

**Submission
No 51**

INQUIRY INTO ILLEGAL TOBACCO TRADE

Name: Professor Renee Bittoun

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Illegal Tobacco Trade in NSW

Introduction

Illicit tobacco—especially unregulated “chop-chop” and smuggled imported tobacco—poses serious health risks and undermines public health. This important consequence is not commonly known and is not given enough media attention.

Background and Medical Rationale

The Health risks: Chop-chop (home grown) and smuggled imported tobacco is unregulated, often contaminated, and is associated with fungal infections, respiratory conditions, and more.

Users falsely believe chop-chop, home grown tobacco and imported illicit tobacco is safer or more 'natural' than legal regulated tobacco despite evidence to the contrary.

Importance of Expert Testimony – Renee Bittoun

I am a leading expert in tobacco and nicotine addiction treatment, founding Australia’s first smokers’ clinic and now vaping cessation clinic. I have been in the “Tobacco Control” movement since its inception in the 1970s. I lead national cessation programs, am member of multiple national and international committees, have published guidelines and continue in clinical and academic teaching in national and international medical schools and institutions. My insights are essential for understanding the medical and behavioural harms of illicit tobacco use.

I have no conflicts of interest.

References

- Bittoun R. “Chop-chop” tobacco smoking, Medical Journal of Australia, 2002.
- Chop-chop contamination risks: tobaccoinaustralia.org.au
- Survey data on health harms and misperceptions: pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov
- Enforcement details and NSW legislative context: parliament.nsw.gov.au
- Renee Bittoun’s expertise: unsw.edu.au, ramsaymentalhealth.com.au