

Tobacco

FACTS

For Unions

Smoky pubs, clubs & casinos risk workers' health

While most indoor workplaces are now smoke-free, some 25-30% of employees mainly in hospitality venues, factories and small businesses, are still exposed to tobacco smoke toxins. Managers are risking increasing legal action from staff and patrons by clinging to venues that continue to allow smoking.

The hot spots for Australia include nearly all bars and gambling venues, the whole of the Northern Territory; and the ACT, SA and WA – where they grant exemptions based on an air conditioning standard that fails to adequately protect health.

See report "Environmental Tobacco Smoke in Australia" at www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/strateg/drugs/tobacco/resources.htm

New tobacco report: more cancers, dangers of passive smoking confirmed

State and Territory Governments have been urged to enforce existing OHS laws and end exemptions to smokefree laws for public venues, following the release of a new international report confirming that passive smoke causes cancer.

The report by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) of the World Health Organisation, is a review of all significant research on tobacco smoking and cancer. The report, by 29 experts from 12 countries, concludes: "Second-hand tobacco smoke IS carcinogenic to humans."

It says body fluid samples showed carcinogens were inhaled and absorbed. "Even the typical levels of passive exposure have been shown to cause lung cancer among never smokers," it concludes.

The report also points to tobacco causing even more cancers than previously thought – including stomach, liver, cervix, kidney and myeloid leukaemia. It says half of all smokers die from tobacco-related diseases.

IARC summary report at monographs.iarc.fr/htdocs/indexes/vol83index.html



September 2002

Smoke-free workplaces help smokers quit, protect non-smokers

A new study in the *British Medical Journal** has found that smoke-free workplaces help smokers quit as well as protecting the health of employees.

The study finds that total smoke bans in workplaces "not only protect non-smokers from the dangers of passive smoking, they also encourage smokers to quit or to reduce consumption."

It provides a powerful new argument for governments to legislate for total smoke bans covering the hospitality industry.

* "Smoke-free workplaces protect non-smokers and encourage smokers to quit"

– BMJ article at http://bmj.com/content/vol325/issue7357/press_release.shtml#1

Evidence of harm to Australian workers

Workers suffer a range of health problems from exposure to tobacco smoke pollution at work, according to new research from The Cancer Council Victoria. The study, co-authored by Professor Alistair Woodward, an internationally recognised expert on passive smoke, found:

- many workers are suffering from frequent coughing, sore throat, sore eyes and wheezing, from work exposure;
- over half the employees surveyed said smoking was allowed in their workplace;
- almost one in five employees said there were no smoking restrictions in their work area, and 6% said there were no restrictions at all at their workplace;
- over a third reported being exposed to cigarette smoke at work; 17% faced prolonged daily exposure (more than 7.5 hours a day), and 18% were exposed for some part of their working day.

The Melbourne study is based on a survey of 382 full time Victorian employees, all members of the Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Worker's Union (LHMU), all non-smokers. Around half worked in bars, hotels, gambling venues and restaurants.

Cancer Council Victoria, media release 4 April 2002. This study backs up international research on the harm of passive smoking to hospitality workers: for example, Bates, MN et al, "Exposure of hospitality workers to environmental tobacco smoke" in *Tobacco Control* June 2002: 11:125-129



New Report

Big Tobacco manipulates hospitality industry to stay smoky

Secret tobacco industry documents show their strategy of scaring proprietors and workers with the "risk" of lost business. A new study says in Australia, US, Canada and elsewhere, "Through the myth of lost profits, the tobacco industry has fooled the hospitality industry into embracing expensive ventilation equipment (see below), while in reality 100% smoke-free laws have been shown to have no effect on business revenues, or even to improve them."

Dearlove, J et al, "Tobacco industry manipulation of the hospitality industry to maintain smoking in public places," *Tobacco Control* 2002;11;94-104 at www.tobaccoscam.ucsf.edu/pdf/9.4-DearloveHospitality.pdf

For more on tobacco manipulation in the restaurant industry, see the new Tobacco Scam website at www.TobaccoScam.ucsf.edu

...and the truth: smoke bans are good for business

More than 30 published independent studies show smoke bans do no harm to hospitality businesses – and in fact tend to improve their trade figures.

