



## **SENATOR DAVID LEYONHJELM**

Leader of the Liberal Democrats

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

## **AUSTRALIA'S ANTI-TOBACCO MEASURES ARE NOT WORKING**

Plain packaging and exorbitant price hikes for tobacco products have done little to bring down long-term smoking rates in Australia.

The latest National Drug Strategy Household Survey shows that rates of smoking have all but flat-lined since 2013.

"This independent survey conducted by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows there has actually been a marginal increase in the percentage of smokers aged between 30 and 49 over the past three years," Senator Leyonhjelm said.

"Clearly plain packaging has had no effect on this significant age group when it comes to giving up tobacco.

"The only significant effect from successive anti-smoking measures has been on smokers' hip pockets, with the government now grabbing about 66 cents in every tobacco retail dollar."

According to an analysis conducted by the University of NSW, the United Kingdom's smoking rate is declining sharply, while the United States now has a lower percentage of smokers in its population than Australia.

In both these countries e-cigarettes are readily available, while in Australia the sale of such products is prohibited.

"Our public health bureaucrats choose to ignore their international counterparts such as the Royal College of Physicians, which concluded that e-cigarettes offer massive potential to improve public health by providing long-term smokers with a much safer alternative to tobacco," Senator Leyonhjelm said.

"It's time to end this ridiculous ban on e-cigarettes and start doing something practical to help smokers. Plain packaging is a joke while the high rate of tobacco excise mainly harms low income smokers."

**Media:** Kelly Burke 0408 734 586