

Submission to the Education and Health Standing Committee
pertaining to the
Inquiry into the Tobacco Products Control Amendment Bill 2008

1 Submitter

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2 Purpose of Submission

The purpose of this submission is support the *Tobacco Products Control Amendment Bill 2008*, specifically the replacement of section 22 regarding the display of tobacco products. It is our contention that the open display of branded cigarette packets behind shop counters constitutes a clear form of advertising, circumventing the prohibition against tobacco advertising in Western Australia as intended by the *Tobacco Products Control Act 2006*. In support of our contention, the results of a recently completed Western Australian study undertaken by Curtin University are provided hereafter.

3 Study Design

In late 2008 we undertook a university study to investigate the influence of point-of-sale (POS) cigarette displays on cigarette purchases. Customers observed purchasing cigarettes from supermarkets at Karrinyup and Galleria shopping centres were approached to participate in the survey. Supermarkets were selected because they account for a greater proportion of tobacco sales within Australia (51%) than all other retailer types combined.¹ Of 344 people approached, 206 (60%) agreed to participate, aged 18–76 years (90 male, 116 female). They were asked questions regarding:

- their intention to purchase cigarettes prior to entering the store
- their awareness of the POS cigarette display
- the effect of the POS cigarette display on their purchase decision
- their support for a ban on POS cigarette displays.

4 Study Results

4.1 Unplanned Purchases

In total, 22% of respondents had no intention of purchasing cigarettes before entering the store. Around one-in-two of these respondents claimed the POS tobacco display had prompted their decision to make a purchase—around four times the proportion of respondents who *had* intended to purchase cigarettes prior to entering the store (47% vs. 12%). These data clearly suggest that POS tobacco displays act as a form of

advertising by stimulating spontaneous cigarette purchases. Based upon our sample size we can estimate that POS tobacco displays account for a 6–14% increase in total purchases in supermarkets in Western Australia.

4.2 Brand Switching

Brand switching was reported amongst 5% of respondents. POS tobacco displays played a major role in respondents' brand selection (e.g., *"I looked at the display and picked the one I liked the look of"*). Indeed, respondents suggested the POS tobacco displays were just as influential as friends' recommendations in terms of brand selection. This again demonstrates POS tobacco displays constitute a form of advertising for tobacco products by influencing smokers' brand selections.

4.3 Temptation for Smokers Attempting to Quit

A not insubstantial proportion of our respondents (28%) said the removal of cigarette displays from stores would make it easier for them to quit. This result closely mirrors the 31% of smokers who claimed the same in a previous Australian survey.²

4.4 Smokers' support for a ban on POS tobacco displays

Eighty-eight percent of smokers were supportive (49%) or at least ambivalent (39%) towards a ban on POS cigarette displays (e.g., *"whatever helps people quit is worthwhile"*, *"it might help stop impulse buys"*, *"it might stop first time buyers"* and *"out-of-sight is out-of-mind"*). The chief objection of those few smokers (12%) opposed to removing POS tobacco displays was that it would infringe upon their right to choose between tobacco brands. As enacted in Canada, upon request customers could be provided an in-store catalogue of available tobacco products and their 'right' would therefore be preserved.

5 Conclusions

Our data clearly suggest POS tobacco displays act as a form of advertising even in the absence of advertising materials. They stimulate unplanned cigarette purchases, play an important role in brand selection, and tempt smokers trying to quit. Furthermore, it appears very few smokers would object to POS tobacco displays being removed from line-of-sight, and many would welcome it.

We would welcome the opportunity to appear before the committee to present our findings.

¹ PricewaterhouseCoopers. *Sales of cigarettes and tobacco products by type of retail business: an analysis of the significance of cigarettes and tobacco products to tobacco retailers in Australia*. Sydney: PricewaterhouseCoopers prepared for British American Tobacco Australia, 2005.

² Wakefield M, Germain D, Henriksen L. The effect of retail cigarette pack displays on impulse purchase. *Addiction* 2008;103(2):322-8.