

Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023

Submission No: 22
Submitted by: NAME WITHHELD
Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name

Attachments:

Submitter Comments:

It is great to see something is finally being done about the illicit stores that are opening everywhere & causing legal tobacconist to suffer such huge losses, but I still have some concerns on how it will be delivered.

- There is still a 15 month wait for the introduction of licensing. Some legal tobacconists probably can't wait 15 months for action to be taken. Stores are already having to close their doors due to poor sales. Staff are loosing their jobs, is there something that can be done in the interim?
- While the illicit stores are selling coloured pack they are also selling illicit product in plain packaging which can look correct, with warning labels & even using Bata, Pml & Ita addresses & phone numbers, but on closer inspection there are differences in the wording, font size & package quality. Are the inspectors going to be trained to look for these differences & be given time to inspect every product on their shelves & in their not-so-secret draws under the front counter?
- Most of the illicit stores that have been raided in the past are, at best, only closed for a few hours before opening for trade with all their stock refilled. With the new laws is anything going to change in that regard? These guys are making millions out of the sale of illegal products so 1 raid every few months is doing nothing to hurt their cash flow.
- Illegal nicotine vapes are becoming a huge issue especially with underage consumption. Just yesterday I had someone tell me that her sons best friend & his mother are ordering these vapes in bulk from stores in south east Queensland for \$10-\$15 each & he is on selling to his fellow students for \$50.00. It is common knowledge in Townsville that the illicit stores do not ask for ID when making a sale whether the customer is in school uniform or not. All the work the Australian Government has done to curb teenage smoking over the last 20 years has gone out the window with the introduction of nicotine vapes. I believe there is more teenagers addicted to nicotine now than there ever was. Schools (secondary & primary) in this country are being forced to install vape detectors in toilet blocks because it is such a huge issue. And when students are found with this product, the legal tobacconists are being blamed for the sale. One illicit store where I live even advertises the vape products on Facebook.
- Finally, the people who own these illicit stores are well known to threaten & intimidate & in more than 1 occasion harm anyone who should stand up to them. Everyone is too afraid to take action for fear of repercussions from these people. Are the police & health officials who live locally going to feel the same way? We've all heard the stories of what's happening to the tobacconists in south east Queensland & now the illicit stores out number the legal stores, the legal stores that abide by the laws, provide full training to their staff, pay all the relevant taxes & employ local.