

City of Launceston

Evaluation of businesses in the Launceston CBD concerning the Smoke-Free Laws.

A Comparison report

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Executive Summary

The City of Launceston proposed to expand the smoke-free areas in the Launceston CBD to include part of St John Street between York St and Paterson St, Brisbane St Avenue and selected Lanes. As part of the proposal to expand the smoke-free areas, the City of Launceston sought input from affected businesses in the form of a survey which was similar to a survey conducted by the Cancer Council in 2012.

The objective of this report is to compare the results from the City of Launceston's 2016 survey with that of the Cancer Council 2012 survey.

The survey was designed to evaluate the current opinions of businesses located in the CBD regarding the smoke-free areas and to ascertain whether there is support for the new proposed smoke-free areas and designated smoking areas.

There were 199 surveys distributed in person to the businesses in and around the Launceston CBD, with 154 responses received giving a 77% response rate. The results were collated, and then compared with the 2012 Cancer Council survey.

The key findings were:

1. There was an increase of 8% support for the current smoke-free laws as compared with the 2012 results.
2. The support in total for the expansion of the smoke-free area was 69%, with 52% supporting the idea of designated smoking areas be set up.
3. Issues of smokers congregating on the edge of smoke-free area, inadequate enforcement and signage were highlighted as a common issue between both surveys.

Recommendations:

1. The smoke-free area should be increased with consideration given to designate smoking areas away from the public, but close enough for smokers working in the CBD to access.
2. The expansion of the smoke-free areas should be supported by increased enforcement, signage and education.

Background

Almost one in four Tasmanian adults (23.2%) currently smoke with almost one-third (30.6%) of young Tasmanians aged 18-24 years smoking daily or occasionally.⁵ Tobacco smoking is linked to lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, ischemic heart disease with many other diseases associated with smoking like cancer of the stomach, bladder, cervix, mouth, larynx to name a few. Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (second hand smoke) is linked to lung, nasal and sinus cancer, asthma, respiratory infections and more.⁵

The Australian Government is committed to reducing the national smoking rate to 10 per cent of the population by 2018. To achieve this goal Australia has progressively implemented a comprehensive range of policies to reduce smoking rates. These include media campaigns, health warnings, price increases and controls on second hand smoke exposure.⁶ Potentially avoidable mortality rates⁵ have fallen in line with the smoking rate.

The exposure to second hand smoke (SHS) can increase when there is a high density of smokers. This can increase further if there is no wind, low air pressure, increased number of smokers and how enclosed the area is.³ In 2014 a smoke-free university did a study on how much smoke the public is exposed to when smokers congregate on the edge of smoke-free areas. People could potentially be exposed to 48.7% higher fine particulates matter from SHS.⁴ SHS contains more than 7000 chemicals, including about 70 known and probable carcinogens as well as toxicants and irritants.⁷

The general function of the council within its municipal area is to develop and implement strategies to promote and improve public health.¹ Smoke-free legislation leads to a reduction in population exposure to SHS, and bans have been shown to be helpful in encouraging smokers to quit and to be more successful doing it.² A strategy from the Australian Government is to encourage adoptions of policies that restrict smoking outdoors where people gather or move in close proximity to each other.⁶ Increasing outdoor smoke-free policies may reduce the health effects of SHS, reduce butt litter and could help smokers with quitting attempts.⁸

