**BRIEFING 2:**

# STANDARDISED PACKAGING WORKS

- Standardised packaging will **STOP** young people from taking up smoking
- Standardised packaging will see current smokers think more about **QUITTING** and have negative thoughts about smoking
- Studies from Australia, which introduced standardised packaging in December 2012, show standardised packaging **WORKS**
- The tobacco industry sees packaging as their last great marketing tool
- The legal challenges in Australia show that the tobacco companies know the **POWER** of standardised packaging
- Research by the Irish Cancer Society and Irish Heart Foundation shows teenagers have perceptions of tobacco products based on the **GLAMOUR** and design of the pack
- The research also shows that standardised packaging is immediately **REJECTED**

## What standardised packaging WILL do

- ➢ Standardised packaging will <u>reduce the appeal</u> of tobacco products to young people.[1]
  - ○ In Ireland, tobacco companies need 50 people a day to take up smoking in order to replace those quitting or dying.

- ➢ Standardised Packaging will stop smokers believing that some cigarettes are <u>less harmful</u> than others.[2]
  - ○ Light colours and pack design is used to give a false impression that some cigarette brands are 'healthier' than others.

- ➢ Standardised Packaging will make <u>health warnings more effective</u>.
  - ○ Research has shown that more smokers will seek to quit with standardised packs.[3]

1 Moodie C, Ford A, Mackintosh AM, Hastings G (2012). Young people's perceptions of cigarette packaging and plain packaging: an online survey. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, 14(1): 98-105. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntr136

2 Wakefield, M (2013); Introduction effects of the Australian plain packaging policy on adult smokers: a cross-sectional study; BMJ Open 2013; 3e003175 doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2013-003175

3 Munafò M, Roberts N, Bauld L, Ute L (2011). Plain packaging increases visual attention to health warnings on cigarette packs in non-smokers and weekly smokers but not daily smokers. *Addiction*, 106(8): 1505-1510. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2011.03430.x http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21401767

➢ Standardised Packaging will <u>increase negative feelings</u> about smoking.[4]
  o It has been shown that standardised packs were perceived to be poorer quality, poorer tasting and cheaper than branded packs.

## Positive signs in Australia

➢ Australia was the first country to introduce standardised packaging in December 2012.
➢ While it will take some time for the long-term effects to be realised, already there are signs that standardised packs have had a positive effect.
➢ A recent study in the state of Victoria showed that those smoking from standardised packs:[5]
  o perceived their cigarettes to be lower in quality
  o perceived their cigarettes as less satisfying than the previous year
  o were more likely to have thought about quitting at least once a day
  o rated quitting as a higher priority
  o tended to support the policy on standardised packaging

➢ A study in the Medical Journal of Australia found a 78% increase in the number of calls to the Quitline following the introduction of standardised packs. [6]
➢ New research by the Cancer Council Victoria found that pack display on cafe tables declined by 15% after the introduction of plain packaging, which was mostly due to a 23% decline in the percentage of patrons who were observed smoking.[7]

## The last great marketing tool

➢ Standardised packaging will reduce the appeal of tobacco products to young people. Young people are a primary target for tobacco industry marketing.
➢ Currently, cigarette companies use design-heavy packaging. The colours, imagery and design are used to attract smokers and reduce the impact of on-pack health warnings.
➢ In 2010, trade magazine 'Tobacco Reporter' ran a series of articles on the importance of packaging to the industry's business: '*In many countries, the cigarette pack is now the only*

4 Hoek J, Gendall P, Gifford H, Pirikahu G, McCool J, Pene G, Edwards R, Thomson G (2011b). Tobacco branding, plain packaging, pictorial warnings, and symbolic consumption. *Qualitative Health Research*. Dec 27 [Epub ahead of print] http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1049732311431070

5 Wakefield, M (2013); Introduction effects of the Australian plain packaging policy on adult smokers: a cross-sectional study; BMJ Open 2013; 3e003175 doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2013-003175

6 Young, F *et al.* (2014) 'Association between tobacco plain packaging and Quitline calls: a population-based, interrupted time series analysis'. *Medical Journal of Australia,* 200, 29-32. https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2014/200/1/association-between-tobacco-plain-packaging-and-quitline-calls-population-based

7 Zacher, M. *et al.*(2014) 'Personal tobacco pack display before and after the introduction of plain packaging with larger pictorial health warnings in Australia: an observational study of outdoor cafe strips'. *Addiction.* DOI: 10.1111/add.12466 http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/add.12466/abstract

*remaining avenue of communication with smokers.  This development is challenging packaging suppliers to be creative.'* [8]

➢ The extensive legal challenges in Australia to standardised packaging shows how effective the tobacco industry expected standardised packaging to be at reducing the take-up of smoking among young people.

## Irish teenagers and standardised packaging

➢ The Irish Heart Foundation and the Irish Cancer Society commissioned research on the impact of tobacco branding and standardised packaging on young people in September 2013. [9]

➢ Focus groups were set up with teenagers aged fifteen and sixteen



**Teens reactions to current tobacco packaging:**

The key attributes that the teens looked for when assessing the appeal of cigarette packs included colour, box and cigarette shape, pack imagery and the brand name itself. The teenagers felt that the cigarette's positive brand attributes (such as glamour, fashion, or job status) are projected onto those who smoke them.

They said that appealing cigarette packaging encourages them to choose one brand over another while branding that they class as 'unattractive' is instantly rejected.

➢ Speaking about the super-slim cigarettes which come in lipstick-shaped boxes, one female participant said: *"They look really cool, I think they would look classy if you had them on the table".*

➢ Speaking of a popular brand of cigarette, one male participant said: *"The [brand name] box is slick. It's the colour and the box looks sharp".*

---

8 'Standing Out', Tobacco Reporter, January 2010,
9 'The Impact of tobacco branding and standardised packaging on young people' (2013), Ignite Research for the Irish Cancer Society and the Irish Heart Foundation

**Teen responses to the standardised packaging**

When shown the new standardised packaging being used in Australia, the teenagers rejected them. All said they would not smoke when the new packs are introduced because they are at odds with the image they want to portray.

➢ *"When they come out, I'll stop smoking, it's turning me off completely"* . (Female)
➢ *"Those pictures look awful, disgusting. You would be embarrassed to be seen with them in your hand"* . (Male)
➢ *"The other packs are a bit stylish, but they are just a horrible green, I'd feel embarrassed taking that pack out"* . (Female)
➢ *"That picture of the foot is sick, can you get that from smoking? I can't even look at it, if they put that on every box, I'd stop smoking"* . (Male)

➢ Initial responses did give way to a level of post rationalisation and potential barriers were identified, such as the use of alternative packaging, desensitisation to health messages and the relevance of those messages.
➢ However, brands are integral to teens' lives and their status and initial reactions to the standardised packaging suggest that removing this key branding element for teens will have a strong overall impact on their attitudes towards smoking and ultimately their smoking behaviour.

> *For more information, please contact:*
> *Eoin Bradley, (01) 2310 518, ebradley@irishcancer.ie*
> *Cliona Loughnane, (01) 6685 001, cmccormack@irishheart.ie*