

# New research shows licensed venues clinging to cigarette vending machines

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One hundred years after the introduction of cigarette vending machines in Australia, new research shows that businesses have no plans to consign them to history.

The research conducted with more than 800 owners and managers of alcohol-licensed premises in NSW, Qld and WA, reveals that sales of [tobacco](#) via vending machines are of low importance to businesses, yet most businesses are unlikely to voluntarily phase them out.

Dr. Christina Watts, Research Fellow at the Daffodil Center (a [joint venture](#) between Cancer Council NSW and the University of Sydney) and lead author on the study, said the research demonstrates the need for proactive action from State and Territory Governments.

"Our research provides the first evidence on the attitudes of owners/managers of alcohol-licensed venues to the importance of tobacco vending sales. It indicates that retailers are not going to voluntarily stop using vending machines and points to the need for legislative reform to reduce the supply of tobacco in our community and ultimately help continue to drive down smoking rates."

The [study](#), published today (March 6) in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, showed that for alcohol-licensed venues that sold tobacco exclusively through a [vending machine](#), tobacco sales were—on average—not considered important to their business. Despite this, only a very small minority of owners/managers (3.7%) reported their venue would be likely to stop selling tobacco.

"Australia is falling behind countries such as the U.K. and France where tobacco vending machines are no longer permitted. In Australia, ACT is the only jurisdiction that has prohibited tobacco vending machines, with other States and Territories lagging behind," said Dr. Watts.

Professor Suzan Burton from Western Sydney University, Chief Investigator on the study also states that removing vending machines from alcohol venues would help reduce smoking temptation for many vulnerable Australians.

"The association between [alcohol consumption](#) and tobacco use is well established, with research showing that people who drink alcohol are more likely to smoke. Alcohol consumption, particularly in [social settings](#) like pubs, bars and clubs, also increases the amount of smoking, increases the likelihood of smoking for people who smoke only occasionally, and undermines quit attempts.

"Ending tobacco sales through vending machines in Australia will help prevent impulse purchasing and will eliminate a key trigger for smoking relapse. It is a simple policy reform that is long overdue.

Chair of Cancer Council's Tobacco Issues Committee, Alecia Brooks said, "recent data shows that [smoking](#) rates in Australia have hit a new historical low of 8.3%, but we still have a lot more of work to do to reach the Government's ultimate goal of 5% by 2030. It's time to put cigarette vending machines where they belong—in the past.

"Australian state and territory governments are urged to reform legislation to ensure that cigarettes cannot be sold from vending machines."

**More information:** Christina Watts et al, Tobacco sales through vending machines: Insights from owners and managers of Australian alcohol-licensed premises with different licencing schemes, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/j.anzjph.2024.100126](#)

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