



MEDIA RELEASE
www.bata.com.au



Thursday, 11 October 2012

Tougher illegal tobacco laws the right step

British American Tobacco Australia (BATA) spokesperson Scott McIntyre welcomed the government's tougher tobacco smuggling laws which passed through parliament today.

"We hope the new penalties send a clear message to the organised crime gangs smuggling illegal tobacco on boats from Asia that their activities now risk serious gaol time," Mr McIntyre said.

"This is a step in the right direction by the government to try and stamp out the growing illegal tobacco problem in Australia and for that we're thankful.

"Customs do a good job with limited resources protecting our borders so any smuggling legislation that makes their job easier we support.

"The tobacco black market is very lucrative for smugglers due to the high tobacco excise rate here in Australia which is up to 70 per cent for some cigarettes.

"Last year taxpayers lost a billion dollars in foregone tobacco excise due to smuggled tobacco products as crime groups obviously don't pay tax to the government.

"The size of the illegal tobacco market in Australia is equal to 13.4 per cent of the legal market.

"This is almost 2.3 million kilograms of cigarettes and loose leaf tobacco sold by criminals who put the profits straight into their back pockets.

"We're hopeful the government can also introduce similar tough laws for dodgy retailers who sell illegal tobacco products in shops, markets and from car boots all around Australia as a further deterrent.

"This way we can tackle the problem at the border as well as on the streets."

Media contact: Scott McIntyre on 02 9370 1222 or follow on Twitter @ Scott_BATA