

## Media Release

22 December 2014

### **VICHEALTH PAYS TRIBUTE TO ANTI-SMOKING PIONEER DR NIGEL GRAY**

VicHealth has today paid tribute to Dr Nigel Gray AO whose relentless campaigning against tobacco advertising led to the creation of VicHealth in 1987.

Dr Gray passed away over the weekend at the age of 85.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said Dr Gray's persistence and dedication to reducing smoking in Victoria had helped save thousands of lives over the last 50 years.

"His commitment to increase taxes on cigarettes to keep them out of reach of young people and to ban tobacco advertising and sponsorship was unmatched.

"He worked relentlessly, quickly and with all sides of politics to achieve his goal. He stuck to the science and never let emotion overcome reason.

"His determination led to the creation of VicHealth in 1987. This was no mean feat; it was a major battle in the face of adversity and the opposition from tobacco companies was fierce.

"However, Dr Gray persevered and today, nearly 30 years later, preventing tobacco use remains a key focus of VicHealth."

Ms Rechter said Dr Gray's legacy extends far beyond Australia.

"VicHealth was the first organisation of its kind in the world and the model has been implemented in many other parts of the world from Korea to Portugal.

"On behalf of the staff and board of VicHealth, I'd like to extend my deepest sympathies to Dr Gray's wife Ann and his family."

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