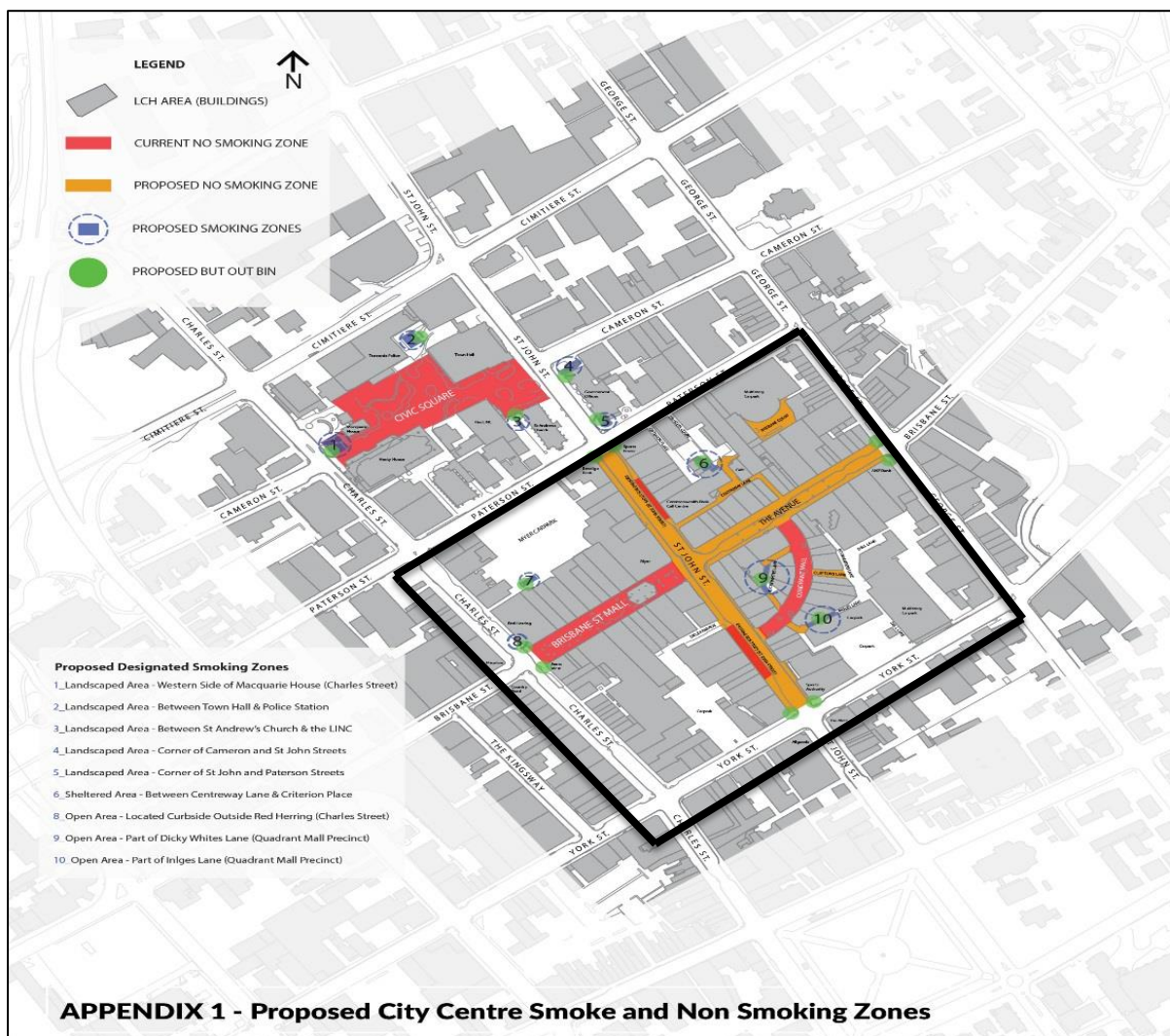
Launceston City Council has been one of the leaders with implementing bylaws that banned smoking in Malls and bus stops, which then became State Legislation. Smoking is not illegal but due to the creation of smoke-free areas, smokers are now congregating elsewhere, increasing the quantity of SHS smoke exposure for non-smokers.

As the Launceston Council considers increasing the smoke free area in the CBD this report provides valuable information from the businesses located in the Launceston CBD that are most affected. It highlights the current issues of smokers congregating on the boundaries of smoke-free areas and the public's exposure to SHS.

References: Appendix 2.

Evaluation of businesses in the Launceston CBD concerning the Smoke-Free Laws.

This survey was conducted by Sarah Kent, Bachelor of Health Science (Environmental Health) student at the University of Tasmania in consultation with the City of Launceston (COL). The aim of the survey is to evaluate the businesses in the CBD area regarding how the smoke-free laws that were introduced in the Launceston CBD in 2011 has affected them, and compare the results with 2012 Cancer Council survey. The survey consisted of 11 questions with 4 of them asking for additional comments. A map of the CBD was included in the survey and shows the current smoke-free areas, the proposed new smoke-free areas, and the designated smoking areas to be considered. The map shows the area of the CBD surveyed with the borders being Paterson Street, George Street, York Street and St John Street, with the majority of businesses inside that perimeter surveyed. The survey was hand delivered and left with businesses including cafes, offices, hotels, and retail shops in March/April 2016 and was collected in person the following week. A total of 199 surveys were distributed with a total of 154 received back, equating to a 77% response rate.



Q.1 Who is completing the Survey?

The first question was to establish who was participating in filling out the survey. Managers of businesses were the main participants for COL 2016 survey (40%) while Cancer Council 2012 survey majority was received from the owners of businesses (51%), as seen in figure 1.

