

Position Paper

The position of the Department of Health on smoking is clear: smoking at any level, and in whatever form, is harmful to health. This is a position recognised by health authorities worldwide.

Australian Health Ministers have long recognised the dangers to health of smoking. At their March 1981 Conference, Health Ministers endorsed the establishment of a Tobacco Products Subcommittee of the Standing Committee of the Health Ministers' Conference (SCOHM) to examine and report on methods and stages of reducing human usage of all tobacco products.

The Subcommittee developed a paper 'Recommendations for a National Policy on Smoking Control': a number of these recommendations were endorsed at the April 1983 Australian Health Ministers' Conference - copy at Attachment A.

The National Policy represents a positive commitment by Australian Health Ministers to reduce tobacco consumption in the community.

The Commonwealth IDWG has been established to determine what can be done - within the powers of the Commonwealth - to give effect to one of the recommendations contained in the National Policy, viz:

'that Governments at all levels review existing legislation to ensure the rights of non-smokers to breathe air unpolluted by tobacco smoke'.

Accepting that the powers of the Commonwealth to act in this particular area are limited under the Constitution to those Territories and areas within Commonwealth control, and given the all-embracing nature of this recommendation, membership of the IDWG has been drawn in the first instance, from those Departments/Authorities able to consider those areas nominated specifically by Health Ministers as requiring particular attention - public and privately operated public transport, passenger aircraft, restaurants and establishments selling food and drink, elevators, public buildings, hospital and health care facilities.

It is recognised that other Departments may need to be approached for advice during the course of the IDWG's deliberations.

Government Policy

The Australian Labor Party, in its 1982 Platform, Constitution and Rules (Pp 89-90) is committed to: