



New cigarette packs put end to glamour associations with smoking

Quit has welcomed news that the Federal Government will release draft plain packaging legislation today putting Australia just months away from passing the landmark health bill.

Quit Executive Director Fiona Sharkie said the proposed dull, plain packaging with enlarged graphic health warnings will stop the tobacco industry from using packs as mobile mini-billboards that spruik their deadly product. "As other forms of tobacco advertising have been banned, cigarette packaging has become the key avenue the industry has to recruit new smokers. We should all be proud that the Government is putting an end to this form of promotion." "Cigarettes kill half of all long-term smokers. They're not normal consumer products, so we shouldn't allow them to be packaged as such," Ms Sharkie said. Ms Sharkie said the significance of plain packaging, as a tobacco control reform, couldn't be underestimated. "The introduction of plain packaging should be a key priority of any Government seeking to reduce the devastating toll of tobacco. There is nothing attractive about smoking-caused disease and the packs should reflect this," Ms Sharkie said it was imperative that all members of parliament supported the legislation. "We've already seen desperate attempts by the tobacco industry to stop this potentially life-saving policy from getting through parliament in the next few months." "Despite what they may say, this is not about tobacco companies caring about shopkeeper's livelihoods or about smokers civil liberties. This is all about big tobacco protecting big profits."

Centrelink offers more Child Care Rebate options

From 4 July, around 700 000 Australian families will have more Child Care Rebate payment options, giving eligible parents and guardians greater flexibility in the way they manage their child care costs.

Human Services Portfolio General Manager, Hank Jongen, said that the Child Care Rebate helps eligible parents and guardians with up to 50 per cent of their out-of-pocket expenses for approved child care.

"Currently families can choose to have their Rebate paid in a lump sum once a year or once a quarter. Now families have the additional options of having their Child Care Rebate paid fortnightly and in many cases weekly," said Mr Jongen.

"Customers can also choose to have their Rebate paid either directly to their child care service provider or into their nominated account.

Having the Rebate paid directly to their provider will reduce the amount of child care fees they need to pay upfront.

"Affected families will receive a letter soon informing them of their new Child



Care Rebate options and asking them to advise Centrelink how they want to receive their Rebate before 17 June 2011.

"Customers can visit www.centrelink.gov.au or call 13 6150 and use the phone self service to register their preferred Child Care Rebate payment option before 17 June 2011. The option they choose will apply for the 2011-2012 financial year.

"Customers who do not contact Centrelink will retain their current Child Care Rebate payment choice (either annually or quarterly).

"Families currently receiving their Child Care Rebate quarterly can expect their third quarter payments between 20 April and 3 May. If they haven't received their Rebate by mid-May, they can call 13 6150."

World Red Cross Day 2011

Dear Editor,

As we prepare to celebrate both World Red Cross Day and International Volunteers Week in May I would like to thank our many Red Cross volunteers for the amazing work that they do.

A recent global survey has found that Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers contributed 6 billion dollars worth of services worldwide in 2010, or around 90 cents for every person on earth.

The work of Red Cross volunteers in Australia is valued at more than \$82 million a year.

According to the survey, donor dollars go much further with volunteers extending the work of Red Cross staff by a ratio of 1 to 20, meaning that for every paid staff member there are 20 volunteers.

Our community-based volunteer network and workforce reaches around 30 million people each year during disasters alone and even more through community development initiatives that reach vulnerable people each day. During the recent floods, cyclones and fires in Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia Red Cross volunteers assisted more than 27,000 people in evacuation and relief centres.

Our volunteers also supported many others in recovery centres and by going door-to-door to visit people in their homes.

As we celebrate volunteers and volunteering worldwide, we urge all governments to



formally recognise the economic value of volunteers by incorporating their contribution into key economic and social indicators used in decision-making and planning at the highest levels.

Red Cross volunteers and staff are always among the first on the ground to assist individuals, households and communities affected by disasters and emergencies.

We are among the world's leading humanitarian providers of water, emergency accommodation and sanitation services, we play a major role in assisting refugees and asylum seekers, we prepare breakfasts for school kids who might otherwise go to school hungry, and each day we ring thousands of older or isolated people to check they are safe and well.

If you or your readers would like to learn about the work of our Red Cross volunteers or would like to make a donation to support the work of Red Cross go to:

www.redcross.org.au
or phone 1800 811 700.

Kind regards
Robert Tickner
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Red Cross

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