

## 2002 TOBACCO RETAILER COMPLIANCE SURVEY

### Background

A survey of retail outlets selling tobacco products in the Perth metropolitan area was conducted between 1 October and 15 October 2002, the timing of which mostly coincided with the September/October school holidays. The survey measured compliance with the *Tobacco Control Act 1990*, in terms of determining the proportion of retail outlets in selected areas that were willing to sell tobacco products to children.

Previous surveys on the compliance of retail outlets with the Act have been conducted on a biennial basis from 1992 onwards. However, the findings presented in this bulletin are not comparable to previous surveys due to methodological changes made in the 2002 survey.

### Research Methodology

A number of zones were randomly selected within the Perth metropolitan area. Attempts were made to survey all outlets within each zone on two separate occasions. Purchase attempts were carried out in 533 retail outlets, with most outlets being visited twice, resulting in 1047 purchase attempts.

Five children, three males and two females were recruited to carry out the purchase attempts. Each child was chosen as they looked 16 years of age or younger. The children were paired up so that one male and one female visited each of the outlets on different days and at different times.

Accompanied by an adult supervisor, the child visited all retail outlets identified in their area. The child entered the outlet alone and requested a packet of cigarettes. As the children did not carry sufficient funds to complete a transaction, a completed or 'successful' sale was defined as a clear intention to sell.

### Results

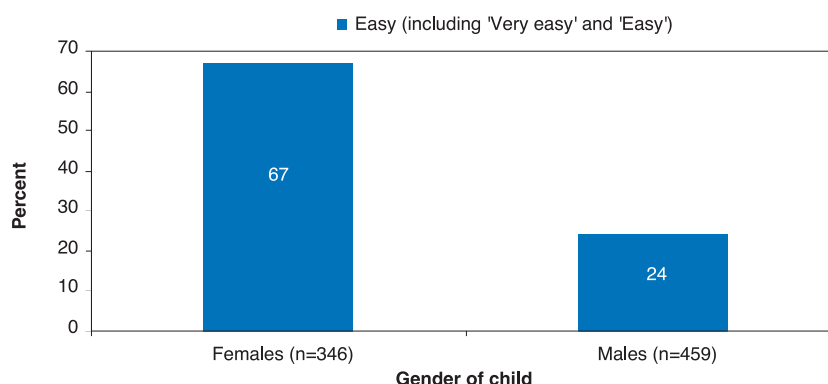
Overall, 45% (n=471) of all purchase attempts (n=1047) were successful. Further analysis of the results shows that 373 of the 533 retail outlets surveyed (70%) were prepared to sell cigarettes to children on at least one purchase attempt.

#### Impact of child's gender on purchase outcome

Overall, females were significantly more likely to be successful in their attempts to purchase cigarettes than males (67% and 33%, respectively). Of the 471 successful purchase attempts, three quarters (75%) were made by females with the remaining 25% by males.

As shown in Figure 1, females were not only more readily able to purchase cigarettes, they also found the experience to be easier. Two thirds (67%) of females stated that it was easy to purchase cigarettes, compared to 24% of males. In addition, in 97% of successful purchase attempts the children indicated that it was 'very easy' to purchase cigarettes.

**Figure 1: Ease of purchase attempt by gender of child**



## Impact of outlet type on purchase outcome

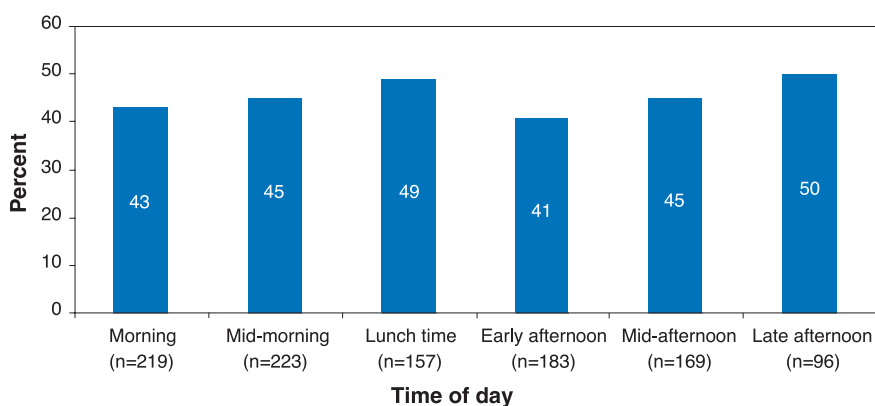
Smaller, independently owned outlets were more likely to be prepared to sell cigarettes to children than were larger, commercial outlets. Delis (59%) and cafés (51%) were most likely to sell cigarettes to children, while lottery outlets (32%) and department stores (33%) were least likely to sell to children.

## Impact of day and time on purchase outcome

Purchase attempts were more likely to be successful over the weekend, with Saturday (56%) and Sunday (57%) purchases having the highest success rates. In comparison, purchases made on Wednesday (38%) and Thursday (38%) were the least successful.

As shown in Figure 2, the largest proportion of successful purchase attempts took place in the late afternoon, between 4:30pm and 6:00pm (50%). In comparison, purchases made during the early afternoon (1:30pm to 3:00pm) were least successful (41%).

Figure 2: Success of purchase by time of day



## Impact of other customers on purchase outcome

As the number of other customers present in the outlet increased, the level of successful purchase attempts decreased. Nearly half of retailers were prepared to sell when the store was quiet, that is no other (49%) or one other customer (51%) present. However, when there were more customers in the outlet the percentage of successful purchases decreased, 38% when there were two to four customers present and 34% when there were five customers.

## Impact of retailer's gender and age on purchase outcome

Male retailers were more likely to sell cigarettes to children with nearly half (49%) prepared to sell compared to 42% of female retailers.

The majority (93%) of retailers in the outlets surveyed were estimated to be over the age of 18 years. However, as indicated in Figure 3 below, of the 7% that were under 18 years of age, 73% sold cigarettes to children. Retailers under the age of 18 years were significantly more likely to sell cigarettes than retailers over 18 years of age (43%).

Figure 3: Success of purchase by age of retailer

