

**COFFS HARBOUR CITY COUNCIL
FACT SHEET SMOKE FREE OUTDOOR AREA**



Why is Council introducing a Smoke Free Outdoor Area Policy?

Public Health

Smoking remains a major cause of preventable death in Australia. Introducing outdoor smoke free areas is a positive step towards reducing exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke for all, including children. By making public areas smoke-free Council can directly improve the health of our local community.

Second-hand smoke can cause early death and disease in children and adults who do not smoke. The more second-hand smoke you are exposed to the more likely the increased risk of disease. There is no known level of exposure to second-hand smoke that is free of risk.

Second-hand smoke can cause the following diseases and conditions:

In adults:

- heart disease
- lung cancer
- irritation of the eyes and nose

In children and infants:

- sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS or cot death)
- lower birth weight (where the pregnant mother was exposed)
- bronchitis, pneumonia and other lung/airways infections
- middle ear disease (titis media or 'glue ear', middle ear effusion)
- respiratory symptoms including cough, phlegm, wheeze and breathlessness
- higher rates and worsening of asthma
- lower level of lung function during childhood (i.e. they cannot breathe in as deeply or breathe out as hard as they would otherwise)
- embryonic cancer (where the pregnant mother was exposed)

While most of the evidence relates to indoor exposure, there is emerging evidence on how smoking affects air quality in outdoor locations such as alfresco dining and playgrounds. In the interest of community health other areas may also be investigated as part of the Policy's development.

A study which measured cigarette smoke levels in a variety of outdoor locations showed that a person sitting near someone smoking in an outdoor area could be exposed to levels of cigarette smoke similar to the exposure of another sitting in an indoor tavern where smoking is allowed. Therefore, in outdoor areas where people tend to congregate, such as alfresco dining areas, sporting fields, playgrounds/parks etc, people smoking can present a real health risk to non-smoking patrons.

Community Support

There is also evidence to suggest that smoking bans support smokers who are trying to quit as well as reduce their overall cigarette consumption. According to a 2006 study, 54% of smokers who had tried to quit found that seeing someone with a cigarette was a trigger to relapse, while 40% said that smelling a cigarette was a trigger to relapse

(N.B. supporting statistical and survey data in evidence of a Smoke-Free Outdoor Areas Policy provided by the Heart Foundation and The Cancer Council go to

http://www.smokefreecouncils.com.au/smoke-free_outdoor_areas_resource_kit for more information.) 24 June 2011

Increasing community awareness of the harmful effects of second-hand smoke has led the community to accept, and expect the availability of smoke-free areas. Given that over 82% of the NSW population are non-smokers a Council's decision to introduce smoke-free areas is often in response to community expectations. In December 2006, a survey of 2,400 NSW residents found overwhelming support for smoking restrictions in the following areas:

- 92% support bans in children's playgrounds
- 85% support bans outside workplace doors/entrances
- 80% support bans in sports stadiums
- 69% support bans in outdoor dining areas
- In addition, 65% say they avoid places where they may be exposed to other people's smoke.

Litter

Cigarette butts are consistently one of the most common items found during *Clean Up Australia Day*. Approximately 7.2 billion cigarettes are littered in Australia each year. Cigarette butts negatively impact the appearance of local neighbourhoods as well as the environment, waterways and wildlife. Outdoor smoking bans may help to reduce the amount of cigarette butt litter.

How will it affect my business?

This myth assumes that smokers choose a venue solely on the basis of their ability to smoke whilst in attendance. Australian and international studies have found that instead of reducing bar and restaurant patronage, smoking bans may actually increase it, as non-smokers are attracted to venues they would previously not attend. At the same time, existing smokers are unlikely to be 'repelled' as there are now no alternate venues available as more and more businesses become smoke-free.

Currently, Council's Operational Smoke-Free Outdoor Areas Policy has already been applied to all children's playgrounds, some sporting fields, egress and entrance to Council owned buildings e.g. SportzCentral, the newly refurbished swimming pool and the International Sports Stadium.

Additionally, Council became a Cancer Council Community Partner in December 2006 with a mandate to undertake to help lower the impact of cancer in the community. Initiatives such as the introduction of smoke-free outdoor areas addressed the broader communities need for healthier outdoor spaces.

No Smoking stickers and other resources call the NSW Better Health Centre (02) 9879 0443.

Feedback

Council is keen to hear your feedback on the Smoke-Free Outdoor Areas Policy via the Council website www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au.

Quitline 13 7848 (13 QUIT) is a specialised service designed to help you, or someone you know, succeed in becoming a nonsmoker. Smokers who seek support from the Quitline can significantly increase their chances of success. The health benefits of quitting start within just two hours of giving up!

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24 June, 2011