Tasmania

The “light” cigarette scam continues to kill

SmokeFree Tasmania has slammed the tobacco industry for perpetuating the light cigarette fraud, putting thousands of smokers at greater risk of cancer “So-called light cigarettes are just as lethal and are engineered to taste smoother, increasing the chances of young people taking up smoking and becoming addicted” Dr. Nick Towle, Convenor, SmokeFree Tasmania said today.

According to an article soon to be published online in the international journal [Addiction](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/add.13536/full) new research reveals the tobacco industry is producing more ‘light’ variants to their existing cigarette brands. The industry is working hard to sidestep the plain pack laws, and this rebranding effort only perpetuates the myth of a lighter, safer cigarette.

In [2005 the ACCC](https://www.accc.gov.au/media-release/accc-resolves-light-and-mild-cigarette-investigation-with-imperial-tobacco) forced Imperial Tobacco to pay $1 million towards a campaign to explain to Australian consumers that “light” cigarettes were unsafe, and said that false lower tar“..cigarettes were likely to have breached the misleading and deceptive conduct provision(s)”.

“We know that these cigarettes are more [attractive to kids](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/content/what_we_do/industry_watch/product_manipulation/2014_06_19_DesignedforAddiction_web.pdf), and an aid in targeting young Tasmanians.”

Policy Advisor for SmokeFree Tasmania Dr. Kathryn Barnsley said “Once again the tobacco industry is trying to create a lifelong addiction in young Tasmanians. These cigarette engineering tricks are deceptive and misleading, and are a lethal scam.”

The engineering and design of cigarettes, particularly using filter ventilation to create the effect of a “lighter” tasting smoke, means modern cigarettes are more likely to cause lung cancers, than the cigarettes of the 1950s according to the US [Surgeon General](https://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress/exec-summary.pdf).

“We know that so-called “light” cigarettes are more likely to cause cancers deep within the lungs, making them harder to treat and therefore more likely to kill patients.” Dr. Towle said.

Former WHO tobacco control expert Dr. Harley Stanton said, “Right now the Tasmanian government has the opportunity to protect the next generation from the tobacco industry. Supporting the tobacco free generation proposal currently before the Legislative Council will tackle these new attempts by the tobacco industry to get more young Tasmanians addicted to cigarettes.”

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