



Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Health and Ageing  
House of Representatives  
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Dear Committee Secretary

The RACGP WA Faculty Board commends both the Government and Opposition for supporting the introduction of plain packaging of tobacco products sold in Australia.

We call on the House of Representatives to convert this bipartisan support into action and pass the Tobacco Plain Packaging Bill 2011 and the Trade Marks Amendment (Tobacco Plain Packaging) Bill 2011 in the next session of Parliament.

There is compelling evidence that the proposed legislation would reduce the appeal of cigarettes to teenagers and adults; make health warning messages on packs more prominent and stop smokers incorrectly believing that some brands of cigarettes are less harmful than others. (The review of evidence, prepared by Quit Victoria and dating back more than 20 years, is available here: <http://bit.ly/jmWu36>.)

It is also instructive that the most vocal opponents of the bills are commercial entities that profit from the sale of tobacco products, particularly the multinational tobacco companies, and have a vested interest in young people continuing to become long-term users of harmful, addictive tobacco products.

The arguments against plain packaging are spurious and are effectively debunked by the joint, evidence-based submission developed by Cancer Council, the National Heart Foundation of Australia and Quit Victoria, which we formally endorse.

A large body of research now shows that branded tobacco packaging is a powerful form of advertising, particularly for targeting young people. Evidence also shows that comprehensively restricting the advertising of tobacco products reduces consumption and, with it, premature death and disease caused by smoking. (Tobacco smoking is still the largest preventable cause of death in Australia, by a significant margin.<sup>1</sup>)


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<sup>1</sup> Begg S, Vos T, Barker B, Stevenson C, Stanley L, Lopez AD. The burden of disease and injury in Australia 2003. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007 PHE 82

Therefore, plain packaging has enormous potential to contribute to efforts to reduce the tobacco disease burden in Australia.

Given the evidence, and the fact both Government and Opposition have announced their support for plain packaging, the two bills should be passed expeditiously. There is no valid reason for delay.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Associate Professor Frank Jones  
WA Faculty Chair