



Cig shops mostly in poor areas

■ **Bethany Hiatt**

Disadvantaged suburbs have four times as many shops selling cigarettes as those in more affluent areas, according to research which has prompted health experts to call for a limit on tobacco outlets.

A study from the University of WA, to be published in the Medical Journal of Australia today, is the first of its kind in Australia to find a strong relationship between an area's socioeconomic status and tobacco outlet density.

The report said State and Territory governments were responsible for tobacco retail licensing, but none had implemented any restrictions on the number of licences they granted.

"This is in stark contrast to the processes applied to alcohol, for which decisions to grant new liquor licenses in a given area require the public interest to be considered," it said.

Terry Slevin, director of education and research at Cancer Council WA which commissioned the study, said it was time governments considered restricting licences available to sell tobacco products.