



Submission No. 26
(Plain Packaging Bill)
A.O.C. Date: 21/07/2011

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Health and Aging
House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
CANBERRA ACT 2600

19th July 2011

I would like my opinion in regard to the Tobacco Reform to be heard.

“Plain Packaging” of late, but also the “dark market” and exorbitant taxes have had a hugely negative affect on legal businesses in this country.

We are talking about a legal product here. I own a legal business where I provide employment, pay all my taxes and provide a legal product to the public.

Meanwhile the sale of illegal tobacco (chop chop) is rampant in Ballarat and other areas. There is no excise paid on this tobacco, and there are no health warnings on the packaging.

The availability of this product had cut our legal sales by 30% fifteen years ago when it first became available, and now with exorbitant excise increases making it more difficult for people to afford the legal product, the impact of people turning to the cheaper untaxed chop chop has reduced legal sales by 45-50%.

If the Government wants to continue in this way, making it harder for the customer and the retailer to purchase and sell legal tobacco products, they can expect the black market to take over supply of the market, and will receive no revenue from excise.

Plain packaging will not stop smokers from smoking, the same as the dark market did not stop smokers from smoking. Outlandishly over taxing the product will not stop smokers from smoking, but it will carry on the tradition of pushing legal small business to the wall, whilst pushing people to deal with the black market.

The legislation is a joke, an insult to Australians and hypocrisy at its finest.

I am being discriminated against, so are my customers. I can't promote my business; in fact I am expected to make it difficult for people to buy my merchandise. Can you please explain to me, in what other area of any trade or industry this is tolerated.

How will I be compensated for the restriction of trade imposed on my business firstly, and also for my loss of trade?

I look forward to some common sense and respect toward adult people who exercise their right to make their own decisions in our (democratic) country.

Vicki Simpson.
Director.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'V' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that loops back under the 'V'.