



dental health  
services victoria  
oral health for better health

Assistant Secretary, Drug Strategy Branch  
Attention: Tobacco Reform Section  
Department of Health & Ageing  
MDP 701  
GPO Box 9848  
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Tobacco Plain Packaging Bill 2011. Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV), Victoria's leading public oral health agency, supports the Government's suite of reforms to reduce smoking rates in Australia.

DHSV supports the logo-free packaging with larger health warnings and plain packaging to reduce the appeal of these products in the belief that these changes will have a beneficial effect on the health of Australians.

Tobacco is the number one risk factor for the development of oral cancer with around 1,200 Australians diagnosed (excluding lip cancer) each year. It is estimated that smoking accounts for 75 percent of oral cancer cases in Australia (McCullough, Prasad, & Farah, 2010). If a person doesn't already have oral cancer, stopping smoking will halve their risk of mouth and throat cancer within five years.

Smoking is also a risk factor for the development of periodontal disease. Smokers are four times more likely to have advanced periodontitis than non-smokers (Chambrone L, Chambrone D, Lima LA, Chambrone LA, 2010). Emerging evidence shows an association does exist between periodontal disease and a risk of developing chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.

Smoking affects a person's appearance and general health. It may cause stained teeth, bad breath, impaired taste, "black hairy" tongue or smoker's palate (Therapeutic Guidelines, Oral and Dental, Edition 1, 2007).

A reduction in smoking incidence not only has personal health benefits it can also potentially reduce the cost of oral health care for the community. An international study has concluded that the dental treatment costs of smokers are at least 14% higher than for those people who have never smoked (Ide, Hoshuyama, Wilson, Takahashi, Higashi, 2009)

Legislation that discourages people from taking up smoking and encourages people to give up smoking will lead to improvements in public health.

For more information please contact Sue Kearney, Manager Health Promotion, by [sue.kearney@dhsv.org.au](mailto:sue.kearney@dhsv.org.au) or 03 9341 1390.

Sincerely

Dr Deborah Cole  
Chief Executive Officer

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