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Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTRALIA SUPPORTS GLOBAL ACTION ON TOBACCO

The Australian Government will provide an additional \$700,000 to the World Health Organization (WHO) to increase the global fight against tobacco smoking.

Minister for Health and Ageing Nicola Roxon today announced the contribution to the WHO's secretariat for the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in New York, while addressing a forum at the United Nations' High Level Meeting on non-communicable diseases.

"Tobacco is one of the deadliest products in the world and it is in the interest of all nations to act to minimise the harm from tobacco on their population.

"The World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control provides a comprehensive roadmap for implementation of effective tobacco control policies which more than 170 countries have ratified the FCTC.

"Australia is the only country to have so far moved to introduce plain packaging of tobacco products, which FCTC guidelines advise parties to consider, and this funding is designed to help developing countries with their efforts to fight tobacco.

The additional \$700,000 for the FCTC secretariat is more than three times Australia's assessed share in its biennial budget and will provide:

- \$400,000 to fully fund an intergovernmental working group on Article 6 of the Convention, covering tax and pricing measures to reduce demand for tobacco
- \$200,000 for work to adapt existing graphic health warnings and social marketing materials for use by low resource countries
- \$50,000 to develop an international database of best practices to support the FCTC guidelines

- \$50,000 to improve periodic reporting on FCTC implementation, which is crucial to maintaining the momentum in tobacco control and reducing smoking rates.

Ms Roxon said that Australia had also recently made a contribution to assist FCTC implementation in Pacific Island countries.

Through its international development assistance agency AusAID, Australia has committed \$25 million over the next four years to help Pacific nations tackle non-communicable diseases through healthy lifestyle campaigns, diabetes clinics, and new tobacco and alcohol legislation.

“Tobacco companies are fighting for their profits; but we are fighting for people’s lives,” Ms Roxon said.

“Australia looks forward to continuing to work with partner countries, particularly those from the Asia-Pacific region, in the global effort to reduce non-communicable diseases NCDs and their risk factors, including smoking. Because the fight against Big Tobacco is one which together, we can win,” said Ms Roxon.

For more information, contact Ms Roxon’s Office: (02) 6277 7220