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foot the bill for a bad Bill**

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Sydney number one hot spot for illegal tobacco

A report by Deloitte commissioned by the tobacco industry estimates that the Federal seat of Sydney held by the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP is ranked first in terms of illegal tobacco sold in Australia.

The report showed that over 54,000 kilograms of illegal tobacco was sold in the Sydney electorate last year which in turn cost taxpayers over \$22 million in lost tobacco excise.

The growing trade of illegal tobacco is spreading across the country with the second highest sales in the Federal Electorate of Melbourne and the third highest in Adelaide.

Overall, the illegal tobacco black market is equal to 16% of the legal market and cost taxpayers a staggering \$1.1 billion last year in forgone excise.

British American Tobacco Australia (BATA) CEO, David Crow is concerned that illegal tobacco sales will only get worse in the Sydney electorate under the untested and unprecedented plain packaging legislation.

“The illegal tobacco black market has grown 150% over the last three years and plain packaging will only fan the flames and allow criminals to profit further,” Mr Crow said.

“It's alarming to see tens of thousands of kilograms of illegal tobacco sold in Sydney. Of 150 electorates in Australia it's the worst.

“Plain packaging will provide a blueprint for crime syndicates to reproduce counterfeit cigarettes as all packs will look exactly the same. It will make black market packs more difficult to identify.

“The Government needs to do more to stop organised crime gangs dealing in black market tobacco across our suburbs.”

The Australia Crime Commission highlighted in its 2011 report on organised crime that “organised crime networks have been linked to the importation of counterfeit cigarettes and loose tobacco”.

To assist the industry and authorities to deal with the rapid growth of illegal tobacco in Australia BATA developed a website which outlines the size and scope of the problem in each electorate.

The website ranks all electorates, shows the excise lost and the amount of illegal tobacco sold in each area as well as further information on the issue.

Visit the website to see the size of the problem in your electorate: www.illegaltobacco.com.au

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