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**(19) AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE**

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(54) Title  
**Slot machine game with randomly-designated special symbols**

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(71) Applicant(s)  
**Aristocrat Leisure Industries Pty Ltd**

(72) Inventor(s)  
**Nicholas Luke Bennett**

(74) Agent/Attorney  
**F B RICE and CO,605 Darling Street,BALMAIN NSW 2041**

## ABSTRACT

A gaming machine having display means and game control means, the game control means being arranged to play a game wherein a plurality of symbols are randomly selected from a predetermined set of symbols and displayed in rows on the display means, and if a winning combination of symbols results, the machine pays a prize. In a first aspect, a triggering event invokes a game feature in which a sprite randomly designates one or more of the symbols displayed on the display means to be treated as special symbols for that particular game and a prize is awarded for any winning combinations formed with one or more of the special symbols. Embodiments of the special symbol include a wild card symbol and a scatter symbol. In a second aspect, the sprite designates the win meter or the credit meter, causing the amounts shown on the win meter and credit meter to increase.



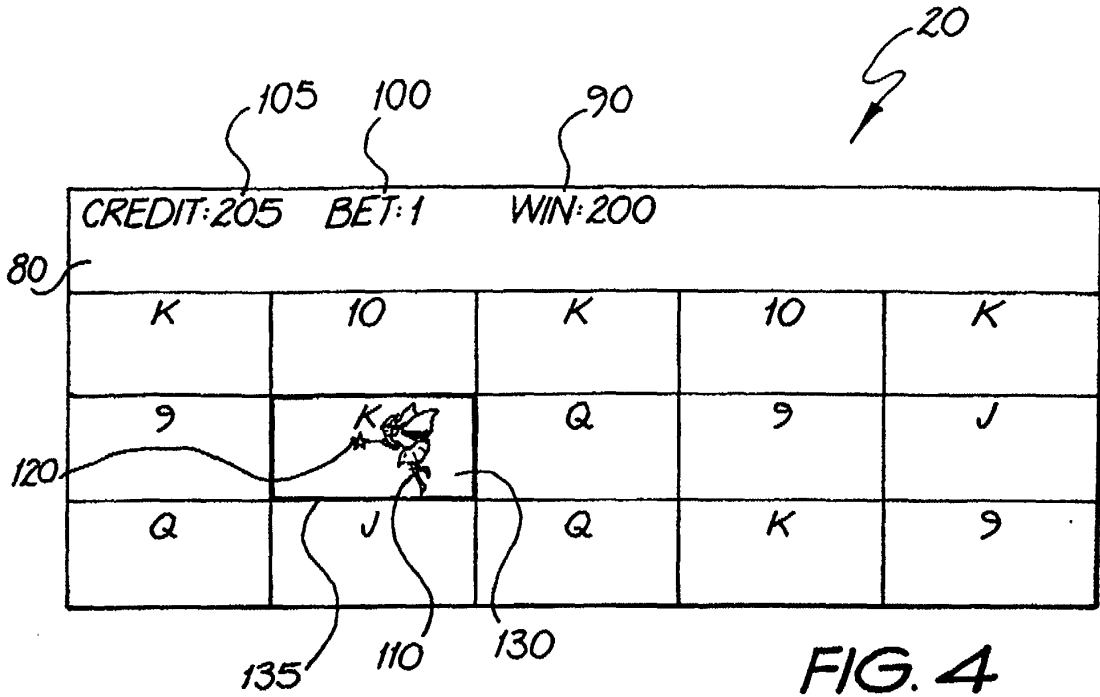


FIG. 4

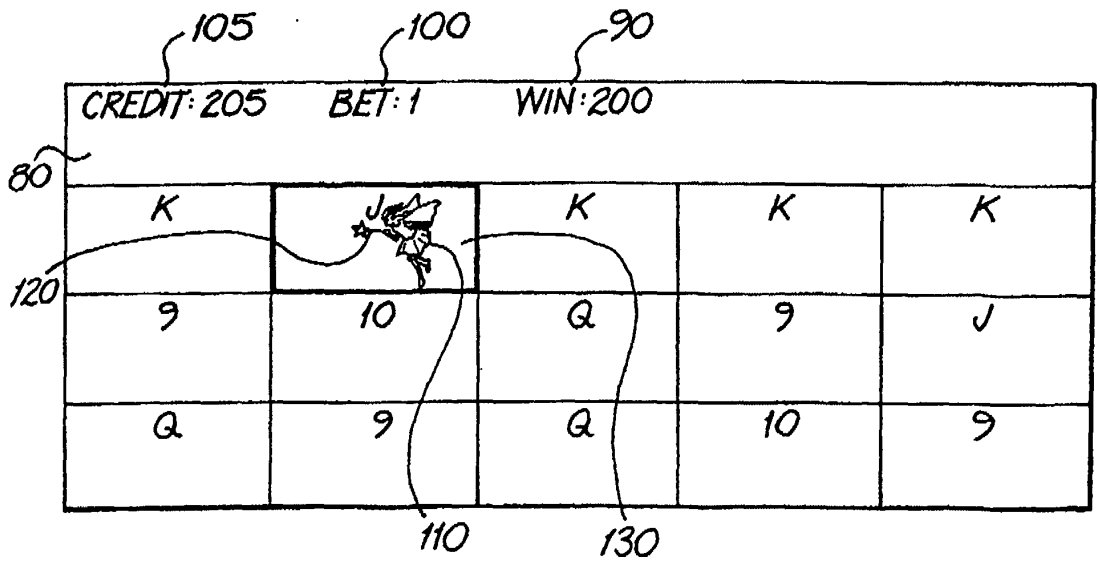


FIG. 5

# AUSTRALIA

## Patents Act 1990

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ORIGINAL

COMPLETE SPECIFICATION  
STANDARD PATENT

*Invention Title:*

*Slot machine game with randomly-designated special symbols*

The following statement is a full description of this invention including the best method of performing it known to us:-

*Slot Machine Game With  
Randomly-Designated Special Symbols*

**Field of the Invention**

The present invention relates to gaming machines of the type arranged to play a game of poker, and in particular the invention provides an improvement to a game played on such a machine.

5        Players who regularly play gaming machines frequently tire of particular games. It therefore becomes desirable for gaming machine manufacturers to come up with innovative game features that add interest to the games, thereby keeping the players amused and willing to continue playing.

10       **Background of the Invention**

      Gaming or poker machines have been well-known in the state of New South Wales for many years and have more recently gained considerable popularity throughout Australia, with quite substantial amounts of money being wagered on these machines. There is a growing tendency for State  
15       Governments to legalise the use of gaming machines by licensing operators, with resulting revenue gains through licence fees and taxation of monies invested. The licensed operation of gaming machines is the subject of State legislation and regulation. This regulation almost always dictates a  
20       minimum percentage payout for a gaming machine. For example, the regulatory controls may ensure a minimum of 85% of monies invested must be returned as winnings. Manufacturers of gaming machines must therefore design their machines around these regulatory controls.

      With the growth that has occurred in the gaming machine market there is intense competition between manufacturers to supply the various existing  
25       and new venues. When selecting a supplier of gaming machines, the operator of a venue will often pay close attention to the popularity of various games with their patrons. Therefore, gaming machine manufacturers are keen to devise games which are popular with players, as a mechanism for improving sales.

30       Many varied strategies have been tried in the past to make games more enticing to players. For example, in the commonly-known "double-up" feature a player is provided with the option of risking the winnings of a game in a double-or-nothing mode by gambling it on a subsequent and often

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