

Tobacco

FACTS

FOR MPs

Campaign could slash NSW smoking rates, costs, hospital waiting lists

Decisive leadership by the NSW Government could save lives and taxpayers' money and free up much-needed hospital beds, according to health groups. They have called for an investment of at least \$13 million pa over 10 years for a major anti-tobacco mass media campaign, with costs largely offset by savings in healthcare. The campaign, ranging across several major portfolio areas, would feature high-profile mass media, information and resources, cessation services and community initiatives.

Targeting hot spots with higher than average smoking rates could achieve:

- at least a 1% decline in smoking rates each year – to less than 10% within 10 years (c350,000 extra quitters);
- Special attention for lower socio-economic status groups and high risk culturally and linguistically diverse communities;
- offset savings of \$8m a year in health care costs – including \$4.4m on heart/cardiovascular conditions alone;
- at least 1,500 fewer hospital admissions a year; more than a billion dollars saved over the next 30 years in reduced treatment costs of heart and lung diseases and various cancers; and
- **larger public health benefits than any other prevention program.**

Source: Cancer Council NSW, "Tobacco Control in NSW – The Case for a Mass-Media Anti-Tobacco Campaign", 2002 (unpub.)

HOW DO WE KNOW IT WOULD WORK?

There is now a large body of evidence from Australia and overseas showing that comprehensive tobacco control programs, including commercially realistic funding for anti-smoking mass media campaigns, will significantly reduce tobacco related diseases, deaths and disabilities.

VCTC, "Tobacco Control: A Blue Chip Investment", 2001 at www.vctc.org.au



Drink coaster design from NSW Cancer Council

STOP PRESS

Major report finds more cancer links, confirms passive danger

A new report from the WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer has added to the already long list of cancers caused by smoking. The report said:

- Half of all smokers die from smoking-related illness;
- Some of the most common cancers are caused by tobacco smoke - including stomach, liver, cervix, kidney and myeloid leukaemia;
- Even in typical levels of exposure, passive smoke causes cancer in non-smokers.

Health groups in Australia have urged governments to speed up anti-tobacco measures in response to the report.

Source: IARC, "Second-hand smoke causes lung cancer, June 2002 at www.iarc.fr

July 2002

Who would benefit?

The NSW Government

- GST revenue from other goods and services bought instead of tobacco;
- Shorter hospital waiting lists and release of health care resources.

NSW businesses

- Reduced property and Workcover insurance costs (fewer fires, injury and illness claims);
- Lower litigation risks (discrimination, OH&S);
- More goods and services purchased instead of tobacco;
- Reduced sick leave, early retirement, absenteeism; higher productivity.

Regional NSW

- Reduced disability, sickness and death rates in rural and remote communities
- Reduced pressure on strained rural health services.

Health funders/insurers

- Reduced perinatal care costs of up to 20%pa;
- Reduced treatment costs for cardiovascular conditions – almost \$100m pa nationally;
- Reduced treatment costs for chronic and complex conditions;
- Savings from shorter surgery recovery times for smokers who have quit.

Families and the community

- Fewer unnecessary deaths; reduced disability, illness and trauma;
- Household savings from cigarette spending and health service costs;
- Improved fitness, work and educational performance;
- Increased public enjoyment of smokefree venues and natural areas with reduced litter and bushfires.

Source: "Blue Chip Investment" at www.vctc.org.au/publ/BlueChipOverview.pdf

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

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



Tobacco Facts for MPs

GOOD NEWS

NSW Health takes on Philip Morris over hidden teen marketing

Philip Morris and Wavesnet have been back in court following legal action by NSW Health against below-the-line marketing tactics aimed at young people. Wavesnet has pleaded guilty but Philip Morris is defending the action. The case is back in the Magistrates' Court on 8 July.

New guidelines to help smokers

NSW Health has launched a new set of guidelines in support of its smokefree workplace policy. The publication, "Guide for the management of nicotine dependent inpatients", aims to identify every smoker admitted to state healthcare facilities, provide assessment and offer suitable treatment options.

