



Media release

Date: Thursday, 29 April 2010

Anti-smoking initiatives to save SA lives

Anti-smoking initiatives announced today by the Australian Government will save South Australian lives, with estimates the price hike alone will prompt 8,000 of our State's adults to quit smoking and avoid 2,000 children becoming addicted to nicotine.

Cancer Council SA Chief Executive Professor Brenda Wilson is welcoming the decision to increase taxes on cigarettes, enforce plain packaging requirements, restrict internet advertising and invest millions of dollars into anti-smoking campaigns.

"These world leading initiatives have the potential to deliver the most significant progress in combatting smoking related death since tobacco advertising was banned on television and radio in 1976," says Professor Wilson.

"We have been lobbying for these outcomes to help South Australians live longer and healthier lives in which they can enjoy their interests and see their grandchildren grow up.

"Removing one of the last remaining forms of tobacco advertising will de-glamorise a unique consumer product that kills 1 in 2 long term users.

"Research suggests that cigarette packets and point of sale displays attract youth, in particular, and even entice those who have quit the deadly habit to relapse.

"These initiatives will have a positive impact on decreasing smoking in the community especially amongst the most vulnerable, young people.

"Smoking is the leading contributing factor to lung cancer, with 80 percent of all lung cancer deaths attributed to smoking. Lung cancer claims approximately 650 South Australian lives a year yet in most cases can be prevented if people did not smoke.

"Increasing the cost of tobacco and investing in anti-smoking campaigns have been shown through research to be the most effective government policy measure to reduce smoking rates, leading to an immediate reduction in youth smoking and an overall increase in quitting.

"Cancer Council SA commends the Australian Government on its initiatives which build on many significant steps toward a reduction in tobacco use in SA over the past decade," says Professor Wilson.

Other significant reforms in SA include smoke-free dining (1999), graphic health warning labels (2006), limitations on tobacco product displays (2007), smoking restrictions in cars carrying children (2007), smoking bans in pubs (Nov 2007), restrictions on tobacco vending machines (2008).

Tobacco smoking causes 1,130 deaths in SA each year. It also causes approximately 78,000 hospital bed days and an estimated cost of \$1.7 billion to the community.

For information, support or advice on quitting contact the Quitline, 13 7848, and speak to a trained counsellor or check www.quitsa.org.au

Media contact: Nicole Thomas on 0400 855 244