

ACOSH Celebrates 40 years at the frontline of tobacco control!

Healthway congratulates the Australian Council on Smoking and Health (ACOSH) for its work over 40 years on reducing the impact of health consequences of smoking.

ACOSH is an independent, authoritative voice on all tobacco related issues and the organisation regularly engages with politicians, community leaders, the news media and the general public to advocate for changes that will lead to a decrease in smoking and therefore the harm it causes, in our community.

ACOSH was a key organisation among a group of organisations and individuals that advocated for the Tobacco Control Act 1990 which led to the establishment of Healthway. ACOSH also played a lead role in the tobacco control legislation in WA which led to a ban on smoking in pubs and clubs and outdoor public areas, smoking in cars in which children are present and restrictions on point of sale advertising.

Nationally, ACOSH has participated in the push for bans on tobacco advertising and most recently the legislation on plain packaging of cigarettes.

ACOSH, which consists of around 40 health, medical, community and educational organisations, held its first meeting in Perth on 17 November 1971 and the birthday celebration was held 40 years to the day on 17 November 2011 at The University of Western Australia.

Speakers at the celebration included His Excellency Mr Malcolm McCusker AO QC, Governor of Western Australia and ACOSH Patron, Mr Kim Snowball, Director General of the WA Department of Health, former WA Department of Health Director General Professor Bruce Armstrong who attended the first ACOSH meeting in 1971, and current ACOSH President Professor Mike Daube.

Guest speakers included:

- Professor Melanie Wakefield, Director of the Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer, Cancer Council Victoria, who spoke about research and findings behind what influences adults and children to smoke;
- Mr Peter Gordon, the Director of Melbourne-based Gordon Legal, who outlined legal aspects of tobacco control, and
- Professor Simon Chapman, a Professor of Public Health at the University of Sydney, who painted a picture of the end of smoking. Professor Chapman forecast that smokers might need to be registered in the future and would need a swipe card to obtain cigarettes.

The prestigious Bob Elphick Medal was presented by the Governor His Excellency Mr McCusker. The 2011 recipient was Dr Mal Washer, a general practitioner and Federal Member of Parliament in the WA seat of Moore, who is a long-time supporter of tobacco control. Dr Washer, who has seen firsthand the tragedies of preventable death and disease caused by smoking, provided firm, unequivocal and outspoken support for the plain packaging legislation which passed recently through Federal Parliament.

ACOSH presents the Bob Elphick Medal, annually to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to tobacco control in WA. The medal is awarded in the memory of Dr Bob Elphick who was a distinguished respiratory physician, President of ACOSH for many years, and a tireless and committed tobacco control advocate.

Congratulations ACOSH for 40 years of great work in tobacco control!