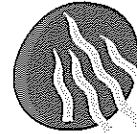


5 FEB 2009



Hon Stephen Robertson MP
Member for Stretton



**Queensland
Government**

Minister for Health

MI160467
MO: H/09/00285

30 JAN 2009

Dr Janet Woollard MLA
Member for Alfred Cove
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Dr Woollard

Thank you for your letter dated 13 January 2009, regarding the *Tobacco Products Control Amendment Bill 2008* currently under consideration by the Education and Health Standing Committee. Minister Robertson has asked that I respond on his behalf.

As you may be aware, the Queensland Government implements a multi-strategy tobacco control plan to help reduce smoking rates. Our comprehensive tobacco legislation is a fundamental part of this plan. Some of Australia's toughest tobacco laws are in place in Queensland, and include a range of smoking bans for indoor and outdoor public places. These laws are reducing the public's exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, contributing to a culture that supports smokers trying to quit, and discouraging young people from taking up the habit.

The impact of these laws in Queensland has been positive, with independent research undertaken after the commencement of the first phase of Queensland's smoking bans on 1 January 2005 showing an increase in the number of smokers making a quit attempt, and a decrease in the number of cigarettes being smoked overall. The survey also found that 58% of smokers reported smoking less in public places since the new laws were introduced.

Independent research conducted following the final changes to the tobacco legislation on 1 July 2006 found that since the introduction of the new laws, 67% of smokers in Queensland reported smoking less in public places and 22% reported making a quit attempt. The evaluation also found that the new tobacco laws helped 27% of ex-smokers to stay smoke-free. Queenslanders are enjoying the benefits of our many smoke-free places, and strong community and health group advocacy for laws to go further are a reflection of this.

The "outdoor eating or drinking places" smoking ban in Queensland applies to all businesses where there is food and drink for example hotels, clubs, restaurants, coffee shops and snack bars. Outdoor events, such as a festival in a park where there is a temporarily fenced off area for the event and on-site food and drink is sold and consumed, are also covered by this ban. It is important to note that the outdoor smoking bans in Queensland are not all about exposure to environmental tobacco smoke. The laws are also about supporting social change and creating an environment where non-smoking is the norm.

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Queensland's tobacco laws go further to protect young people with bans on smoking within 10 metres of children's playgrounds, between the flags at patrolled beaches, in all public buildings, indoors and outdoors at all restaurants, cafes and eating places, at large outdoor events, within four metres of almost all building entrances, at major sports stadiums and now in all vehicles where children are present. The upcoming ban on smoking in cars where children are present sends an additional, and vital, message about the impact of exposure to tobacco smoke on children.

I strongly encourage all Governments to create more smoke-free environments to protect children, non-smokers and smokers alike from the harmful effects of tobacco. Great progress has been made in Australia and internationally with respect to smoking bans for indoor places. I fully support all positive moves towards further addressing exposure to tobacco smoke, particularly in outdoor settings and crowded areas, and changing the social culture of smoking to create an environment where non-smoking is the norm.

Should you have any queries regarding my advice to you, Mr Mark West, Director, Prevention Programs, Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Branch, Queensland Health, will be pleased to assist you and can be contacted on telephone (07) 3234 1709.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Struthers', written in a cursive style.

KAREN STRUTHERS MP
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health