**<https://www.theadvocate.com.au/story/6503742/framework-aimed-at-limiting-tobaccos-voice/?cs=7649>**

**The Advocate – North West Tasmania**

**NOVEMBER 22 2019 - 5:00AM**

**Letters to the Editor Extra**

**No doubt about it**

Your editorial rightly notes that tobacco companies will do everything they can to oppose anything that might reduce their sales (Adv., Nov. 19).

Their history of lies and deceit continues many decades after unequivocal evidence that their products kill.

But you are wrong to doubt whether the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, ratified by 181 countries, aimed to preclude the industry from meeting with governments and politicians. It sought precisely to do that. "Parties should protect the formulation and implementation of public health policies for tobacco control from the tobacco industry to the greatest extent possible", and "should interact with the tobacco industry only when and to the extent strictly necessary to enable them to effectively regulate the tobacco industry and tobacco products". This applies to all public officials, and to those groups associated with tobacco companies that lobby for them.

This is not the end of democracy as we know it. The FCTC is unique because the tobacco industry is unique - its products kill some two-thirds of its Australian consumers, and cause seven million deaths each year. The industry remains free to spend billions on PR and related activities. But the FCTC is precisely about limiting its capacity to (in the Australian Health Department's words) "subvert the role of governments in developing and implementing public health policies....".

The 2016 WHO FCTC Impact Assessment Expert Group, of which I was deputy chair, concluded that "the role and activities of the global tobacco industry remain by far the most important obstacle to action".

Your editorial's distaste for this industry is commendable.

The current debate in Tasmania is because tobacco interests oppose action designed to protect the health of children. Why on earth would any politicians want to meet with lobbyists for this lethal and disreputable industry?

**Emeritus Professor Mike Daube AO, Faculty of Health Sciences, Curtin University**

**Meetings claim wrong**

The editorial "Tobacco lobby can speak too" makes incorrect claims around the freedoms of pro tobacco industry lobbyists to influence health laws and policy (Adv., Nov. 19).

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control highlights the fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the interests of the tobacco industry and those seeking to improve the health of the public.

The guidelines identify the tobacco industry as an extreme outlier in the commercial world, with an unethical business model that currently enjoys a special exemption from the laws that prevent any other business from selling such unsafe products.

In this regard those who seek to profit from selling toxic and addictive products should not be allowed to influence or shape policies that are designed to protect our health.

Our fundamental rights to health and efforts to maintain an accessible and affordable health system should be free from tobacco industry interference.

**Nick Towle, Heybridge**