

HOW TO CREATE A SMOKE-FREE AREA

City of Melbourne has been successfully implementing smoke-free areas since 2013. Following the pilot of a small CBD laneway which received strong community support, there are now 14 smoke-free areas across the municipality. City of Melbourne has developed a comprehensive [Smoke-free Melbourne Policy](#)¹ to further protect the community from the harms of smoking and vaping.

Under City of Melbourne's local law, the definition of 'smoking' includes e-cigarettes (or vaping), therefore both smoking and vaping are banned in City of Melbourne smoke-free areas.

This document has been developed to provide a step-by-step guide for local governments who may also be looking to create smoke-free areas. We acknowledge that other local governments may have different legislation, internal procedures and/or structures, in which case the following steps can be used as a general guide to support the process.

PREPARE AND PLAN FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
Step	Action
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Select an area to propose as smoke-free and seek approval from relevant senior management and/or councillors. This could be an area that has high pedestrian activity or high levels of smoking activity. High smoking activity may be evident through increased cigarette butt litter, or community complaints in a particular area
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">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.Select the approach to be taken and dates for community engagement to take place.Develop a community engagement plan, identifying key stakeholders, activities, and engagement questions.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.If budget is available, a consultant can be engaged to support the community engagement activities. At City of Melbourne, community engagement of the smaller smoke-free areas is managed internally, whereas a consultant has been utilised for some of the larger smoke-free areas.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Contact your council's Geographic Information System (GIS) team to request a map of the smoke-free area.Contact your council's Communications team to request the development of a communications plan, including a list of key messages for the smoke-free area.

¹ https://hdp-au-prod-app-com-participate-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/2316/4446/1973/050909r09_COME_Smoke-Free_Melbourne_Policy_WEB.pdf

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop campaign collateral including flyers, posters and handouts to support community engagement activities. • If using a council online engagement platform, prepare the community engagement page.
<h2>UNDERTAKE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</h2>	
Step	Action
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake community engagement using a range of activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ online surveys, including the use of an online engagement platform if applicable ○ face-to-face intercept surveys to collect information from the community in the area ○ workshops with key community groups and businesses – this may be necessary if the proposal is controversial. • Work with your Communications team to use council's communication channels including website, social media, and newsletters to promote the community engagement.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a mail-out to all building owners and occupiers abutting the proposed area.
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and promote the smoke-free area engagement with public health and tobacco control experts and health promotion organisations, such as QUIT Victoria and VicHealth.
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the engagement internally through in-house communication channels. • Keep internal stakeholders informed and seek their feedback.
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<h2>PREPARE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COUNCIL REPORT</h2>	
Step	Action
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a report that highlights key findings and feedback from the community engagement activities. • Prepare a council committee report that includes the smoke-free area proposal and community engagement report for councillor discussion and endorsement. An example of a City of Melbourne smoke-free area proposal report can be found online.

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10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare the communications plan for the smoke-free area announcement in the lead up to seeking Council endorsement.
SEEK ENDORSEMENT FROM COUNCIL	
Step	Action
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief senior management about the key findings from the community engagement and identify potential questions councillors may have.
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit the proposal to Council for endorsement.
IMPLEMENT SMOKE-FREE AREA IF ENDORSED BY COUNCIL	
Step	Action
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with your council's legal team to develop the Local Law documentation for the smoke-free area. Refer to steps outlined in the Local Government Act 2020 – Section 74.
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement key communication processes to inform the community of the smoke-free area. Use communication channels such as social media and your council's online community engagement platform.
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with council's Design and Communications teams to develop signage for the smoke-free area. Consider temporary signage options such as footpath decals while waiting for permanent signage to be installed. 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 area. It is recommended that an education first approach is used during the first six months of implementing a smoke-free area.

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:

Internal stakeholders	External stakeholders
Environmental Health	Businesses within the proposed smoke-free area
Legal	Building and property owners abutting the proposed smoke-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 and tobacco control experts
Design team	Community engagement consultant (if needed)
Council Business/Governance	
Finance	
Councillors	