



Tobacco

July 2018

Introduction

Tasmania has the second worst smoking prevalence in Australia at 19%, and tobacco smoking is Tasmania's single most preventable risk factor for poor health outcomes. Further, the tobacco smoking rates are higher in lower socio-economic groups, which reinforce their negative health outcomes. Tasmania has the highest poverty rate in Australia at 10.5% and introducing the tobacco-free generation bill will provide a short circuit to this cycle improving both health outcomes and disposable income for some of our most vulnerable Tasmanians.

Tobacco smoking is highly addictive and has no redeeming characteristics. It causes death in up to two-thirds of long-term users and also causes harm to other people around the smoker including unborn babies and children. Smoking is a major contributing factor in 8 of the top 10 causes of death and seven of the top 10 burdens of chronic disease in Tasmania.

The adverse health impacts of tobacco smoking are evident, but previous attempts to introduce tobacco-free generation type legislation have failed with critics citing lack of general public support. Recent research now shows that this is not the case and there is overwhelming support for the tobacco-free generation legislation amongst Tasmanians with 75% of surveyed Tasmanian adults being in support of the legislation. Even amongst current smokers and those born after 2000 who would be impacted by this legislation the support is 72% and 64% respectively.

In the long term, the AMA would like to see the Tobacco Free Generation legislation introduced; however, we also accept the minimum age for purchasing tobacco and tobacco products to 21 years and over.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Tasmanian tobacco-free generation bill. This legislation provides a unique opportunity to significantly improve the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians both now and into the future.
- Raise the age at which tobacco products can be sold, to those over the age of 21 years. The proposal would be to phase this in from January 2019.
- Step up efforts to protect children in Tasmania from tobacco in view of a healthy, tobacco-free younger generation.

<https://ama.com.au/position-statement/tobacco-smoking-and-e-cigarettes-2015>

[20170824 - Public Health Amendment \(Healthy Tasmania\) Bill 2017 \(No.35\).pdf](#)

Adopted by email poll on the 23rd July 2018