

Friday 11 November, 2011

Plain tobacco legislation will brand Australia: 'gutsy' in tobacco reform

A new era in the fight against the tobacco industry is about to begin following the passing of the amendments to the Tobacco Plain Packaging Bill, 2011 in the Senate, said Australian General Practice Network [AGPN] Chair, Dr Emil Djakic.

"The Gillard Government has successfully marketed itself as a gutsy Government determined to deliver world leading legislation that takes away one of the tobacco industry's most powerful marketing strategies to target smokers and children," Dr Djakic said.

"This is one of the country's most progressive pieces of public health legislation which will stunt significantly the marketing and branding of cigarettes to adults and minors," he said.

"The tobacco industry has never shied away from being aggressive in its advertising and marketing campaigns.

"Fortunately, we have a Government that has not shied away from its pursuit of public health and duty of care and has succeeded in achieving what most countries cannot fathom, taking away the marketing and branding opportunities of the tobacco companies.

"We are moving into a new era in which the glamour associated with smoking will be gone from cigarette packs by December next year and over time and with future generations public perceptions and attitudes towards cigarettes will shift significantly," he said.

"Smoking related illness is one of the country's leading causes of death and disease and it starts with the branding and marketing of cigarettes to minors.

"Future generations will only ever associate cigarettes with death, disease and *plain ugliness* as opposed to the decades of glamorous cigarette packs which have enticed young people to be associated with a brand of cigarette," Dr Djakic said.

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