



Increase to the minimum legal smoking age

As retailers may or may not be aware the Tasmanian Government released their Healthy Tasmania Five Year Strategic Plan just prior to Christmas last year. Part of their plan is to increase the minimum legal smoking to either 21 or 25 years of age.

The Strategic Plan has been open for community consultation and we have made a submission as well as ensuring your voice has been heard at public forums, but I encourage all members to submit letters of objection to ahealthytasmania@dhhs.tas.gov.au. While the date for submissions has closed, we have been assured that your comments will be listened to.

I also encourage you all to raise this issue with your local member of parliament by making a call to their office or sending them an email. You will find the relevant MP contact information at the end of this document.

If passed, this legislation will have a direct and serious impact on all independent retailers across Tasmania.

TIR, along with many others key stakeholders such as the TSBC, TCCI, THA and others view this proposal as simply unworkable with the burden of compliance, along with other logistical issues once again being passed onto the retailer to police and administer. It has also been clearly documented that legal tobacco consumption is on the decline largely due to policies such as 'go dark', plain packaging, excise tax increases, better awareness and educational programs coupled with an underlying push by many within our community for a healthier lifestyle – with these outcomes I ask, is this unreasonable and unworkable reform necessary?

In addition TIR also feels that it is inappropriate to disenfranchise a portion of the community in saying that at the age of 18 you are legally entitled to vote, consume alcohol, gamble and defend our country yet not mature enough to make a decision to purchase and consume tobacco products. Prohibition in any form simply does not work.

As noted above TIR has made a separate submission on behalf of our retailer network in Tasmania, a copy is attached for your reference. We have also attached a copy of the MGA submission for your reference. A copy of a media release from the ARA regarding a recent survey of 1000 Tasmanian which rejects increasing the smoking age to 25 is also attached for your reference.

Your voice on this matter is imperative, you need to let your local politicians know that this type of reform is ludicrous and won't work.

We have listed below some general dot points that you can use in any conversation you may have with your local MP, in addition to those points as noted in the TIR and MGA submissions. The same or similar dot points can also be used in any written submission that you may wish to make in regards to this matter. TIR is also willing to assist any retailer that may choose to make a written statement on this matter. If such assistance is required please email grant.hinchcliffe@igatas.com.au or call on 03 63910200 or 0407 534737.

A copy of the consultation draft can be found here;
https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0020/208433/Healthy_Tasmania_Five_Year_Strategic_Plan_-_Community_Consultation_-_FINAL_18.12.15.pdf



Points for discussion

- Tobacco retailers are operating an entirely legal business selling a legal product and employing hundreds of people across the country.
- Should the proposal be implemented, as with other restricted products demand for tobacco will remain and a black market will open up to fill it.
- The proposed changes will seriously impact Tasmanian retailers – the changes can't stop people buying online from interstate or turning to the black market.
- There is a concern for the welfare of young employees who may face confrontation from disgruntled customers
- This should be a matter for the federal government as there are too many interstate travel and trade implications
- The legislation is cheap for government to administer with the expense relayed onto small businesses through additional training and added responsibilities.
- Overly strict legislation will turn away tourists and international students.
- Travellers aged 18 to 24, who are also smokers contribute \$14.2 million to Tasmania's tourism annual output.
- The need for vigilance on behalf of the retailer is enormous to avoid breaking the law and facing serious consequences.
- A 'Responsible Service of Tobacco Products' formal training course could be introduced which would have a significant administrative and financial impact on retailers.
- According to research undertaken by the Australian Retailers Association 76% of Tasmanians would prefer to see better education and harm reduction measures to reduce smoking.
- According to research undertaken by the Australian Retailers Association 75% of Tasmanians believe the age of majority should equally apply to a person's ability to vote, gamble and access and consume to tobacco and alcohol.
- Retailers may be forced to initiate an operational policy that requests all customers who are purchasing tobacco products to present identification creating an administrative burden for retailers of around \$133,000 per annum.

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