

Draft Bill on Tobacco Products

Notice 220 of 1992 in the Government Gazette of 6 March, gives details of a draft bill, the "Tobacco Products Control Act, 1992."

The intention is to control smoking for the benefit of non-smokers and the 'not yet smokers.' To achieve this the Minister of National Health may, "by regulation, prohibit, restrict or regulate smoking in prescribed public places."

Further, advertising should contain warnings about health hazards and details about the quantities of hazardous constituents in the tobacco product being sold.

Sale of tobacco products to persons under 16 years will be prohibited and people making vending machines available will be liable for ensuring no sales go to under 16's.

Well! what can one say? If people will really be prosecuted for smoking in prohibited areas, it may make the smoking issue one of higher profile than it is at present. It does however seem to me that the whole issue of advertising of tobacco products is really being avoided. Will we be able to establish a non-smoking culture if we ignore the continued impact made by advertising?

Last week I recommended the medical boarding of a person with self inflicted emphysema from smoking. How many more people are you and I going to do this for and go on paying taxes, to afford them an extra 5 years of pension credits for which they have not contributed.

Their biggest contribution was to the tobacco merchants so that they can benefit from ill health and the rest of us from raised taxes.

Coercion is not the best way of changing human behaviour. But one can ask, will this Bill make any difference?

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