



Contacts:

Chris Martin

Vice President, Public Relations

CMartin@DavidJamesGroup.com | 630-670-2745

Becky Bunn, MSc

IASLC Project Specialist

Becky.Bunn@IASLC.org | 720-254-9509

Australian Doctor Turns Tables on Tobacco Companies; Seeks to Rid Pension Funds of Tobacco Investments

Vienna, Austria—December 5, 2016—As a young doctor treating patients on the lung cancer ward of Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne, Australia, Dr. Bronwyn King was dismayed to see the impact of cigarette smoking on her patients. However, her surprise grew when she discovered that her hospital’s pension fund had invested her money in the very tobacco products that were killing her patients.

Dr. King shared her experiences at the **IASLC 17th World Conference on Lung Cancer** in Vienna, Austria.

“Once I discovered that through my compulsory pension fund, I was invested in and actually owned a part of a several tobacco companies, I couldn’t just do nothing – I had to take action,” she said.

During her investigation of how tobacco company stocks get selected, she realized that in addition to occasionally being selected actively for investment, tobacco companies are usually wrapped up in default investment products, so they commonly find a way into pension funds and mutual funds. She believed that if she would educate investors about these selections and their impact, she could help reduce the amount of investment in tobacco stocks.

To accomplish this, Dr. King founded [Tobacco Free Portfolios](#) to collaboratively engage with leaders of the finance sector to encourage tobacco-free investment. She soon found that finance executives were also alarmed at the scale of the tobacco problem and have deeply re-considered the role they can play in addressing this pressing global issue.

“Because of this, there are now 35 tobacco-free pension funds in Australia – just over 40% of all funds. Many more will soon follow and each tobacco free announcement is met with resounding public support,” she said.

Dr. King told the audience that Tobacco Free Portfolios recently negotiated with global insurance giant AXA to divest \$1.8B Euro of tobacco assets.



“Affiliations with the tobacco industry are no longer wanted,” she said. “There are very few individuals or organizations that actively seek to be a part of the tobacco industry. The associations are often so deep and longstanding that it can seem overwhelming – but they must be addressed and they must be undone.”

Dr. King reported that the tobacco-free investment momentum has been excellent and her conversations in Vienna, Paris, Singapore, London and New York are received with the same concern as the conversations she had in have in Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra.

“Tobacco is everyone’s problem, not just the doctors who provide the care and treatment. We should all feel obliged to do something about it and all those with investments, including those through compulsory pension schemes have a role to play,” she said.

About the WCLC:

The WCLC is the world’s largest meeting dedicated to lung cancer and other thoracic malignancies, attracting more than 6,000 researchers, physicians, and specialists from more than 100 countries. The goal is to increase awareness, collaboration, and understanding of lung cancer, and to help participants implement the latest developments across the globe. Organized under the theme of “Together Against Lung Cancer,” the conference will cover a wide range of disciplines and unveil several research studies and clinical trial results. For more information, visit <http://wclc2016.iaslc.org/>.

About the IASLC:

The International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC) is the only global organization dedicated to the study of lung cancer. Founded in 1974, the association's membership includes more than 5,000 lung cancer specialists in over 100 countries. Visit www.iaslc.org for more information.

###

