



## Media Release

**Date:** Under embargo until 06:00am Thursday 14 December 2017

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### **Half of young smokers incorrectly think roll-your-own cigarettes are less dangerous: survey**

An alarming new survey from Quit Victoria has revealed that almost 1 in 2 Victorian smokers aged 18-29 think roll-your-own cigarettes are less harmful than traditional factory made cigarettes.

Roll-your own tobacco use has sky rocketed in recent years, particularly among younger smokers – half of Australian smokers aged 18-24 used roll-your-own cigarettes last year, up from 29 per cent in 2001.

Quit Victoria Director Dr Sarah White said the idea that roll your own is somehow organic or safer is simply not true – roll-your-own cigarettes are just as harmful as factory made cigarettes.

“It’s really alarming that close to half of roll-your-own tobacco users believe roll-your-own tobacco is less harmful than traditional cigarettes. There is a perception among smokers that these products are more 'natural' and don’t contain additives – but this couldn’t be further from the truth,” Dr White said.

“Not only do tobacco companies use similar additives in loose tobacco as they do in cigarettes, these additives tend to be added in even higher amounts.

“Smoking any form of tobacco delivers nicotine, tar and thousands of other disease-causing substances straight to the lungs and into the bloodstream, which is incredibly harmful to health.”

Until September this year, roll-your-own tobacco was taxed more favourably than factory-made cigarettes and was therefore less expensive. The low cost of loose tobacco, along with the myth that RYO cigarettes are less harmful, has made them more popular and appealing, especially to young smokers.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said the findings highlight the need to educate Victorians about the true health effects of roll-your-own tobacco.

“Big Tobacco has cleverly positioned its loose tobacco products as more ‘natural’ or ‘organic’ than traditional cigarettes, making them more appealing to younger and more health-conscious smokers,” Ms Rechter said.



“But smoking – whether it’s roll-your-own tobacco, cigars or factory made cigarettes – kills more than [4000 Victorians](#) every year. There’s nothing natural about the unnecessary deaths smoking causes.”

For personalised support to help you kick the habit for good call the Quitline on 13 78 48 for a tailored coaching program, or visit [quit.org.au](http://quit.org.au) for information and tools to help you plan a quit attempt.

The Victorian Smoking and Health Survey revealed the following Victorians believed roll-your-own tobacco was less harmful:

- Almost 1 in 2 (43%) smokers aged 18-29
- Almost 1 in 2 (43%) roll-your-own cigarette users
- 1 in 3 smokers aged 18 and over, and
- More than 1 in 3 (35%) of smokers in Melbourne vs 1 in 4 (24%) in regional areas.

**About the survey:** The Victorian Smoking and Health Survey is a cross-sectional telephone survey of approximately 4,000 randomly sampled Victorians aged 18 years and over conducted in November and December 2016.

*Quit Victoria is a partnership between VicHealth, Cancer Council Victoria, the State Government of Victoria and the Heart Foundation.*