



media release

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For Immediate Release

A Step in the Right Direction

British American Tobacco New Zealand (BATNZ) welcomes the announcement made by the Minister of Customs today to try to tackle the serious issue of black market tobacco in New Zealand but encourages the Minister to go further.

“We are disappointed that the Minister has not taken this opportunity to remove the personal use allowance altogether and adopt a licensing policy similar to that in Australia with far tougher penalties for illegal growing and sales,” said Saul Derber, Head of Legal and External Affairs, BAT New Zealand.

“We fear that inevitable difficulties enforcing a new limit will have little practical effect on curbing the significant black market in home grown tobacco.”

In 2013 ASH NZ estimated that up to 134 million cigarettes a year are consumed in New Zealand without any tax being paid.¹

“On these figures alone this is a serious issue, however, we believe that the true size of the black market is much higher.

“New Zealand is the only OECD country with a smoke-free goal that also permits tobacco to be grown without a licence and consumed without any tax being paid, health warnings applied or controls preventing sales to youth.

“The tobacco black market costs the Government tens of millions of dollars annually while undermining the Government’s health objectives.”

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¹ http://www.ash.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ASH-NZ_Illicit-Tobacco-in-New-Zealand-2013.pdf page 19