

TASKFORCESUBMISSION: submission

NAME: David Currow

POSITION: CEO

ORGANISATION: Cancer Australia

SUBMISSION1: Smoking is a major, preventable cause of lung cancer and is associated with bladder, kidney, larynx, mouth, pancreatic and stomach cancers. The greatest single contributor to the burden of cancer in Australia is tobacco smoking; one fifth of the total cancer burden. In 2005, the most common cancer death in Australia was due to lung cancer, accounting for 19.1% of all cancer deaths. Lung cancer has a 5 year survival rate of only 12%. The incidence and mortality rates increase with age after the age of 40 years. In 2005, over 11% of cases and nearly 21% of cancer deaths were attributed to smoking. For Indigenous Australians, smoking is responsible for one-fifth of deaths, and this will not peak for the next 20-30 years.

Cancer Australia and its Advisory Council recognise the extensive international evidence that demonstrates price increases have a major impact on tobacco consumption and that public health objectives are increasingly integral to decisions on tobacco taxation.

We therefore strongly support the policy actions proposed by the National Preventative Health Taskforce (the Taskforce) to tackle tobacco use and market failures in tobacco control. We specifically support taxation changes to cover: (1) all tobacco products that harm health (i.e. not solely cigarettes); (2) abolishing duty free sales of tobacco products, and banning sales of tobacco products to retail consumers through the Internet.

Comprehensive policy action must also recognise that the consequences of tobacco use can take decades to become evident in individuals and the health system; even as tobacco consumption may be dropping.

Effective action on reducing tobacco consumption involves taking action aimed at the needs of individuals, health professionals and the health system. In addition to increasing tobacco taxation, we support policy measures that include:

- (1) funding of practical, evidence based measures designed to provide well-targeted and sustained support through the health system; particularly through primary care; for: groups needing support over many years to prevent reuptake; cessation interventions; and treatment of tobacco dependence;
- (2) prompt action on reducing tobacco use by Indigenous Australians, including dealing with illicit trading, recognising this is as vital an issue as tackling alcohol abuse; and

(3) research, reliable data gathering and evaluation to demonstrate the continuing impact of pricing action on consumption and to sustain the most productive forms of support, interventions and clinical practice.

The Australian Government's Review of Australia's Future Taxation system provides the policy vehicle for taking forward action on tobacco taxation, including modelling options on structure and rate (to sustain a high price regime, take account of international best practice and provide a transparent process for annual increases); assessing the impact of abolishing duty free concessions; and strategies for control of illicit tobacco trading.

PRIVACY: yes

SUBMIT: Submit