



Media Release

Friday 9 October 2009

Tobacco displays cause quitters to relapse

Seeing cigarettes for sale increases the likelihood of a person smoking within a four hour period by more than 25 per cent, research has revealed today (9 Oct) at the Oceania Tobacco Control Conference in Darwin.

Researchers from Macquarie University, led by Associate Professor Suzan Burton, examined the factors that lead to smokers relapsing, with findings confirming beliefs that tobacco displays are a major barrier for smokers trying to kick the habit.

“Tobacco displays at point of purchase are a key reason that smokers attempting to quit are unsuccessful,” Professor Burton said. “Even if the person doesn’t actually buy a packet of cigarettes, they are still 25 per cent more likely to smoke within any four hour period if they see a tobacco display.”

“Our research also suggests that people who are trying to quit are particularly likely to be influenced to smoke and to buy cigarettes after seeing them displayed within the first month of quitting.”

Associate Professor Burton said the research also revealed some interesting buying habits of smokers.

“It is well known that supermarkets are the most common place for people to buy cigarettes. However, people who are trying to quit smoking and lighter smokers are more likely than regular smokers to buy cigarettes while out in pubs and clubs. This is due to the fact that they can see the cigarettes for sale, see other people smoking and are usually drinking alcohol – factors that combine to create a very challenging situation for a recent quitter.”

Cancer Council Australia Chief Executive Officer, Professor Ian Olver, said point-of-sale displays of tobacco products were one of the last remaining forms of tobacco advertising and it was critical that they were removed.

“Currently the ACT, NSW, Tasmania and Victoria have all legislated to end tobacco displays in shops, with the legislation varying slightly from state to state,” Professor Olver said.

“Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland are all making moves toward implementing a ban, but South Australia is yet to show its support for the measure.”

“The evidence is clear – removing tobacco displays is a key priority for tobacco control.”

[Suzan Burton will present her research at 2.15pm today at the Oceania Tobacco Control Conference, Meeting Room 3, Darwin Convention Centre, Northern Territory.](#)

Notes to editors:

- ACT, NSW, Tasmania and Victoria have legislated to end tobacco displays in shops
- ACT has introduced a ban on tobacco displays from in shops except tobacconists, to be phased in by the end of 2009 - tobacconists by end of 2010
- NSW has banned displays in large shops by end-2009, smaller shops by mid-2010, tobacconists by 2013
- Victoria has committed to introduce a ban by January 2011
- Tasmania is phasing in a ban on all shops bar a few tobacconists by February 2011
- WA has legislation before Parliament, NT has foreshadowed it and Qld is considering it.

Action on Smoking and Health: Tobacco out of sight in shops
[www.ashaust.org.au/lv3/action_POS.htm#STEPS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION](http://www.ashaust.org.au/lv3/action_POS.htm#STEPS_IN_THE_RIGHT_DIRECTION) .

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