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## **Anti-tobacco activists come to aid of criminals**

**British American Tobacco Australia (BATA) is frustrated at efforts to undermine action against the tobacco blackmarket.**

BATA spokesperson Josh Fett said that media coverage over the past two weeks has further highlighted illegal tobacco as a serious and growing problem in Australia.

"It's bizarre that anti-tobacco activists are attempting to derail actions to halt criminal activity in Australia by misinterpreting WHO guidelines", Mr Fett said.

BATA refers to a ABC story today, where anti-tobacco activists allege that it is inappropriate for BATA to share information relating to criminal activity.

BATA makes no apology for providing law enforcement and health agencies with information which may help them to put a stop to this crime.

"Criminals running the tobacco black market defraud the Government of revenue; undermine tobacco control laws; damage the livelihood of honest retailers; and threaten our legal business.

"Anti-tobacco activists also recently opposed our application to the ACCC for permission to work with other manufacturers to cease supply of our products to retailers found to be selling illegal tobacco," Mr Fett said.

Why would anyone oppose measures designed to reduce criminal activity and ensure compliance with Australian laws?

The Government needs to adopt a national anti-illegal tobacco strategy now. It should acknowledge illegal tobacco as a real and growing problem; coordinate law enforcement responsibility and activity; and provide appropriate resources and enforcement mechanisms.

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