

Tobacco

FACTS

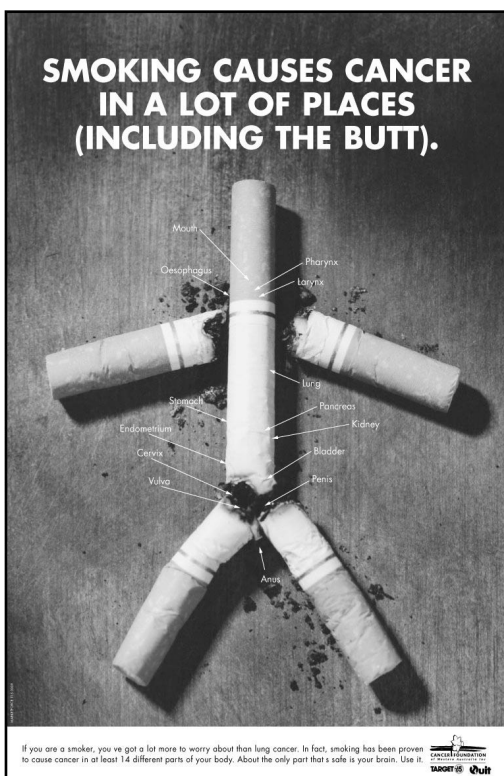
FOR MPs

Smoking: Australia's worst serial killer

Tobacco's toll

- Tobacco use is the biggest single preventable cause of both cancer and heart disease, causing more than 80% of all drug-related deaths.
- Smoking kills more Australians than the combined death toll from road accidents, homicide, suicide, illicit drugs, breast and skin cancer, diabetes and AIDS.
- Tobacco diseases are responsible for 1 in 7 adult deaths, killing more than 19,000 Australians every year – including several thousand from NSW.
- New cancer reports estimate smoking causes 21% of all cancer deaths and 13% of all new cases of cancer (1998: www.aihw.gov.au/whatsnew/releases.html).
- NSW businesses are losing \$2 million each working day to tobacco-related sickness, absenteeism and medical retirement.

Billions of health care dollars up in smoke



- In 1998, more than 142,500 Australians were hospitalised due to illness caused by smoking.
- More than 940,000 hospital patient days are swallowed up each year by tobacco-related illness.
- Smoking causes one quarter of cases of low birthweight infants, placing a heavy burden on neonatal services.

Source: Ridolfo, B and Stevenson, C. Quantification of Drug-caused Mortality and Morbidity in Australia, 1998, AIHW, March 2001 <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/phe/qdcmma98/index.html>

One of the many anti-smoking ads from the WA campaign (see over)

November/December 2001

Blue collar areas are cancer hot spots

Figures released by the NSW Central Cancer Registry for 1995-99 clearly show the link between wealth, smoking and cancer. Only 12% of professional men now smoke compared with a third of blue-collar workers. As a result, the far west of NSW is the state's worst "black spot" for lung cancer, according to new figures – and Sydney's worst areas are its south-western, central and western suburbs.

"There has been a large divergence in smoking rates between higher and lower socio-economic classes", says NSW Cancer Council CEO Dr Andrew Penman; and he adds, "without a strong anti smoking campaign, these rates are likely to diverge further over time."

Men living in Central, Western and South-Western Sydney have higher lung cancer rates than the NSW average, whilst Central Coast women have the highest lung cancer rates. Lung cancer and heart deaths can be expected to rise in these areas without increased funding for anti-smoking campaigns.

For graph of smoking rates by health area, see http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/chorep/beh_smkabs_big.gif

Sources:

NSW Cancer Council, *Smoking and Tobacco-related Disease in NSW: an Agenda for Control* (1999);

NSW Health Department, *The Health of the People of NSW* (2000).

An information bulletin for MPs from Australia's leading health organisations:

Action on Smoking and Health, The Cancer Council NSW and National Heart Foundation.



Tobacco Facts for MPs

Anti-smoking campaigns **SAVE** money

Evidence shows that effective smoking reduction programs not only reduce deaths and disease caused by smoking, but can also produce substantial economic benefits in the short to medium term.

See the evidence summarised in a report for governments "Tobacco Control is a blue chip investment in public health", 2001 at <http://www.ashaust.org.au/lv3/Lv3informationMPs.htm>

WA campaign leads the way

WA has just announced an \$8m mass media campaign to slash smoking rates over four years.



That's about \$4.30 per head. NSW would have to spend around \$27m for the same per capita result.



Best wishes for Christmas and 2002!

We extend Season's Greetings to all MPs and their families – we hope you have a happy and healthy holiday season and an outstanding new year of lasting achievements to benefit all the people of New South Wales.

Australians want tobacco control: new poll

A recent poll of 1,026 people (including smokers), found a high level of public support for adequate funding of programs to reduce tobacco use. Results included:

- 81% approved of a 10% surcharge on industry profits to pay for the programs;
- 74% said the tobacco industry never or rarely told the truth.

Source: Borland, R Public Support for federal Government program for tobacco control, VicHealth Centre for Tobacco Control, 2001 (unpub).

Where there's smoke, there's schoolies

NSW High School kids are smoking an appalling 100 million cigarettes a year, says new research from NSW Health and the Cancer Council. It also shows:

More than half the state's HS students have tried smoking at some time;

1 in 5 (85,000) are likely to have smoked in the last week;

35% of these recent smokers are aged 12-14.

While secondary school smoking overall has fallen by 2.4% from 1996-99, there's far to go.

Source: Cancer Council NSW/ NSW Health, *Self-Reported Behaviours of Secondary School Students, 1999 (2001)*.

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GOOD NEWS

NSW campaign targets vulnerable kids

Congratulations to the NSW Government and Health Minister Craig Knowles for their announcement last month of a \$2.4m, four-year campaign to reduce the exposure of children to tobacco smoke in the home.

Cigarette smoke causes or contributes to a wide range of health problems in children, especially the very young – including SIDS, serious respiratory problems, meningococcal disease and "glue ear".

BAD NEWS

Tobacco smuggling & illicit tobacco trade expose gaps in laissez-faire system

As the trade in illicit tobacco (known as "chop chop") and smuggling continues to rise (*Sunday Tele 4/11*) a new report is calling for tougher regulation of tobacco traders.

After several court cases and official investigations in different parts of the world – which accused the industry itself of supplying the smuggled cigarettes – experts are calling for tougher measures including licences for all manufacturers and retailers.

See full report at <http://www.ashaust.org.au/lv3/Lv3informationMPs.htm>

Parliamentary Questions Service

If you would like further information or assistance with a tobacco-related question, please contact ASH on **02 9334 1876**. Media enquiries: **02 9334 1823**.