



21 January 2016

Vice-Chancellor and President

Professor Peter Høj
MSc PhD Univ FTSE

Mr Scott Stewart MP
Chair
Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000


Dear Mr Stewart,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the Queensland Parliamentary Committee's *Inquiry into smoking and tobacco use at universities, technical and further education facilities, and registered training organisations.*

Background

The University of Queensland (UQ) is Queensland's largest University, operating across three campuses at St Lucia and Herston in Brisbane and Gatton in South-East Queensland. We also deliver services from a number of other sites throughout Queensland, including teaching hospitals and health centres, veterinary science centres, agricultural science farms, marine research stations and physics research stations. In 2015 The University delivered services to over 50,000 students and had a workforce of over 6,800 full time equivalent staff.

Spanning over 110 hectares and comprising over 700 buildings, St Lucia is our largest campus, with over 45,000 people attending the campus during semester weekdays. The University values the significant role it plays in the life of the local community, and to Brisbane more broadly. The campus provides a range of amenities including cafes, galleries and museums, a movie theatre and sporting fields, all of which are open to the general public. Recent infrastructure such as the Eleanor Schonell Bridge, improvements to the local bike paths and relocation of the CityCat terminal has further enhanced the accessibility of the campus to visitors.

Herston is the University's core campus for clinical health teaching and research. The campus is located alongside the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, which also houses the UQ Centre for Clinical Research and the new Herston Imaging Research Facility. Situated on 3 hectares, the campus is home to multiple buildings including the UQ School of Medicine and the new Oral Health Centre, Australia's largest and most advanced specialist oral health service that brought together UQ's [School of Dentistry](#) and parts of Queensland Health's Oral Health Services. Since opening to patients in January 2015 over 2,000 people, on average, have attended the clinic each week.

The Gatton campus provides teaching and research in the field of animals, agriculture, veterinary science, food and the environment. Located over 1,000 hectares the campus is home to the School of Veterinary Science, including a veterinary medical centre, veterinary teaching laboratories and a clinical studies centre, and the Queensland Animal Science Precinct, which conducts animal research in the areas of animal growth, adaptation, welfare, health and vaccines.

Current legislative framework

Smoking laws in Australia are administered by individual States and Territories through legislation developed and administered by the state or territory. In Queensland the applicable smoking legislation is the *Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998* (TOSP Act) and *Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Regulation 2010*.

The TOSP Act makes the following provisions for tobacco smoking:

- Smoke-free enclosed places.
- Smoke-free motor vehicles.
- Smoke-free outdoor eating or drinking places.
- Person must not smoke within four (4) metres of an entrance to an enclosed place.
- Person must not smoke within five (5) metres of a boundary to any Queensland public and private hospital or health facilities.
- Electronic cigarettes are now subject to the same laws as regular cigarettes.
- Person must not smoke at major sports facility declared under *Major Sports Facilities Act 2001*.
- Person must not smoke at a prescribed outdoor swimming area.

In addition there are Commonwealth laws that are applicable to smoking that apply to all States and Territories.

Measures undertaken by The University of Queensland to reduce/minimise the impact of smoking

The University of Queensland's Alcohol, Tobacco Smoking and other Drugs Policy

The University's Alcohol, Tobacco Smoking and other Drugs Policy (the Policy) places strong restrictions on tobacco smoking across all campuses, to a standard that is reasonably practicable under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act Qld 2011*, and that exceeds the requirements of the TOSP Act. It is the objective of the policy to contribute to ensuring the health and safety of staff, students and visitors to the University's campuses.