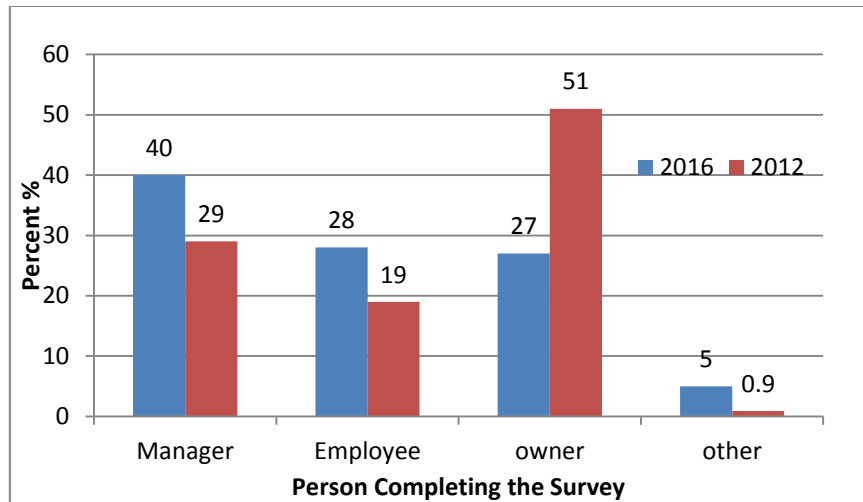


Figure 1. Comparison on who is completing the survey.

Q2. What is the location of the business/residence (Street Name, Mall, Arcade, etc.)

The COL survey was broken down into Streets, Malls, Court and Arcades. The largest response results were received from George St (20%) followed by Brisbane St (16%). The 2012 survey highest returns were from Brisbane St (24%). Comparison of response rates are shown in figure 2.

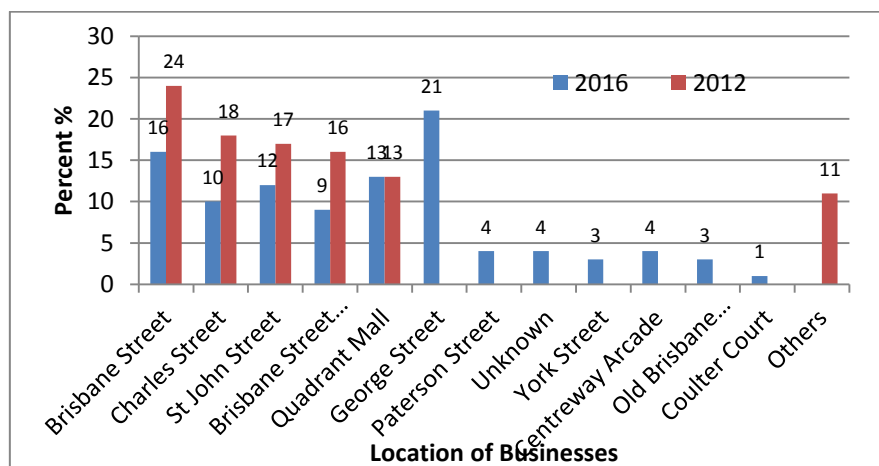


Figure 2: The location of businesses that returned surveys.

Q3. Do you support the ban on smoking in the Brisbane Street and Quadrant Mall, Civic Square and the two St John Street bus stops?

In both surveys businesses were asked if they supported the ban on smoking in the Brisbane Street Mall, Quadrant Mall, Civic Square and the two St John Street interchange bus stops. The support for the smoke-free laws introduced in the Launceston CBD was extremely positive with 87% of businesses answering yes. This was an increase of 8% when compared to Cancer Council's result of 79%, as can be seen in figure 3.

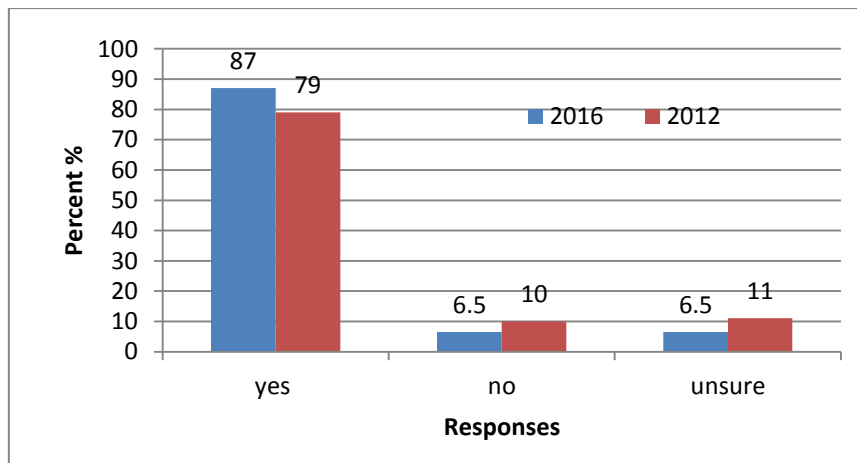


Figure 3. Comparison of support for smoke-free areas.

Q4. How would you rate the compliance of smokers with the smoke-free laws?

When comparing the COL and Cancer Council's survey there was a 5% increase in smokers complying with the smoke-free laws in the CBD. There was also a combined decrease in smokers (15%) being inconsistent or poor when complying to the laws compared to 2012, as shown in Figure 4. This suggests that smokers are more compliant than previously was the case in 2011..

