

*Friday, 26 February 2016*

## **New report highlights the failures of plain packaging**

British American Tobacco Australia (BATA) today released a report by SLG Economics that reviews and analyses information on plain packaging from four independent surveys including three of which were commissioned by government.

The report draws on evidence from these surveys which compare smoking prevalence, attitudes to smoking and health warnings, quitting intentions as well as smoking behavior before and after the introduction of plain packaging.

It highlights that there is a significant body of evidence to show plain packaging hasn't achieved its objectives.

BATA spokesperson Scott McIntyre said the evidence from various health departments and health groups own research shows plain packaging has been a failure.

"The evidence from shows plain packs have their research either had the opposite effect of what was intended, caused little or no change in the indicator or remained on the long term trend," Mr McIntyre said.

"This means that plain packing did not accelerate the long term trend in people quitting but it actually changed some people's views and opinions to the opposite direction of what it was meant to.

"The report is based on surveys commissioned on behalf of federal and state health departments. These are not surveys from the industry."

The four surveys reviewed as part of the report include:

- The Australian Drug Strategy Household Survey (ANDSHS)
- The Cancer Institute New South Wales Tobacco Tracking Survey (CITTS)
- The National Tobacco Plain Packaging Tracking Survey (NTPPTS)
- Roy Morgan Research (RMR)

The ANDSHS data for daily smokers aged over 14 shows that it's clear that the proportion of daily smokers has been declining steadily over time and is almost exactly on the long term trend line.

"This shows there has been no significant effect on daily smoking rates since the introduction of plain packaging," Mr McIntyre said.

"The ANDSHS also shows that the percentage of 12-17 year olds who smoked on a daily basis increased from 2.5 per cent to 3.4 per cent between 2010 and 2013 which is the highest rate since 2004. That's a 36 per cent increase in young people smoking during the time plain packaging was introduced.

"The same survey shows the percentage of smokers nominating health warnings on tobacco packets as the reason for trying to quit smoking reduced from 15.2 per cent in 2010 to 11.1 per cent in 2013."

Evidence from the CITTS suggests that health warnings were less effective at encouraging smokers and recent quitters to stop smoking after the introduction of plain packaging.

The CITTS data strongly challenges the assumption that plain packaging increases the effectiveness of graphic health warnings. It shows that since plain packaging was introduced:

- The proportion of smokers ignoring the health warning has increased.

- The proportion of smokers thinking health warnings are exaggerated has increased.
- The proportion of smokers thinking health warnings help them quit has decreased.
- The proportion of smokers seeking to hide their cigarettes from others due to the health warnings has not changed.

The NTPPTS was conducted by the Cancer Council of Victoria for the Department of Health and Ageing to assess the effects of plain packaging, including the appeal of tobacco.

There are a number of different measures from the NTPPTS that suggest plain packaging has not been successful in reducing the appeal of tobacco.

- Frequency of thoughts about enjoying smoking did not change.
- The proportion of smokers not thinking about quitting and thinking quitting is unimportant increased.
- The proportion of smokers with no intention to quit increased.
- The proportion of smokers who had not attempted to quit and who had not attempted in the previous year increased.
- The proportion of smokers thinking that quitting was of low importance increased.
- The proportion of smokers not attempting to limit their consumption increased.
- Smoking frequency increased.
- The average daily consumption of cigarettes increased.

Analysis of the Roy Morgan Research data also does not find any significant effect of plain packaging on reported tobacco usage by adults or 14-17 year olds.

These independent surveys back industry data which also shows that plain packaging has failed to meet its objectives.

Additional evidence from the industry shows that tobacco sales increased in the first full year following the introduction of plain packaging for the first time in over a decade.

“InfoView<sup>1</sup> industry sales data demonstrates that legal volumes of tobacco grew by 59 million cigarettes or 0.3 per cent in the first 12 months following the implementation of plain packaging, Mr McIntyre said.

“Data from 2014 indicates that only after two significant excise increases, tobacco volumes have reverted to the long term trend of decline.

“Further, the latest illicit tobacco report<sup>2</sup> shows that illegal tobacco now represents 14.5 per cent of all tobacco consumed in Australia. The black market has grown nearly 30 per cent since plain packaging was introduced and the two 12.5 per cent excise increases have been implemented.

“The direct evidence from the Australian experience suggests that even when combined with other tobacco regulations measures, plain packaging has failed to meet its public health outcomes.”

The SLG report was commissioned by BAT with the report containing background on the respected economics consultancy which undertook the review.

The report can be found on our website at: [www.bata.com.au](http://www.bata.com.au)

**Media contact:** Scott McIntyre on **02 9370 1222** or follow on **Twitter @ Scott\_BATA**

<sup>1</sup> Infoview Technologies Pty Ltd – an independent company that collates industry data on Exchange of Sales shipment volumes  
<sup>2</sup> [http://www.bata.com.au/group/sites/bat\\_7wykg8.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/DO9T9289/\\$FILE/medMD9W6RKB.pdf?openelement](http://www.bata.com.au/group/sites/bat_7wykg8.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/DO9T9289/$FILE/medMD9W6RKB.pdf?openelement)