Towns (30%) and the Rest of the NT (41%) had a smaller

percentage of people stating they would prefer to see decreases in EGM numbers compared with Darwin/Palmerston (52%) and Alice Springs (59%). Correspondingly, respondents from Regional Towns (70%) and the Rest of the NT (55%) also had larger percentage of people stating that would like the EGM numbers to stay the same in hotels, compared with Darwin/Palmerston (47%) and Alice Springs (37%). The Rest of the NT had the highest percentage of respondents stating that they would like to see an increase in EGM numbers in hotels (4%), followed by Alice Springs (3.7%), and the other two regions 1.1% or less said they would like an increase.

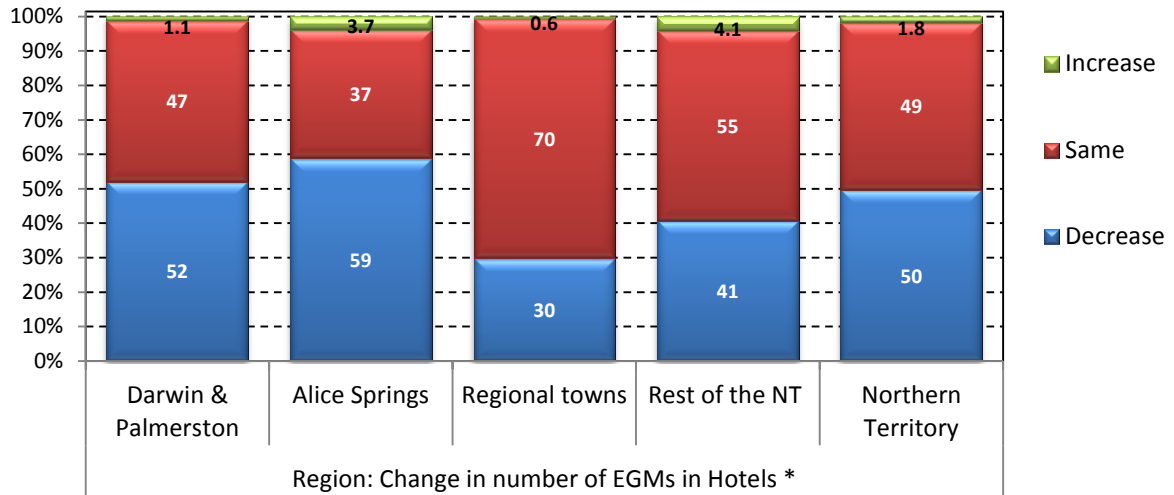


Figure 65: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in hotels by region, 2015 NT Adult population

Significant association between region and EGM numbers in hotels: *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

The association between change in EGM numbers in hotels and gender was marginally non-significant (p=0.08, see Figure 66), with women (55%) more likely to say that they would like to see a decrease in EGM numbers in hotels, compared with men (45%). There was no difference between men and women in stating they would like an increase in EGM numbers, and a higher percentage of men (53% cf. 43%) said that EGM numbers should stay the same.

