

Media Statement, for Immediate Release - 22 June 2005

HEALTH GROUPS WELCOME CLOSURE OF SMOKY BAR

The Smokefree Coalition is welcoming a Liquor Licensing Authority ruling that Kelly Browne's Bar must shut for three weeks. The Cambridge bar had repeatedly thumbed its nose at the new smokefree bars law. The Coalition represents 27 health groups, including the Asthma and Respiratory Foundation, the National Heart Foundation and the Cancer Society.

The temporary closure was punishment for a number of transgressions cited by the Liquor Licensing Authority, including a 'defiant and unco-operative attitude' in refusing to comply with recent amendments to the smokefree legislation that required licensed premises to be smokefree inside.

Smokefree Coalition Director Leigh Sturgiss says the ruling will come as a relief, not only to bar workers and members of the public who don't want to inhale hydrogen cyanide, arsenic and other chemicals in second-hand smoke; but also to other publicans in the area.

"These publicans have been justifiably annoyed that one of their number was allegedly continuing to allow people to smoke in his pub. Now we have a level playing field once more.

"It also sends a clear message to anyone else tempted to allow smoking in their premises – you will pay a heavy price. Whereas it costs nothing to comply."

Kelly Browne's licensee Dean Risi estimates that the licence suspension will cost the business around \$30,000.

Leigh Sturgiss says that the requirement for smokefree bars and restaurants, introduced on December 10 last year, appears to have been a great success.

"Public support for smokefree bars is at 70 percent, and, in general, business does not seem to have been affected.

"Nearly every week we hear of another country considering banning smoking in bars – clearly the future is smokefree. Hopefully those few publicans challenging the law – like Dean Risi – will now join us in the 21st Century."

For further information contact Leigh Sturgiss:

04 472 0157 wk

0274 591 664 cell

04 973 3759 hm