

**Submission
No 10**

INQUIRY INTO ILLEGAL TOBACCO TRADE

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I am writing to formally express my deep concern and strong opposition to the growing number of so-called “tobacconists” that have been rapidly appearing in our neighbourhoods. These stores, while presenting themselves as legitimate retailers of tobacco products, are often nothing more than thinly veiled fronts for the sale of vape products, illicit items, or other goods clearly targeted at vulnerable young people.

It is becoming increasingly obvious that these establishments are exploiting regulatory grey areas and lax enforcement to operate unchecked. Many are located in close proximity to schools, youth centres, and residential areas—strategic placements that defy common sense and public health policy. Their shopfronts, signage, and advertising—while skirting the legal limits—are clearly designed to appeal to younger demographics.

What is perhaps most disturbing is the apparent lack of action by authorities. Whether through under-resourcing, outdated legislation, or sheer negligence, these businesses are getting away with practices that would raise immediate red flags if they were operating under any other pretext. Why is there no serious scrutiny of who is opening these stores, what they are actually selling, or how they are affecting community wellbeing?

If these tobacconists were held to the same standards as other retail businesses—with proper oversight, health inspections, and accountability—we would see far fewer of them exploiting the system. Instead, we are watching as they multiply, normalizing addictive products in the everyday fabric of our communities while the regulatory system remains curiously silent.

This situation demands urgent review. I call on local councils, health authorities, and state regulators to stop turning a blind eye. We need:

- Clear and enforceable zoning laws preventing tobacconists from opening near schools and residential zones.
- Regular inspections and licensing reviews to ensure these businesses are complying with the law.
- A review of marketing tactics and store aesthetics that blur the lines between legal tobacco retail and youth-targeted environments.
- Our health, our children, and our communities deserve better.