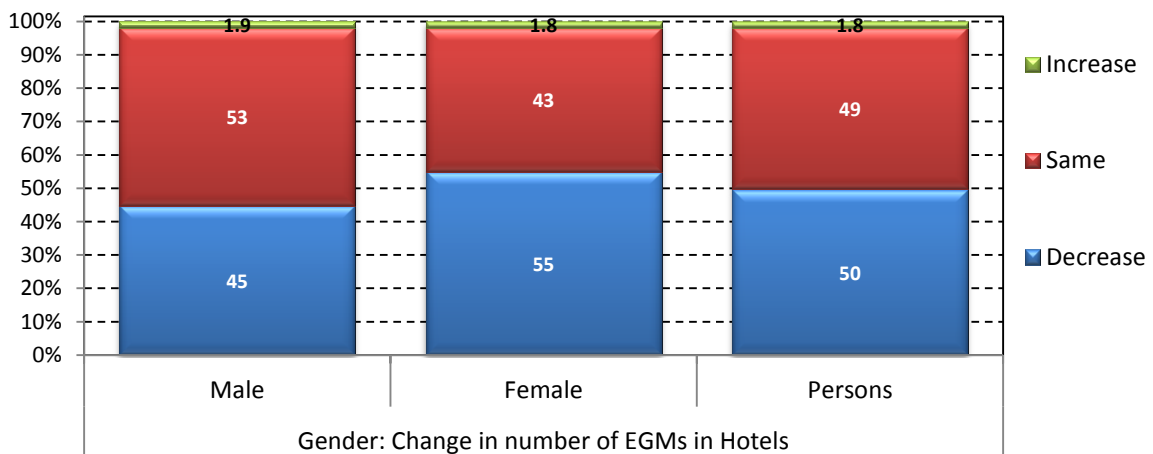


Figure 66: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in hotels by gender, 2015 NT Adult population

Figure 67 shows the association between age and preference for a change in EGM numbers in hotels. This association was statistically significant, with an increasing percentage of respondents stating they would like to see a decrease in EGM numbers in hotels in older age groups (38% to 56% to 61%). The opposite trend was present for respondents stating that the EGM numbers should stay the same in hotels, from 61% in those under 35 years decreasing to 39% in those 55 years and over. Respondents aged 35-54 years were most likely to say they would like to see an increase in EGM numbers in hotels (2.5%), followed by those under 35 years (1.8%), then respondents 55 years and over (0.9%).

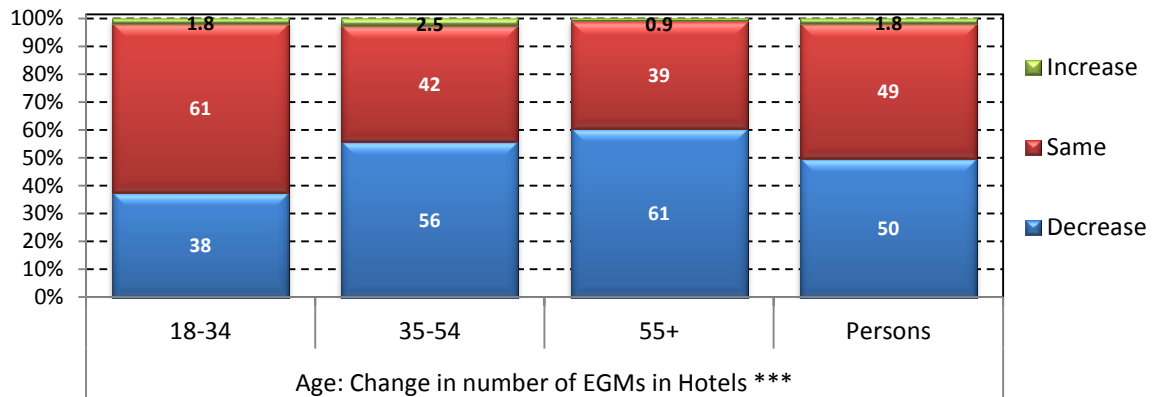


Figure 67: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in hotels by age, 2015 NT Adult population

Significant association between age and EGM numbers in hotels: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Figure 68 shows the association between EGM frequency of play, and preferences for the number of EGMs in hotels. This association was highly significant, with 60% of weekly EGM gamblers saying that they would like a decrease in EGM numbers in hotels, compared with 20% of monthly gamblers, and 31% of less than monthly EGM gamblers. Just over 50% of gamblers who did not play EGMs said they would like to see a decrease in EGM numbers in hotels, while 72% of non-gamblers endorsed a decrease. Nine percent of monthly EGM gamblers would like an increase in EGMs in hotels, compared with 3% of weekly EGM gamblers, and 2% or less for other categories of EGM gambling frequency.

