



THE HON CHRISTOPHER PYNE MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing

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Smoking campaign confronts the truth

A new and deliberately shocking national anti-smoking campaign will help make Australians understand the real dangers of smoking, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, Christopher Pyne, said today.

The campaign focuses on the risk that smoking will lead to peripheral vascular disease which can lead to limb gangrene and, in turn, amputation. It is a collaboration of Quit SA, NT Health, Queensland Health, the Cancer Institute NSW, the National Heart Foundation of Australia, The Cancer Council Victoria, Quit Tasmania and Quit Victoria.

Mr Pyne said it would reinforce the Government's message that "every cigarette is doing you damage".

"I don't doubt that most Australians will react strongly to these advertisements," Mr Pyne said. "But, while they are confronting, they do not overstate the real dangers of smoking.

"Most people know that smoking can cause lung cancer and heart disease, but it can also affect many other organs and areas of the body.

"This message is also carried by the new graphic warnings on tobacco product packaging as a result of the Australian Government's recent legislation.

"I hope this new campaign will motivate smokers to quit, help former smokers to 'stay quit', and also discourage young Australians from taking up smoking."

Mr Pyne said the Australian public underestimated the negative health consequences of smoking. For example, around 2,000 Australians die from mouth and throat cancers each year. Of about 4000 people diagnosed with these cancers each year, 80 per cent are smokers.

"Fifty percent of long-term smokers will die from smoking-related causes. Tobacco smoking is the single largest preventable cause of death and disability in Australia," Mr Pyne said.

Mr Pyne said it was particularly important to reduce the number of young people taking up smoking and to help young smokers to quit. For this reason, the Australian Government last year allocated \$25 million over four years to a new phase of the National Tobacco Campaign focusing on young people.

Education campaigns such as the long-running National Tobacco Campaign “Every cigarette is doing you damage” have already reduced smoking rates in Australia to among the lowest levels in the world.

“Initiatives such as the campaign launched today, the Australian Government youth campaign, and the new system of graphic health warnings on tobacco products, will hopefully provide impetus for a further decline in adult and youth smoking rates,” Mr Pyne said.

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