

# Australia rules out total smoking ban

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Australia plans the world's toughest laws on tobacco promotion but Health Minister Nicola Roxon denied Sunday the government's ultimate goal was a complete ban on smoking.

Under proposed legislation, due to take effect next year, all logos will be removed from [cigarette packets](#), which must be a drab olive-green colour and be plastered with graphic [health warnings](#).

The big [tobacco companies](#) have vowed to fight the move in the courts.

Anti-smoking advocates were quoted in the media Sunday as saying a [smoking ban](#) could be a reality within 10 to 15 years, but Roxon said that was not part of her agenda.

"No, I don't think it is," she told the Ten Network's "Meet the Press" programme when asked if a complete ban was where she was ultimately heading.

"I think what is logical about it is if tobacco were a brand new product today, seeking to come on to the market, and we knew about tobacco what we know now, it would not be a legal product.

"But the truth is that it has been a legal product for many, many years. "We're trying to make sure that we tackle the last remaining method that tobacco companies use to market their products.

"We know it is successful in marketing their products, because we know

that they are determined to stop it and they are very fearful about what it will do to their business.

"We know it affects their profits. It means it is good to reduce the number of smokers. That is the [public health](#) aim we have."

Mike Daube, president of the Australian Council on Smoking and Health, told the Melbourne Age newspaper public support for banning tobacco was growing.

"The way smoking trends are going, it's not unrealistic to think that we should see an end to the commercial sale of [cigarettes](#) within 10 to 15 years," he said.

Around 15,000 Australians die of smoking-related diseases every year, with [tobacco use](#) costing the country Aus\$31.5 billion (\$32.9 billion) annually in healthcare and lost productivity.

Smoking is prohibited in virtually all enclosed public places in Australia, such as pubs, restaurants and workplaces.

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