



17 September 2014

Mr Trevor Ruthenberg MP
Chair
Health and Community Services Committee
Parliament House
Brisbane, Queensland, 4000
hcsc@parliament.qld.gov.au



**Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2014
Cancer Council Queensland Submission**

Dear Mr Ruthenberg,

Thank you for inviting Cancer Council Queensland to make a submission in response to the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2014.

Cancer Council Queensland supports the proposed amendments to the *Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998* to extend smoking bans on and around health facilities, school grounds and in prisons; and to apply existing tobacco laws to personal vaporising devices, e.g. electronic cigarettes, including prohibiting sale and supply to children, restricting advertising and display, and prohibiting use in smoke-free places.

Cancer Council Queensland additionally recommends that the Queensland Government amend the *Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998* to introduce uniform designated smoke free spaces in Queensland.

As you know, health and wellbeing is one of the nine foundations in the *Queensland Plan*, identifying a measure to reduce smoking rates from the current baseline of 14.3 per cent of adults who smoke daily.

In accord with this goal, we urge Queensland Members of Parliament to respond to community calls for the introduction of progressive legislative reforms to the current Act.

Designated smoke free spaces are urgently required at the State level, recognising public demand for the creation of smoke free bus stops, ferry terminals, taxi ranks, and pedestrian malls.

You may be aware that the former Government introduced legislation giving local governments the power to enact smoking bans in public spaces, although few councils have acted on this power, citing cost and resource barriers as reasons for inaction. Many local councils have expressed to Cancer Council Queensland their preference for the reinstatement of State Government power to create smoke free spaces and also their desire for new bans to encompass many more public spaces than those proposed.

The efficacy of smoke free spaces as a public health protection is backed by evidence and supported by the majority of Queenslanders. Smoke free spaces will save costs on the health system and protect our next generation from the harmful effects of smoking.

As you know, smoking is estimated to cost the Queensland economy more than \$6 billion each year, causing more than 3,400 deaths and resulting in over 36,000



hospitalisations. One in five male deaths and one in 10 female deaths are caused by smoking-related illness and disease each year in Queensland, and 46% of these will be people younger than 75 years of age.

The majority of Queenslanders today are non-smokers and studies of community attitudes towards smoking have found overwhelmingly high levels of public support for broadening restrictions on smoking, largely attributable to strong awareness of the harmful effects.

Evidence demonstrates the implementation of multi-faceted tobacco control measures over recent decades has helped Queensland to advance more rapidly towards becoming completely smoke free. In 2012, fewer than 15% of Queensland adults reported smoking daily.

Community support[^]

In a 2007 survey commissioned by Queensland Health on smoke free laws in Queensland (the most recent survey of its kind available to the public), 87% of respondents indicated that further reforms were required to the *Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act (1998)* in order to meet the objective to reduce public exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.

The 2007 review found majority support for smoke free spaces, with 90% of Queenslanders supporting government-enacted powers to ban smoking in malls and 92% of people supporting bans on smoking at public transport waiting points.

Facts^{*}

- Smoking rates declined by 4% per year between 2001 and 2012, equivalent to about 10,000 fewer adult smokers per year. If the current trend continues the prevalence of smoking in Queensland will be about 10% in 2017.
- Adults living in disadvantaged areas are twice as likely to smoke daily as those in advantaged areas.
- 7.3% of 14–19 year olds smoked daily in 2010, 6% higher than the national rate. The average age of first full cigarette was 15.8 years.
- in 2008, 44% of Indigenous Queenslanders were current smokers.
- 1 in 6 of all pregnant women smoked at some time during their pregnancy in 2010. The rate for indigenous women was 1 in 2 and the rate for teenage mothers was triple that of other women.
- Tobacco smoking caused 7.2% of the burden of disease in 2007, 1 in 7 of all deaths and 1 in 6 premature deaths.
- Smoking resulted in about 3,400 deaths per year in 2006–2007 and about 36,000 hospitalisations per year between 2006–07 and 2008–09.
- At least 2,000 deaths due to COPD and lung cancer have been averted since 2001 as a result of smoking decline.

[^] Queensland Government Review of Smoke-free Laws, Public Consultation, Summary of Feedback, 2007
^{*} Chief Health Officer's Report 2012



- Tobacco smoking cost an estimated \$31.5 billion in Australia in 2004–05, about 1% of this was spent in the healthcare system.
- About 10% of deaths due to tobacco smoke are of non-smokers exposed to second-hand smoke.
- Preventing uptake of smoking, increasing the quit rate especially for high risk groups, and reducing exposure to second-hand smoke will reduce the health impact of tobacco smoking in Queensland.

It is the view of Cancer Council Queensland that balanced legislative reforms represent a reasonable and appropriate response to community outcry about the harmful effects of smoking.

We reiterate our previous comments in appreciation of the efforts by Health Minister Lawrence Springborg and the Department of Health for their commitment to addressing public concern and enhancing health outcomes through smoke free strategies and law reforms. This includes the current amendments to ban smoking at school gates and on hospital grounds.

With the support and assistance of Queensland's Parliamentarians, smoke free spaces have among the greatest potential to reduce public exposure to second-hand smoke, decrease the consumption of cigarettes, and curb the prevalence of tobacco-related illness and disease both now and in the future.

As such, we would welcome the Committee's commitment to ensuring Queensland continues the current pace of its advancement towards a smoke free future.

Your support for smoke free spaces would symbolise a critical step in the journey towards realisation of the *Queensland Plan*. Together, we can achieve the Plan's vision to create a vibrant, prosperous, and healthy community.

Yours sincerely



Professor Jeff Dunn AO
Chief Executive Officer
Cancer Council Queensland

Copy to: The Hon. Campbell Newman MP
Premier

The Hon. Lawrence Springborg MP
Health Minister