



11 September 2020

The City of Vincent
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To whom it may concern

SUPPORT IN PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE SMOKE-FREE TOWN CENTRES

The Australian Medical Association WA (**AMA (WA)**) is the State's peak medical representative body, and the only independent organisation acting on behalf of Western Australian doctors. We represent the medical profession to the government and to the community and advocate for the best interests of patients.

The AMA (WA) strongly supports the City of Vincent's proposal to introduce smoke-free town centres as part of the five-year Public Health Plan.

Tobacco smoking and passive smoking are among the most significant public health issues we face. Tobacco smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease burden and the leading cause of cancer in Australia¹. Second-hand smoke causes coronary heart disease and cancers in non-smoking adults, and induces and exacerbates a range of mild to severe respiratory effects in infants, children and adults². Second-hand smoke is a cause of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and a range of other serious health outcomes in young children. Furthermore, there is increasing evidence that second-hand smoke exposure is associated with psychological distress³.

The AMA (WA) believes West Australians have a fundamental right to clean, safe environments. There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke. Just 30 minutes of exposure to tobacco smoke changes the way in which blood flows and clots, increasing the risk of heart attack and stroke⁴. Completely smoke-free environments – with no exceptions – are the only proven way to protect people⁵.

Smoke-free environments protect children, the sick and other vulnerable groups and help smokers who are trying to quit. Establishing smoke-free public places encourages families to make their homes smoke-free. This further protects children and other family members from the dangers of second-hand smoke. Smoke-free environments also contribute to changing the social norm to make smoking less acceptable.

¹ AIHW 2020, 'Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Australia', *The Australian Government*. Available at: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia/contents/drug-types/tobacco>.

² Ibid.

³ Campbell, Ford & Winstanley 2017, 'The health effects of second-hand smoke', Tobacco in Australia: facts and issues. Melbourne: *Cancer Council Victoria*. Available at: <https://www.tobaccoinaustralia.org.au/chapter-4-secondhand/4-0-background>.

⁴ WHO n.d. 'Protect people from Tobacco smoke,' *WHO Prevention of Noncommunicable Diseases*. Available at: https://www.who.int/tobacco/mpower/publications/en_tfi_mpower_brochure_p.pdf?ua=1.

⁵ Ibid.

There is substantial precedence for implementing restrictions on smoking in outdoor areas in Western Australia and across the country (eg. City of Perth, City of Bunbury, City of Albany, Town of Cottesloe, Shire of Augusta Margaret River, City of Melbourne, City of Hobart, North Sydney Council, Brisbane City Council, South Australia).

It is imperative that e-cigarette aerosols are included in smoke-free policies. There is overwhelming and accumulating evidence on the harms caused by e-cigarettes to the lungs, heart and blood vessels⁶. The full extent of the damage caused by e-cigarette aerosols is not yet known and so, we must take a precautionary approach to limit their potential harm of vaping in public areas.

The AMA (WA) is hopeful that the City of Vincent will act upon public health advice, make a commitment to the health of your community and introduce smoke-free town centres by 2025.

Yours sincerely



Dr Andrew Miller
AMA (WA) PRESIDENT

⁶ NHMRC CEO Statement: Electronic Cigarettes (e-cigarettes). *Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council*; 2017 Available at: <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/resources/ceo-statement-electronic-cigarettes>.