

Action NOW: Putting the Policy Measures in Place

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Abstract

The comprehensive strategy of tomorrow will make the comprehensive strategies of today and yesterday look like a mere good start. Although traditional policy measures should be maintained and enhanced (substantial further tobacco tax increases, continuous improvement to package warnings, ensuring advertising is fully banned, etc.), far more needs to be done. This presentation will emphasize a series of policy measures not yet implemented, or only partially implemented, in New Zealand, Australia and other parts of Oceania.

Some such unimplemented measures are ones where Canada has already had experience: banning retail displays and signage; reducing the type and number of retail outlets; eliminating the tax loophole for roll-your-own tobacco; contraband prevention; package inserts; smoke-free hotels/apartments/condominiums; banning smoking in various outdoor areas; sustained, properly-funded mass media and other programming fully paid for by manufacturer licence fees; government health care cost recovery lawsuits; extensive manufacturer reporting requirements. Other measures, some of which have been implemented or considered in parts of the world, include: plain packaging; real bans on “light” and “mild” labelling; requiring messages on the filter of every cigarette; standardizing cigarette appearance; increased access to NRT; banning smoking in vehicles carrying children; movie classification ratings for smoking; prohibiting menthol and other flavoured cigarettes; minimum age of 21; consumer licence to purchase; duty-free sales ban; and price/profit controls on tobacco manufacturers.

The world is watching. Countries in Oceania have the opportunity to demonstrate world-precedent setting leadership, building on impressive successes of the past.