



PRESS RELEASE
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**ON 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF PLAIN PACKAGING IN AUSTRALIA,
RESULTS CONFIRM THAT PLAIN PACKAGING DOES NOT CURB SMOKING**

Montreal, December 7, 2017 – Five years after Australia introduced plain packaging on all tobacco products, data show that the policy has had no impact on reducing smoking across the country. While the Australian government admitted earlier this year that smoking rates have not declined since the introduction of plain packaging – the first time the rates have not decreased in more than two decades – neither their Department of Health nor Canada’s normally-vocal anti-tobacco lobby have made any statements in connection to this Five-Year milestone.

“We are not surprised that the data clearly indicates that implementing plain packaging has not worked in Australia,” says Eric Gagnon, Head of External and Corporate Affairs for Imperial Tobacco. “It’s time Canada recognized that efforts to legislate plain packaging will result in similar numbers.”

France has discovered the same. Tobacco sales have not decreased in the year since the Republic introduced plain packaging, and last week the country’s health minister, Agnès Buzyn, stated in the legislature that “plain packaging has therefore not reduced official tobacco sales.”

“The answer to reducing the number of smokers is not, and has never been, plain packaging,” added Eric Gagnon. “Plain packaging however does impact the sale of contraband tobacco products. Australia’s introduction of the legislation corresponded with a significant increase in the market share of illegal tobacco in the country, rising over 25% in the first two years.ⁱ Plain packaging forces legal companies to abandon their symbols of legitimacy and makes it easier to counterfeit tobacco products. Canada must take a step back and look at the data. It’s the reasonable thing to do.”

As Bill S-5, which mandates plain packaging, moves into second reading in the House of Commons, Imperial Tobacco Canada wishes to remind legislators of the inefficiency of plain packaging observed in other countries.

Imperial Tobacco Canada supports the objective set forth by Health Canada to reduce the smoking rate to 5 per cent by 2035, and believes the best way of achieving this goal is by offering consumers less harmful alternatives, such as vaping products.

“There is sound evidence telling us that vaping products are less-risky than traditional cigarettes, but they are currently illegal” added Eric Gagnon. “Our government needs to embrace the harm reduction model supported by other governments and public health experts, and provide Canadians with access to legal regulated vaping products as soon as possible.”

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For more information or for interview request with our spokesperson, please contact:

Joanne Lépine
Torchia Communications
Off.: 514-288-8290 ext. 216
Cell.: 514-296-5056
jlepine@torchiacom.com

Karen Parucha
Torchia Communications
Off.: 416-341-9929 ext. 228
Cell.: 416-898-4336
karen@torchiacom.com

ⁱ KPMG Report, ‘Illicit Tobacco in Australia 2016’. <https://home.kpmg.com/uk/en/home/insights/2017/04/illicit-tobacco-in-australia-2016.html>