

Welcome to the second edition of *Tobacco Facts for MPs*. A regular newsletter to highlight the latest in tobacco legislation, research and litigation.

Focus

The latest evidence on the health effects of passive smoking; tobacco industry deception over second-hand smoke; and why NSW is lagging behind other states in providing smoke-free hospitality venues.



Congratulations to the ACT, SA and WA governments for introducing smoke-free public places legislation. Smoke-free eating and drinking is the norm in the ACT (1994) followed by SA and WA earlier this year. The National Tobacco Strategy, which includes smoke-free public places as a goal, was endorsed by all health ministers (MCDS) last month as part of a national trend to protect community health by 2000.



Sadly, NSW is dragging the chain with an ineffective *Smoking Regulation Act 1997* that delays smoke-free hospitality venues for at least five years! The clock doesn't start to tick until health authorities agree upon a ventilation standard for exemptions. The hold up is that there is no agreement because mechanical solutions can only achieve a comfort not a health standard. Health groups and unions are calling upon the Carr Government to amend this "Clayton's" legislation as part of a review due before May next year, to ensure smoking is banned indoors by the end of 2000.



Health Effects of Passive Smoking

Passive smoking can cause a variety of illnesses in both adults and children, such as:

Adults	Children
Lung Cancer	Bronchitis
Nasal Cancer	Cot Death
Increased Stroke risk	Asthma
Heart Disease	Low birthweight
	Middle Ear Infection
	Pneumonia

(Source: <http://www.health.gov.au/nhmrc/advice/nhmrc/foreword.htm>)

WHO report calls upon Governments to protect kids

The World Health Organisation's (WHO) landmark report this year calls for greater protection of children from passive smoking. WHO estimates that almost half the world's children (700 million) are exposed to tobacco smoke by the 1.2 billion adults that smoke. The report summarises evidence showing that passive smoking is a cause of pneumonia and bronchitis, coughing and wheezing, asthma attacks middle ear infection and cot death. WHO highlights the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - Articles 6 and 24 - and the health rights of children to grow up in a smokefree environment.

(<http://www.ash.org.uk/papers/who-ets.html>)

Bans are good for tourism

A tourism study in the US shows that smoke-free laws had no adverse impact on tourism revenues in several major cities. The study published by the Institute for Health Policy Studies at the University of California-San Francisco said the US tobacco industry vigorously opposed the introduction of the bans claiming that tourism would suffer. Researchers, however, found that tourism earnings actually rose in four of the nine localities studied while four remained stable and revenue slowed in only one locality.

(Source: *JAMA* 1999; 281: p1911-1918)

Health News:

Passive smoking/stroke link

A recent study from the Department of Medicine University of Auckland reaffirmed that there is a higher risk of stroke in men and women who smoke. However, the results also suggested that passive smoking known to be associated with an increased risk of heart disease, is *also* associated with subsequent stroke in men and women.

(Source: *Tobacco Control* 1999; 8:156-160)

(<http://tc.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/8/2/156>)

Passive smoking increases heart disease

Research involving 643,750 people from eight countries confirms that passive smoking increases coronary heart disease. The combined meta-analysis of 18 studies dealing with the possible dangers of passive smoking has concluded that smoke from another person's cigarette can increase a non-smoker's risk of heart disease by 25%.

(Source: *New England Journal of Medicine* 1999: 340:p920-926)

Law:

Barman sue hotels

George O'Keefe was a smoker and a barman who worked in smoky pubs. He successfully sued several pubs for \$20,000 in 1991, in an out of court settlement, because his lawyers claimed that passive smoking contributed to his lung cancer.

(Source: *When Smoke Gets In Your Eyes...A Guide to Passive Smoking & the Law* by Francey N, Schwager M, Soulos G NSWCC 1996)

(<http://www.nswcc.org.au/pages/tobacco/wsgiye/cover.htm>)

Comment:

Tobacco Industry 'beat up'

The International tobacco industry is terrified of passive smoking because when people can't smoke at work and in other public places, their daily consumption falls by around 20%. Great news for public health, but panic stations for the industry's bottom line. A 1998 memo reporting a peak tobacco industry meeting held in London talks frankly of the industry's response to this: "spending vast sums of money...to keep the controversy alive" by hiring tame scientists willing to have their reports "filtered" through industry lawyers. The report states "The consultants should, ideally, be ... scientists who ... have no previous record on the primary issues" - in other words, passive smoking researchers with no expertise in this area.

(<http://www.gate.net/~jcannon/document/880217b1.txt>)

Source: Simon Chapman, A/Professor of Public Health at the University of Sydney and Chairman of Action on Smoking and Health.

80% back Smoke-Bans

More than 80 per cent of South Australians agree with the State's new smoke-free dining laws, according to a survey by the South Australian Anti-Tobacco Research and Evaluation Program.

About 55 per cent of smokers and 87 per cent of non-smokers gave the ban the thumbs up. Human Services Minister, Mr Brown, was reported to have said the results were pleasing.

(Source: *The Sunday Mail*, 19 September, 1999)

"Smokos" harm business

More than 60 per cent of employers believe that smokers should be required to make up time lost due to smoke breaks, according to a survey by Morgan & Banks. Joint managing director of Morgan and Banks, Mr Geoff Morgan said, "...the majority of smokers take between 3-4 smoke breaks per working day. This means smoke breaks are costing Australian industry \$1.646 billion dollars". The survey also reported that highest proportion of smokers appear to be in the Transport, Tourism, Manufacturing, Advertising and Food industries.

Hot Documents

Documents uncovered during a US trial reveal how the tobacco industry knew about the dangers of passive smoking but actively pursued a global strategy to combat restrictions and create doubt over the evidence.

Global strategy by Philip Morris

Philip Morris (PM) and its lawyer's Covington and Burling created controversy and doubt by infiltrating highly respected science institutions and buying out some scientists.

The "Whitecoat Project" shows how PM consultants established a learned society with its own journal *Indoor Air International* and appointed three PM consultants as the first presidents.

(<http://www.health.su.oz.au/tobacco/subject.html#PASSIVE>)

Documents from "Project Down Under" further reveal PM's tactics:

"Find a "rainmaker". Develop a spokesperson who has visibility respect and impact to carry our message to the press..."

"Consider acquiring major media vehicle...wire service or media outlet."

"Support dramatic increase in scientific activity on ETS indoor air pollution and positive sociological and economic aspects of smoking"

(<http://www.pmdocs.com/getallimg.asp?DOCID=2021502671/2678>)

Parliamentary Questions Service

If you would like assistance with a tobacco-related question please contact ASH on 02 93341876

Visit www.ashaust.org.au for copies of newsletters, links to references, tobacco industry documents, fact sheets, media releases, tobacco and health policies and links to international, national and state organisations committed to tobacco control.

For further information, contact ASH

Email annej@ashaust.org.au

Telephone (02) 93341876

Facsimile (02) 93341742

Mobile 0417 22 7879

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