

# Statement on Foundation for a Smoke Free World



## Statement on Foundation for a Smoke Free World

The Council of Academic Public Health Institutions Australasia (CAPHIA), the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA), and the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) note with concern the announcement that Philip Morris International plans to contribute nearly \$1 billion to a not-for-profit organisation known as Foundation for a Smoke Free World.

We will not accept any kind of funding or support from Foundation for a Smoke Free World, nor will we work together with this Foundation on any research, advocacy, or other projects. We encourage and expect our members and member institutions not to accept any funding or support from the tobacco industry, directly or indirectly, including through non-profit organisations such as Foundation for a Smoke Free World.

To collaborate with or accept support from the tobacco industry would be to abandon our ethical obligations to promote the public's health and would seriously undermine the integrity of public health academia.

We oppose any form of collaboration with the Foundation due to its close association with the tobacco industry, which has a well-documented history of funding 'research' with the aim of disseminating false and misleading information about the dangers of smoking, as well as preventing or overturning evidence-based tobacco control policies.

As an example of how the tobacco industry has undermined effective public health interventions, it has promoted the usage of supposedly 'light' or 'mild' tobacco products, while being fully aware that these products were just as harmful to health as the 'full strength' varieties. The tobacco industry has encouraged consumers concerned about the health effects of smoking to use these products as an alternative to quitting. Furthermore, the tobacco industry has aggressively opposed public health policies, such as the 'plain packaging' of cigarettes in Australia, for which there is strong evidence that they contribute to smoking cessation<sup>[1]</sup>. For these reasons, we consider that any organisation receiving such significant funding from the tobacco industry is likely to have the covert goal of undermining public health initiatives to reduce and prevent the rates of tobacco use.

In this statement, we join with the World Health Organization<sup>[2]</sup>, as well as Schools of Public Health in the United States<sup>[3]</sup>, the World Heart Federation<sup>[4]</sup> and many other organisations in considering funding from Foundation for a Smoke Free World to be

equivalent to funding from the tobacco industry.

While the Foundation for a Smoke Free World states that it aims to advance global efforts to reduce health impacts and deaths from smoking with the goal of ultimately eliminating smoking worldwide, as well as claiming that it is independent from the tobacco industry and transparent about how its funding is obtained and used [5], we question these assertions. In particular, we share concerns with other public health academic bodies about the lack of transparency about how the Foundation's research agenda has been established, as well as the extent of public relations benefits for Philip Morris International in funding the Foundation.

April 2018

[1] World Health Organization (2017). WHO Statement on Philip Morris funded Foundation for a Smoke Free World

[2] World Health Organization (2017). WHO Statement on Philip Morris funded Foundation for a Smoke Free World

[3] Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (2018). Statement on the Foundation for a Smoke Free World

[4] Wood, D. and Eisele, J. (2017). Condemning industry attempts to subvert public policy for a tobacco-free world. The Lancet 390 (10104), p1733

[5] Foundation for a Smoke Free World

Available on: <http://caphia.com.au/statement-on-foundation-for-a-smoke-free-world/>