

### **6.3. MM03 Australia's First Smoke Free Municipality**

North Sydney Council has led the way in creating smoke-free zones in our area. In 2011, we implemented a smoking ban near playgrounds, sports fields, outdoor dining areas on Council-owned land and in our bus shelters and taxi ranks.

We followed that in 2016 with smoking bans in Brett Whiteley Place and Elizabeth Plaza in the North Sydney CBD and in Ernest Place in Crows Nest. In 2018, I proposed we extend the ban to the whole of the North Sydney CBD. The proposal not only won the support of councillors, but also our community with 80% of the 558 submissions we received supporting the ban.

The CBD ban has been in place for some time now and I am receiving positive feedback on its impact. We have fewer cigarette butts on our streets, which means fewer make their way into the stormwater system and Sydney Harbour. A tenant in the new office tower at 1 Denison St recently told me that while he was frustrated to learn of the ban when he first moved to North Sydney, he has changed his habits and stopped smoking.

North Sydney has successfully led the way in this area, and I think it is time we gathered our courage and took the next step to an LGA wide ban. This would involve banning smoking in all public areas within the North Sydney Council Municipality including all parks, reserves, streets and plazas.

Such a ban will not stop people smoking on private property or in designated smoking areas. But it will mean that non-smokers, who are the majority of the community, will not be exposed to second hand smoke which is detrimental to health. It should also further decrease the number of discarded cigarette butts which leach toxins into the soil or harbour water.

This is a big step and I'm sure we'll hear criticism about being a nanny state. Rather than follow our usual consultation process, I suggest we put this question to the whole community via a referendum question at the council elections in September. If we make sure the question is promoted widely before the election, our community will be able to make an informed decision.

#### **I therefore recommend:**

**1.THAT** the General Manager report back to the April meeting of Council with wording for a referendum question asking whether the community supports a ban on smoking in all public areas of the North Sydney Council area including parks and reserves, streets and plazas.

**2.THAT** the report include recommendations for how the referendum questions can be promoted to the community so that the implications of the ban can be fully understood and considered by the community before they vote.

**COUNCILLOR JILLY GIBSON  
MAYOR**