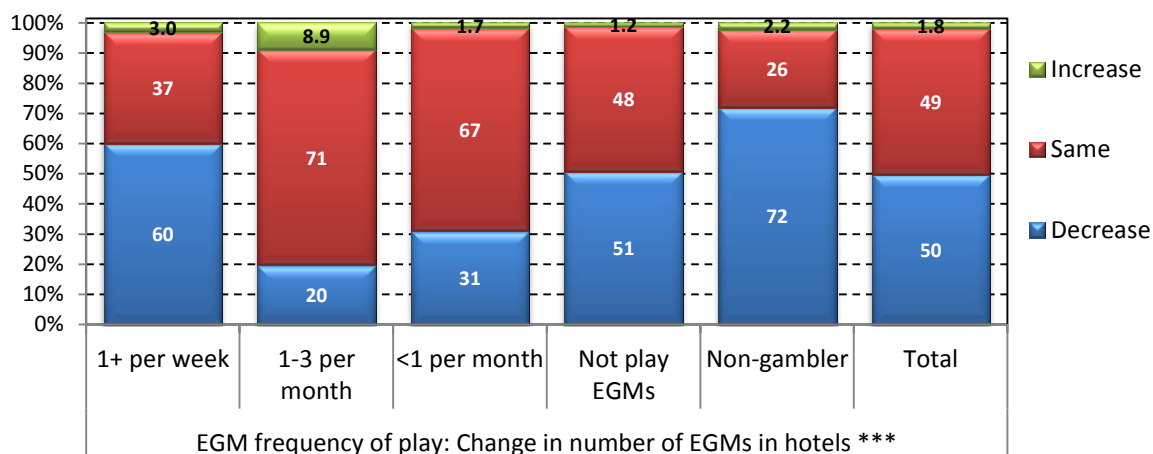


Figure 68: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in hotels by EGM gambling frequency, 2015 NT Adult population

Significant association between EGM frequency of play and EGM numbers in hotels:

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

8.6 Community opinion on change in number of EGMs in clubs in 2015

The association between region and preferences for numbers of EGMs in clubs was significant (Figure 69). Around 60% of adults in Alice Springs and the Rest of the NT indicated they would like to see a decrease in EGMs in clubs, while 52% of Darwin/Palmerston and 38% of adults in Regional Towns would like to see a decrease in EGM numbers in clubs. Fourteen percent of adults living in Regional Towns indicated they would like an increase in EGM numbers in clubs, compared with 4% in Darwin/Palmerston and the Rest of the NT, and around 1% in Alice Springs.

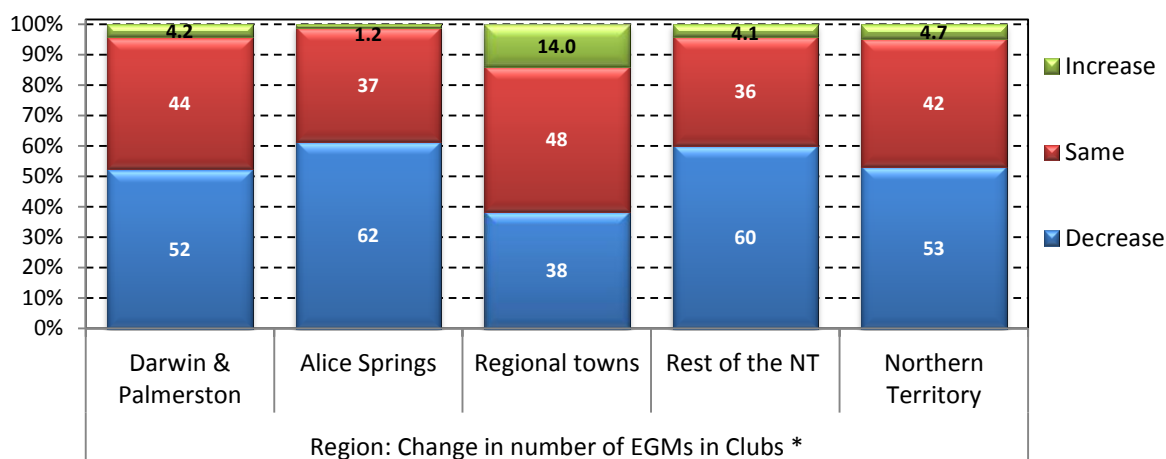


Figure 69: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in clubs by region, 2015 NT Adult population

Significant association between region and EGM numbers in clubs: *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

The association between preferred changes in EGM numbers in clubs and gender was not statistically significant (Figure 70). However, 57% of women compared with 50% of men indicated they would like to see a decrease in EGM numbers in clubs, and there was no difference between men and women indicating their preference for an increase in EGM numbers (5%).