New SA dining study shows no adverse impact of smoke bans: Wakefield M et al, "The effect of a smoke-free law on restaurant business in South Australia" in ANZJPH, August 2002 – abstract at www.phaa.net.au.

33 objective studies are summarised at www.vctc.org.au/tcrs/Hospitalitysummary.pdf. See Table 1, pp. 8-20.



Ventilation and separation are no solutions

The tobacco companies have sought through hospitality organisations to stave off smoke bans by pushing extravagant and ineffective ventilation options. Such options have been dismissed by independent experts and authoritative health agencies worldwide. Instead, says the World Health Organisation:

"Smoking bans remain the only viable control measure to ensure that workers and patrons of the hospitality industry are protected from exposure to the toxic wastes from tobacco consumption."

See Repace J, OSHA Ventilation Workshop Analysis, "Can Ventilation Control Secondhand Smoke in the Hospitality Industry?", 2000

The LHMU, our largest hospitality union, says:

"Employees in most of our workplaces are still spending up to eight hours a day in smoky venues. Our union has clearly warned employers that they're accruing a legal liability – increasing day by day – for those who will inevitably suffer illness or death from an unsafe work environment. All hospitality workers should be protected from tobacco smoke toxins in enclosed workplaces – and banning smoking is the only safe and effective way to achieve this."

Tim Ferrari, Assistant National Secretary, LHMU

More reasons why workplaces should clear the air:

- Legal action on passive smoke in workplaces has increased over the past decade and lawyers predict more such claims. A Guide to Passive Smoking and the Law summarises medical evidence and latest cases, including \$466,000 payout to a former bar worker in Sharp v Port Kembla RSL.

More at www.cancercouncil.com.au/cncrinfo/cncrsmt/tobasmok/whensmoke/whensmoke_index.htm

- This court win established that smoking can cause or materially contribute to the development of laryngeal cancer.

See *Medical Journal of Australia*, 4 February 2002 (Abstract) at www.mja.com.au/public/issues/176_03_040202/ste10611_fm.html

- Smoky venues discriminate against more than two million Australians with disabilities. These venues risk legal action under the Disability Discrimination Act.

www.cancercouncil.com.au/cncrinfo/cncrsmt/tobasmok/whensmoke/whensmoke_index.htm

- Clinging to smoky workplaces means owners are contributing to potential insurance premium rises, as future claims over passive smoking injuries are more likely in these workplaces.
- Staying smoky means owners are ignoring their responsibilities to staff under Occupational Health & Safety and Workers' Compensation laws.

See OHS legal requirements at www.ashaust.org.au/pdfs/OHSduties.pdf

- **The public overwhelmingly supports smoke bans.**

Many surveys, including latest Household Drug Survey 2001 (27,000 Australians), confirm public opinion is way ahead of government action.

More at www.aihw.gov.au; and for hotels, see: Walsh, R et al, "Public views on smoking in pubs and bars", Cancer Education Research Program, Cancer Council NSW, 2002 (unpublished).

Public support grows for smoke bans: new Victorian study on dining areas & pubs at www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/

WORLD NEWS: AUSTRALIA LAGS BEHIND

Employers jailed over bank worker's passive smoke death

Milan, Italy: Two bank managers in Milan, Italy have been jailed for criminal manslaughter after a bank employee suffered a fatal asthma attack from workplace exposure to passive smoke.

35-year-old "Monica C" had repeatedly asked to be transferred away from smoky areas at the Paribas Bank, but her requests were ignored despite medical evidence provided.

See the full story at no-smoking.org/march02/03-06-02-2.html

Mayor wants New York workplaces smoke-free

New York City, USA: Mayor Michael Bloomberg has announced proposed legislation to guarantee all workers – including those in the hospitality industry – safe, smoke-free workplaces. Polls show 75% popular support for the move. *Globalink*, 12 August 2002

Need more information?

Telephone ASH Australia on 02 9334 1823 or go to www.ashaust.org.au