The Policy is implemented and monitored at all campuses and makes the following provisions:

- Smoking is prohibited in all University buildings.
- The University upholds the right of an individual to work in a smoke-free environment.
- There is no provision for the designation of smoking-permitted rooms or areas in buildings controlled by the University.
- Smoking is not permitted in basements, balconies, loading bays, or within five metres of entrances to buildings. Neither is it permitted in the vicinity of outdoor eating areas, air-conditioning unit vents and building roofs. (Noting the TOSP Act specifies an exclusion zone of four metres).
- Where necessary, permanently fixed ashtrays are provided at the edge of exclusion zones to encourage smokers to dispose of cigarette butts responsibly.
- Permanent signs are posted in problem areas indicating a "No Smoking Area" with specification of the five meter exclusion zone where appropriate.
- Smoking is banned in all University vehicles other than those issued to staff for private use, noting the TOSP Act specifies no smoking in business vehicles only when accompanied by another person.
- The University's smoking policy is recognised as an Occupational Health and Safety responsibility.

- The University will provide support to individuals trying to stop smoking.

The Policy is further supported by other University Senate policies covering a range of matters including complaints management, health education and health assistance.

Support and education to staff and students

The University, through its Wellness Program, provides education and support to staff who are wanting to give up smoking. Information is available on the Program's website, and appointments can be made with the Occupational Health and Safety Nurse Adviser who can provide general information on quitting options, and if required arrange referrals to specialist advice programs.

The University acknowledges that the majority of our international students will not be aware of the smoking restrictions that apply in Queensland when they enrol to study at UQ, and that for many there are few, if any, restrictions on the sale and use of tobacco products in their homeland. At the beginning of each semester the University's Student Services Division runs a course targeted to international students that provides information on a range of issues they may experience. The course contains information on the smoking restrictions that apply both on campus and more broadly in the community.

Businesses operating on University land

All private businesses leasing space on University property are required to sign, and comply, with all requirements of individual License to Occupy agreements. The agreements include a clause that licensees are required to comply with all of the University's Rules, policies and procedures.

Tenants in houses owned by the University

Residents of houses owned by the University are required to enter into a formal rental agreement with UQ in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*. In addition to the conditions of the Rooming Accommodation Agreement and General Tenancy Agreement residents are required to comply with a number of additional conditions, including being prohibited from smoking inside the residence. Compliance with this condition is undertaken as part of regular property inspections, and any tenant found to be non-compliant is issued with a Notice to Remedy Breach notice. Repeated instances of non-compliance will result in eviction from the premises.

The impact of smoking on staff, students and campus users

All complaints relating to smoking are managed in accordance with the University's Complaints Management policy. In accordance with the policy, in the first instance, all steps must be undertaken to resolve the matter at the local level. If the matter cannot be resolved at the local level or if either party is dissatisfied with the outcome there are processes in place to escalate the matter. The majority of complaints that involve smoking are resolved at the local level, usually through erecting additional signage and/or targeted educational campaigns.

In 2015 UQ staff were invited to participate in an on-line health assessment survey. Participants were asked a range of health and lifestyle questions, with the results benchmarked against other participating organisations across Australia. Feedback from the survey indicate that around 4% of UQ staff that completed the survey smoke, compared to an average of 9% across the participating survey respondents. The findings of the 2013 National Drug Strategy Household Survey undertaken by the Australian Government Department of Health indicated a general population smoking rate in Australia of 12.8%.

Feedback from grounds staff working on our St Lucia campus indicate the prevalence of smoking on campus remains low. They also report there are no specific areas of concentrated smoking activity. This is evidenced by walking through the campus.

The capacity for improved laws and regulations to reduce smoking

Taking into consideration the governance and educational measures currently in place, the size and scope of the sites we operate from, and the qualitative and quantitative data on the incidence of smoking on our campuses, the University believes it has sufficient processes in place to minimise the impact of smoking. The University's current evidence based approach coupled with a comprehensive policy framework, constructive, positive encouragement of healthy behaviours and access to remedial strategies have been a successful approach to date.

However we will continue to monitor the incidence of smoking at all our sites and take the necessary measures to ensure the health and wellbeing of all who work, study or visit our campuses. We will also be undertaking a review of the UQ Wellness Program to determine if further education, support or other measures can be put in place to assist staff who wish to give up smoking.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office should further information be required.

Yours sincerely



Professor Peter Høj
Vice-Chancellor and President

Copy: Mr Greg Pringle, Chief Operating Officer, The University of Queensland

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