

**Submission  
No 14**

## **INQUIRY INTO ILLEGAL TOBACCO TRADE**

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These tobacco stores are popping up all over Sydney at a very fast pace. They mostly sit empty with no customers to be seen in sight. Some stores even try to fill the shelving up with counterfeit items such as designer bags. They add no benefit to the community, wasting good shop front space that could be utilised by other businesses that can contribute to the long term growth and improvement of a community. They are an eye sore, are frequently set up in main areas and even around schools where children can be exposed to smoking which has been and should continue to be a dying trend. Less than 10% of Australians smoke. The number of these shops existing in our communities are not proportionate and do not add up. What's worse is their potential links to illegal activities, crime and gangs. These shops are not difficult to identify, they operate in broad daylight and often are brightly lit at night. Anyone can go in and access these shops, why cant the police prosecute? We should be tougher on these types of "businesses" and avoid inadvertently encouraging more of them being set up due to lack of consequences.

Please look into tougher law and law enforcement for these types of shopfronts. It should not be so easy for them to set up shop selling black market items such as illicit tobacco, vapes etc and getting away with it - they need to be prosecuted for the long term benefit of this country.