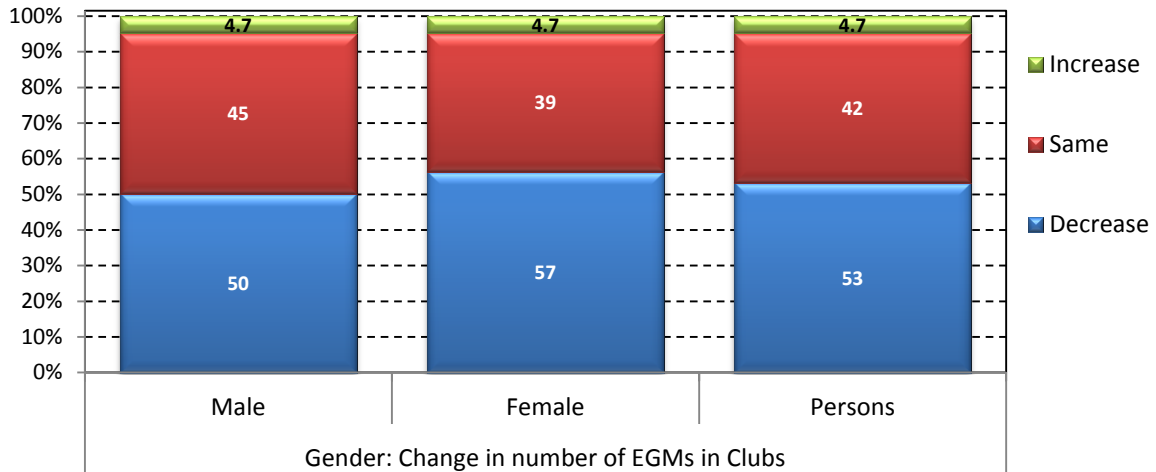


Figure 70: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in clubs by gender, 2015 NT Adult population

There were no significant differences across age groups in preferred change in EGM numbers in clubs (Figure 71). However, there was a small trend across age groups with those less than 35 years more likely to indicate they would like an increase in EGM numbers in clubs (6%), compared with 4% of 34-54 years and 3% of 55 or more years.

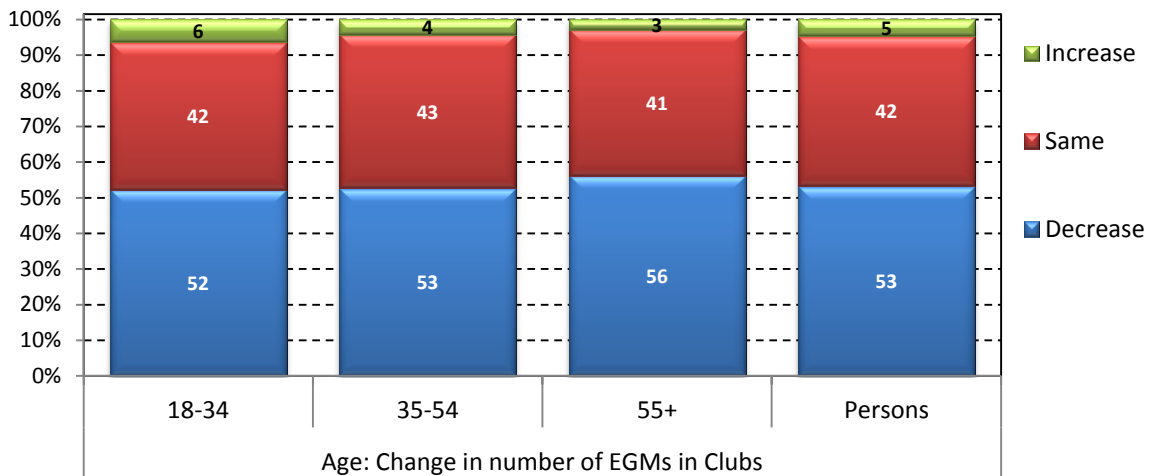


Figure 71: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in clubs by age, 2015 NT Adult population

