

SMOKING BANS IN LICENSED PREMISES - PUBS, BAR, NIGHTCLUBS, GAMING VENUES

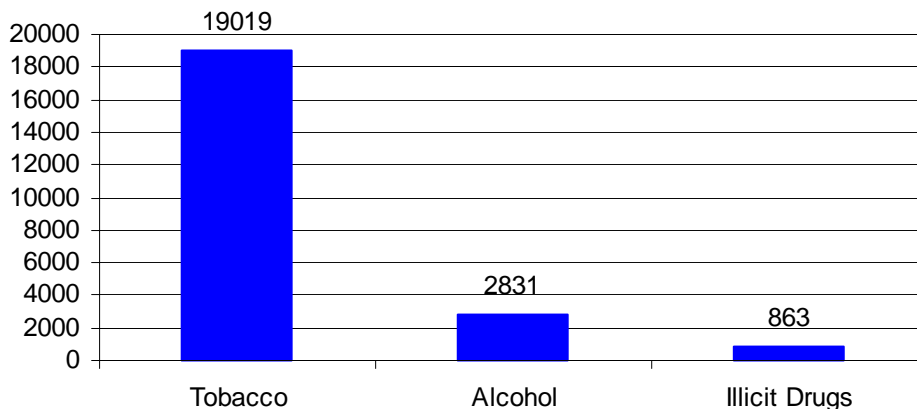
Rochelle Shaw and Yuki Simmonds

Department of Human Services, Victoria Government, Australia

I am going to be talking about smoking bans in licensed premises throughout Victoria, including pubs, bars, nightclubs, and gaming venues. I am briefly going to talk about the issues as to why these laws were introduced, the impact of the laws, and also the industry's response. I am also going to highlight a lot of the factors which Helen has talked about as well, in regard to the issues.

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in Australia; it kills nearly 5,000 Victorians every year, and it costs \$5 billion per year in terms of health and social costs. This graph (see below graph) paints a picture of the magnitude of the problem - it represents the number of deaths attributable to alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs in 1998 in Australia. As you can see, alcohol and illicit drugs combined, are less than half that of those caused from tobacco.

Number of Deaths Attributable to Alcohol, Tobacco and Illicit Drugs in Australia 1998-99



Smoking not only harms the smoker, but also people around them - the non-smoker - through passive smoke, or as Helen mentioned today, through environmental tobacco smoke. Passive smoking in itself is a significant issue; it costs \$11 million per year, just in terms of hospital costs, and results in 19,000 hospital bed days per year in Victoria alone.

There is an abundance of evidence on the health effects from passive smoking as was highlighted earlier, such as lung cancer, heart disease and respiratory problems and asthma. In particular, there is a high risk of disease from passive smoking in the hospitality industry; staff in the hospitality industry are regularly exposed to high levels of passive smoke. One study found that one shift in a smoky bar is equivalent to smoking 16 cigarettes – that's in an eight-hour shift. It has also been found that bar

workers are at significantly higher risk of lung cancer - and this is among both smoking and non-smoking bar tenders.

Social venues (pubs, bars, nightclubs) not only have significant risk for passive smoking, but they also have a powerful influence on people's decisions to smoke. It has been found that non-smokers experiment, that people binge smoke (they smoke a lot more in these venues, as highlighted by Helen earlier), and they also progress from being social smokers to addicted smokers within these venues. What is really significant is that smokers have indicated that they are more likely to quit, or at least attempt to quit, if smoking was banned in pubs, bars and nightclubs.

To begin to address this significant issue within the hospitality industry, in September 2002 the Victorian Government introduced passive smoking reforms in licensed venues. These reforms are partial bans, not full bans, and this recognises the government's incremental approach to introducing reforms in these venues. They require gaming rooms to be smoke free, bingo centres to be entirely smoke free, the casino to be smoke free on the main gaming floor and in six of the twelve bars, and they also require licensed premises with two or more rooms to designate one room as smoke free. This is to provide a smoke free alternative for people when they are socialising in these venues.

When these restrictions were introduced they were the toughest smoking restrictions in these types of venues across Australia. Since their introduction, many other States are investigating restrictions in these venues, including full bans to be introduced in venues. And late last year the Australian Capital Territory announced that these venues would be smoke free, in their State, by the end of 2006.

The reforms have impacted over 500 gaming venues throughout the state, over 5,000 pubs, bars, and nightclubs throughout Victoria, and on the casino. What we have seen is that community support, prior to and after the implementation of the reforms, has increased for smoking bans in these venues. As you can see (referring to screen (see below table)), in 2000 the support for the bans was around 55-65% in bars, nightclubs, and gaming venues, and this was prior to any mention of smoking restrictions, in these venues. Since the implementation of the reforms, the community support for these bans is up to around 70-80%. This is really interesting, especially because industry continually voices concerns about bans in these premises having a detrimental effect on venues and decreasing patronage.

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Bars	57%	63%	68%	72%
Nightclubs	55%	63%	66%	71%
Gaming	66%	74%	79%	81%

Community support for smoking bans in bars, nightclubs and gaming venues

There has been a varied response to the bans from industry. The most visual response has been in the gaming industry, where many gaming venues have renovated their premises to create smoking rooms adjacent to the gaming room. I am just going to

show you a couple of slides of the types of rooms that have been created by gaming venues (refers to the screen). So as you can see (from the below pictures), they have created sub-structures to enclose an area to allow people to smoke, and these are directly adjacent to the gaming room. These types of structures raise issues as to whether the room is substantially enclosed and whether they comply with the laws; but also issues in regard to smoke drift, as obviously there's nothing there to protect people from the harms of passive smoke.



Examples of smoking rooms created in or next to the gaming room

The response of industry in pubs, bars, and nightclubs is not as obvious. There have been very few complaints from the public about premises not complying with the laws, which may indicate that the laws are being complied with. Also, in the first twelve months after implementation, the government funded local council officers to enforce the laws and to educate proprietors, and they were funded to visit all

premises. From these visits, it was indicated that 99% were complying with the requirement to designate a room as non-smoking.

The peak-operating hours of pubs, bars, and nightclubs, is after hours and weekends (so evenings and weekends). However, local council enforcement officers operate 9-5, Monday- Friday. Therefore to try and get an accurate picture of what was happening in these venues, we funded councils to do after-hours enforcement. Again we found that there was high compliance, with 94% complying with the restriction to designate a non-smoking room. We did, however, note that compliance in the metropolitan area was lower at 78%, which is significant because the demographics of venues within the metro area is a lot different to that in the outer metro suburbs, where there's a lot more bars and night clubs in the inner city, compared to pubs and hotels outside.

We also found, through the after-hours enforcement, that the majority of designated smoke free rooms were dining rooms within these venues. Under the laws, the proprietor has the ability to choose which room they designate as a non-smoking room. This is possibly an issue with the legislation, in that it may not actually be allowing patrons to have that smoke free alternative in their socialising space, as it is the dining room which is designated as non-smoking.

Lastly, the government is going to continue to monitor the laws, compliance, industry's response, and community support to further inform any future developments in this area.

Thank you.