

# Tobacco

# FACTS

Winter 2007

For MPs (NSW)

## Loopholes threaten further declines in smoking rates

Leading health, medical and community organisations are urging the NSW government to close several loopholes in tobacco control laws – to keep up the momentum against tobacco.

While the regular smoking rate has recently fallen in NSW from 20.1% to 17.7% (2006), tobacco is still the leading cause of death and disease – costing the state \$6.6b a year. Further declines could be accelerated if loopholes in tobacco advertising and smokefree workplace laws were closed to protect hospitality workers and young people.

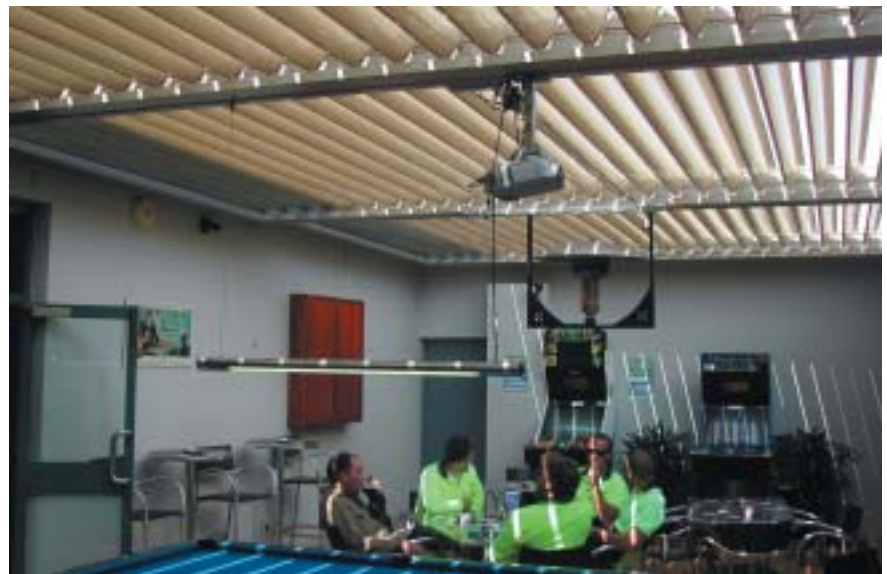
Closing the loopholes would maximise the effectiveness of mass media campaigns, accelerate the fall in smoking rates, and bring NSW into line with more effective laws in Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia.



## WEAK “SMOKEFREE” LAWS FAIL TO PROTECT

### PUB/CLUB CHANGES WELCOME BUT STAFF STILL AT RISK IN SMOKY WORKPLACES

Smokefree pubs and clubs are a step closer – but the job is not yet finished. Changes from July 2 have at last ended smoking in totally enclosed areas, but some smoky workplaces as much as 75% enclosed remain.



*Now it's open, now it's closed: “vergola” in Sydney pub with opening roof slats.*

Pubs and clubs have spent a reported \$800m expanding into sensitive outdoor areas – courtyards, verandahs, balconies and “vergolas” with opening roof slats, and even into parklands. The “high roller” gambling room at Star City casino remains an exempt black hole, with staff having to work in an unsafe, smoke-filled room.

This chaos could be overcome by following the Queensland legislative model – where all remaining smoking areas must be separate, outdoors and unserved.

This would bring NSW in line with best Australian practice, protect employees from secondhand smoke in their workplace as they should be under OH&S law, and reduce discrimination against high-risk health groups.

New research from Stanford University shows health risks remain in crowded smoky “outdoor” areas – especially to workers, children, and heart/vascular and respiratory sufferers.

This problem cannot be dealt with safely by removing a wall or part of a ceiling. Full separation of smoking from working, eating and child-accessible areas, and effective measures to prevent smoke drift, are the only safe strategies.

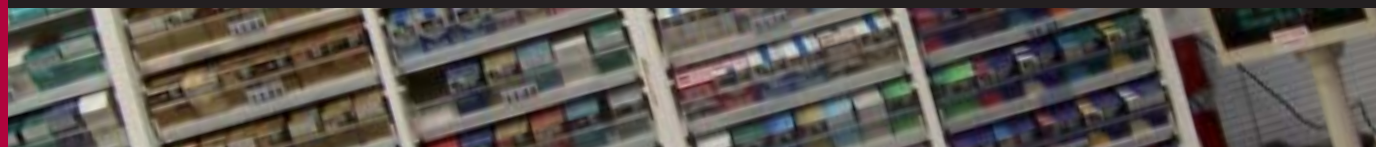
See smokefree workplace news and evidence at [www.ashaust.org.au/SF'03](http://www.ashaust.org.au/SF'03)



An information bulletin for MPs from  
Action on Smoking & Health (ASH) Australia

[www.ashaust.org.au](http://www.ashaust.org.au) (02) 9334 1823

## PROTECT CHILDREN FROM TOBACCO ADVERTISING IN SHOPS



### **One square metre of tobacco display is advertising, says ad expert**

A national coalition of more than 30 health, child welfare, research, medical, church and community organisations is calling on government to reject the misleading claims of tobacco retailers and protect children from tobacco advertising in shops.

The coalition\* supports measures to protect children including:

- removing tobacco products from view in all retail outlets;
- banning children from selling tobacco in shops;
- implementing a licensing scheme for tobacco sellers; and
- making cars carrying children smokefree.

\* Current list of endorsements at [www.ashaust.org.au/lv4/ProtectChildrenEndorsements.htm](http://www.ashaust.org.au/lv4/ProtectChildrenEndorsements.htm)



*Woolworths supermarket, Sydney 2006.*

Retail groups have used misleading arguments to lobby strongly against removing tobacco from view. For example, they told a NSW Select Committee in 2006 that display bans were “not advertising” and would not discourage smoking – while independent research has shown that display normalises tobacco and predisposes children towards smoking.

Says leading advertiser John Bevins: “Product display is advertising that can directly ensure the most desired result of all: an immediate sale.”

If every child smoker is one too many, then even one square metre of tobacco displayed to children is a square metre too many. Strong action to remove these displays from view would benefit not only child health but the NSW economy.

See Protecting Children from Tobacco campaign and evidence at [www.ashaust.org.au/lv3/action\\_POS.htm](http://www.ashaust.org.au/lv3/action_POS.htm)

### **FRUITY CIGS TARGET KIDS**



*These child-appealing fruit-flavoured cigarettes are banned in SA, Tasmania and the ACT – but they're still legal in NSW.*

## TIME TO REFORM POLITICAL DONATIONS



Our system of electoral funding is in urgent need of reform. Huge donations from powerful organisations and individuals are undermining our democratic process.

Millions of dollars are donated by corporations – including tobacco companies and gambling interests – to gain access

and influence, as well as pay for costly, drawn-out election campaigns. Wealthy donors can influence government decisions, often to benefit the donor at community cost.

While countries like New Zealand, Canada and the UK have acted to limit election funding, Australia has moved in the opposite direction – making electoral funding less, not more, transparent. Our parties are engaged in an increasingly US-style fund-raising race which puts commercial interests ahead of research evidence and community support.

ASH Australia, together with a growing coalition of organisations and individuals, is calling for a parliamentary inquiry and a national summit to start the process of review and reform.

See ASH website action pages at [www.ashaust.org.au/campaigns/campaign.php?camp\\_id=50](http://www.ashaust.org.au/campaigns/campaign.php?camp_id=50)