

The Hon Bob Carr MP
Level 40 Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
Sydney, NSW, 2000

Dear Mr Carr,

Re: Smoke-Free Environment Amendment Bill 2004

I am writing to express Healthy Cities Illawarra's opposition to further delays in the full implementation of a smoking ban in NSW pubs and clubs.

It is deeply worrying to hear that particular interest groups have challenged the current Smoke-free Environment Act definitions of an enclosed room. To propose a method of calculation for the assessment of an enclosed room that is untested, overly biased away from the precautionary principle of health protection, and blatantly delays an extremely important legislative measure that would prevent exposure of employees to thousands of harmful chemicals is irresponsible, unwise, and endangers the health of employees and patrons of pubs and clubs.

Any space with a roof or ceiling should be considered enclosed. The only reliable way for environmental tobacco smoke to escape a space is via upwards displacement, and so a ceiling or roof prevents the space being smoke-free.

The definition of an enclosed public space needs to hold in high priority the need to protect staff and patrons from exposure to environmental tobacco smoke. Steps that challenge or dilute a comprehensive definition of enclosed space will result in increased negative health effects on staff and patrons of exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.

Studies in Ireland have found a recently implemented smoking ban in bars to be extremely successful, and have had no negative effects on bars' business. These findings support the full implementation of the Act in NSW with no further delays.

I urge you to uphold your promise to protect the health of employees of pubs and clubs by eliminating their at-work exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.

Regards,

Ben Grounds
Community Environmental Health Officer