

Jenny Leaman

From: Launceston FCS <Launceston@freechoice.com.au>
Sent: Friday, 5 June 2015 12:36 PM
To: tfg
Subject: Submission for New Tobacco Bill proposal

To Members of the Legislative Council considering the proposed new Tobacco Bill.

There are numerous reasons across all areas of business, individuals rights, tourism, organised crime and more, as to why Tasmania shouldn't isolate itself from the other states by passing this Bill. However, perhaps the main reason may be common sense. I would like to briefly outline some problems I see.

Is this age discrimination ? Do we have the right to stop adults buying a legal product, a known source of stress relief ? Through education and continual promotion everyone knows smoking is not healthy. Just like too much alcohol and fatty unhealthy food contribute to diabetes, a fast spreading disease. It is fundamental and simple that adults have right to choose to buy legal products. To start to introduce prohibition to groups in society is a risky move.

The sale of illicit tobacco products is a growth industry made stronger in recent times by rising costs. In the last 6 months we have been regularly asked if we sell cheaper illegal tobacco. In the last 2 months I have been asked for Manchester Cigarettes, an illegally packaged, cheaper product in Australia. On reporting this to the tobacco industry I was told it was readily available in mainland states and evidence is starting suggest it is creeping into Tasmania via tourists and workers travelling in and out. Authorities are trying to shut it down, but a recent report by KPMG has valued the illicit trade of tobacco in Australia at \$1.5billion. Age restrictions will only increase this industry and encourage organised crime.

Logistically with this law it will be a growing nightmare. In 15 years retail workers will spend too much time asking for I.D. and arguing with irrate customers over forgotten wallets or purses left in the office. It is difficult to judge 18yo's now, it will become ridiculous as we progress through the years. Please show some understanding for the retail workers and shop assistants who will be asked to enforce this law.

In 2020 we will have to inform tourists coming for holiday, workers coming for jobs and anyone else coming into the state that unless they can prove they are 20 they will not be able to buy cigarettes when they enter the state. In Asia and Europe the population is great and the percentage of smokers is far greater than the 20% in Australia. As the years roll by I can see the increasing arguments being had with a tourist trying to buy his/her smokes.

Even if we falsely consider the above points may be irrelevant, how stupid is it that to beat this law I could, buy illegally, fake I.D, buy online from another state, buy up when I go to Melbourne for the footy or ask my 2 year older neighbour to buy a packet. The law has no point and is not workable.

Consider the potential loss in revenue for the Tasmanian government. We are already holding off the other states from cutting the GST returned to us by the federal government. Wait till they see our contribution in tobacco excise and GST from sales start to drop. This money is crucial to maintaining our infrastructure and quality of services provided. Have the future implications of loss of revenue been considered ?

Finally, on a personal level, my business profit breakdown is roughly 35% tattsлото, 65% tobacco. I purchased the business 6 years ago. Like many in small business it provides an income for my wife and I. Its value on eventual sale, hopefully provides our superannuation and a nest egg for our 2 children. Our future is invested in this business. It provides on average 100 hours of work for the 6 staff employed. This scenario would be repeated on a smaller and far grander scale in corner stores, newsagency's, service stations, IGA's and Coles and Woolies right across Tasmania. Some will rely on tobacco sales for 10% of profit, some 100%. The impact of this law will be a disaster. The owner who is paying off a 10, 15 or 20 year loan is in big trouble. Like all tobacco sellers their outlet will be de-valued overnight and their ability to pay out their loan will diminish as revenue falls. The increase in bankruptcy could be significant. The ability to employ people will slowly decrease, more and more staff hours reduced and staff laid off. I have heard some discussion with owners re compensation for small business, I suspect conversations will take place with lawyers. Will help and financial support be made available ?

I hope you consider the points that I and others have raised and decide this Bill should not be supported.

Kind regards,
Kevin Wade
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