



MAKE 2017 THE YEAR TO QUIT SMOKING FOR LIFE

The AMA is encouraging smokers to make a New Year resolution to quit the habit, and help the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) keep one of its own resolutions.

AMA Vice President, Dr Tony Bartone, said that in 2008, COAG resolved to set a national target to reduce the smoking rate to 10 per cent within 10 years.

“With 2018 fast approaching, and 15 per cent of Australians still smoking daily, there is a lot of work to be done to meet the 10 per cent target,” Dr Bartone said.

“Quitting smoking is not easy, but the health benefits and financial savings make it worthwhile. Smoking kills more people than drugs and alcohol combined, and accounts for 13 per cent of cancers, including 81 per cent of lung cancers.

“The holiday period is a good time to quit, as it provides a break from your regular routine.

“If your working day is broken up by regular smoking breaks, this habit can be almost as addictive as nicotine itself. Quitting while your routine is already broken, and you are not in contact with your daily smoking buddies, may make it easier to break these habits when you return to work.

“Even long-term smokers can expect to notice positive changes within just a few weeks. Within a few days, your heart rate will normalise, the oxygen flow to your heart will increase, and your blood pressure will stabilise.

“Over the longer term, you will find yourself coughing and wheezing less, your immune system will be better able to fight off infections, and blood flow to your hands and feet will increase.

“You will also feel the benefit in your wallet. Pack-a-day smokers spend almost \$130 a week on their habit, so you can save more than \$500 in your first smoke-free month.”

Dr Bartone said that while the prospect of quitting could be daunting, help was at hand.

“GPs are an invaluable source of practical assistance and emotional support, and having an understanding GP in your corner may make all the difference,” he said.

“There are a growing number of apps, websites, and text messaging services designed to support quitting smokers through the tough times. Quitline provides valuable, confidential, and free-of-charge assistance. Call 13 78 48 and ask for a free Quit Pack to be sent to your home.

“Make 2017 the year that you quit for life.”

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CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761
 Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753