Figure 72 shows there was a similar significant trend as observed between preferred EGM numbers in hotels and age is present for clubs. Just over 50% of weekly EGM players indicated they would like to see a decrease in EGM numbers in clubs across the Territory, compared with 23% of monthly EGM gamblers, 30% of less than monthly EGM gamblers, 58% of non-EGM gamblers and 75% of non-gamblers. Just less than 40% of monthly EGM gamblers indicated they would like to see an increase in EGM numbers in clubs, compared with 9% of weekly EGM gamblers, 6.5% of less than monthly EGM gamblers, 2.5% of non-EGM gamblers and 1% of non-gamblers. Around 40% of weekly and monthly EGM gamblers, and non-EGM gamblers indicated a preference for EGM numbers to stay the same in clubs, compared with 63% of less than monthly EGM gamblers and 24% of non-gamblers.

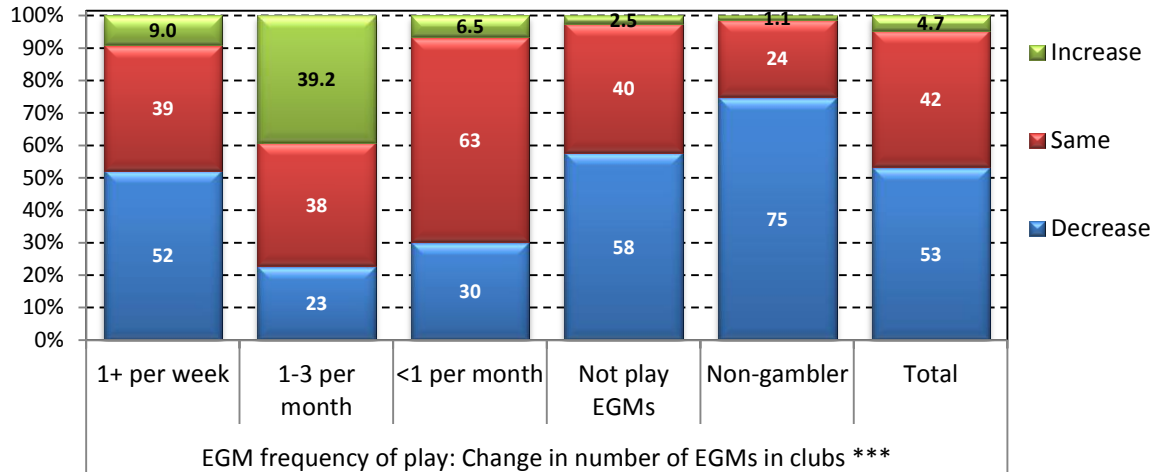


Figure 72: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in clubs by EGM gambling frequency, 2015 NT Adult population

Significant association between EGM frequency of play and EGM numbers in clubs:
 *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

8.7 Community opinion on change in number of EGMs in casinos in 2015

There was a significant association between regions and preferred change in EGM numbers in the casinos in the NT (Figure 73). Just over 50% of respondents in Alice Springs indicated they would like to see a decrease in EGM numbers in casinos, compared with 40% in Darwin/Palmerston, 37% in Regional Towns and 36% in the Rest of NT. Between 2% and 4% of respondents in all regions outside of Rest of the NT indicated that they would like to see an increase in EGM numbers in the casinos, while 6.7% of respondents living in the Rest of the NT indicated they would like to see an increase in EGM numbers.