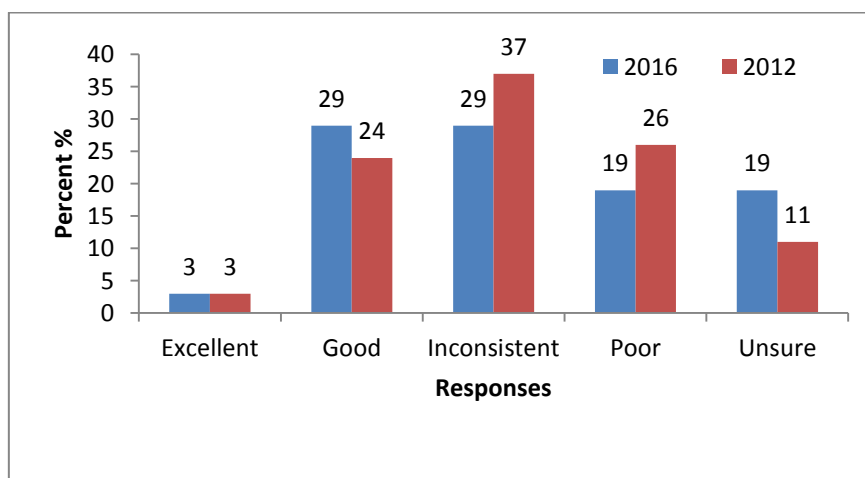


Figure 4. Compliance rating in smoke-free areas.

Q5. How often do you see people smoking in the designated smoke-free areas?

When combining the results of smokers seen smoking in the smoke-free area (1-2 times a week, daily, and several times a day) the 2012 survey had a total result of 90%. The COL total results of smokers seen smoking in the smoke free area, 1 to 2 times a week and daily (several times a day was not asked) were 84% making a total decrease of 6% in smokers seen smoking in the smoke-free areas, as shown in figure 5.

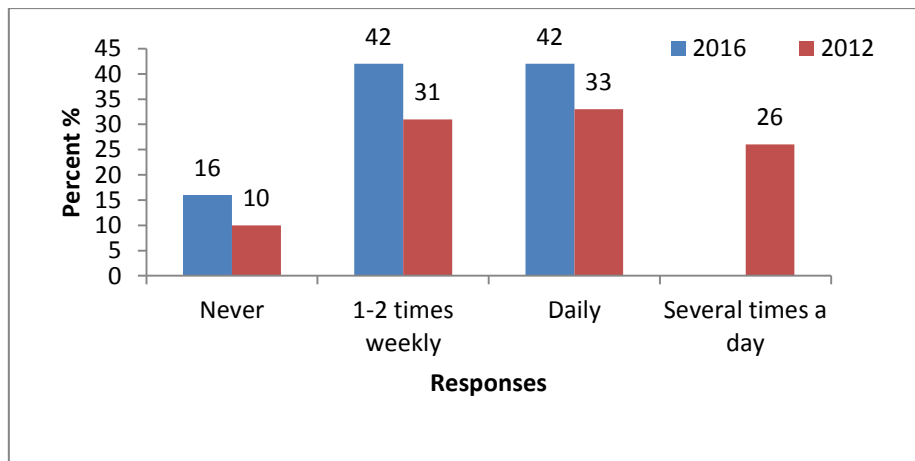


Figure 5. The frequency of smokers seen in the smoke-free areas.

The 2016 survey showed Brisbane Street responded the highest with 17 businesses sighting people smoking in the smoke free area 1-2 time a week. The Quadrant Mall saw it on a daily basis with a response of 13 businesses, closely followed by George Street, St John Street and the Brisbane Mall as shown in figure 6.

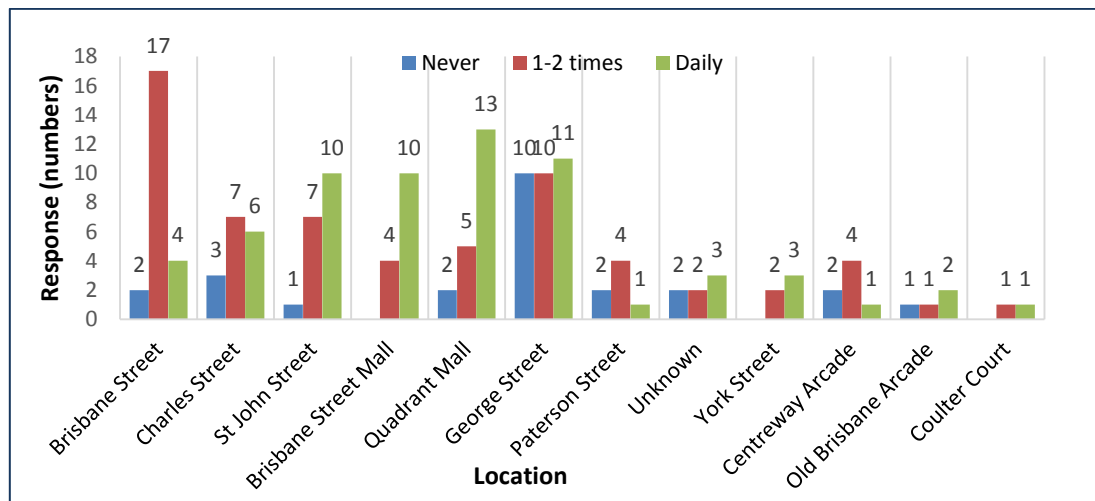


Figure 6. responses numbers seperated in street location for frequency of smokers seen in the smoke free areas.

