

## SMOKE-FREE POLICY

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### Rationale

There is now overwhelming evidence that exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) is harmful to health. There is no safe level of exposure to ETS. Long-term exposure to ETS can have serious adverse health effects including heart disease and lung cancer. Breathing ETS can increase the risk of heart attack, particularly for those with existing heart disease or asthma, and even brief exposure to ETS can trigger symptoms such as irritation of the eyes and nose, headaches, sore throat and cough.

**Environmental tobacco smoke (ETS):** Environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) is described as a combination of side stream smoke (smoke from the burning end of a tobacco product) and exhaled mainstream smoke (the smoke breathed out by a smoker). The US Environmental Protection Agency has classified ETS as a proven human carcinogen (cancer causing agent).

### NSW Health Legislation

The NSW Health policy on Smoke-Free laws in the workplace states: "Smoking and using e-cigarettes are banned in all enclosed public areas and certain outdoor public areas, under the Smoke-free Environment Act 2000 and the Smoke-free Environment Regulation 2016. These bans protect people from harmful second-hand tobacco smoke. There is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke."

### Workplace Health and Safety

Section 19 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 requires an employer, so far as practicable, to provide and maintain a working environment in which the employees are not exposed to hazards. Under regulation 3.44B of the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 employers, employees and self-employed persons are prohibited from smoking in enclosed workplaces.

### Objectives

The purpose of the Complete Health at Crossways Smoke-Free policy is to:

- Protect all employees and patients from exposure to ETS (environmental tobacco smoke or passive smoking)
- To consider the health and wellbeing of all employees and patients by supporting smoking prevention and cessation
- To create a healthy working environment

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### **Our Policy**

Because of the acknowledged health hazards of exposure to ETS, and to comply with the legal obligations, Complete Health at Crossways has adopted a smoke-free workplace policy that formalises its commitment to, and extends beyond the legislated smoking bans. Everyone in the workplace must observe these smoking bans including employees, volunteers and customers.

The Complete Health at Crossways smoke-free workplace policy is effective immediately, and applies to all persons including staff and visitors to the workplace. Smoking is prohibited **in all indoor and outdoor areas owned or leased by Complete Health at Crossways.**

Smoking by staff is only permitted **off the premises** during award meal breaks and scheduled rest periods. Smoking is prohibited in all vehicles owned or leased by Complete Health at Crossways. As Complete Health at Crossways is a General Practice providing health services to patients, consideration must also be given by staff to the smell of smoke when acting in an official capacity representing the company.

### **Benefits**

There are many benefits of providing a smoke-free workplace. In addition to meeting the legal obligations and eliminating the risk of prosecution for non-compliance in relation to enclosed workplaces, a smoke-free policy can:

- Provide a safer, cleaner and healthier workplace environment
- Encourage and support smokers to cut down or quit
- Educate staff on the health risks of smoking, and of the benefits of quitting
- Promote a healthy corporate image Increase productivity
- Reduce absenteeism from illness caused by smoking and passive smoking
- Reduce cleaning and maintenance costs
- Reduce the fire risk
- Reduce the risk of litigation/compensation costs resulting from passive smoking caused illness

### **Smoking Cessation Support**

Dr Raya and our team understand that restricting opportunities to smoke can result in physical and emotional symptoms of nicotine withdrawal for our employees and patients so we offer support for smoking cessation which could include:

- Self-help materials and resources from Health Info – 1300 135 030
- Quitline – 13 78 48
- Smoking cessation groups
- Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) h
- Prescription-only medicines