

The Health Benefits of Smoke-Free Dining

FACTS & FICTION

The concept of a state-wide smoking ban in outdoor dining areas is vigorously opposed by peak-hospitality industry bodies including the *Australian Hotels Association (AHA)* and *Clubs NSW* partially on the grounds that it will offer no additional public health benefit. Tobacco smoke contains an estimated 4,000 chemicals, many of which are known to be carcinogenic (cancer causing) and toxic (1). The chemical composition of second-hand smoke and mainstream tobacco smoke (smoke inhaled by a smoker directly from a cigarette) is highly similar (2). Current evidence suggests that exposure to second hand smoke increases a non-smokers risk of developing smoking-related complications.

Fiction	Fact
<p>Second hand smoke from indoor smoking is not harmful to other people's health.</p>	<p>There is a substantial body of independent academic evidence that has linked exposure to second hand smoke (SHS) in confined settings with a range of serious and life threatening health conditions including heart disease, lung cancer and other respiratory problems (3-9).</p> <p>Epidemiological evidence linking exposure to SHS in indoor settings with ill health is strengthened by the knowledge of the chemical make-up of SHS and its biological effects. It's estimated that tobacco smoke contains over 4,000 chemical compounds, including more than 60 known carcinogens (10). Exposure to these carcinogenic chemicals individually is already strongly regulated.</p>
<p>There is no health impact from second hand smoke in outdoor areas.</p>	<p>An increasing number of air quality measurement studies have found that second hand smoke can accumulate at outdoor locations at levels that pose risks to health (11-17).</p> <p>A recent air quality measurement study of 69 alfresco dining venues in Melbourne found concentrations of SHS at levels that were considered harmful to health (14). Furthermore a West Australian study looking at air quality in cafes and pubs noted that "that even in outdoor well-ventilated areas, environmental tobacco smoke levels can be high enough to be a health risk to others nearby" (11).</p> <p>These studies suggest that outdoor exposure to second hand smoke in settings where people gather in close proximity poses risks to health. People at greatest risk from SHS exposure in such outdoor settings are likely to be: children (7;18); those susceptible to acute respiratory responses such as asthmatics (4;5;10;18); those with pre-existing heart disease (3;8;18) and those subject to long-term exposure such as hospitality staff.</p>

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