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TRAIN AND TRAM PLATFORM SMOKING BAN TO BE EXTENDED

Minister for Health David Davis and Minister for Public Transport Terry Mulder have announced changes to the Transport Regulations to prohibit smoking anywhere on railway station platforms and raised platforms at tram stops, effective from early 2014.

Until now, smoking had been banned only in covered areas of train platforms and within tram and bus shelters. Minister Davis said the extended bans would benefit the health and wellbeing of other public transport users, particularly school children.

“Around 4,000 lives are lost each year in Victoria as a result of smoking and it costs $2.4 billion in direct health costs and lost productivity every year. These new bans in public transport areas are extending the no-go zones for smokers in the community,” Minister Davis said.

The number of infringements issued for smoking offences on the public transport has steadily increased during the past few years. During 2012-13, 2,002 infringements were issued, with 1,988 issued in 2011-12 and 1,161 in 2010-11.

The fine for smoking within the covered areas of station platforms, tram stops and bus shelters is $212 for adults and $72 for children. This same fine will now apply to smoking anywhere on railway station platforms and raised platforms at tram stops.

Tobacco Act amendments were introduced in Parliament last month to also ban smoking at children’s playgrounds, public swimming pools, children’s sporting grounds and skate parks. They build on the reforms introduced last year that banned smoking at patrolled beaches and the provision of rewards associated with tobacco purchases.

Member for Prahran, Clem Newton-Brown said the new smoking bans were a breath of fresh air.

“As well as being unpleasant, second hand smoke can cause serious health problems. People should be able to enjoy a day outdoors without having to inhale cancer-causing cigarettes.”

“Victoria will be the first jurisdiction to introduce a smoking ban specifically for sporting events and skate parks. This is a pivotal step in the right direction to ensure children and teens can enjoy recreational activities in a smoke-free environment. This is also critical in ensuring the number of young people taking up smoking continues to decrease,” Mr Newton-Brown said.

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