



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **Safeguarding Australia's position as tobacco control leaders - new smoking health warnings, pack inserts and a ban on menthols from April 1**

**Embargoed until 12:01am 1 April 2025**

Quit and Cancer Council welcome a range of new mandatory changes to tobacco products coming into effect today, as Australia becomes just the second country in the world to introduce Health Warnings on individual cigarette sticks, following Canada.

These changes come alongside the introduction of 10 new [Graphic Health Warnings](#) on cigarette packs and 10 new [Health Promotion Inserts](#) inside packs, providing information on the benefits of quitting and cessation support services such as [quit.org.au](http://quit.org.au) and Quitline. A phased ban on menthol in cigarettes also begins today.

Compared to a standard cigarette, a cigarette with a health warning better conveys the risks and harms of smoking, in a manner that cannot be avoided as the wording is printed on the filter which doesn't burn down as someone smokes. Health warnings on individual Australian cigarettes will include phrases such as "CAUSES 16 CANCERS", "DAMAGES YOUR LUNGS" and "DAMAGES DNA".

Professor Sarah Durkin, Director of Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer at Cancer Council Victoria commented on why updated imagery was also important.

"Graphic Health Warnings have long proven effective in increasing knowledge about the harms of smoking, preventing smoking uptake and encouraging people who smoke to quit. But evidence has shown that the effectiveness of the current warnings has decreased over time<sup>1</sup>, as people have become accustomed to seeing the images.

"We also have new scientific information that extends our knowledge of the health effects of tobacco use<sup>2</sup>. The new Graphic Health Warnings feature some of these harms of smoking that people may not be aware of, such as diabetes, erectile dysfunction, cervical cancer, DNA damage, and the impact of second-hand smoke on children's lung capacity," said Professor Durkin.

Rachael Andersen, Quit Director, spoke about the addictive nature of smoking and the need to provide avenues of support for someone caught in the grips of nicotine addiction.

"There's no doubt quitting smoking can be hard, people tell us so all the time. Our hope is that these new changes will provide new education to people who smoke about the harms at the same

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<sup>1</sup> Evaluation of effectiveness of graphic health warnings on tobacco product packaging: An evaluation report. Prepared for the Department of Health, 2018. Available from: <https://beta.health.gov.au/resources/publications/evaluation-of-effectiveness-of-graphic-health-warnings-on-tobacco-product-packaging>

<sup>2</sup> The health consequences of smoking--50 years of progress: a report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, United States: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; 2014 [12 September 2019]; Available from: <https://archive.cdc.gov/www/cdc.gov/tobacco/sgr/50th-anniversary/index.htm>



time as informing them of the supports to quit, acting as both a disincentive to smoke and a bridge to services such as Quitline and [quit.org.au](http://quit.org.au),” added Ms Andersen.

Alecia Brooks, Chair of Cancer Council’s Tobacco Issues Committee, said we have an obligation as a society to do all we can to stop the tobacco industry profiting from inherently harmful products.

“Cancer Council and Quit are pleased to see these new changes come into effect today. Australia is one of the first countries to require evidence-based health promotion inserts and on-stick messaging, and we should be proud of our commitment to protect Australians from the harms of smoking.”

“It’s not lost on us that despite Australia’s relatively low-prevalence, smoking is still a top public health priority. While 66 Australians die from smoking-related illness every day, we’ll continue doing all we can to end the lethal impact of tobacco,” added Ms Brooks.

- ENDS -

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#### **Quitline**

*For support to stop smoking or vaping, connect with **Quitline on 13 7848**. Find your state’s operating hours at [quit.org.au](http://quit.org.au).*

#### **About quit.org.au**

*Quit received a funding boost in 2024 to transform [quit.org.au](http://quit.org.au) into a centralised national digital platform providing users with a personalised experience to access support, information, resources and tools at any stage of their quitting journey, wherever they are in Australia. The platform will be Australia’s source of information reflecting how we work as a nation to tackle cessation.*

#### **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

Find out more at [cancer.org.au](http://cancer.org.au), or visit our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#)