

Smoking age should be raised to 21 years says mining magnate Andrew Forrest

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THE legal smoking age should be raised to 21 to cut the profits of “big tobacco”, mining billionaire and anti-cancer campaigner Andrew “Twiggy” Forrest says.

The Eliminate Cancer Initiative is an organisation funded by Mr Forrest and wife Nicola, to take on the tobacco industry and aims to pursue legal action and push for legislation change.

“We need to stop fuelling big tobacco preying on our vulnerable youth,” Mr Forrest said on Monday.

Federal and state governments should stop young people from smoking until they are at least 21, he said.

Almost 90 per cent of adult smokers first start the habit as children and the law needed to be changed to address the issue, he said.

“By the time they reach 21, they are hooked and become lifelong customers of big tobacco,” he said.

Tobacco companies needed to be held account financially for the suffering they cause to Australians, Mr Forrest said.

“When tobacco causes many times more cost to the nation than it ever brings in revenue and creates extreme suffering before palliative care and death there is something seriously wrong with any government in the world, particularly ours, tolerating it,” he said.

Part of the \$75 million funding the ECI received from the Forrests will be used to launch a legal “assault” against tobacco companies.

The ECI is funded by the Munderoo Foundation and aims to help accelerate cancer research, improve prevention detection and treatment options including access to clinical trials.