

Barbara Perry MP

Minister for Local Government
Minister Assisting on Health (Mental Health and
Cancer)



September 27, 2009

New anti-smoking campaign launched today: major new study finds 80 per cent of smokers want to quit

A confronting new \$1.4 million anti-tobacco campaign will be launched today in a bid to encourage more people to quit smoking.

The NSW Government's campaign – to run on TV, radio and outdoor media - focuses on the 'suffocating' effect of emphysema, a deadly lung disease that most smokers are likely to already have to some extent.

Minister Assisting on Health (Cancer) Barbara Perry said the television advertisement demonstrates just how difficult breathing is when you have emphysema.

"The sad fact is that the damage caused by emphysema is irreversible," Ms Perry said.

"In its advanced stages it often requires oxygen or medical support and drastically lowers a sufferer's standard of living. Emphysema condemns people to a life of being short of breath. It is a major cause of disability, hospital admissions and death."

Symptoms of emphysema include shortness of breath and fits of coughing.

The anti-tobacco campaign comes as new statistics from a report by the Cancer Institute NSW, to be officially released next month, show that four out of every five smokers want to quit.

The 'Smoking and Health Survey' surveyed 1600 NSW residents including 800 smokers and 800 non-smokers.

The study found:

- 80 per cent of smokers want to quit smoking and stay off cigarettes for good;
- 11 per cent of daily smokers say they definitely won't be smoking in a year;
- 4 out of 5 smokers have tried to quit;
- 71 per cent of ex-smokers believe GP advice increases the chances of quitting;
- 49 per cent of daily smokers smoke more cigarettes on some days than others, with up to 30 cigarettes smoked on average on a heavier day;
- 77 per cent of smokers aged 18-39 are more likely to 'binge smoke' when drinking alcohol and 71 per cent when in a social situation;
- 83 per cent of smokers said if they had their time over again they would never have started smoking.

Ms Perry said anti-tobacco campaigns are an important part of the fight to encourage more people to stop smoking.

“As the survey demonstrates, while most people are aware at least in general terms about the danger of smoking, we have to be relentless in our efforts to encourage people to quit,” Ms Perry said.

“With around 920,000 smokers in NSW, smoking remains the number one public health problem.

“If you smoke, you should not wait for a sign that your health is being damaged. The time to quit is now. By continuing to smoke you are resigning yourself to a life of being short of breath.”

Smokers who need support should talk to their doctor or pharmacist about stopping smoking today, or call the Quitline on 13 QUIT and speak to a specialist advisor.