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Heart Foundation endorses Burnie councillor's smoke-free CBD hopes

As Councillor Themba Bulle pointed out in his article on Saturday, it is important to keep sending the message about the dangers of smoking.

Tasmania's North West Coast's smoking rates are among the highest in the nation. And while studies show that people associate smoking with lung cancer but are typically unaware of the raft of other conditions that can be brought about by smoking, like stroke, type two diabetes, macular degeneration, low bone density, lower fertility, and heart disease.

Heart disease causes more deaths in Australia than any other single disease. People who smoke are four times more likely to die of cardiovascular disease (that is, a heart attack or stroke) than those who do not smoke, and three times more likely to suffer sudden cardiac death.

It's the job of local government to represent the people in the community, and so as we wise up to the dangers of smoking we can expect to see more pressure to impose bans. Central Coast Council has made Ulverstone's main street smoke free. Hobart's CBD will soon boast more smoke-free areas, thanks to a council decision in April. North Sydney Council is looking to declare their CBD smoke free some time this year, while Tamworth, Lismore and Glen Innes councils have already pulled it off.

I urge Burnie Council to follow Cr Bulle's lead and support a community consultation process about smoking in the CBD. Small steps can lead to big changes.