

Media Release
ASH, Cancer Society and the Smokefree Coalition

17 November 2006

For immediate release

C'mon Baby, Light My Liar

- Seminar on Tobacco industry deception over light and mild descriptors, and the Commerce Commission investigation

ASH, the Cancer Society and the Smokefree Coalition are joining forces to increase the awareness of the dangers of light and mild cigarettes in New Zealand and to put an end to tobacco company deception.

"Tobacco companies have literally made billions of dollars by presenting 'light' or 'mild' cigarettes as a safer product or as an alternative to quitting, when they have known all along that these products carry the exact same level of risk for heart attacks, lung cancer and other tobacco-related diseases," says Smokefree Coalition director Mark Peck.

Two events have been organised to help bring the light and mild message to New Zealand's politicians and decision makers. Experts from Canada, Australia and New Zealand will speak at a breakfast session at Parliament on 22 November organised by the Cancer Society and at a one day seminar on 23 November in Wellington.

The two overseas guest speakers are Management and Marketing expert, Dr Tim Dewhirst from the University of Saskatchewan, Canada and Anne Jones, Chief Executive Officer, ASH Australia. They will be discussing the tobacco industry's deception over light and mild descriptors and the Commerce Commission investigation in New Zealand.

Sneha Paul ASH spokesperson says, "The meetings and seminars with international experts will be a key influencer in increasing the awareness of the dangers of light and mild descriptors in New Zealand. We hope they will encourage the Commerce Commission to take the tobacco companies to court over their wilful deception of the New Zealand public. 5000 New Zealanders die from smoking every year. Fifty percent of BATNZ customers will die as a direct result of smoking BATNZ products. These statistics alone are surely enough to merit immediate action to end tobacco industry deception."

"This stuff matters", says Cancer Society Chief Executive Dalton Kelly. "Many New Zealand smokers believe that 'light or mild' cigarettes are safer to smoke, or an alternative to quitting, and the tobacco companies deliberately market them that way. This sort of wilful deception must be exposed and punished in New

Zealand just as it has been in other countries such as America, Australia and in Europe.”

In July this year, with the support of a number of key health groups and academics, the Smokefree Coalition lodged a complaint with the Commerce Commission in New Zealand about tobacco companies misleading smokers by implying that there are health benefits from smoking ‘light’ or ‘mild’ cigarettes. The Commerce Commission has agreed to investigate.

Media are invited to attend both events.

-- Ends --

Details Below:

For more information or to schedule interviews with the international experts contact:

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or

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Breakfast and Seminar details:

Wednesday, 22 November 2006 – Mild Case of Tobacco Deception
Parliamentary Breakfast, West Foyer, Parliament Buildings, Wellington, at 7:15 am.

Thursday, 23 November 2006 – *C'mon Baby, Light my Liar* – Seminar on the tobacco industry deception over light and mild descriptors, and the Commerce Commission Investigation, Lambton Room 1, The Terrace Conference Centre, Levels 2-4, St John House, 114 The Terrace, Wellington.