

Brave Gillard a great example for New Zealand

Smokefree Coalition media release, 28 June 2011

Members of the Smokefree Coalition applaud Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard for refusing to back down against tobacco industry threats to sue over plain packaging legislation, saying her actions are a wonderful example for our own Government.

“Gillard has the moral high ground supporting health and wellbeing over exploitation and profit, and refusing to be bullied,” says the Coalition’s Executive Director, Dr Prudence Stone.

“She’s saying, ‘We don’t care who or how big you think you are; a business that causes death is not as big as a country that prevents it.’”

Dr Stone said it is only because the industry knows plain packaging legislation is a nail in its coffin that it is pulling out all the stops.

“We know plain packaging will hit the industry really hard which is why they are making such a big song and dance about it. They will use whatever tactics they can to fight this measure, including making threats at the highest level.

“Our Government has already committed to making Aotearoa New Zealand a smokefree nation by 2025, and plain packaging will be a logical and necessary part of getting us there. We expect our leaders will show the same guts and backbone when those threats start over here.”

Cancer Society Chief Executive Dalton Kelly agrees cigarette companies can see the writing on the wall.

“Smoking is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Australia is leading the world by introducing plain packaging and I hope New Zealand is not far behind. Our vision to rid New Zealand of tobacco products by 2025 will positively impact on the health of hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders, including children.”

Dr Stone said there was a raft of recent evidence showing tobacco companies use packaging as a way of advertising, and that many young people strongly identify with cigarette branding.

“This is one of the last ways big tobacco has to ‘hook them young, and hook them for life’. Taking that away from them is an extremely positive move for the health of future generations.”

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