

Media Release



21 February 2012

The Smoke Haze is lifting for NSW Residents

The NSW Government is to be applauded for finally lifting the cigarette smoke haze on residents in NSW with the introduction of a comprehensive smoke free policy that will see smoking banned in outdoor areas where food is sold, Tony Thirlwell, NSW Heart Foundation CEO said today.

“This is an historic moment in our State’s history and one that will help to protect the thousands of people in NSW who don’t smoke,” Mr Thirlwell said.

“There is no safe level of exposure to second hand smoke – evidence shows that a non-smokers exposure to second-hand smoke can result in up to a 30 percent increase in risk of heart disease.

There is strong community support for smoke free policy. Heart Foundation and Cancer Council surveys found that 94% of adults agree that playgrounds should be smoke free and 83% support smoke free outdoor dining.

“Smoking is the largest single preventable cause of death in Australia, killing more than 15,000 Australians a year which is why the Heart Foundation welcomes the release today of the Tobacco Action Plan.

The Heart Foundation has worked with the 94 Councils in NSW who already have smoke free outdoor areas policy and believes they are the big winners in this announcement.

“Majority of NSW Councils have done an admirable job in responding to community expectation by including alfresco dining areas.

The Heart Foundation sees the only downside in this announcement is the unnecessary amount of time that has been given for its introduction – which is not until 2015.

“While we are pleased to see the release of the Tobacco Action Plan we are disappointed that it doesn’t come into effect until 2015. There is very little that needs to be done in order to make the areas specified in the document smoke free.

“We’ve been lobbying the State Government in NSW for a number of years on this issue, trying to play catch up to QLD, WA, ACT, Tasmania and the Northern Territory and therefore think action could be taken in a much faster time than has been allocated.

“Contrary to tobacco industry scare tactics, state wide legislation is what eight out of ten** café and restaurant owners want, believing it is much fairer than leaving it to individual councils.

“The cigarette smoke haze on residents in NSW can not be lifted soon enough so that we can protect everybody equally,” Mr Thirlwell said.

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