



News Release

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Imperial Tobacco to defend its trademarks

ITA will robustly challenge the Government's disproportionate and misguided plans to introduce plain packaging of cigarettes. Plain packaging has not been introduced in any country in the world and there is no evidence to support the Government's notion that this will reduce consumption.

Plain packaging would seriously harm our brands and infringe the intellectual property rights in which both Imperial Tobacco and its shareholders have invested.

Plain Packaging takes away the ability and rights of adult consumers to identify our brands from competitors and to readily choose and enjoy smoking a legal product. Plain packaging also undermines the rights of our commercial freedoms of our business and we will fight to protect the value of our trademarks.

The introduction of this legislation would mean that all tobacco products would be available in the same generic plain packaging, which would lead to a significant increase in counterfeit products, currently reported at about 12 per cent of the Australian market.

This would also seriously undermine the considerable joint work being undertaken by the tobacco industry and customs authorities in Australia and around the world to combat the illicit trade.

The Government will not collect any excise on illicit product. The continued growth in the illicit tobacco market in Australia will undermine government efforts in the area of tobacco control. It will make it easier for children to access illicit tobacco products and it will also undermine and circumvent legislation such as the requirement to display health warnings on packets, report cigarette ingredients to the Government and manufacture reduced fire risk cigarettes.

At the request of the Federal Government and the ACCC, in 1999 Imperial Tobacco was encouraged to enter the Australian market to prevent market dominance by the merger of two long standing tobacco companies, *Rothmans* and *WD & HO Wills*. At that time, Imperial Tobacco purchased a range of existing cigarettes brands, logos, copyrights and other intellectual property.

Imperial Tobacco will make every effort to protect its brands and associated intellectual property and including, if necessary, take legal action.

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