BAD NEWS

Tobacco sellers raking in "illegal" profits from child sales

The latest national school survey shows that tobacco sellers will profit from over \$100m in illegal sales to kids. In 1999, 269,000 school kids were weekly smokers – with a third of boys and a quarter of girls purchasing their most recent cigarette. *Hill et al ANZJPH, April 2002.*

NSW lags behind other states

In the "Dirty Ashtray" 2002 Awards from the AMA and ACOSH (Australian Council on Smoking and Health), NSW scored equal third place on its tobacco control record (behind Vic and Tas, equal with WA). Victoria jumped ahead of NSW on safe venues by requiring hotels, clubs, bingo and gaming centres to provide smokefree areas by September. The change followed Australian research showing workers' health harmed by passive smoke. *See also STOP PRESS (over).*

Smoking: major cause of health inequality

It is those who are already socially disadvantaged who bear the brunt of the damage inflicted by tobacco. Young blue-collar men, unemployed people, lone parents, Indigenous people and men born in Asian, Mediterranean and Baltic countries are all in the highest-smoking groups.

Blue collar workers and people with no educational qualification were at least twice as likely to smoke – and thus to die prematurely from heart disease and stroke – than people from higher income groups. Death rates from lung cancer, bronchitis, emphysema and asthma are all significantly higher among low socio-economic groups.

In NSW, smoking is more common among single and jobless people and those living in economically disadvantaged areas: notably Far Western NSW and Central Sydney; and among males in Southwest Sydney and females on the Central Coast.

Sources: AIHW, "2000 National Drug Strategy Household Survey" at www.aihw.gov.au/publications; VCTC, "Tobacco Control: a Blue Chip Investment in Public Health", p. 45, at www.vctc.org.au/publ/TC_S2.PDF; Chief Health Officer, NSW, "The Health of the People of NSW", p. 46, at www.health.nsw.gov.au/public-health/chorep/cho2k1_4.pdf

The deadly cost of tobacco

- † Our biggest serial killer: 1 in 7 adult deaths – 19,000 nationally; more than 6,000 in NSW.
- † Causes more than 80% of all drug-related deaths (including alcohol).
- † Kills more than the combined death toll from road accidents, alcohol, illicit drugs, homicide, breast & skin cancer, diabetes & AIDS.
- † Our biggest health risk - causes almost 10% of the total disease burden from all causes.
- † Fills NSW hospitals – 54,000 hospitalisations pa; more than \$152m pa spent on treating tobacco-related illness.
- † Causes a quarter of cases of low birthweight infants, straining neonatal services.
- † Costs the NSW economy an est.\$4.34b a year – including \$1.5b costs to NSW businesses.

Sources: Cancer Council NSW; Ridolfo, B and Stevenson, C. "Quantification of Drug-caused Mortality and Morbidity in Aust 1998", AIHW, 2001 at www.aihw.gov.au/publications/phe/qdcmma98/index.html; AIHW, "Burden of Disease" at www.aihw.gov.au/publications; NSW Health, "Guide for the management of nicotine dependent inpatients", 2002; NSW Report of Chief Health Officer 2000.

Survey: small decline in smoking rates and public demand for tougher controls

The 2001 Household survey of 27,000 Australians over 14 years of age shows an encouraging decrease in daily smoking to 19.5% compared with 21.8% in 1998. Weekly smoking is also down to 21.1% from 23.6% for same period. The survey also confirmed strong public support for tougher measures to reduce tobacco harm, including nearly two thirds of people support banning smoking in hotels and clubs. *Source: AIHW, "2001 National Drug Strategy Household Survey", Ch. 4, p. 34 at www.aihw.gov.au/ndshs/index.html*



A separate survey by the NSW Cancer Council showed two-thirds of people in NSW support indoor smoke bans throughout pubs and clubs. Health groups are repeating their call for these bans to be introduced without delay.

Walsh, R et al, "Public views on smoking in pubs and bars", Cancer Education Research Program, Cancer Council NSW, 2002 (unpublished).

Parliamentary Questions Service

If you would like further information or assistance with a tobacco-related question, please contact ASH on 02 9334 1876/1823 or go to www.ashaust.org.au