



Media Release
Tuesday 21 December, 2010

Health impacts of smoking for women shows a gender sensitive approach to prevention is needed

Women's Health Victoria today called for measures that specifically target women to prevent the rise of smoking, with their Gender Impact Assessment on Women and Tobacco published today.

Acting Executive Director of Women's Health Victoria, Ms Rosemary Sexton, said that Women's Health Victoria's Gender Impact Assessment on Women and Tobacco showed that strategies to address smoking must be gender sensitive and take into account the different triggers for women and men that cause smoking uptake, behaviour and cessation.

"The tobacco industry has long employed gender sensitive research to hone their marketing and advertising appeal. Unless the same approach is used to develop effective prevention initiatives, we will fail to engage many at-risk groups of women.

"Tobacco companies conduct profiling according to women's age and economic background", said Ms Sexton. "The industry utilises this knowledge to create targeted campaigns which have proven to be very successful."

"Tobacco marketing aimed at women advertises cigarettes as a symbol of independence, self reliance, stress management, popularity, and attractiveness. Plain packaging is one way of denying the tobacco industry this marketing tool.

"It's not just a matter of informing people of the negative health effects of smoking. We need to get much better at using the gender sensitive approach to smoking that the tobacco industry uses to promote smoking.

"Strategies to address smoking in women can only be strengthened by a gender specific approach to policy and prevention." said Ms Sexton.

WHV supports the introduction of plain packaging for cigarettes.

Women's Health Victoria's Gender Impact Assessment on Women and Tobacco is available here: <http://whv.org.au/publications-resources/publications-resources-by-topic/post/women-and-tobacco-gia/>

For further information contact:

WHV Acting Executive Director Rosemary Sexton on 03 9662 3755 or Media: Anaya Latter on 0432 121 636