Q6. Do you think these smoke-free laws are being enforced adequately and if "No" what would you like to see done?

There was an increase of 12% of businesses who were unsure if the smoke-free laws were being enforced adequately. The main comment the respondents asked in the COL survey was, "who is meant to be enforcing the laws". The comparison of the two surveys revealed that there has been a 16% drop in responses that thought there is inadequate enforcement. Both surveys recorded comments about police doing nothing and wanting punishment to be given to offenders. As shown in the COL survey figure 8 the Quadrant Mall, St John Street and George Street had the highest "No" answers, with their comments showing that this can be due to the bus stops in St John Street, the taxi ranks in George Street and the construction activities in the Quadrant Mall. In the 2012 survey 56% felt they were not policed adequately with 31% unsure.

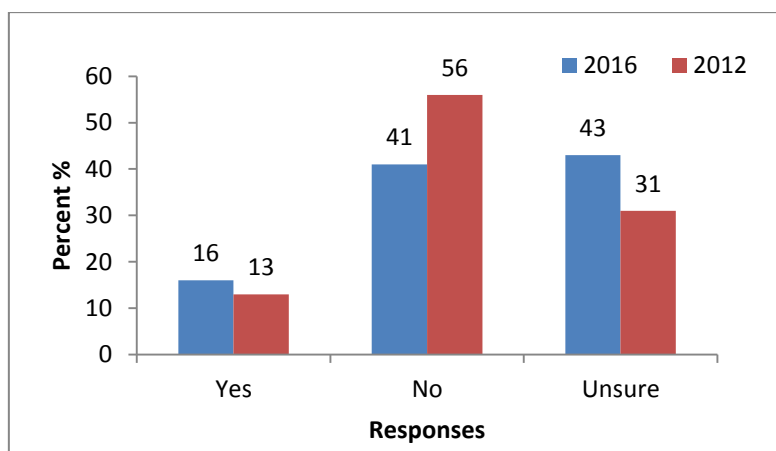


Figure 7. Comparison of the smoke-free laws being enforced adequately.

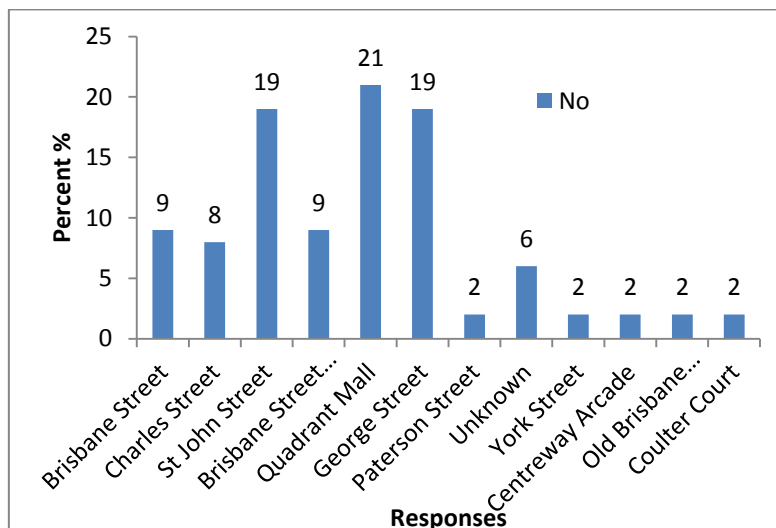


Figure 8. The "No" responses from 2016 separated into location.

Q7. Have you noticed a general decrease with smoking in the CBD area?

The 2016 survey asked if businesses have seen a general decrease in smoking in the CBD. In figure 9, 53% of Businesses thought there were less smokers in the CBD. The Quardant and Brisbane Street Mall recorded the highest 'No' answers showing that they did not see a decrease in their areas of the CBD, as shown in figure 10.

