



3-7 APRIL 2017

**15th** WORLD CONGRESS  
ON PUBLIC HEALTH  
2017 MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA  
VOICES • VISION • ACTION

15th World Congress on Public Health Secretariat  
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## Tobacco: Australian achievement

### Global challenge

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- 6 trillion sticks sold per annum
- Killing half its users – over five million people a year
- Australia, UK, and Canada are winning the fight – we're smoking less and pension funds are pulling their money
- Tobacco's new ruthless tactics for blocking health policy
- What's happening for the 800 million smokers in developing countries?

Researchers at the World Congress on Public Health in Melbourne available for interview

- More at [www.scienceinpublic.com.au/publichealthcongress](http://www.scienceinpublic.com.au/publichealthcongress)
- Researchers available for interview, contact Niall Byrne on 0417 131 977 or [niall@scienceinpublic.com.au](mailto:niall@scienceinpublic.com.au)

### Tobacco taxes could save 200 million lives this century

*Prabhat Jha, Centre for Global Health Research (Toronto, Canada)*

Nearly 80% of the world's 1 billion smokers live in low- and middle-income countries. Despite that, global annual cigarette sales rose from 5 trillion sticks in 1990 to about 6 trillion today. Prabhat Jha has been a key figure in epidemiology and economics of global health for the past decade, particularly influential in tobacco control. He estimates that if excise taxes were tripled worldwide, this would avoid about 200 million deaths by the end of this century.

### Tobacco free investment: pension funds are pulling out

*The Melbourne cancer scientist who took on big tobacco – Bronwyn King, Tobacco Free Portfolios*

Why do many government sovereign wealth funds invest in the tobacco industry, while their health budgets pay the high costs of lung cancer? And why do pension funds, insurers, banks and fund managers invest in, lend to or seek to profit from a product that kills about half of its customers?

When former Peter Mac lung cancer oncologist Bronwyn King discovered she was unwittingly investing in tobacco through her superannuation fund, she decided to do something about it and founded Tobacco Free Portfolios. She now leads a global team working with finance leaders around the world to influence public health through its overlap with the financial sector.

Her work in the divestment movement has contributed to a total of approximately AUD \$5 billion being withdrawn from investment in the tobacco industry. In Australia, 40% of pension funds are now free. In 2016, Australia's largest health insurer implemented a tobacco-free investment policy. Fund managers have brought new tobacco-free products to market to meet the demand.

With examples from Australia, Sweden, France, Ireland, and the USA, Bronwyn will discuss how disentangling the finance sector from tobacco will be a long-term transition, but one that is essential for comprehensive tobacco control.



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## **Multinational companies, like mosquitoes, are vectors of disease**

*Meet the man behind Australia's tobacco plain packaging laws – Mike Daube, Curtin University*

Big Tobacco with their armies of lawyers; multinational companies with huge advertising budgets; sports sponsorship and its subtle ability to associate unhealthy products with healthy activity – the modern public health battleground pits science-based policy against the mighty dollar.

Mike Daube says the single most important obstacle for effective public health advocacy remains ruthless and determined opposition from powerful global and national industries and companies that are both vectors of disease and unrelenting in their efforts to prevent any action that would run counter to their interests. How do we make them accountable?

Mike will receive the World Federation of Public Health Associations highest honour, the Hugh Leavell Award for Outstanding Global Health Leadership.

### **Other speakers and topics**

- How big tobacco (and gambling and alcohol) block public health initiatives—Peter Miller, Deakin University
- Can religious leaders help the people in their congregations quit smoking?—Muhammad Aziz Rahman, La Trobe University and Alfred Health
- Could an app and the up-take of smartphones in rural India help people quit smoking?—Ramprasad Vasthare Prabhakar, Manipal University, India

### **Tobacco stats and facts**

- More than 600,000 non-smokers are killed each year from second-hand smoke.
- Tobacco use is the most significant risk factor for cancer, linked with 22 per cent of cancer deaths.
- Smoking kills and smoking costs—\$31.5 billion in social (including health) and economic costs in Australia alone.
- Australia is doing well, with smoking rates nearly halved in the 20 years to 2013, and our plain packaging laws are already helping smokers quit.
- In 1950s Canada, more than half of adults smoked; today, the figure is less than 1 in 5. The ban on smoking in public places saves the UK National Health Service over £380 million a year.
- But the battle is far from over. It's highly addictive and the crops are highly lucrative. Smoking rates remain higher among the Indigenous people of Australia and Canada, and are on the rise in many developing countries.

*The World Congress on Public Health is on from 3 to 7 April at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.*

More at <http://www.wcph2017.com/media.php> and @wcph2017 on Twitter.

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