

TASKFORCESUBMISSION: submission

NAME: Sheryl Mulconray

POSITION: Peer Worker

ORGANISATION: Tobacco and Mental Illness Project

SUBMISSION1: I work within the field of Mental Health as a peer worker, with the Tobacco & Mental Illness Project in South Australia. The nature of my work is that I have a mental illness & have also quit tobacco & I share my knowledge & experience with others who are also trying to quit.

1. As a person living well with mental illness & having quit smoking, I feel that the impact of well thought out support services which encourage smoking cessation for people with a mental illness cannot be overestimated.
2. As a smoking cessation/reduction peer worker I have witnessed time & again the valiant efforts of people with mental illness to fight the indoctrination of the cigarette companies & battle peer pressure in order to give up a habit which dominates their lives in a wholly negative manner.
3. People with a mental illness have complex needs & require specific services which reach out to them, discuss the issues in a straightforward manner & provide a high level of support.
4. The Poverty experienced by most people with a mental illness means that the practice of raising cigarette prices to reduce consumption results, simply for us, in increased financial distress & unhealthy habits such as "picking up butts"
5. I feel that a substantial part of the revenue raised by the Government through cigarette sales should be used to fund programs for the disadvantaged people & in particular those with high & complex needs; those with mental illness. Part of this could involve arranging the availability of NRT on the PBS for the people with a mental illness (it should be noted that products like Zyban & Champix are available on the PBS but in fact are contraindicated for most people with a mental illness).
6. Telephone support/call back services are important however they need to encompass all special needs groups, especially the mentally ill who after all consume between 1/3 & near to half of all the cigarettes smoked in Australia.
7. I encourage you to continue doing your best to make inroads into this complex problem however I beseech you, to allocate funds to programs which tackle, at grass roots level, the problem of smoking & the mentally ill.

Sheryl Mulconroy
Peer Worker
"Be Smoke Free" Program
Tobacco & Mental Illness Project
In South Australia
Peer Mentor-Baptist Care South Australia

PRIVACY: yes

SUBMIT: Submit