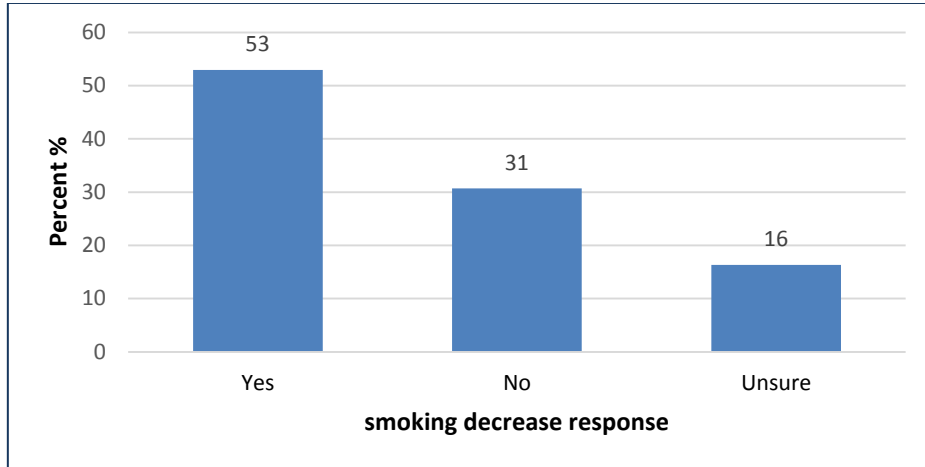


Figure 9. 2016 general decrease in smoking.

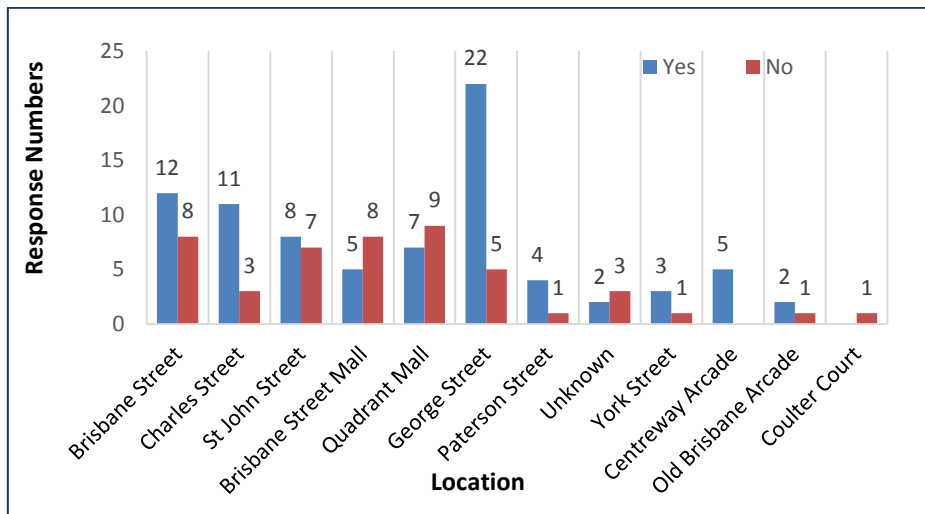


Figure 10. 2016 Response seperated into location and Yes, No answers for general decrease in smoking in the CBD.

Q8. Do you think smokers are now congregating in other areas of the CBD

Both surveys asked if smokers are now congregating in other areas of the CBD and if "yes" comment where. As shown in figure 11, the COL survey saw a 20 % decrease with less smokers congregating in the CBD compared to 2012. The common areas listed in both surveys are The Avenue, Tatlers Parade, both ends of the Mall, Charles Street, St John Street bus stops, and Lane ways off the Quadrant. Some other places that the COL survey found were Trustees Ct toilets area, taxi Ranks in George Street and front of Quest Hotel in Paterson St. There were also issues with people smoking while walking, with smoke regularly wafting into businesses. Respondants also noted that people working in the CBD and catching buses were the main offenders.

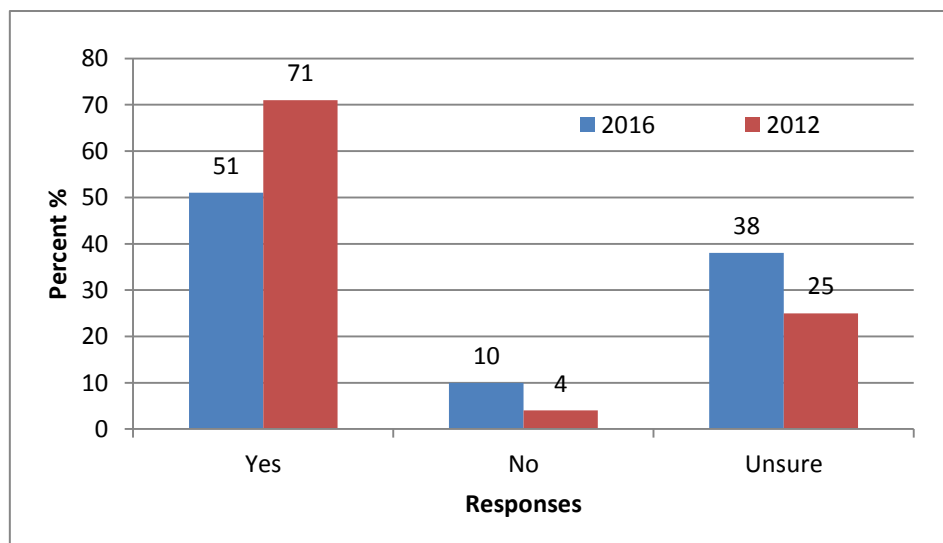


Figure 11. comparison of smokers congregating.

