

Media Release

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Failing The Smoke Test — National Scorecard Exposes States and Territories Falling Behind on Tobacco and Vape Reform

A nationwide scorecard assessing the performance of each state and territory on tackling tobacco and vapes has been released by the Australian Council on Smoking & Health (ACOSH) ahead of World No Tobacco Day 2025. Almost a year on from the Federal Government introducing world leading reforms, the results show a stark divide — with some states leading the charge, and others lagging.

“If this were an exam result, you’d have to say some states and territories are struggling,” said ACOSH CEO Laura Hunter.

The scorecard measures progress across nine key areas — from cracking down on illegal sales and enforcing vape laws, to protecting kids from marketing and ensuring smoke and vape-free public spaces. It also looks at investment in public education, support for high-risk groups, and whether governments are keeping the tobacco industry at arm’s length.

“The results show that while South Australia and Queensland are leading the charge, jurisdictions like the Northern Territory and Western Australia are falling behind — and are needing to prioritise urgent updates to state tobacco laws. Without these, the Federal legislation lacks the bite needed to drive real change,” said Ms Hunter.

“In WA, we’ve seen regulations introducing the prescription-model for vaping products, a very welcome direction but the state tobacco laws haven’t been updated in seven years. Bringing these up to date will play a critical role in giving authorities the power to shut down illegal vape shops and introduce tougher penalties that actually deter offenders.”

We are already seeing how this can work in other states. In South Australia, there have been over 500 inspections conducted with closures of retailers who are doing the wrong thing and huge resourcing and investment into government taskforces that are seizing millions of dollars’ worth of illicit cigarettes and vapes. We’re also seeing the introduction of significant penalties in Queensland, with large-scale seizures and stronger enforcement.

New South Wales, Victoria, the ACT and Tasmania fall into the middle tier of performance, with Tasmania leading this group. Though some reforms have been made, stronger and more comprehensive action is required.

“We intend to redo this scorecard in 2026 and look forward to seeing all of the states united in prioritising tobacco and vape control and strengthening enforcement efforts.”

“We cannot afford to get complacent, because behind closed doors, Big Tobacco has its sights set on one goal—to grow the next generation of addicts for their own financial gain, and at our expense.”

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For media comment please contact:

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About ACOSH

ACOSH is an independent, non-government, not for profit coalition which represents 33 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 Healthway — the Western Australian Health Promotion Foundation.

