Dear ....,

Thank you for your ongoing and successful efforts to reduce tobacco smoking in our community.

The Australian Government is implementing a number of new initiatives to further reduce tobacco smoking. I am writing to specifically seek your assistance in supporting these initiatives.

As you know smoking is the largest preventable cause of disease in Australia and lung cancer is the largest cause of cancer deaths in both men and women\(^1\). Peto et al\(^2\) have estimated smokers lose, on average, around 10 years of life compared to non-smokers. We know that quitting works at any age and will add years to life.

On 30 January 2011 the Australian Government launches its largest ever National Tobacco Campaign on TV. This campaign will focus on lung cancer and its presenting symptoms of cough and haemoptysis. Other elements of the campaign will show the benefits of quitting.

You can assist by mentioning the campaign and conducting a brief intervention with your patients who smoke and with their families to encourage quitting. Guidelines for such interventions are at: [http://www.racgp.org.au/guidelines/smokingcessation\(^3\)](http://www.racgp.org.au/guidelines/smokingcessation).

Randomised controlled trials have demonstrated that smokers are about twice as likely to quit with smoking cessation drugs than with “cold turkey” alone\(^4\). From 1 February 2011 the PBS listing of nicotine patches (Nicorette\(^\circ\), Nicabate P\(^\circ\) and Nicotinell\(^\circ\)) will be extended to all eligible Australians and concession card holders.

The PBS listing of varenicline (Champix\(^\circ\)) will be extended from a 12 week supply to a 24 week supply. Further information on these PBS listings will be available on [www.pbs.gov.au\(^5\)](http://www.pbs.gov.au) from 1 February 2011.

I have enclosed a poster for your use but more can be obtained from: [www.australia.gov.au/quitnow\(^6\)](http://www.australia.gov.au/quitnow).
Any feedback can be sent to quitnow@health.gov.au.

Thank you so much for taking the time to think about tobacco cessation for your patients and their families.

Evidence suggests that these measures, with your support, along with the increased price of tobacco products, will further reduce tobacco consumption in Australia.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

**Professor Jim Bishop AO**  
MD MMed MBBS FRACP FRCPA

28 January 2011

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1 Cancer in Australia AIHW  
2 www.deathsfromsmoking.net  
4 Perez et al Pharmacotherapy evaluation: drugs that assist smoking cessation, Sydney Cancer Institute NSW Oct 2008  
5 www.pbs.gov.au  