

Coroner blames pokies addiction for Katherine Natt's death (ABC News) - ABC Online

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By Rebecca Brice

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A young mother-of-two killed herself because she could not cope with her poker machine addiction, the South Australian Coroner has found.

Casino worker Katherine Natt, 24, took an overdose of painkillers in 2006, fearing she may lose custody of her children because of her gambling addiction.

The coroner had been told the woman started work at the Adelaide Casino at 18 and struggled for four years with her poker machine addiction.

Her father had told the court he understood many employees worked at the casino because it prevented them from gambling there, but many, including his daughter, would still gamble at other venues after work.

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Ms Natt accumulated a debt of more than \$100,000 and her family never knew.

Coroner Mark Johns said given the the Federal Government was considering measures to help deal with problem gamblers, his only recommendation was that his findings be forwarded on to Canberra.

Outside court, Ms Natt's mother Christine Matthews said she felt let down by the findings.

"I feel like everybody's just failed her," she said.

Senator Nick Xenophon represented the dead woman's family during the inquest and has long campaigned for tougher gambling laws.

He had also hoped for more from the coroner, including recommendations about the responsibility of gambling venues to their employees and patrons.

"The system has failed Katherine and it's failed Katherine's family," he said.

Senator Xenophon said he believed it was the first death directly linked to poker machines in South Australia.

SA's acting Gambling Minister Grace Portolesi said she was saddened by the death.

She said Gambling Minister Tom Koutsantonis would raise the case at the Select Council for Gambling Reform, on Friday in Melbourne.

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