



National Campaign Headquarters

16 August 2010

Anne Jones
Chief Executive
Action on Smoking and Health
PO Box 572
KINGS CROSS NSW 1340



Dear Ms Rooney

Thank you for your letter.

The Gillard Labor Government is committed to tackling tobacco use and the health-related harms it causes.

Smoking, along with obesity and alcohol misuse, are risk factors for a number of major chronic diseases, including diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease. Rising rates of these diseases will put Australians' health at risk, increase pressure on the health system, and impose costs on the wider economy.

Despite the spiralling rates of preventable chronic disease, the former Coalition Government failed to plan for the future by investing in prevention or prioritising preventative health programs. For example, the former Coalition Government created a loophole in taxing 'alcopops', and directed a small fraction of total health expenditure to preventive health.

Federal Labor has acted to increase the health system's focus on prevention, through major initiatives that tackle smoking, alcohol misuse and obesity.

The Gillard Labor Government is introducing the world's toughest measures against tobacco, the single largest cause of premature death and disease:

- The Government increased excise on tobacco products by 25 per cent, which is expected to result in 87,000 Australians quitting smoking. All proceeds from tobacco excise – some \$7.5 billion a year – will be directly invested into better health and hospitals.
- All tobacco products will be required to be sold in plain packaging by 1 July 2012 – a world first that removes one of the last avenues for cigarette advertising. In addition, tobacco advertising on the internet will be restricted in line with general bans on tobacco advertising.
- Federal Labor has increased the investment in hard-hitting anti-tobacco campaigns to \$85 million over the next four years.

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The Tobacco lobby is now mounting a desperate advertising campaign to try and stop these reforms. They know the best way of ensuring their ability to sell the most cigarettes is by having a Tony Abbott Liberal government.

This goes right to the very core of Mr Abbott's judgement and questions whether he is fit to be Prime Minister. The Australian people deserve to know that Mr Abbott is happy for Big Tobacco to try and buy him this election.

Mr Abbott must come clean on what commitments he has made to his mates in Big Tobacco to convince them to make this unprecedented intervention in the campaign.

He must come clean on whether he will withdraw his support for Plain Packaging laws despite publicly backing them only months ago.

Mr Abbott should also call the tobacco companies and Liberal Party identities behind this campaign and tell them that the TV ads should not go to air. If he doesn't do these things he'll demonstrate he's nothing more than the mouthpiece of Big Tobacco and that you can't trust him to put preventative health above grubby politics.

Kind regards,
ALP Information Services