

Submission to

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SESSIONAL COMMITTEE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION A

Tobacco Free Generation

BY

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Dear Committee,

I am a Tasmanian family man, business owner and employer. Two of my businesses sell tobacco products and I benefit directly from the sale of these products.

I see that the introduction of the TFG legislation will have, detrimental impacts upon employment, tourism and the Tasmanian economy as well as making worthless many small businesses, provide benefit to interstate businesses, provide little or no health benefit whilst the onus for compliance and implementation being born by the retailer.

I am also disturbed that those parties with direct involvement in the industry and the most to lose from the proposed legislation were not directly canvassed. How simple would it have been to have sent a letter to all Tobacco seller licence holders rather than the low visibility advertising relating to the Committee process for this legislation. Surely, the committee would benefit from a variety and numerous submissions that an open process would facilitate.

Employment

Two of the small businesses that my family own and operate are newsagencies that sell tobacco products. The newsagency industry is experiencing much change as traditional sources of print media and entertainment are being substituted with electronic products. My two newsagencies which have existed for many decades and I have owned for more than 15 years are diversified with lotteries and/or post plus other agencies to have as many diverse income streams as possible. However, tobacco products are the largest single contributor to our sales, and likely to be for many other small businesses like mine throughout the State. Without doubt the transition to the TFG would see loss of jobs at my businesses and threaten their viability. I estimate that through this period at least half of my staff would lose employment. Across the state with almost one thousand

tobacco retailers we are talking about thousands of jobs lost. What are the alternative employment prospects for these people?

Tourism

MONA and events like the AFL and V8 Supercars have added new levels of national and international visitors to Tasmania. We are riding on a high of the Chinese tourism following the visit by the Chinese President this is actively encouraged within the State.

Approximately 20% of Australian adults smoke. Smoking rates around the world range from 15 to more than 50%. For example 59% of Chinese males smoke (ABS National Health Survey 2010). Are we telling these people they are no longer welcome? Can we afford to suggest to 1 billion or so potential tourists that we don't like smokers here. With language barriers and the uncertainty regarding the legality of these peoples habits they will just choose to travel elsewhere.

My non tobacco related business is an iconic retail business that relies on visitors for survival, this and many other such business will be decimated by this "TASMANIA CLOSED TO TOURISTS WHO MAY WANT TO SMOKE" mentality. I doubt the Tasmanian economy would recover from this enormous market reduction.

My family and I travel internationally regularly. With language barriers and the like if we were to travel to a country/state in which we were unable to consume as at home we would not go. It would just be too difficult having to interpret who was born before or after a specific date.

Business Value

I have worked hard to purchase and then operate Small businesses for more than 15 years. I have provided employment and services whilst having an expectation that when I retire my family will have business assets to convert to superannuation. The transition to TFG will remove the majority of businesses sales and erode future value, removing opportunities for me and the other 958 tobacco retailers to have assets to provide for future income. The flow on will be increasing vacancies in commercial real estate and reduction in commercial property value.

Implementation

It is illegal to sell or supply, what about smoke, why is the onus again on the retailer not the user or the legislator. Surely if we as a State are genuine about improving health outcomes from the TFG then parties other than the retailer would need to bear some responsibility.

My reading of the proposed bill does not make it illegal for the tobacco free generation to smoke in Tasmania, only that it is illegal to supply these people with tobacco. So we are creating an opportunity for interstate retailers to supply this market.

Misnomer “Tobacco Free Generation”

The bill is not stopping the tobacco free generation from smoking, rather stopping the supply by Tasmanian retailers to the TFG. Members of the TFG will be able to source Tobacco products from other jurisdictions and consume the product. So if members of the TFG are legally able to source products from outside Tasmania and are able to consume within Tasmania how do we get to the utopian Tobacco Free Generation? We don't!

What health benefits does the community receive? None!

The beneficiaries of the proposal will be interstate retailers or illicit suppliers, the losers Tasmanian businesses.

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