

Submission

No 18

**INQUIRY INTO TOBACCO SMOKING IN
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Organisation:

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Theme:

Summary

JSC TOBACCO SMOKING

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Mr. R. Torbay
State Government Representative
New England Electorate,
as Chairman,
Enquiry into Smoking.

7 APR 2006

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FAX: 02 6772 5026

Dear Sir,

TIME LINE TO QUIT PASSIVE SMOKING?

This submission comes from the lifetime perspective of a non smoker (of necessity by virtue of genetic endowment of lungs being able to tolerate any foreign substance). Therefore tribute is acknowledged of our governance standard within the Writer's life to this issue, along with the hope for yet further improvement in our future.

The main areas of concern, from the personal perspective of this Writer at the moment, are the 'informal areas of congregation' associated with public access to communal transport and communal living space (private urban blocks of land) where fences don't keep out smoke! Granted, 'we' all have rights, however in 'our' small mixed economy, such rights must be balanced by costs/benefits to 'us' individual citizenary.

The Writer, of the necessity claimed by her Widow Mother, was compelled to commence work at 15 years of age to contribute to the household income in lieu of being a cost thereto, by remaining a full time student. At the time, work dictated that one endure smoke daily, the only other option was unemployment! Likewise, night-time study. For four years from the age 16 to 19 years the Writer studied four nights a week to qualify for the then Leaving Certificate at Sydney Technical College in a 'cloud of cigarette smoke'. Again, the only other option was *go without!* As stated in the introduction, credit to 'our' governance dynamics must be made that both these scenarios today should not be an issue to a person of basic intolerance to cigarette smoke.

The Writer, then at 30 years of age after the failure of her what was expected under Australia's then law of a lifetime marriage to a non smoker, commenced work at the Brisbane Taxation Office in the early 1970's. The then dynamics when she initially commenced work at 15 years of age still applied, and in spite of much relief work in many other Commonwealth Government Departments, endured much cigarette smoke with the only other option, of no smoke, no work. (This in spite of a Medical Practitioner's certificate stating such, the original still held in a bank security box). The net result, the predominant physical condition being asthma, was that she was retired invalidity at the age of 40 years with a small Commonwealth Government Pension that she is still in receipt of. The good news is that for 25 years the Writer's asthma completely disappeared, until quite recently only re-emerging in the last two years after a severe emotional 'blockbuster' situation.

The Writer being cognizant of the 'smoking' origin, that of a PEACE PIPE, in a 'free society' one is loathe to advocate complete annihilation of this indulgence. For nothing makes gravitates a freedom loving person more ^{ance} to indulge than prohibition!

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Indeed, the aroma of cigarette smoke now, (in spite of its accute effect on my physical person) allows me to state with complete sincerity to someone who lights up in my company and seeks my approval, to say, 'well it is your life, your lungs you are hurting'

Such an attitude is quite a modification of my remembered attitude during my years of 30 to 40 where I remember on one occasion in a 'dog box' train in Brisbane, after nicely requesting a fellow traveller lady to respect my inability to breath by not smoking and her ambivalent response, I flicked the smoking cigarette from her fashion extended hand, to her great surprise. But the injustice of the situation still remains, cigarette smoke to my lungs is just as injurious and hurtful as any other form of physical assault, and if I retaliate by hitting someone, I would have the full force of the law stating that that is unacceptable behaviour. Well, I simply ask, why can someone assault me with their smoke, and there is not even the opportunity to complain, and until quite recently, indeed, one was considered a 'WOSSER!'.

And then there are the real opportunity costs to a non smoker who is effected by cigarette smoke and the other particles of modernity (e.g. asbestos). One does not have the physical reserves to do the physical work entailed in the upkeep maintenance of a private 'priveleged' home owner (compared with an underpriveleged renter who receives an monetary allowance for such underpriveleged and all maintenance such as painting is INCLUDED therein). At the very basic, the physical reserves of walking to town (1 km) which was nothing when this home was selected 10 years ago, now has become not a luxury, but a necessity to hire a taxi, which eats inordinately into my strictly priveleged first world structured pensioner income. Nevermind, life was not meant to be easy, was it? Comparing that 'our' local public school students (my home approx. half way between the primary/secondary school) are taxpayer funded transported by bus, and 'us' senior citizens don't even have any local bus service.

The two main current issues are that of the peripheral areas related to public transport and the compacted urbanisation space. For example, waiting for the Countrylink coach at Glen Innes, the area immediately outside the coach sometimes can be a cloud of smoke with travellers getting their last fix for the stint on the coach, nevermind the area just outside the coach, when they board at the last possible moment, the 'aroma' of their clothes and body permeate the whole coach. Whilst smoking on platforms during a trip is prohibited, the current reality is that every opportunity is taken with boarding passengers having to wait for the unfit carrying passengers to alite during the short stop, before even boarding the train. And on the trip to Brisbane where one changes from the train to the coach, one is subjected to a footpath lined with buses and smoking passengers for nearly half an hour prior to departure to Brisbane without any kind of inhibition to smoking evident. As a non smoker, one cannot depart the departure area without fear of being left without transport, so one is a captive to the situation. And again, one is loathe to complain, as nothing makes an addiction more desirable than prohibition, but from the perspective of the person who is so adversely effected when one is so disadvantaged being forced to 'exist' on an equal minimal income and having such an unfair expense forced on one due to one's incapacity to cope when one could have coped by using one's physical body, is completely UNFAIR, indeed, UNAUSTRALIAN!

Glen Innes, the site of the Writer's home, is on the crest of the Australian Great Dividing Range, and one should be able to expect the very best available source of clean fresh air, by virtue of the air currents constantly available. I purchased a home in Glen Innes commensurate with my status, and as a result, without complaint live on an allotment similar in size to any inner Sydney allotment, hence houses are very closely sited of necessity. And neighbours are of the same social cohort. But they all smoke cigarettes, outside of their homes yes, but that means virtually in my back yard!

Whilst as explained from the perspective of a non smoker prohibition would make the situation worse, especially adjacent to one's own home, I do believe that the economic/adjustment should be available for lifetime non smokers such as myself who have been so adversely effected by cigarette smoking to be 'equally' compensated for this personal assault of smoke and the resultant physical disability.

This submission on passive smoking comes with the wishes to 'our' Legislators to receive the 'wisdom of Solomon' in this matter, indeed with 'our' entire governance here in freedom loving Australia.

Yours in Australia's best long term interests,
(Mrs Dawn Eda Phillips, B.A.)

