



THE HON CHRISTOPHER PYNE MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing

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Graphic images show effects of cigarettes

Graphic images that aim to shock Australian smokers by revealing the physical effects cigarettes have on the body are the focus of a new anti-smoking campaign officially launched today at Parliament House, Canberra.

Speaking at the Tobacco Health Warnings Campaign launch, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, Christopher Pyne, said Australians were well aware that smoking was harmful to their health.

“Warnings on tobacco product packaging have been telling us this for more than 30 years,” Mr Pyne said.

“Sadly, very few Australians realise the full extent of the illness and disease which smoking causes.

“Smoking is linked to heart disease, stroke and lung cancer. It is also associated with impotence, cervical and colorectal cancer, bladder cancer, hearing loss, premature wrinkling of skin, osteoporosis, and peripheral vascular disease.”

Recognising the seriousness of the health effects from tobacco use, coupled with an apparent complacency in smokers with the existing text warnings, the Australian Government commenced in 2000 a review of the health warnings messages.

The review resulted in a series of new graphic health warnings that provided a strong and confronting message about the harmful health consequences of tobacco use.

“The new warnings will take full effect on 1 March 2006 and will cover 30 per cent of the front and 90 per cent of the back of cigarette packs,” Mr Pyne said.

Fourteen stark images focus on the major smoking-related health topics including lung cancer, emphysema, peripheral vascular disease, heart disease, macular degeneration, environmental tobacco smoke, foetal exposure to the toxins in tobacco smoke, smoking as a leading cause of death, and the benefits of quitting.

The new campaign will play a vital role in preventing the uptake of smoking among Australian youth. It also builds on the success of the National Tobacco Campaign ‘every cigarette is doing you damage’ to extend and reinforce messages on the negative health effects of smoking for current smokers, ex-smokers vulnerable to relapse and potential future smokers.

“The new image warnings will be rotated to keep their message fresh. Cigarette packaging will also carry an information panel, as well as the phone number and web site address for the Quitline,” Mr Pyne said.

The most recent national figures on smoking prevalence show that the daily smoking rates for smokers aged over 14 years has dropped from 19.5 per cent in 2001 to 17.4 per cent in 2004. This is among the lowest of any country in the world.

“While this change is encouraging, it could be a lot better,” Mr Pyne said.

For more information, graphics and photos from the launch please visit www.quitnow.info.au and select Health Warnings.

Radio Producers please note that audio grabs of Mr Pyne speaking on the Tobacco Health Warnings Campaign are available on T: 02 6289 3010

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