

News release

British American Tobacco response to New Zealand Government's plain packaging announcement

19 February 2013

The New Zealand Government has said today it is likely to delay the implementation of plain packaging for tobacco products until the World Trade Organisation disputes facing the Australian Government have been decided.

Kingsley Wheaton, Director of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs, said: "We understand the reasons why the New Zealand Government has taken this pragmatic step to defer its decision regarding plain packaging.

"The New Zealand Government has listened to the many arguments for and against this regulatory measure and has acknowledged both the importance of the issue to its trade obligations, as well as the impending World Trade Organisation challenge that Australia is currently facing.

"We support reasonable and evidence-based regulation but there is still no credible evidence to suggest plain packaging will support the New Zealand Government's stated public health objectives. In fact, ill-thought through regulation, like plain packaging, brings with it the very real threat of serious unintended consequences, such as a rise in the number of smokers willing to turn to the black market.


"Furthermore, plain packs play right into the hands of the counterfeiters who are ready and waiting to supply people, regardless of their age, with cheap tobacco products."

Mr Wheaton concluded: "We remain opposed to the plain packaging of tobacco products not only because of the lack of credible evidence to suggest it will deliver its policy aims but also due to the likely and serious unintended consequences."

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