



AMA



Australian Council on Smoking & Health

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 25 November 2024

Allies of tobacco industry exposed – Dirty Ashtray and Exploding Vape Awards

On the 30th anniversary of the Dirty Ashtray Awards, two Australian organisations received dishonourable mentions for attempting to influence public policy while hiding the full extent of their links with the tobacco industry.

The Australian Association of Convenience Stores (AACS) took out the Dirty Ashtray Award for refusing to disclose their industry funding to a Senate Inquiry consultation on new tobacco laws. AACS members include three transnational tobacco companies. It has campaigned against world leading public health measures on smoking and vaping for over two decades.

The Exploding Vape Award went to the Australian Taxpayers Alliance for their 'Bust the Black-Market' campaign, which pushed an industry agenda for regulating consumer sales of vapes 'just like cigarettes and alcohol' while ignoring public health recommendations and claiming to be grassroots campaigners (astroturfing)*.

"All you need to do is spend one day at my GP clinic to realise tobacco and nicotine are still having disastrous effects on Australians' health," said Dr Danielle McMullen, President of the AMA, which partners with ACOSH to deliver the awards.

"In particular, young patients who have developed a nicotine addiction through vapes, shows the industry is unfortunately alive and well, and reinforces why these awards are needed as much now as they were 30 years ago."

"The tobacco industry is still campaigning hard to keep and grow their markets, but they are doing so via their friends and pretending to be legitimate," said Laura Hunter, ACOSH CEO.

"It is completely unacceptable to see the tobacco industry attempting to influence health policy. We need the public and our politicians to understand who is really talking when organisations like the AACS and the Australian Taxpayers Alliance lobby our elected officials, so that they can deliver public health policy based on the best evidence, not vested interests."

ENDS

**Astroturfing denotes political, advertising or public relations campaigns that are formally planned by an organisation, but are disguised as spontaneous, popular 'grassroots' behaviour. (WHO)*

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About AMA

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) is the peak professional body for doctors in Australia.

The AMA promotes and protects the professional interests of doctors and the healthcare needs of patients and communities.

Representing doctors, the AMA works with governments to develop and influence health policy to provide the best outcomes for doctors, their patients, and the community.

The AMA represents and supports all Australian doctors and medical students. We are member-run and led, fighting for fairness and equality, and lobbying and campaigning on the issues affecting the medical profession.

About ACOSH

ACOSH is an independent, non-government, not for profit coalition which represents 31 prominent health, research, social service and community organisations with a shared concern about smoking and vaping and their harmful consequences.

ACOSH has been a leading advocate for all the regulatory and legislative changes to reduce the impact of smoking on the Australian community and is supported by the Healthway — the Western Australian Health Promotion Foundation.

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