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More dirty tricks from tobacco industry terrified about plain packaging

Quit has slammed an anti plain packaging campaign fronted by the Alliance of Australian Retailers, saying it's nothing but a tobacco-funded scare campaign.

The advertising blitz, to be launched in the coming days, claims plain packaging will not bring down smoking rates and only cost jobs.

In response Quit says:

The tobacco industry cannot be trusted.

FACT: This campaign is brought to you by the same organisations that denied for so long that smoking causes lung cancer.

Quit Executive Director Fiona Sharkie said; "Make no mistake, this campaign is purely about an industry terrified of declining profits and one that will do anything to save its bottom line. We should be asking what this newly formed 'alliance' is getting from the tobacco industry to come out against plain packaging."

Smoking rates have been declining since the 1980's

FACT: 30 years ago one in three adults smoked, today it's less than one in five. Youth smoking rates have never been lower.

Quit Executive Director Fiona Sharkie; "Let's get real here – plain packaging isn't going to take us from a 20% smoking prevalence rate to zero in the blink of an eye. Retailers will have time to adjust to the gradual change in demand, just like health professionals and all Australians and their families will adjust to seeing fewer smoking caused deaths. Instead of doing favours for the tobacco industry, retail associations should be helping their members diversify their business to cope with this inevitable change."

Smoking kills one in every two smokers.

FACT: Smoking kills one out of every two long-term users, which amounts to 15,000 Australians every year.

Quit Executive Director Fiona Sharkie; "Every Australian would agree we should do everything we can to prevent further deaths from tobacco in this generation and the next. This includes removing any glamour associations from tobacco. Research shows that cigarettes in plain packages **look** less appealing to teenagers who also believe the products would not **taste** as good."

Australia's world first plain packaging of cigarettes will likely set off a global domino effect.

FACT: The world is watching how Australia implements legislation around plain packaging and the tobacco industry knows this.

Quit Executive Director Fiona Sharkie; "This campaign is all about the tobacco companies running scared about the long term implications plain packaging will have for their global profits, and trying to scare other countries into not taking this important life saving policy reform."

To organise an interview with Fiona Sharkie, please contact Jessica Longbottom on 0438 714 264