



Media Release

## **TOBACCO21 MOMENTUM GROWS AS MORE TASMANIANS GET BEHIND THE CAMPAIGN**

Tuesday 16 July 2019 -- New polling by You Gov Galaxy has revealed 78 per cent of Tasmanians now support plans to raise the purchasing age for tobacco from 18 to 21.

The results come as Tasmania's Upper House prepares to debate the policy in early August.

The policy, drafted by the Hon Ivan Dean MLC, aims to address Tasmania's high smoking rates by further limiting young people's access to tobacco products, preventing the next generation from becoming addicted.

The increase in support comes after The Minderoo Foundation released a radio and television campaign on 31 May for World No Tobacco Day.

The campaign featured 52-year-old smoker and terminal lung cancer patient Jason Trewin pleading for politicians to make it more difficult for kids to start smoking. The campaign aired for four weeks on television, radio and Twitter across Tasmania. Sadly, Mr Trewin passed away on 10 June 2019.

After the campaign, a You Gov Galaxy survey of 600 Tasmanians, commissioned by the Minderoo Foundation, found that total support for Tobacco21 had increased from 73 per cent (in 2018) to 78 per cent.

The strongest support for the legislation was found in the areas of Franklin (80%), Clark (84%).

"Notably, 76 per cent of Tasmanians aged 18 to 29 support the move to Tobacco21, which is the age group this policy will impact," Minderoo Foundation's Eliminate Cancer adviser Bruce Mansfield said.

"The effectiveness of age-based sale restrictions on tobacco sales is already proven in Australia, that's why smoking rates are now minimal for 12-17 year olds and then quickly rise for 18-29 year olds."

### **THE SURVEY ALSO FOUND THAT:**

- More than half of those aged 18-29 were current and occasional smokers in Tasmania, with the majority being men.
- Nine in ten smokers had their first cigarette before the age of 21 years, and
- Seven in ten smokers were influenced by someone else when they started smoking.

"The polling confirms US research in a Tasmanian context," Mr Mansfield said. "The biggest driver of young people taking up smoking is peer group pressure combined with the addiction of nicotine. Delaying the age of uptake through Tobacco21 addresses this effectively".

"Already today it is a requirement to check IDs for tobacco purchasers and most retailers set this policy at the age of 25 to ensure compliance, of which Tasmanian retailers do very well. This policy does not affect selling age, it does not affect current smokers aged 18-21 years, but it does promote and prioritise our future generation's health and wellbeing".



“Nicotine is a poison, more addictive than heroin. It requires special consideration, and it is very pleasing the vast majority of Tasmanians understand this and support this policy for better health outcomes for our kids and grandchildren,” he said.

“We fully support small business and the creation of more jobs and better education around tobacco prevention – Tobacco21 will not be a barrier to these things, if anything it will keep more people in jobs and out of hospital beds”. he added.

The Tobacco21 policy is set to be debated in the Upper House of State Parliament in early August. The Minderoo Foundation will be supporting the Hon. Ivan Dean MLC in the lead up to this debate and encourages everyone to find out more and have their say by visiting [tobacco21.com.au](http://tobacco21.com.au).

ENDS.

**Note to the editor:** the polling is available at: [tobacco21.com.au](http://tobacco21.com.au)

Sadly, Jason Trewin passed away in June. You can read a statement on our [website](#).

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*Bruce Mansfield is available for telephone interview on Tuesday 16 July.*