



# SmokeFree

## SmokeFree Tasmania says government smoking age proposal is “flawed”.

SmokeFree Tasmania (SFT) supports the intention of the state government to take courageous steps to address unacceptably high rates of smoking. However, SFT does not support the proposal to raise the minimum legal smoking age (MLSA) as it is more complex and punitive than the Tobacco Free Generation (TFG) amendment ALREADY IN PARLIAMENT, spokesperson Professor Haydn Walters said today.

**“The MLSA proposal will criminalize smokers. The emphasis should be on the “pushers and dealers” who are selling this lethal product, not on those smokers who have become addicted”, Prof Walters said.**

“We have some sympathy for the Australian Hotels Association (AHA) in not wanting to enforce MLSA legislation, they are not police officers, and we agree with them that the government proposal is flawed. That’s why we support the well-considered, simple and easy to administer TFG proposal” Prof. Walters said.

The *Public Health Amendment (Tobacco-free Generation) Bill 2014* was introduced by Hon. Ivan Dean MLC into the Legislative Council in 2014, partly debated in 2015 and is being considered by a Legislative Council Committee. The TFG amendment does not penalize smokers.

“The TFG is easy for retailers to implement as all they have to check is an ID to easily make sure a person was born before the year 2000. If after no sale! The government proposal is much more difficult as retailers will have to do more complicated arithmetic to calculate how old someone is”, Prof Walters said.

There is substantial community support for the TFG. 70% of people surveyed in Tasmania by the Cancer Council support the TFG; 88% of young people and even 57% of smokers support it. A local newspaper survey in 2015 found similar levels of support.

“The tobacco industry and some retailers want more punitive measures for those who supply tobacco products. We don’t think the government should be sending in busy police to family barbecues or pubs to stop anyone giving a cigarette to a 24-year-old!”

“Furthermore, the government proposal continues current ‘rite of passage’ messaging that encourages young people to want to smoke in order to appear grown-up. The Tobacco Free Generation approach is a more measured phase-in that will be reviewed by parliament twice for efficacy, and targets the sellers, not the victims. It ends the misleading idea of a ‘special’ somehow ‘safe’ age for smoking. The TFG makes it clear that smoking is not safe at any age.” Prof Walters said.

---

**SmokeFree Tasmania: contacts – Prof Haydn Walters 0419 770 086,**

**Dr. Harley Stanton 0418 344 703; OR Dr. Nick Towle 0428 834 748.**