To whom it may concern

**Submission to the National Drug Strategy Consultation – Tobacco**

We thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the review of the National Drug Strategy. This submission is made on behalf of the Cancer Council Australia’s Tobacco Issues Committee comprised of representatives from Cancer Council Australia, the Heart Foundation, Action on Smoking and Health Australia and the Australian Council on Smoking and Health. While we support the submission made by the Alcohol Policy Coalition in relation to alcohol, this submission relates only to tobacco.

As stated in the Australia’s National Drug Strategy Beyond 2009 Consultation Paper, alcohol and tobacco remain the most commonly used drugs in Australia. Despite this, we submit that it is no longer appropriate to include tobacco in the National Drug Strategy. The reason for this is that it is now comprehensively covered by the National Preventative Health Taskforce Report which was released in 2009 as well as the National Partnership Agreement on Preventative Health (“NPAPH”) which was negotiated through COAG.

In our view, the steps requiring the most immediate attention to meet the targets set by the NPAPH and affirmed by the Taskforce (namely, to reduce smoking rates to less than 10 percent by 2020) are:

- an increase in taxation of tobacco products;
- an adequate and sustained national social marketing television campaign;
- the introduction of plain packaging of tobacco products;
- a ban on tobacco displays at retail outlets across all States and Territories;
- an increase in the size of graphic health warnings;
- increased Quitline capacity on a national basis; and
- subsidisation of NRT for financially disadvantaged smokers.

As the National Drug Strategy has a strong law enforcement focus, we believe that the future approach for dealing with tobacco differs from what is required to manage other illicit and licit drug use. Therefore, it is our submission that tobacco control should be managed, at a national level, through the National Preventative Health Agency which is to be established in 2010 and in accordance with the NPAPH. The agency is best positioned to adequately implement the above policies and laws so as to effectively reduce tobacco use and related disease in Australia. It would appear that continuing to include tobacco in the National Drug Strategy would result in unnecessary and inefficient duplication.
We thank you for considering this submission. Please do not hesitate to contact Kylie Lindorff, Chairperson of the Cancer Council Australia’s Tobacco Issues Committee, on (03) 9635 5518 if you have any queries or we can provide you with further information.

Yours sincerely,

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