

# Tobacco

# FACTS

Spring 2006

For MPs

## Moving tobacco out of sight will protect children

**Health leaders and the community are calling on MPs to support moves to put tobacco displays out of sight – to protect children and teenagers.**

**Governments are being urged to:**

- End advertising of tobacco products in shops by putting them out of sight.
- Introduce a uniform licensing scheme for tobacco dealers – the fees paying for educating retailers in responsible selling, and for improving compliance with law.

**An out-of-sight policy would:**

- Reduce the large number of child smokers by ending their exposure to advertising displays that normalise the product and predispose children towards smoking
- Help keep recent quitters from relapsing; and
- Support other government strategies to protect children and reduce smoking

**– and without inconvenience to smokers wanting continued access to tobacco products.**



▲ *Socially responsible: Coles Tasmania supermarket*  
(Photo: ASH)

## SHOP DISPLAYS PREDISPOSE CHILDREN TO SMOKE

Tobacco displays in shops are having a harmful effect on children by making them more familiar with tobacco products and helping to predispose them towards smoking, says a new Australian study of 605 Year 9 schoolchildren.

Health groups have renewed their calls for tobacco displays to be out of sight in shops following the findings – in the face of claims by tobacco retailers that their prominent displays are not influencing children to smoke.

The new study examined the impact on 605 Year 9 students of seeing representations of convenience store displays with tobacco advertised, displayed, or out of sight.

Where tobacco was prominently displayed, the children:

- perceived it would be easier for them to buy tobacco from shops, evading underage controls; and
- recalled brands more.

The authors called for tougher restrictions, noting that other research confirms that displays were normalising smoking to children, that retail advertising “influenced students, and tended to weaken students’ resolve not to smoke in future”.

Wakefield M et al in *Health Education Research*, online May 2006 at <http://her.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/cyl005v1>



▲ *In your face, kid: Australian convenience store, 2006* (Photo: ASH)

## CHILDREN, TOBACCO AND RETAIL: THE FACTS

- More than 200,000 Australian schoolchildren are smoking regularly. *National Drug Strategy, “Smoking Behaviours of Australian Secondary Students in 2002”*
- 24% of school-aged smokers (and more than a third of 16-17-yr-olds) are being sold this addictive drug illegally by retailers. *ASSAD surveys of school-age behaviours, various states, 2004*
- Half these child smokers will become long-term addicts and half of those will die prematurely, losing many years of productive life. *Doll R et al study, BMJ 2004.*
- Children starting smoking under 16 are at high risk of serious illness and disability. *Hill D et al in ANZJPH, April 2002*
- Small increases in the number of cigarettes consumed during childhood are associated with higher odds of daily smoking in adolescence. *Jackson C et al in Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med, Nov 2004; 158:1050-1056*

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



# Tobacco Facts for MPs

## Community backs display ban and tighter retail controls

Surveys show the community is strongly and increasingly behind moves to "clean up" tobacco retailing. The 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey of almost 30,000 Australians aged 12 and over confirms strong public support for tobacco control measures. Among the findings:

70% support a ban on retail display of tobacco;

70.3% support a retail licensing scheme;

89.6% support stricter law enforcement of illegal tobacco sales to minors; and

63.6% support making it harder to buy tobacco in shops.

AIHW, "2001 National Drug Strategy Household Survey", Ch. 4, p. 34

## Over 80% of smokers know their brand – without displays

A recent survey found retail display of tobacco has little influence on brand choice: over 80% of smokers already know their brand preference and are not influenced by displays.

Cancer Council Victoria for National Heart Foundation, July 2004



**Selling to kids:**

## who are the worst offenders?

In a recent survey of Queensland retailers, 57.7% sold cigarettes to children. The worst offenders were convenience stores and newsagents – but all retailers showed widespread disregard for the law and the health of children.

Convenience stores	65.1%	Petrol stations	57.3%
Newsagents	64.7%	Tobacconists	56.8%
Independent stores	58.6%	Supermarkets	37.6%

Queensland Cancer Fund Compliance monitoring survey 2004

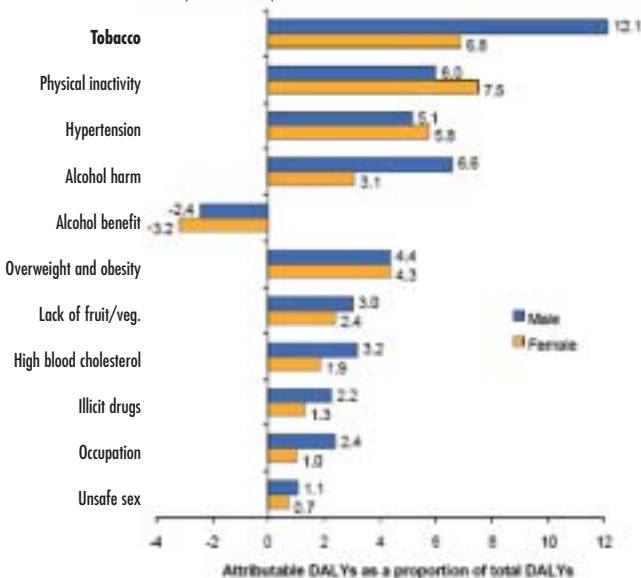
## TOBACCO SELLERS' SHONKY ARGUMENTS

- "Tobacco product displays in shops are not advertising"**  
 Then why do tobacco companies spend millions on securing prime front-of-shop display positions? **Kids certainly see displays as ads: 31% of NSW secondary students say they've seen tobacco "advertising" in shops.**  
*NSWHealth, "Health Behaviours of Secondary School Students." p.19*
- "Banning tobacco displays will not affect youth smoking"**  
 See Wakefield study over page, confirming earlier findings that displays influence children to smoke.
- "Display bans will cause hardship for small business"**  
 Out of sight selling will not end cigarette sales; and reduced spending on tobacco quickly transfers to other consumables.
- "It's a legal product and already restricted enough"**  
 Many other legal products, such as 60% of pharmaceuticals, are restricted – and other drugs of addiction are kept in safes.
- "It's parents' responsibility to stop their kids smoking"**  
 Display bans support responsible parenting. Retailers also have a social responsibility to comply with the law and not put tobacco advertising in the face of children.

## In full view: our biggest cause of preventable disease

Selling tobacco in prime family shopping locations, send the wrong message to children. Smoking contributes more to Australia's burden of disease and disability than any other identifiable risk factor.

This graph shows average proportion of years of life lost to disease caused by ten major risk factors. Guess what's No. 1?

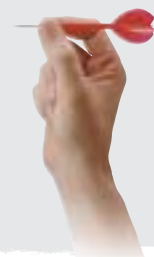


From National Tobacco Strategy 2004-2009, Fig. 1, p.4

## BIG TOBACCO TARGETS CHILDREN

Tobacco companies claim they "don't want kids to smoke" – but:

- A Philip Morris internal memo refers to children as young as 15 as "a significant market opportunity."  
*Marlboro marketing strategy in Australia, 1993*
- A 1999 British American Tobacco (BAT) memo showed company executives discussing using pop stars, DJs, toys and video games to target the youth market. *Times Online, 8/11/04*



See The Cancer Council Australia's "Out of Sight" policy endorsed by all major health groups at [www.ashaust.org.au/lv4/POSposTCCA.doc](http://www.ashaust.org.au/lv4/POSposTCCA.doc)

More information: [www.ashaust.org.au](http://www.ashaust.org.au) or phone (02) 9334 1823