



Monday 5 March 2018

Cigarettes more available in Tasmania's most regional, remote and disadvantaged areas, study finds

Cigarettes are more readily available in Tasmania's most regional and remote areas and areas of socio economic disadvantage compared to other areas, public health researchers at the University of Tasmania's Menzies Institute for Medical Research have found.

The researchers, working with the Department of Health and Human Services, found that the density of outlets was 79% greater in suburbs or towns in outer regional, remote and very remote Tasmania than in 'inner regional' Tasmania.

Suburbs or towns in Tasmania with the greatest socio-economic disadvantage had more than twice the number of tobacco outlets per 1000 people compared to areas of least disadvantage.

The lead researcher, Dr Shannon Melody, said the findings were important because easier access to tobacco was likely to contribute to higher tobacco consumption and tobacco-related harm.

She said international research suggested that tobacco outlet density and proximity are associated with youth experimentation, smoking by young people and adults, and reduced success in quitting by established smokers.

"We know that a greater amount of time, effort and cost in obtaining tobacco has an impact on the prevalence of smoking," Dr Melody said, adding that the potential to address these inequities through licencing required further investigation.

The paper, published today in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, states that at 31 December 2016, 769 current tobacco licences had been issued in Tasmania, an average of 1.54 tobacco retailers per 1000 residents, or one outlet per 650 Tasmanians.

Tobacco retail outlet data was collected by the Department of Health and Human Services, with remoteness defined by the Remoteness Structure of the Australian Statistical Geographical Standard and socio-economic status defined by the 2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics Index of Relative Socioeconomic Advantage and Disadvantage.

Media contact: Miranda Harman 0427 199 562 or miranda.harman@utas.edu.au

Information released by:

Communications and Media Office

University of Tasmania

+61 3 6226 2124

Media.Office@utas.edu.au

[Twitter.com/utas_newsroom](https://twitter.com/utas_newsroom)