Q9. Would you support an extension of the smoking ban to include more of the CBD and if "No" could you give a reason why?

Extra questions that the COL asked in their 2016 survey that were designed to gather further information about how the business feel about extending the smoke-free area. There was good support with 69% responding "Yes" to extending the smoke-free area with all locations surveyed wanting the smoke-free areas increased, as shown in figures 12 and 13. Comments were received for both "Yes" and "No" responses.

Comments left for "No" don't increase the area:

- Smoking is legal and they need somewhere to go;
- Smokers bring in most of the business in the CBD;
- They will only congregate elsewhere; and
- Just keep it as it is.

Comments left for "Yes" increase the area:

- Respondents don't want people smoking outside any shops;
- Need more banned areas;
- Ban it in the whole of the CBD including George and Charles Street outskirts; and
- Shops in between two smoke-free areas have smokers outside shop everyday.

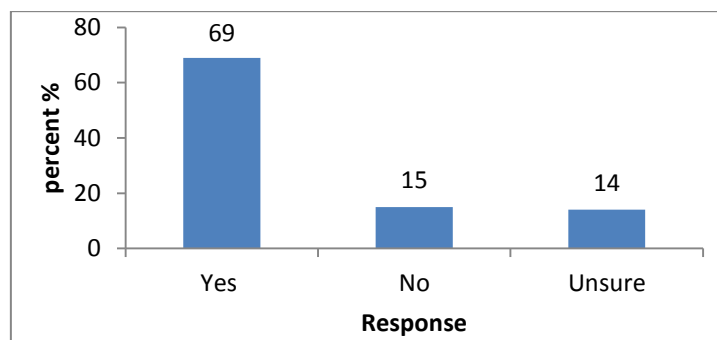


Figure 12. 2016 survey for support with extending the smoking free areas.

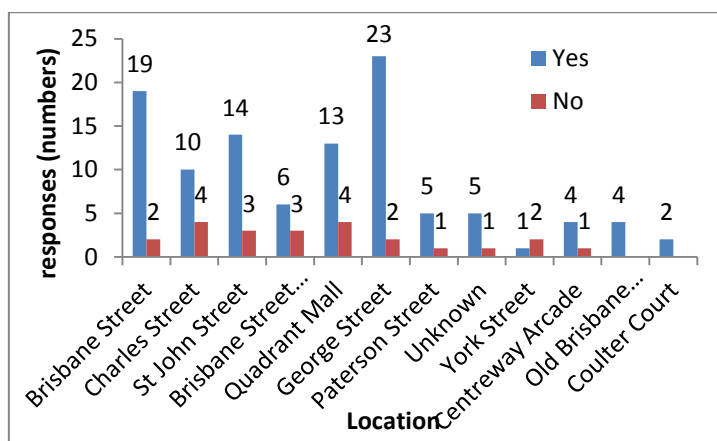


Figure 13. 2016 Number of responses and Location of yes, no answers for extending the smoking ban.

Q10. Would you support designated smoking areas in the CBD and if "Yes" where do you think they should be?

Just over half of business supported designated smoking areas (52%), shown in figure 14. The main comments received stated "as long as it's not near shops" and "away from public view". The respondents that agreed with designated smoking areas would like to see them set up away from food, retail shops, public traffic, and away from public view. There were a lot of comments wanting nice inviting areas for smokers that have some protection from the elements. The 29% of businesses responded "No" to designated smoking areas, had a contrast of comments stating, "Ban it all together", and "leave the smokers alone".

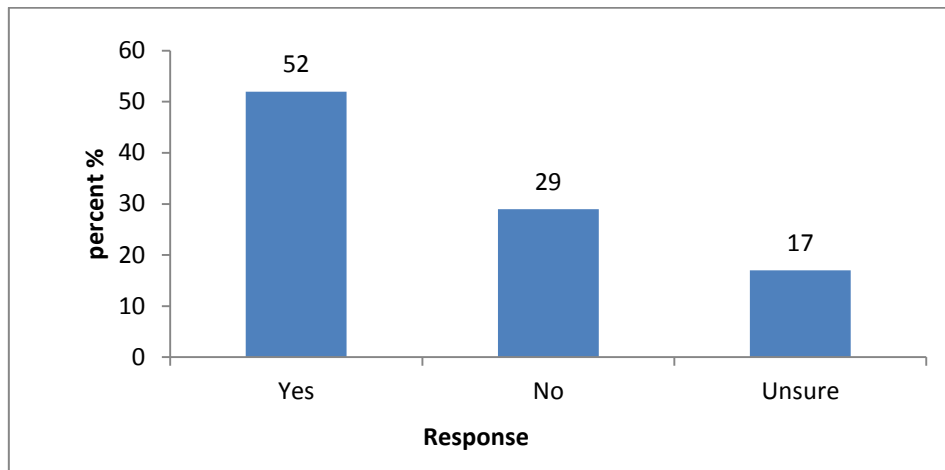


Figure 14. Businesses supporting designated smoking areas.