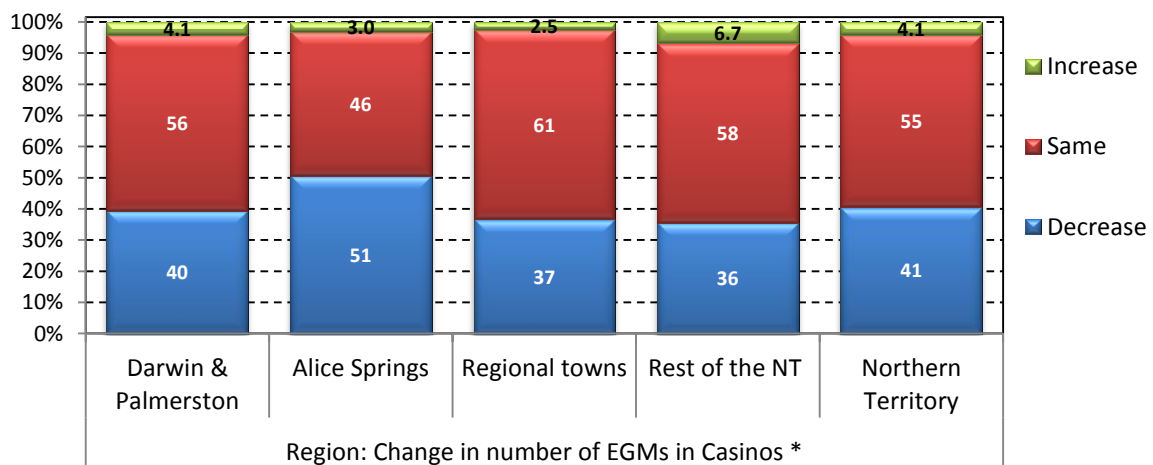


Figure 73: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in casinos by region, 2015 NT Adult population

Significant association between region and EGM numbers in casinos: *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

A significantly higher percentage of women (47%) indicated they would like to see a decrease in EGMs in the casinos compared with men (35%), and a higher percentage men (60%) than women (50%) indicated they would like the EGM

numbers to stay the same (Figure 74). Just 3% of women indicated they would like an increase in EGM numbers in the casinos, compared with 5% of men.

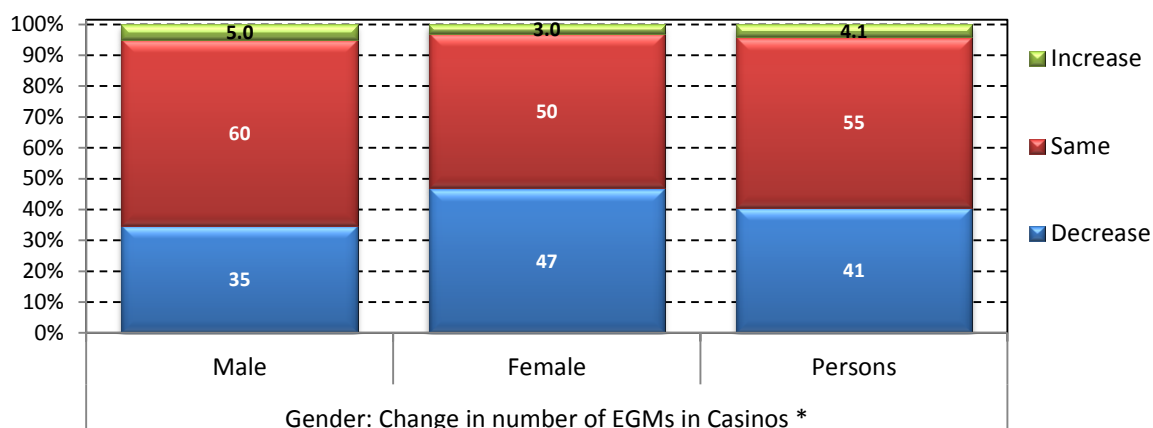


Figure 74: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in casinos by gender, 2015 NT Adult population

Significant association between gender and EGM numbers in casinos: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

The association between age and change in numbers of EGMs in the casinos was marginally non-significant ($p < 0.08$), as shown in Figure 75. Thirty-four percent of respondents aged less than 35 years endorsed a decrease in EGM numbers in casinos, compared with 44% of those aged 35-54 years and 48% of those aged 55 years and over. About 50% of respondents aged 35 years and over indicated they would like numbers of EGMs to stay the same in the casinos, compared with 62% of people aged less than 35 years. Across age groups, between 3% and 5% of respondents indicated they would like to see an increase in EGM numbers in the casinos.

