

Media Release

## Cancer Council calls for urgent investment in a National Tobacco Campaign, as May 31 marks World No Tobacco Day

This World No Tobacco Day, Cancer Council is calling on the Federal Government to revive Australia's National Tobacco Campaign, to help Australian smokers to quit, and to prevent young people from taking up smoking.

Australia has seen a steady decline in smoking rates over the last three decades<sup>1</sup>. Despite this, tobacco use is still the leading preventable cause of cancer nationally, with one in five cancers attributable to tobacco use<sup>2</sup>. In light of this, Cancer Council is calling for urgent action to implement an integrated multi-channel, public education campaign to support those trying to quit, to do so.

This comes as Cancer Council Australia CEO, Professor Tanya Buchanan, noted that most Australian smokers want to quit.

"Around two-thirds of Australian smokers undertook at least one activity to help them quit in 2019<sup>3</sup>, but we know it can be an incredibly challenging task. Implementing an integrated multi-channel, public education campaign would not only motivate and support current smokers to quit, it would also play an important role in de-normalising tobacco use and discouraging uptake among young people.

"Campaigns have been incredibly successful in the past, with research showing that around 55,000 deaths were prevented as a result of the last National Tobacco Campaign, nearly a quarter of a century ago. Unfortunately, Australia is no longer a world leader in tobacco control and it has been more than a decade since our last national tobacco campaign. Now is the time to revive this campaign and help save more Australian lives," Professor Buchanan added.

With this year's World No Tobacco Day theme – "Tobacco: a threat to our environment" – Cancer Council is advocating that the most effective way to minimise environmental damage caused by tobacco and smoking, is to accelerate a reduction in smoking rates.

Libby Jardine, Chair of Cancer Council's Tobacco Issues Committee, noted that while it's important to consider the environmental impact of cigarettes, reducing smoking rates will prevent both the human health and environmental harms caused by tobacco.

"Not only is a major reduction in smoking prevalence the most effective way to reduce tobacco-related environmental damage, it's the only way to reduce the health harms of smoking, which are on track to cause one billion deaths worldwide this century<sup>4</sup>," said Ms Jardine.

To support the call for investment in a National Tobacco Campaign, Cancer Council has launched a [new video](#) highlighting the importance of Government action now. As Australia's leading cancer charity, Cancer Council is also asking Australians to show their support for a National Tobacco Campaign by taking the Cancer Free Pledge. To take the pledge or find out more visit [www.cancer.org.au/take-the-pledge](http://www.cancer.org.au/take-the-pledge).

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For media enquiries please contact:



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See Cancer Council's [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

**To access Cancer Council's new video, please see below.**

- [Revive Australia's National Tobacco Campaign](#)

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<sup>1</sup>Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2020). *Australia's Health 2020*.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2019). *Australian Burden of Disease Study: impact and causes of illness and death in Australia 2015*. Canberra

<sup>3</sup>Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2019). *National Drug Strategy Household Survey*.

<sup>4</sup>World Health Organization. (2008). *WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2008*.