

MEDIA RELEASE

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"NO ONE SMOKES HERE ANYMORE"

With the Launch of the "No one Smokes Here Anymore" program by Health Minister David Llewellyn on December 6th, to inform the public of the legislation that makes it unlawful to smoke in pubs and clubs from 1st January 2006, it is timely to remind the public that tobacco smoking is a major risk factor for coronary heart disease, stroke, peripheral vascular disease, numerous cancers, chronic respiratory conditions and a variety of other diseases and conditions.

Murchison MLC, Ruth Forrest reminds the public that smoking is rightly regarded as Tasmania's single most preventable risk factor in the area of public health, particularly when taking all ages into account, figures from the Department of Health's State of Public Health Report 2003 state that smoking was responsible for 15% of all deaths in Tasmania from 1995-2000.

The State of Public Health Report 2003, shows Tasmania has the third highest proportion of current smokers in Australia, although between 1977 and 2001, there has been a decline from 43% to 25% in males and 29.6% to 23.7% in females. However, among young females aged 18-34 years in Tasmania, there has actually been a disturbing increase in current smokers from 32.6% in 1989/90, to 39.7% in 2001.

"These alarming rates of smoking among younger women, many of whom will be pregnant or planning pregnancy in this age group, is a major concern in all areas of their individual health and wellbeing as well as the potential adverse impact on fertility rates, pregnancy outcomes including miscarriages, low birth weight and

premature births. This is an area of great concern and must be a priority to reduce the adverse impact on the health of future generations" Ms Forrest stated.

"There is increasing research evidence that children of women who smoke, or are exposed to passive smoking, are at greater risk of behavioural problems and learning difficulties, with greater risk associated with higher smoking levels" Ms Forrest stated.

"The fact that pubs and clubs will be smoke free is a very positive step and all concerned with this process are to be congratulated, however the next important step is to address other areas that children are exposed to smoking such as in cars and the promotion of smoking cessation programs for pregnant women and their partners must be a priority" Ms Forrest stated.

"These measures are vital to protect the health and intellectual wellbeing of our future generations" Ms Forrest said.

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For further information, please phone 0419 879 524.