



APACT2010

Asia Pacific Conference  
on Tobacco or Health

Sydney, Australia

6-9 October 2010

*FCTC in the Asia Pacific: Change, Challenge & Progress*

## Media Release

Thursday, 7 October 2010



Cancer  
Council  
Australia

# Plain tobacco packs influence teens: study

Plain packaging of tobacco may discourage teenagers from smoking, says new research presented at an international conference in Sydney today.

Preliminary findings from focus group interviews with 14-15 year-olds in Auckland, New Zealand, show that plain packs:

- increase attention to the graphic warnings;
- increase overall perceptions of smoking harm; and
- reduce the social appeal of smoking.

The finding contradicts tobacco industry claims that plain packaging “won’t work”, adding weight to the Australian Government’s commitment to mandate plain packaging of tobacco products by July 2012.

Said University of Auckland lead author Lisa Webb: “Our study found that plain cigarette packaging not only enhanced the salience and impact of graphic warning labels, but also added to the overall message that cigarette smoking is harmful.

“This suggests that the combination of graphic warning labels and plain cigarette packaging would send a clear and consistent message about the harm and unacceptability of cigarette smoking and therefore, has the potential to further reduce smoking uptake among adolescents.”

The Australian Government has recommitted to the 2012 deadline for plain packaging, in the face of a AUD\$9m tobacco industry mass media campaign described as “misleading and deceptive” by health advocates.

Says Professor Ian Olver, CEO of the Cancer Council Australia: “This study confirms that plain packaging is an important initiative in deterring smoking among adolescents.

“We urge all Australian political parties, and all governments in the region, to stand up to the industry’s misleading claims and make plain packaging mandatory by law as soon as possible.”

**Media contacts:** Kate Dorrell, Cancer Council Australia on +61 (0) 404 691 838  
Stafford Sanders, ASH Australia on +61 (0) 412 070 194