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MO: H/07/04174

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 7 June 2007, regarding a Petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly, No. 825-07.

The Queensland Government is implementing a multi-strategy tobacco control plan to help bring down smoking rates, and new tobacco laws are an important part of this plan. Australia's toughest tobacco laws are now in place in Queensland, and include a range of smoking bans for indoor and outdoor public places. These laws are reducing the public's exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, contributing to a culture that supports smokers trying to quit, and discouraging young people from taking up the habit.

With regard to a total ban on smoking and the sale of tobacco products, it is the view of all Australian Health and Police Ministers, through their endorsement of the *National Tobacco Strategy 2004-2009*, that this is not an appropriate strategy. Tobacco is an addictive substance and currently there are more than 3.5 million addicted smokers across Australia. More effective tobacco control strategies include regulating sale, taxation and advertising of tobacco products, smoking bans for public places, youth smoking prevention, and quit smoking campaigns and programs.

Should you have any queries regarding my advice to you, Ms Katherine Gado, Senior Policy Advisor, Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Branch will be pleased to assist you and can be contacted on telephone 3234 1942.

Yours sincerely

STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP