

AN OPEN LETTER FROM THE ALLIANCE OF AUSTRALIAN RETAILERS

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AS OWNERS OF AUSTRALIAN CORNER STORES, CONVENIENCE STORES, MILK BARS, NEWSAGENTS AND SERVICE STATIONS WE ARE FED UP WITH EXCESSIVE REGULATION THAT IS MAKING IT HARDER FOR US TO RUN OUR BUSINESSES.

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The government proposal to mandate plain packaging for cigarettes is the last straw.

Let's be clear – we believe that reducing smoking is good for our community. But good policies require more than good intentions.

There is no reliable evidence anywhere in the world that plain packaging will stop people from taking up smoking, or help people to quit. But we do know that it will make it harder for us to run our businesses.

That's why we have formed the Alliance of Australian Retailers, a group representing 15,000 mostly small business owners. We employ almost 200,000 Australians, and we say to Canberra loud and clear that enough is enough!

Politicians like to describe businesses such as ours as the backbone of the economy, particularly in rural and regional Australia.

But in recent times we have been hit with an excessive excise tax increase, which makes our businesses a target for theft and will fuel the flourishing black market in tobacco products.

On top of this, every state in Australia has moved to ban the display of tobacco products in stores. So if our customers can't even see cigarettes when they walk into our stores, how will plain packaging make any difference?

Plain packaging has been considered in the UK and Canada, and both countries rejected it.

This is why our alliance is saying: enough is enough!

It's time to support hard working Australians instead of pursuing unproven policy for the sake of a newspaper headline.

SHERYLE MOON

Director, Alliance of Australian Retailers



TO FIND OUT MORE:

www.australianretailers.com.au

The Alliance of Australian Retailers comprises the following organisations: Australian Association of Convenience Stores, The Service Station Association, Australian Newsagents' Federation and National Independent Retailers Association. We are supported by British American Tobacco Australia Limited, Philip Morris Limited and Imperial Tobacco Australia Limited.