

Submission

No 13

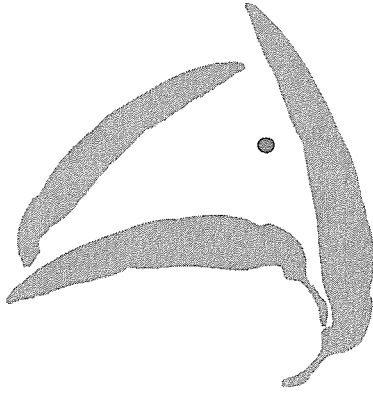
## INQUIRY INTO TOBACCO SMOKING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

**Organisation:** myhealth australia  
**Name:** Ms Rhonda Wilson  
**Position:** Executive Director  
**Telephone:**  
**Date Received:** 31/03/2006

---

**Theme:**

**Summary**



**myhealth australia**

**1/68 markham st, armidale 2350**  
**armidale@myhealth-australia.org.au**

31 March 2006

Richard Torbay, M.P  
Member for Northern Tablelands  
PO Box 77  
Armidale NSW 2350

**Re anti-smoking inquiry**

Dear Richard

In regard to the upcoming anti-smoking inquiry, I would like to submit the following comments for you and your inquiry to consider.

Reducing and assisting people to quit cigarettes in **rural communities** is not well supported by either State or Federal Government. Yet, it still contributes as one of the greatest morbidity and mortality burdens for our nation. Smoking increases risk to a vast number of health concerns – cancers, heart disease, and mental health to name a few. A quit line is a grossly inadequate attempt at supporting people through a quit process. Nicotine the addictive element of cigarettes is perhaps one of the hardest chemical dependencies to give up. It is a major personal challenge, and for many people will draw on their entire personal efficacy to make an attempt.

Often people will manage to quit smoking for a short period of time and then relapse. Relapse can often be triggered by stress. It is well known that an accumulation of seemingly insignificant incidents cause significantly more stress than one large stressor (eg a crisis of some kind). Stress often has an insidious nature, creeping up and evolving into a trigger which starts the smoking behaviour again (relapse).

Some of the key ingredients in quit smoking therapy is access to quit smoking counseling. Success is far better with one on one or group therapy than it is as a phone support.

Rural people usually prefer to attend personal counseling. Further, they prefer to talk to rural people who have an affinity for their culture (specific to rural lifestyle).

These are some of the failings of a relying too heavily on phone quit lines.

Real people prefer real people to talk to in person – especially in the bush.

It is important for governments to prioritise funding rural service provision in regard to quit smoking (as well as other drugs).

NGO's are well place to conduct this work.

MyHealth Australia has developed programs which are designed specifically for rural communities in regard to quit smoking. Our programs are based on contemporary best practice and world health organisation standards, indicating that expertise and capacity exists in rural areas amongst rural people to look after rural people.

However, we lack sufficient financial backing to make this service available free of charge to the target population.

If the government is serious about helping people to quit smoking and taking a preventive approach to smoking related disease (and health budget burden), then it will seek out services like MyHealth Australia, and partner with them in providing/funding publicly accessible rural quit smoking services.

These services really need to be free to participants, especially when so many young people are smoking. School aged young people need to be able to go to a supportive service provider and get individualized support to quit smoking and make positive life style changes. However government funds need to be available to young people for this type of a service.

I hope these comments assist the deliberations of the inquiry.

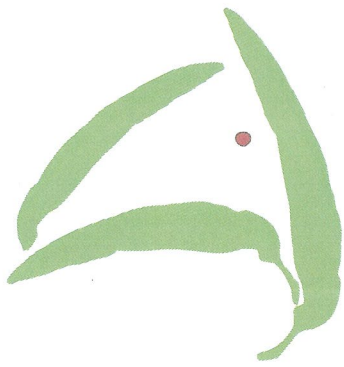
I have attached a flyer about our successful quit smoking program in Armidale for your information.

I would be happy to provide further information or discourse for the inquiry if it is required.

Yours sincerely

Rhonda Wilson  
Executive Director

**Drug & alcohol treatment    community health care    counseling    youth support**



**myhealth australia**

# Do you need help with quitting or reducing your smoking?

**myhealth australia** can assist with a range of individual and group programs to help you.

- ↪ 7-week group quit-smoking programs
- ↪ recovery support groups
- ↪ relaxation and stress management clinics
- ↪ individual treatment and counselling services
- ↪ both night-time and day-time sessions
- ↪ help with relapses and motivational support
- ↪ information and support for parents

Please contact our Armidale office for bookings or further information

drug & alcohol treatment

community health care

counselling

youth support