

INQUIRY INTO ILLEGAL TOBACCO TRADE

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I am truly dismayed at the number of convenience stores / tobacconists proliferating across our suburbs and states .Of course some shops are legitimate businesses but who can tell ?

If 20,000 illegal gambling or illegal alcohol venues popped up around the state the gaming and alcohol industry would be apoplectic with rage at the government because it would be threatening their livelihoods.

Worse still these venues selling cigarettes , legal or otherwise and possibly vapes are of great public health concern especially the ones springing up near our primary and secondary schools

These shops are generally more associated with inner city not suburban settings as we don't have the dense populations to make them sustainable.

So what are they doing here as we already have supermarkets selling cigarettes and pharmacies selling vapes . There is no other explanation in my humble opinion than shops selling cheap possibly illegal cigarettes and vapes .

How many packets of chips or lollies or cigarettes do you have to sell to pay the rent?

The maths doesn't add up to me

Chupachups, chocolates, chips, lollies, non alcoholic beverages and cigarettes does that not ring serious alarm bells? ' Tasty Treats' (see FB ad attached) are a subliminal message to kids .

Many of these stores are generically named Tobacconist / Convenience Shop .

There is no branding and we don't know who owns how many of these stores in our suburb.

NSW govt should request the Federal Govt to do an Australia wide ATO audit through and a search of ASIC to identify any potential red flags around ownership and potential money laundering. We need to know if shops are networked across the state and interstate so there can be a coordinated monitoring.

If any person or group owns multiple shops there should be legislation to have an identifying shop brand name because none of us can tell if multiple shops are owned by one business unlike other chains owned outright or franchised.

I am beyond belief at the criminal element I have read and heard about in the media especially in Victoria that are associated with these shop activities.

Am sure if I lived in a complex with one of these shops it won't be long before the insurance companies increase premiums significantly due to the criminal activity these businesses attract . Let's put it this way , who would want to live above one if any shops are owned by criminals .

Of course a number of these shops are law abiding citizens carrying out permissible activity but we can't tell the legitimate business from the bad faith operators.

In my local shopping area this shop popped up on an ad on Facebook (see 5 pictures)

I immediately recognized the location .

Right opposite a primary school playground.

Open from 8 am .

Tasty Treats .

The ad inadvertently included their shop in Corrimal along with Mona Vale .

That's what concerned me , how many shops are owned by one business, we have no idea if they are ok or not . I am not suggesting that anything illegal is associated with this business advertising on Facebook but it certainly got me thinking about multiple shops and owners .

It also got me thinking about advertising cigarettes on Facebook too .

I suggest NSW govt partner with the police , NSW health and fund Councils to employ more Council rangers to be extra enforcement in our shopping precincts that rangers know very well to be extra observers on the ground , until some solid legislation is made to root out this growing scourge.

Certainly there are shops not conducting illegal activity but Community can have no confidence as to what shops are OK .

I am very upset at how seedy our beautiful suburbs are becoming as these shops pop up where we once had lovely small businesses that brought vibrancy and interesting products to our suburban settings .