

# HOW TO CREATE A SMOKE-FREE AND VAPE-FREE AREA

The City of Melbourne have been successfully implementing smoke-free and vape-free areas since 2013. Following the pilot of a small CBD laneway which received strong community support, there are now 13 smoke-free and vape-free areas across the municipality. The City of Melbourne have developed a comprehensive [Smoke-free Melbourne Policy](#) to further protect the community from the harms of smoking and vaping.

This document has been developed to provide a step by step guide for local governments who may also be looking to create smoke and vape-free areas. While we acknowledge that other local governments may have different internal procedures and/or structures, the following process can be replicated or used as a guide.

<b>PREPARE AND PLAN FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>	
<b>Step</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select an area to propose as smoke-free and vape-free and seek approval from relevant senior management and/or councillors. This could be an area that has a high amount of pedestrian activity or high levels of smoking activity. This can be measured by high instances of illegally disposed cigarette butts, residential complaints or, in some cases, can be referred by councillors in response to resident request.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with key branches and teams across council to discuss the upcoming proposal. Key internal and external stakeholders to consider are listed towards the end of this document.</li> <li>Select the approach to be taken and dates for community engagement to take place. Develop a community engagement plan with key actions and milestones.</li> <li>Identify all stakeholders and plan ways to engage with them.</li> <li>Consider groups within in the community that are harder to reach and implement processes to encourage their engagement. E.g. Older adults, culturally and linguistically diverse groups.</li> <li>If budget is available, a consultant can be engaged to support the community engagement activities. At the City of Melbourne, community engagement of the smaller smoke-free and vape-free areas was managed internally, whereas a consultant was utilised in some of the larger smoke-free and vape-free areas.</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact your council's Geographic Information System (GIS) team to request a map of the smoke-free area.</li> <li>Contact your council's Communications team to request the development of a communications plan, including a list of key messages for the smoke-free and vape-free area.</li> <li>Develop flyers, posters and handouts to support community engagement activities.</li> <li>If utilising a council online engagement platform, prepare the community engagement page.</li> </ul>

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UNDERTAKE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
Step	Action
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake community engagement utilising a range of activities such as:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ online surveys, including the use of an online platform if applicable to conduct community consultation</li> <li>○ face-to-face intercept surveys to collect information from the community</li> <li>○ workshops with particular community groups or businesses – this may be necessary if the proposal is controversial.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Work with your Communications team to utilise council’s communication/promotional channels including website, social media and newsletters to promote the community engagement.</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a mail out to all building owners and occupiers abutting the proposed area.</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss and promote the smoke-free and vape-free area engagement with public health/tobacco control experts and health promotion organisations, such as QUIT Victoria and VicHealth.</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the engagement internally through in-house communication systems.</li> <li>• Provide updates, seek feedback and consultation from internal stakeholders.</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep your council’s Media team updated on the engagement process and expected outcomes. Request the development of a media release in preparation for the report going to council.</li> </ul>
PREPARE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COUNCIL REPORT	
Step	Action
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a report that highlights key findings and feedback from the community engagement activities.</li> <li>• Prepare a report that includes the smoke-free and vape-free area proposal and community engagement results for councillor discussion and endorsement. An example of a City of Melbourne smoke-free and vape-free area proposal report can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare the communications plan for the smoke-free and vape-free area announcement in the lead up to seeking council endorsement.</li> </ul>

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SEEK ENDORSEMENT FROM COUNCIL	
Step	Action
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Brief senior management about the key findings from the community engagement and identify potential questions councillors may have.</li></ul>
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Submit the proposal to council for endorsement.</li></ul>
IMPLEMENT SMOKE-FREE AND VAPE-FREE AREA IF ENDORSED BY COUNCIL	
Step	Action
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Work with your council's legal team to develop the Local Law documentation for the smoke-free and vape-free area.</li><li>Refer to steps outlined in the <a href="#">Local Government Act 2020 – Section 74</a>.</li></ul>
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Implement key communication processes to inform the community of the smoke-free and vape-free area. Utilise communication pathways such as social media channels and council community engagement pages.</li></ul>
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Collaborate with council's Design and Communications teams to develop signage for the smoke-free and vape-free area. Consider temporary signage options such as footpath decals while waiting for permanent signage to be installed.</li><li>Ensure council's Compliance teams are also consulted about the implementation of signage. Compliance teams should be trained on the council's expectations around the education and enforcement of the smoke-free and vape-free area. It is recommended that an education first approach regarding the smoke-free area is implemented for the first six months following the approval of a new smoke-free and vape-free area.</li></ul>

For more information on City of Melbourne's Smoke-free Melbourne Policy and smoke-free areas visit the City of Melbourne [website](#) and online [community engagement platform](#).

Further resources to strengthen tobacco control in your local government area can also be found in the [VicHealth Local Government Partnership module](#).

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Key internal and external stakeholders to consider when preparing for community engagement for a smoke-free area proposal:

<b>Internal stakeholders</b>	<b>External stakeholders</b>
Environmental Health	Businesses within the proposed smoke-free and vape-free area
Legal	Building and property owners abutting the proposed smoke-free and vape-free area
Media and Communications	General community members who use the proposed area
On-Street Compliance/Local Laws	Other key groups, sporting clubs, universities and organisations in the area
Community Engagement	Health promotion organisations
Senior Management	Public health/tobacco control experts
Design team	Consultant (if needed)
Council Business/Governance	
Finance	
Councillors	