

# Tobacco

---

## AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS ACTION PLAN TOBACCO HEALTH AND AGEING

*The level of health-related harm caused by socially accepted and regulated drugs, such as alcohol and tobacco, far outweighs that caused by illicit drug use and abuse. The objective of all drug policy, whether for legal or illegal drugs, must be to discourage drug use and to lessen the harmful effects of drugs on health, society and the economy.*

### Our Action Plan

*“Cigarettes are the only legally available consumer product that, when used in the way intended by the manufacturer, causes death”*

**Senator Lyn Allison**  
**Spokesperson on health**

- Use more of the money generated from the sale of tobacco products in
  - mass media advertising campaigns aimed at preventing people from starting to smoke; and,
  - assisting people to quit smoking through public funding for evidence-based tobacco dependence treatment programs, better training for GPs and free availability of nicotine replacement patches;
- provide subsidized nicotine replacement therapies such as patches, gum, inhalers, lozengers etc to smokers who call Quitline;
- Increased restrictions on all tobacco product promotion, including a ban on indirect advertising through product placement (eg in films) and sponsorship promotion (eg sporting events);
- Prohibition of flavoured cigarettes aimed at enticing young people into commencing smoking;
- National consistency in the extension of restrictions on smoking in public places to include: gaming venues, all restaurants, bars, pubs and clubs; and, beaches, sporting venues and other public places;
- Stricter enforcement of and higher penalties for supplying cigarette products to under-18 year-olds;
- A ban on advertising and sale of tobacco products on the Internet;
- Prohibition of tobacco and tobacco related product display that is visible to children in retail stores, including banning of cigarette vending machines;
- More funding for training for health professionals to encourage them to counsel smoking patients at every opportunity and to advise smokers on how to stop;
- Funding the ACCC and the Attorney-General's Department to enable court action to be taken to recover smoking related costs from tobacco companies;
- Change industrial relations law prohibiting smoking in all work places; and,
- Standards for tobacco products that progressively lower harmful and addictive ingredients.

# Tobacco

---

## The Issues

Smoking cigarettes is the largest single preventable cause of illness and death, killing 19, 000 Australians a year and tobacco causes disease in almost every organ of the body. Costs to the Australian public due to death and illness related to smoking are estimated by the National Drug Strategy to be over \$21 billion a year.

According to the Federal Health Minister in 2002, smoking prevention is extremely cost-effective and saved the Federal Government \$2 for every \$1 spent on anti-smoking programs over the last 3 decades.

The Federal Government currently spends just \$2 million a year on anti-smoking programs while receiving **\$5 billion** in excise on tobacco every year.

Despite the fact that the tobacco industry has, for decades:

- denied the health impacts of smoking;
- used terms such as 'mild' and 'light', knowing these so-named products to be no less harmful than other cigarettes;
- destroyed documentation that would expose misleading and deceptive conduct; and,
- targeted young people in their marketing campaigns,

The Government continues to balk at using litigation against tobacco companies under the Trade Practices Act to recover health and other smoking related costs.

Although finally requiring tobacco companies to introduce more graphic health warnings on cigarette packets, the Federal Government gave in to industry pressure and agreed to the images only covering 30% of the front of the pack rather than 50% as originally proposed. They also gave the tobacco companies 18 months to introduce the new warnings!

The Victorian branch of the Young Liberal's has suggested that the ban on tobacco advertising should be ended.

The Democrats have a long history of pursuing amendments to legislation that force changes to the behaviour of the tobacco industry and reduces smoking. Democrats Senator Janet Powell's private bill prohibiting tobacco advertising became law in 1992. Senator Lyn Allison was pivotal in forcing the ACCC to take tobacco companies to task and get them to remove the labels 'light' and 'mild' from their packets.

Smoking rates have however stalled at just under 20% of the adult population and more effort is needed to encourage people to quit and to dissuade young people from taking up smoking.

The most effective strategies for reducing the costs to society from tobacco products are bans on the remaining direct and indirect tobacco advertising such as that at the Grand Prix, tobacco tax increases, smoke-free environments in all public and workplaces, and prominent graphic health messages on tobacco packaging.



### CONTACT US

(03) 9416 1880

Lv 1, 62 Wellington Parade, East Melbourne VIC 3002

[inquiries@democrats.org.au](mailto:inquiries@democrats.org.au)

Authorised by Jack Evans, 5 Poinciana Place, Wanneroo WA 6065  
Printed by Senator Lyn Allison, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600