

# Media Release



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## Heart Foundation welcomes reported plans to end duty-free cigarette sales

The National Heart Foundation of Australia is welcoming reports that both the Federal Government and the Opposition are considering ending the sale of duty-free cigarettes.

“Stopping duty-free cigarette sales would help to cut the huge death toll caused by smoking in Australia every year and put an end to what is in effect a government subsidy for the tobacco industry,” said Dr Robert Grenfell, Clinical Issues Director at the Heart Foundation.

“If you smoke, you are at least twice as likely to have a heart attack and three times as likely to have a stroke so the Heart Foundation welcomes any measure that stops people taking up the habit in the first place or helps smokers quit.

“There is no rational reason to continue the sale of duty-free cigarettes – not only does it cost the Government around \$200 million a year in lost revenue, it also undermines their other tobacco control efforts,” he said.

An estimated 320 million duty free cigarettes are sold in Australia every year. In addition to the Heart Foundation, the Henry Tax Review and the National Preventative Health Taskforce have also recommended ending the sale of duty-free cigarettes and other tobacco products.

“The additional revenue could be spent on improving support for smokers trying to quit including better access to counselling and nicotine replacement therapies,” Dr Grenfell added.

Smoking is the largest single preventable cause of death in Australia and is responsible for more than 15,000 deaths every year. Nearly one in five adults are still daily smokers and smoking costs the Australian community over \$30 billion a year.

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