

Secretary
Standing Committee on Health and Ageing
House of Representatives
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Submission No. 45 (Plain Packaging Bill) A.O.C. Date: 26/07/2011

21-7-2011

Dear Secretary

On behalf of the Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer Control (CBRCC) and the WA Centre for Health Promotion Research (WACHPR) we commend the main political parties for supporting the introduction of plain packaging of tobacco products. This indicates that the Government and the Opposition politicians do have a genuine concern about the health and welfare of Australians. Importantly, it is reassuring to see political support for a measure that also has overwhelming public support.

It is now timely for the House of Representatives to convert this broad political support into action and pass the Tobacco Plain Packaging Bill 2011 and the Trade Marks Amendment Bill 2011 in Parliament.

We are aware that there is substantial evidence that the proposed legislation would reduce the appeal of cigarettes especially to young people; make health warning messages on packs more prominent and prevent smokers incorrectly perceiving that some cigarettes are less harmful than others.

We are very concerned that the most aggressive opponents of the bills are groups that profit from the sale of tobacco, particularly multinational tobacco companies, and whose objective is to persuade young people continuing to become long-term users of tobacco which ultimately can have devastating effects on their health.

Arguments that have been presented against plain packaging are without foundation and have been shown to be contrived.

Substantial research has accumulated over many years that shows that branded tobacco packaging is a powerful form of advertising, especially aimed at youth and young adults. There is also evidence that also shows comprehensive restrictions of the tobacco advertising contributes to a significant reduction in consumption. As a consequence premature death and disease caused by tobacco use is mitigated.

It is therefore without question that plain packaging has enormous potential to contribute to a reduction in tobacco related health problems.

Accordingly, based on the evidence, and that both Government and Opposition support plain packaging, the two bills should be passed without delay.

Sincerely

Professor Peter Howat, Director, Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer Control, Curtin University

Dr Jonine Jancey, Director, WA Centre for Health Promotion Research, Curtin University