



Monash City Council to introduce more smokefree outdoor areas?

Quit and the Heart Foundation (Victoria) hope more outdoor areas in Victoria will go smokefree, after news a Melbourne council is looking to pursue the idea.

Monash City Council will decide at a meeting tomorrow night whether to commence talks with the public about the possibility of introducing smokefree outdoor areas.

It comes as new data from the Cancer Council Victoria shows widespread support for the concept:

- Over three-quarters (77%) of Victorians believe smoking should not be allowed in outdoor areas where children are present
- Seven out of 10 (71%) disapprove of smoking in outdoor restaurant dining areas

Heart Foundation (Victoria) Chief Executive Officer, Kathy Bell, said early indications to the Heart Foundation had shown a growing interest in smokefree areas from councils across Victoria.

“We know in some outdoor areas people can be exposed to dangerous levels of secondhand smoke. Strengthening smokefree policies in outdoor areas helps reduce this risk, as well as to de-normalise smoking. Making areas such as alfresco dining spaces, sporting fields and parks smokefree makes a strong contribution to improving the health and wellbeing of everyone in the community.”

Quit Executive Director, Fiona Sharkie, said making more outdoor areas smokefree was vital in helping continue to drive down smoking rates in Victoria.

“Smokefree policies can motivate existing smokers to smoke less and quit, discourage young people to take up smoking and support ex-smokers to stay smokefree. Eventually we would like to see a whole of state approach to this issue, but it’s fantastic individual councils are taking action now.”

This year Heart Foundation Victoria and Quit have started working with local councils to offer encouragement and support for the implementation of smokefree outdoor areas.

Since a similar program in NSW started in 2007, the number of councils implementing smoking bans in outdoor areas has almost tripled to 76, which is approximately 50 percent of all councils in NSW.

In Victoria, other councils taking a lead in smokefree outdoor policies include:

- Frankston City Council - will implement a smoking ban within the Frankston central activity district from November
- Surf Coast Shire - has implemented a ban on smoking on beaches

Monash City Council already has some history with smokefree outdoor areas, being the first council in Victoria to have a smoke-free playground policy.

Notes to Editors:

- Half of all long-term smokers will die because of their smoking
- 15,000 Australians and almost 4,000 Victorians die from smoking every year
- Smokers wanting to quit can also get more information at www.quit.org.au and by calling the Quitline on 13 QUIT (7848)

To arrange an interview with Heart Foundation Victoria CEO Kathy Bell or Quit Executive Director Fiona Sharkie, please contact Heart Foundation Media and Communications Manager Siobhan O’Neill on 0418 171 527