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Smith: White in, Maxi out

CRICKET

# Steve Smith addressed Australian cricket's smoking celebration backlash

news.com.au

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AUSTRALIAN Test captain Steve Smith has deflected criticism directed at Aussie Ashes stars Shaun Marsh and Jackson Bird over smoking at a public bar.

[The Daily Telegraph on Thursday published photos of the pair smoking](#) as members of the Australian team gathered at Sydney's Coogee Pavilion watering hole in the eastern suburbs on Tuesday to celebrate their 4-0 Ashes triumph over England.

The images prompted a strong backlash from health experts, including the president of the Australian Medical Association, Dr Michael Gannon, and the President of the Australian Council on Smoking and Health, Maurice Swanson, who expressed their disappointment at the message Bird and Marsh have sent to their many fans.

Quit Victoria director Dr Sarah White said: "It is really poor judgment and really poor role modelling".

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She told 3AW the players should have done more to hide their habit from the public eye.

“In this day and age, why would elite sportsmen (a) still be smoking, and (b) doing so in a public space when children around Australia, teens around Australia, young men, seek to emulate them?” [she said](#).

“Smoking is not illegal. It happens to be the leading cause of preventable deaths and disease in Australia, but sadly not illegal.

“So if they want to smoke, go ahead and do it, but don’t do it in a public forum.”

Cricket Australia has previously told The Daily Telegraph the players behaved in a “responsible manner” while celebrating on Tuesday.



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Smith on Friday addressed the hot topic for the first time in an interview with Channel 9’s *Today Show*, saying his team is powerless to stop photos like the ones published on Thursday being taken.

“It’s not ideal,” he said.

“But boys were just there trying to have a good time. Trying to celebrate what’s been a great couple of months and that’s part of playing cricket for your country and winning big series.

“You need to celebrate your success and the boys had a really good time and those

kind of things coming out aren’t ideal but you can’t do much about it.”

Channel 9 sports personality Tim Gilbert told Smith: “I thought the invasion of privacy was a much bigger sin than a few boys having a gasper”.

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It comes as AFL legend Gerard Healy said it is “impossible” to believe that professional athletes in Australia would decide to smoke, knowing its harmful impact on their health.

“I agree with those from the anti-smoking lobby who rightly said that they should know better in 2018,” Healy told 3AW.

“There’s that much education, it’s impossible to believe that professional cricketers or athletes of any nature would smoke.

“But it’s still their choice. There’s no upside to smoking, athlete or not.

“But to run the public outrage card is simply without merit. It wasn’t on TV, or at work, or in the vicinity of kids.

“If a moron with a camera didn’t take the picture and an editor didn’t publish it, nobody would be any the wiser.”

Australian one-day star Adam Zampa also addressed the issue on Thursday, declaring it is unfair to label Marsh and Bird bad role models because they were smoking inside a public venue where smoking is allowed — and no children were present.

“I don’t think there was any kids at the Coogee Pav,” Zampa said.

“I don’t think they were doing it on purpose in front of any kids either.

“After a 4-0 Ashes, the guys have done quite well, it’s probably a nice time just to loosen up a little bit and have a beer and, if they want to, they can light one up.”

Originally published as [Smith addresses smoking backlash](#)



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