Locations where respondents suggested designated smoking areas.

- Behind car parks In Charles Street;
- Next Jays Jays in the lane;
- Back of Myers in carpark;
- Trustees Ct toilets area;
- The lane next to Quest Hotel in Paterson St;
- Between York Street car park and Quadrant Mall;
- Lane in George Street; and
- Lane off Charles St leading into Paterson St carpark.

Q 11. Do you have any further comments about the impact of the smoke free laws in Launceston CBD?

The final question was a section to add additional feedback and was separated into supportive comments, suggestions and identified problems.

Supportive Comments:

There were a lot of repeated comments for wanting the CBD smoke free with participants stating.

- Good idea to stop Smoking.
- Will help young people to not take up smoking and assist people giving up.
- Will reduce butt litter.
- Should be smoke-free in all CBD.
- Public won't be exposed to SHS.
- Would be great to have footpaths smoke free.

Suggestions

- George Street, Paterson Street and Charles Street want including in the increased smoke-free area.
- Respondents want to see fines given out to people breaching the laws.
- Need nice areas for smokers to make it work, shelter or gardens.
- Clearer signage needed, signs on the ground area not easily noticed.

Identified Problem

- Responses were very supportive of increasing the smoke-free area but had concerns with how it will be policed, they feel what is in place now is not adequately policed.
- The butt bin catch on fire all the time.
- Smoke travels into shops even when people are standing 3m away from entrance.
- The current smoke-free areas have forced smokers to congregate in group on the edge of smoke free areas. This has increased the level of secondhand smoke that the public is exposed to when accessing the CBD.
- People walk and smoke around the CBD, exposing the public to SHS.

Comments that were similar in 2012 are to improve signage, increase patrols and start fining offenders and increase smoke-free areas. There were similar identified issues with smoke wafting in shops on a regular basis and the public being exposed to SHS because of congregating smokers.

Main findings:

- There has been an 8% increase of support for the current smoke-free areas
- Minor improvement with smokers complying with the smoke-free laws, smokers are still smoking in the smoke-free areas.
- Enforcement not adequate, businesses not sure who enforces the law
- 53% of businesses think there has been a decrease of smokers in general around the CBD
- 20% decrease in smokers congregating, common places are Brisbane Street Avenue, Tatlers Parade, both ends of the Brisbane Mall, Charles Street, St John Street bus stops, and Lane ways off the Quadrant
- 69% of businesses support current increase of the smoke free area to include Brisbane Street Avenue, part of St John Street and connecting lanes. Future increases of George Street, Paterson Street and Charles Street needs to be considered.
- 52% support for designated smoking areas, but not all areas marked on the map.
- Main comments were- increase the smoke free area, improve signage, increased enforcement and education.

Appendix 2

References:

- (1) Public Health Act 1997, Sect 27- Division 4- Council 27, General Functions (1) (a)
- (2) Cancer Council Victoria 2012, *Tobacco in Australia, Effectiveness of smoke free legislation in reducing exposure to tobacco toxins and changing smoking behaviors*, chapter 15.9
- (3) Surenda X, Fernandez E, Lopez, M, Nebot M, *Secondhand Tobacco Smoke Exposure in Open and Semi-open Settings A systematic Review*, Tobacco Control Unit, Cancer Control and Prevention Programme, Institute Catala d'Oncologia-ICO, Barcelona.
- (4) Cho, Lee K, Hwang Y, Richardson P, Bratset H, Teeters E, record R, Riker C, Hahn EJ 2014, Outdoor tobacco smoke exposure at the perimeter of a tobacco-free university, *J Air Waste Manag Assoc* , 64 (8):863-6.
- (5) Department of Health and Human Services, *Health Indicators Tasmania 2013*, Population Health, Epidemiology Unit, Hobart.
- (6) Commonwealth of Australia 2012, *National Tobacco Strategy 2012-2018*, Intergovernmental committee on Drugs, Canberra.
- (7) Potera, C 2013, *Outdoor Smoking Areas: Does the Science Support a Ban?*, *Environ Health Perspect*, vol.121, iss.7.
- (8) Thomson, G, Wilson, N, Edwards ,R, Woodward, A 2008, *Should smoking in outside public spaces be banned? Yes*, University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand.