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## MEDIA STATEMENT

### Nicotine replacement therapy central to helping smokers quit

The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI), the industry body representing non-prescription consumer healthcare products today called on the Federal Government to embrace Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) as part of its package to help reduce smoking rates.

The Executive Director of ASMI, Juliet Seifert, welcomed the Government's latest initiatives to reduce smoking, and urged that NRT be adopted as part of the suite of measures that can help people quit the habit.

"The Government's National Preventative Health Taskforce suggested subsidising NRT in order to assist people to quit smoking, and it should form part of any new community-wide campaign," Ms Seifert said.

The Taskforce report raised the idea of subsidising NRT through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme or telephone help services such as Quitline. It also discussed the option of making NRT more readily available to Indigenous communities.

NRT is a proven therapy that reduces withdrawal symptoms associated with smoking and has helped thousands of smokers worldwide. It is available in various forms including gum, lozenges, patches for the skin, nasal spray and inhalers.

"Nicotine replacement therapy is an approach that has been scientifically demonstrated to have a significant impact in reducing smoking."

A 2007 Cochrane review concluded that NRT almost doubles long term success rates.

"It has been estimated that approximately one third of smokers make at least one attempt to quit in any single year, suggesting that more effort needs to be placed on assisting those people who want to cease smoking.

"It makes sense for effective and proven approaches to smoking cessation to be able to play a front line role in preventative health campaigns," Ms Seifert said.

About ASMI: The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI) is the peak industry body for the Australian self care industry representing consumer healthcare products including over-the-counter medicines and complementary medicines. ASMI's mission is to promote better health through responsible self-care. This means ensuring that safe and effective self-care products are readily available to all Australians at a reasonable cost. ASMI works to encourage responsible use by consumers and an increasing role for cost-effective self-medication products as part of the broad national health strategy. [www.asmi.com.au](http://www.asmi.com.au)

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