

MEDIA RELEASE

30 November 2022

Cancer Council welcomes new reforms that will bring Australia's tobacco control into the 21st century

Cancer Council Australia enthusiastically welcomes an announcement by the Australian Government to cement the legacy of Australia's world-first tobacco plain packaging legislation, by urgently upgrading Australia's tobacco control laws.

Ahead of the 10th anniversary of plain packaging tomorrow, the Australian Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Honourable Mark Butler, today announced proposed new legislation that help simplify, modernise and future proof tobacco control in Australia.

"Today, we saw resolute leadership and collaboration to protect the health of Australians. Minister Butler has shown us that Australia will no longer be complacent, stepping up to restore our position as a world leader in tobacco control," said Professor Tanya Buchanan, Cancer Council Australia CEO.

"It's a welcome announcement that puts public health over Big Tobacco's pursuit of profits," added Ms Libby Jardine, Chair of Cancer Council's Tobacco Issues Committee.

Whilst smoking prevalence has halved in the last 25 years, thanks to plain packaging amongst other interventions, today's actions are critical to achieving the government's target to reduce adult smoking rates to less than 5% by 2030.

Smoking remains the leading preventable cause of death and cancer in Australia and is five times deadlier than any other single risk factor for cancer. Yet three million Australians continue to use these inherently harmful products, hooked by the tobacco industry's manipulative tactics and gimmicks.

"The tobacco industry does not rest, so neither can we," Ms Jardine added.

"Since the Tobacco Plain Packaging Act was introduced, the tobacco industry continues to ruthlessly circumnavigate current laws, funding multi-million dollar campaigns, driving product and packaging innovations, pricing strategies and product design to ultimately find new ways to promote their deadly products," she warned.

In 2019, Cancer Council led the call from the public health community to recommend introducing a Tobacco Control Act to consolidate Australia's existing tobacco laws and enable Australia to meet our international obligations as a party to the [Framework Convention on Tobacco Control](#).

Cancer Council commends Minister Butler on today's announcement of eleven new proposed measures, which includes:

- Consolidating Australia's patchwork tobacco legislation, bringing eight tobacco related laws, regulations and court decisions together

- Updating and improving health warnings on cigarette packs and individual cigarettes to help people understand the extent, and significance, of the health risks
- New requirements for pack and pouch sizes to make roll-your-own tobacco less affordable and appealing, particularly to young people
- Closing current loopholes that have allowed the tobacco industry to promote and market their products
- Requiring greater transparency from tobacco companies about sales volumes and pricing, product ingredients and emissions along with their advertising, promotion and sponsorship activities.

“All the reforms announced today have a strong public health evidence base and we can expect they will help encourage existing tobacco users to quit and discourage younger generations from ever starting,” added Professor Buchanan.

“The 47th Australian Parliament now has the opportunity to future proof Australia’s tobacco control legislation giving us the best chance to accelerate the decline in smoking rates and ultimately, save lives,” concludes Professor Buchanan.

ENDS

Notes to editor

A cancer diagnosis can be a distressing and overwhelming experience for many Australians and stories about cancer can raise questions or cause anxiety for readers who have been directly impacted by cancer.

We suggest that any content of this nature should direct to a consumer resource for further information or support. Cancer Council Australia recommends the inclusion of the following line within any content:

- *If you or someone you know has been diagnosed with cancer and needs support, please know that help is available. You can contact Cancer Council’s free and confidential support line on 13 11 20 – for practical, emotional and financial support.*

Contact details

For all media enquiries and interview opportunities, please contact Cancer Council Australia.

media@cancer.org.au

02 8256 4109 (redirects to mobile outside of business hours).

About Cancer Council Australia

Cancer Council Australia is Australia’s leading cancer charity, working to reduce the impact of cancer for all Australians. Cancer Council Australia works with its members, the eight state and territory Cancer Councils to:

- Undertake and fund cancer research
- Prevent and control cancer
- Provide information and support for people affected by cancer
- Shape and influence policy and practice