

## Tobacco display bans may lower smoking rates: Australia study

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Smoking rates have dropped among young Australians in recent years, and research released Tuesday suggests that banning tobacco displays from shops is a factor.

The latest study, funded by the Cancer Institute of New South Wales, looked at the medium-term impact of retailers keeping [tobacco products](#) out of sight of people aged between 12 and 24 in two states.

"Our findings suggest an immediate impact of display bans on youth's exposure to tobacco pack displays, and likely impacts on smoking-related outcomes," it says.

"These results suggest that removing [tobacco displays](#) from retail environments can positively contribute to the denormalisation of smoking among youth."

The study, which quizzed 6,000 [young people](#) before and after the bans came into force in New South Wales and Queensland between 2010 and 2011, found a decline in cigarette brand awareness after they were implemented.

The number of young people able to recall at least one brand fell from 65 to 59 percent, it reported in the *Journal of Nicotine and Tobacco Research*.

Chief executive of the Cancer Institute NSW, David Currow, said it had

long been suggested that tobacco displays effectively advertised brands.

"We've seen [smoking rates](#) in young people drop from 15 to 11 percent (between 2010 and 2012), which is the lowest they've ever been," he told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

He said the report showed that point-of-sale display bans, which means cigarettes are "hidden", often behind plain shutters, as part of a comprehensive tobacco control strategy, were working.

"Putting tobacco products out of sight is helping to put it out of the minds of young people, it's decreasing brand recollection, it's decreasing the perception that their peers smoke and importantly, it's directly helping to bring down the smoking rates of our youth," he said.

A spokesman for British American Tobacco Australia said retail display bans had been in place in many states for some time and had not accelerated the steady trend of a decline in sales volumes, with the biggest impact on sales coming from a high tobacco excise.

Australia has some of the toughest laws on [tobacco](#) in the world and pioneered plain packaging for cigarettes in an effort to strip the glamour from smoking.

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