



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY JOINT COMMITTEE ON LAW ENFORCEMENT

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MEDIA RELEASE

Inquiry into illicit tobacco

Today, the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement presented its final report on its inquiry into illicit tobacco. The inquiry commenced in December 2015, and has shed new light on the growth of the illicit tobacco market in Australia, and the involvement of serious and transnational criminal groups in that market.

Throughout the inquiry, the committee took evidence from a wide range of witnesses, representing law enforcement and border security agencies, health departments, NGOs, academics, retailers, and industry bodies and private companies.

The committee acknowledges and welcomes the extensive steps already taken by the Australian Government during the course of this inquiry to tackle the illicit tobacco market, including the establishment of the Illicit Tobacco Taskforce. These steps are to be commended, but there is more to do.

The committee's inquiry has shown that tobacco policies are most appropriately managed by the Department of Health. However, the inquiry has clearly demonstrated that the production, smuggling and sales of illicit tobacco is a law enforcement issue that requires a law enforcement response, most appropriately managed and coordinated by the relevant law enforcement agencies at the Commonwealth level in collaboration with state and territory police forces.

The committee makes a number of recommendations to the Australian Government in how to further enhance the steps being taken to tackle the illicit tobacco market. Reflecting the committee's conclusion that the problem of illicit tobacco is most appropriately addressed as a law enforcement problem, one of the committee's recommendations is that the Illicit Tobacco Taskforce should be led by the Department of Home Affairs, not the Department of Health as is the current approach.

The committee thanks all participants in this important inquiry, and looks forward to the government's response to its recommendations.

The inquiry's terms of reference and further information can be found on the committee's website at https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/

[Committees/Joint/Law Enforcement/IllicitTobacco46th](#), or by contacting the committee secretariat on +61 2 6277 3419 or le.committee@aph.gov.au.