



MEDIA RELEASE

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An exciting new force in tobacco control

World No Tobacco Day on 31 May is an appropriate time to launch a dynamic force in tobacco control in South Africa. The TAG Tobacco Alcohol and Gambling Advisory Advocacy and Action Group aims to change the landscape of controlling the three major legal addictions in South Africa.

Tobacco is a major scourge that kills about 44 000 people in South Africa every year. South Africa has one of the worst records in the world for Foetal Alcohol Syndrome. Smoking harms the foetus in many ways. Many smokers tend to be heavy drinkers while most alcoholics tend to be heavy smokers. Many gamblers also consume tobacco and alcohol so the three major 'legal' addictions are interlinked. Tobacco and alcohol are regarded as 'gateway drugs'. Their use is also linked to the spread of HIV, and is a major cause and aggravator of most cancers.

TAG has formed partnerships with several organisations, including Soul City and the SA Alcohol Policy Alliance. They are also working closely with the National Department of Health. One of the partners is the Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA) assisting with promoting anti-tobacco awareness to help reduce the cancer risk.

Peter Ucko, a Director of TAG with more than 35 years of experience in tobacco control echoed these sentiments. "CANSA is an important organisation promoting education around the dangers of tobacco use. Working together will exponentially increase our individual strengths. Together we can save more lives".

He adds, "TAG may be young, but those involved have many years, even decades, of experience in tobacco control and related activities. It took some time, simply because of the bureaucratic processes, for the organisation to ensure full compliance with all legal requirements. We have registered as a Non-profit Company, a Public Benefit Organisation and a Non Profit Organisation. We subscribe to the highest moral and ethical standards and expect our partners to do the same."

Ends

For more information contact:

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About TAG

Our aim is **L I F E**

Save Lives. Save Individuals. Save Families. Save the Environment.

The Board of Directors of TAG Tobacco Alcohol and Gambling Advisory Advocacy and Action Group, is:

Paul Hancock; Director Finance, a Chartered Accountant and Risk manager at a major insurance company who has pledged himself to our work.

Trevor Keyes; Director Legal, an Attorney at Law, who has fought tobacco and alcohol use all his life.

Jeff King; Director Medical, a Specialist Physician cardiologist, who has always been opposed to tobacco and alcohol use because he sees daily and understands fully the ravages which they cause.

Did Lubambo; Director Technical, the Service Delivery Manager of a large international computer company, who is committed to making the organisation run smoothly with the latest technology.

Koketso Mophuting; Director Communications, a talented actress and video producer whose youth and energy will help us communicated with the youth and create videos to promote health and abstinence.

Harry Sopper; Director Statistics, is Consultant and past Chief of Fire Protection and Ambulance Services of a major municipality and CEO of the Fire Protection Association of South Africa, who understands, and has experiences of, the risks of fire from discarded smoking materials and the harms cause alcohol use.

Peter Ucko; Executive Director, who has over 35 years' experience in tobacco control, legislation, enforcement and health, and was responsible for the first laws which banned smoking in municipal buildings, being passed in SA in 1989, 12 years before national legislation came into force.

Corne Van Walbeek; Director Research, a Professor of Economics and past Director of the School of Economics at UCT, who has many years of experience in, and research into, Taxation and Excise Duties of tobacco and alcohol

More information is available on the Policies and Plans of TAG Tobacco Alcohol and Gambling Advisory Advocacy and Action Group and brief Bios of the Directors.
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