

MEDIA RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RETAILERS FACE MORE GRIEF THANKS TO PLAIN PACKS IDEA

The Government's announcement that it intends to pursue plain packaging for tobacco products will present more difficulties for the retail sector says a leading retail trade association.

"We have consistently opposed the idea of plain packaging on the basis that the proposal will achieve little aside from forcing increased transaction costs onto the retail sector as staff hunt for the correct pack of tobacco, said Roger Bull, Chairman of New Zealand Association of Convenience Stores.

"With every pack essentially the same, the Government's proposal will translate directly to hindering a retailers ability to provide a quick and efficient customer service – a vital hall-mark of the convenience retail sector.

"It is also disappointing that the Government has failed to take heed of retail sector warnings over excise increases and last week's announcement of a continuation of tobacco excise increases only increases the fears of retailers, said Mr Bull.

"Forcing a packet of 20 cigarettes to be more than \$30.00 only increases the likelihood of consumers seeking out black market tobacco – either home grown or stolen in brazen raids on retailer premises.

"While striving to achieve a Smokefree Aotearoa by 2025 is an admirable goal, getting there requires support of multiple groups including retailers. However, when a government does its best to create more burdens and increases risks for the retail community, these sorts of ideas very quickly lose support.

"Retailers across New Zealand are at the coal-face of government implemented actions against tobacco, yet the Government does little by way of engaging with the retail sector to ensure their views are factored into policy proposals.

"NZACS strongly believes retailers should have a seat at the table when discussing regulations that impact on their businesses. With tobacco representing more than 40% of turnover for a convenience store, a lot is at stake for everyone," Mr Bull said.

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For further comment:

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