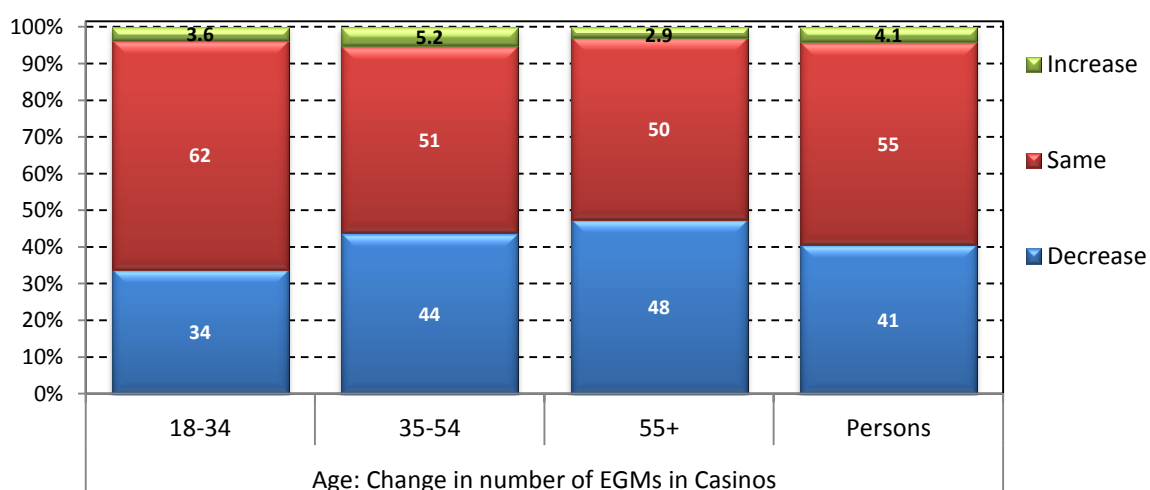


Figure 75: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in casinos by age, 2015 NT Adult population

Figure 76 shows the significant association between EGM frequency of gambling and preference for change in EGM numbers in the casinos. It follows a similar pattern to that observed for hotels and clubs, though a larger percentage across all categories preferred keeping EGM numbers the same in the casinos. Again,

weekly EGM gamblers (34%) were more likely than other EGM gamblers (24% to 26%) to have a preference for decreasing EGM numbers in the casinos, and again monthly EGM gamblers (16%) were more likely to indicate their preference for an increase in EGM numbers in the casinos compared with other groups (2% to 6%).

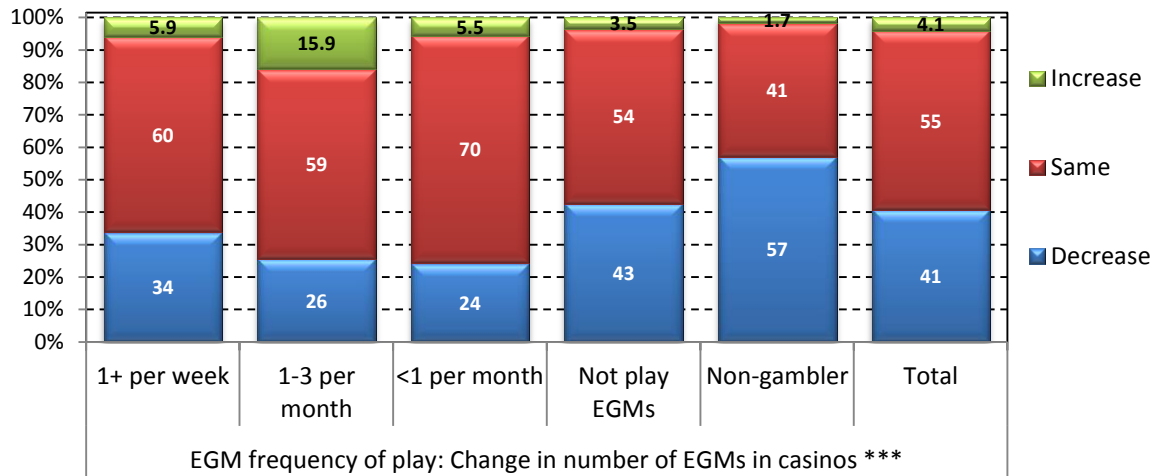


Figure 76: Community opinions on whether to change the number of EGMs in casinos by EGM gambling frequency, 2015 NT Adult population

Significant association between EGM frequency of play and EGM numbers in casinos:
 *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05