VISIT TO SINGAPORE

November 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
RECOMMENDATIONS

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December 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The principal findings from the discussions and meetings during the visit to Singapore are recorded below together with a listing of Recommendations.

* Plain Packaging in Australia has been a failure in meeting the objectives set when introduced 5 years ago.

* The clear link between Plain Packaging and the illicit trade is becoming more extensive with counterfeit plain packs having now been identified in the UK. In Australia illicit whites packs are being counterfeited following the plain pack easy to copy specification with newly thought up product names.

* The level of illicit trade is now approaching 14% in Australia and similar levels in the UK for cigarettes.

* The elimination of pack complexity by introducing plain packaging is making counterfeiting much more easy to undertake using less sophisticated printing manufacturing methods.

* Loss of the packaging industry ability to innovate and introduce cross market packaging applications is a loss to the consumer.

* Future threats to consumer branded existing products e.g. alcohol, soda drinks and certain food and snack products using plain packaging with tobacco as a test bed.

* The threat to inward investment by foreign multinational companies and perception of Singapore supporting free trade with light touch regulation would be seriously challenged.

* The loss of locally based manufacturing and innovation capabilities and revenue generating business would be detrimental to the national economy.

* Greater consideration should be made of successful and effective health education programmes existing in other countries e.g. Germany.

* Future regulation on the size of pack health warnings needs a clear strategy allowing a balance of brand recognition, product quality assurance and easy product identification with increases in health warning size being a consideration in place of plain packaging.

RECOMMENDATIONS

* With a proposed Singapore consultation anticipated on tobacco regulation a full response to all aspects needs to be supplied together with the listing of the unintended consequences from the main report.

* The need for evidence based information must be included and taken into account in the submissions supported by research data.

* The loss of governmental revenue generated by the illicit trade needs to be communicated to the Government using experiences from Australia, the UK and France.

* A public policy of increased health education and awareness should be adopted.

* Emphasise that tobacco is a legal product and the law should not restrict adults who know the health risks in matters of consumer choice.

* Use the experience from other countries who have been involved with similar governmental consultations on plain packaging, particularly those who have rejected the proposal subsequently such as Sweden, Macedonia, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

* Seek meetings with Government officials and local Customs representatives and propose postponing any decision on plain packaging until the international situation becomes clearer regarding effectiveness and policy success.

* Adopt a 'fall-back' strategy of a compromise increase in health warning size to 65% of health warning graphical pack coverage.

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