



...Helping People Breathe Better...



MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 19th August

FREO AND PERTH CARE FOR LOCALS' AIR

During Asthma Week 1-7 2008 - you can take control

Leading up to Asthma Week 2008, the Asthma Foundation of WA is thrilled that the City of Perth is joining the City of Fremantle in their decision for a 100% smoke free ban in all alfresco dining areas.

On August 15th, the Fremantle council rolled out the final stage of the smoking ban which began earlier this year and that will greatly benefit the community, especially those living with asthma, pregnant women and new mothers.

As well as cigarette smoke triggering asthma attacks, research shows that smoking while pregnant increases the risk of asthma, unhealthy birth weight and SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).

Asthma Foundation CEO John Gummer said, "The Asthma Foundation is delighted with the City of Fremantle and City of Perth's initiative, as smoking during pregnancy makes it harder for an unborn baby to obtain the oxygen and nourishment the baby needs to survive. Alarmingly, 17% of pregnant women in WA smoke. Of even greater concern is the fact that over 50% of Indigenous women smoke while pregnant".

The Asthma Foundation of WA's Newborn Asthma Parental Smoking (NAPS) Project aims to promote the message "Care for my air!" and encourages pregnant women and new mothers and fathers to create smoke free environments for their fetus and their newborn.

In the lead up to Asthma Week 2008 (1 -7 September), the Asthma Foundation's NAPS team will be hard at work spreading the word about the dangers of smoking. The Foundation is participating in a national Commonwealth-funded project creating more supportive environments for women and their partners to quit smoking. As part of a new strategy, the NAPS team will work closely with Quitline staff and midwives in the antenatal clinics at two participating hospitals - King Edward Memorial Hospital and Armadale Hospital. The team will also travel to remote and regional areas in WA to spread the message and deliver smoking cessation training to Indigenous health workers.

The Asthma Foundation is urging the community to make use of the large number of free asthma educational sessions that are scheduled for in and around Perth during Asthma Week 2008. Included are several Ask the Asthma Educator sessions, an Education Stand at Whitfords Shopping Centre and an Asthma Awareness Activity in Perth's CBD. For more information about the programs and activities, please visit www.asthmawa.org.au, or phone 9289 3600.

For anyone who requires help with quitting smoking or who would like more information on the NAPS Project, please contact the Asthma Foundation on 9289 3641 or hpo@asthmawa.org.au.

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To schedule interviews or photos please contact Kate on the details above. Attached is a photograph of CEO John Gummer with the Asthma Foundation's NAPS team.