

NZACS Media Release
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Retail Sector Calls for Greater Enforcement not new laws

The New Zealand Association of Convenience Stores (NZACS) today commented on the Report into the tobacco industry by the Maori Affairs Select Committee saying it supports recommendations to increase penalties for selling tobacco to minors, but can't support recommendations that force significant costs onto retailers.

"NZACS has said all along that a relatively simple solution was available – that of greater enforcement of existing tobacco regulations," said NZACS Chairman Roger Bull.

"If there was greater enforcement, backed by retailer education of the existing laws, then tobacco products can be kept out of the hands of young people."

"The Report's authors instead seem intent on wanting to force additional laws and regulations that will result in significant costs and red-tape onto New Zealand retailers who sell tobacco," said Mr Bull.

NZACS has advocated for a more constructive approach whereby the retail sector would work with the Ministry of Health on retailer education programmes, alongside supporting greater fines on retailers who sell tobacco to those under 18 years old.

"Forcing retailers to cough up thousands of dollars to hide tobacco away from their customers will do little aside from placing greater risks on retailers who will be forced to constantly hunt for a product that makes up to 40% of their sales," said Mr Bull.

"Retailers would welcome the opportunity to work with the Government on keeping tobacco out of the hands of young people, but now face the risk of increased theft and robberies as they and their staff go about their daily business.

"NZACS understands the need to address tobacco issues, but this Report continues to avoid what is a glaringly obvious and cost effective solution – work with the retailers who sell the product. Rather this Report punishes them," Mr Bull said.

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For further comment;

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