

**Media Release**

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## Govt makes mockery of public consultation process

**The announcement by the Government that it is going ahead with plain packaging of tobacco products makes a mockery of the public consultation process and will achieve little but force costs onto the retail sector says one of New Zealand's leading retail organisations.**

The New Zealand Association of Convenience Stores (NZACS) is disappointed that the Government has ignored the outcome of the public consultation process which overwhelmingly rejected the idea of plain packaging.

“What was the point in having a consultation process when the decision was already made,” said Roger Bull, Chairman of NZACS.

“Of the 20,000 people that took the time to submit their views, over 11,800 opposed the idea, including over 4,000 retailers. By ignoring them the Government is sending a clear message to them that they don't care about more costs being forced onto the retail sector.”

Mr Bull said that “the Ministry of Health has not only wasted over \$35,000 on consultants to manage the consultation, but has wasted the time of New Zealand retailers as well as international organisations and trading partners that opposed the proposal.”

NZACS has written to the Minister of Health Tony Ryall highlighting a number of concerns about the consultation process, including a number of submissions purportedly from different organisations yet are authored by the same person with identical content.

“Our concern is that Cabinet's decision was based on a flawed report. Should this be found to be true, the Government risks facing a judicial review of their decision.” Mr Bull said.

[ENDS]

**For further comment;**

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**BACKGROUND NOTES TO EDITOR**

- NZACS is a leading trade association representing the interests of over 750 retailers and suppliers within the convenience retailing industry in New Zealand.
- NZACS produces industry research including an annual survey of retailer performance across the convenience retail sector.

- NZACS provides education and development opportunities for member employees in the industry, including an annual development programme for aspiring retail and supplier company leaders.