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MEDIA RELEASE

GRAPHIC CIGARETTE PACKETS BOOST QUIT RATE

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The introduction of graphic warnings on cigarette packets was a major milestone for tobacco control in Australia, says QuitSA, with new research showing calls to the Quitline doubled after the graphic warnings were introduced.

Research published in the Tobacco Control Journal was undertaken by Ms Caroline Miller, University of Adelaide PhD candidate, and General Manager of Cancer Control at Cancer Council SA.

The graphic health warnings on cigarette packets are mandated under Australia's Trade Practices Act, with 90 per cent of cigarette packets now carrying health warnings.

Quit received 164,850 calls in 2006, following the introduction of the new packaging and the associated graphic advertising campaign – more than twice the number of calls received in the two previous years.

David Edwards, Manager of QuitSA, said that the packaging regulations were a major step forward for tobacco control and have had a huge effect.

“There are now limited opportunities for the tobacco industry to promote their products in Australia. Cigarette packaging is the strongest selling point for the product, so regulation of packaging was a huge win for us.”

QuitSA's new advertising campaign, the 'Separation' campaign, has also been a huge success, with a 68 per cent increase in calls being recorded following the launch of the campaign.

“The graphic health warning campaign and the new 'Separation' campaign are completely different styles of advertising, targeting different groups of smokers, but have both been incredibly successful.”

“We know these campaigns are working by the immediate increase of calls to the Quitline. Of the thousands of people these campaigns prompt to call the Quitline each year, we know that those smokers who use the Quitline are twice as likely to successfully quit,” said Mr Edwards.

The Quitline 137 848 is staffed by trained counsellors who can provide information, support and advice on quitting smoking. The Quitline operates from 8.30 am to 8.30 pm on weekdays and 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm on weekends.

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