

Media Release



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Cafés and restaurants support smoke-free dining law

Eight out of ten (78%) NSW café and restaurant owners or managers believe a statewide ban on smoking in outdoor dining areas would be fairer than current arrangements and create a better environment for customers, according to a survey released today.

Almost seventy per cent also believe statewide legislation banning smoking in outdoor areas is inevitable, with 63% of these believing this will happen in the next two years.

The Heart Foundation and Cancer Council NSW survey of cafés and restaurants has sparked calls for politicians to listen to business and introduce legislation that would revolutionise the dining experience for customers across NSW.

Currently, smoke-free outdoor areas policy has been left to local government, resulting in restrictions varying from council to council.

“Businesses deserve a level playing field and are clearly prepared for change. All that remains is for both sides of politics to commit to action,” said Tony Thirlwell, Heart Foundation CEO – NSW.

“A statewide smoking ban in outdoor dining areas ensures that we have a fair and consistent approach to businesses right across New South Wales, while also protecting customers and staff from toxic second-hand smoke,” Mr Thirlwell added.

The survey also found that of 307 businesses that currently allow smoking in their alfresco dining areas:

- 82 per cent think a smoking ban would create a much nicer environment for their customers
- 59 per cent think a smoking ban would give staff greater peace of mind about their health
- 33 per cent said staff members were concerned about exposure to cigarette smoke in the workplace
- 29 per cent have had complaints from patrons about smoking

Also surveyed were 122 premises that are totally smoke-free and 91 per cent of these businesses reported that it is easy or very easy to enforce the restriction.

“Any excuses to delay a state-wide ban on smoking have been eliminated by these results – even those businesses which still allow smoking on their premises are expecting smoke-free dining laws, and can see the benefits to smoking bans,” said Dr Andrew Penman AM, Cancer Council NSW CEO

“Combined with strong community support for smoke-free dining and the evidence that exposure to smoke in crowded outdoor areas harms your health, this latest research places the onus on the State to quickly ban smoking anywhere that food or drink is served. It is time everyone in NSW can enjoy a meal without a side serving of second-hand smoke.”

The survey was conducted by the Ipsos-Eureka Social Research Institute from 12–27 October 2010.

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