

Media Release

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NEW VICHEALTH SURVEY: COMMUNITY SUPPORTS SMOKEFREE OUTDOOR DINING

VicHealth today welcomed plans that will see outdoor dining areas become smokefree.

The Minister for Health, the Hon. Jill Hennessy MP announced today that smoking in outdoor dining areas including cafés and beer gardens would be banned from 1 August 2017.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said the smoking ban in outdoor dining areas would protect non-smokers from the danger of second-hand smoke and help smokers quit the habit.

“Today’s announcement coincides with new research from VicHealth which shows that 67% of Victorians support government introducing regulations for smokefree areas in outdoor areas in restaurants and cafés.

“Smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in the state and continues to kill 4000 Victorians every year, costing the community \$2.4 billion in direct health costs and lost productivity annually. We know that eight in 10 Victorian smokers have tried to quit at least once and that many smokers will need multiple attempts to quit for good. By creating more smokefree spaces, we can help smokers who are trying to kick the habit once and for all, but also improve the health and wellbeing of all Victorians,” Ms Rechter added.

Ms Rechter congratulated the state government on taking a leading role in helping Victorians to breathe easy, but said the ban was more than about protecting people from second-hand smoke.

“As a nation we spend so much of our time outdoors so it makes sense to ban smoking in all outdoor dining areas in cafés and restaurants used by children and young people. Everyone in the community will benefit from being able to enjoy a meal in outdoor dining areas without being at risk of passive smoke.

“Smokefree outdoor dining areas help denormalise smoking for children and young people, which is particularly important for reducing the number of young people starting to smoke. We know young people spend much of their recreational time in outdoor dining areas where they’re exposed to adults smoking and regard it as an acceptable behaviour. The more young people we can discourage from taking up smoking, the more lives we will save in the future.

“We know there is strong community support for smokefree outdoor dining areas in restaurants and cafés and I am confident smokers will act responsibly when the ban comes into force,” Ms Rechter added.

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