

## **Independent Review of SmokeFree 2030 Policies: meeting with the Association of Convenience Stores (14/02/22)**

- The independent review was briefly introduced, with an explanation that we need to do more to get to SmokeFree 2030 and that ACS's views are important in this process.
- The discussion continued on the role of tobacco and the impact of public health policy on retailers.
- ACS outlined how there is a general decline in tobacco sales and they mainly have a low profit margin for retailers. The traditional model of confectionary, tobacco, news (CTN) has changed.
- Tobacco is now quite often a small proportion of the small retailer's shop offer, and there is a move towards other products including items like perishables. Regular and habitual visits to outlets can be driven by tobacco.
- Illicit tobacco and the impact can often be localised within specific communities and retailers as convenience store markets are often hyper-localised. Enforcement of the black market is important to ACS members.
- There was a discussion around the difficulty and lack of join-up to tackle illicit tobacco sales enforcement in local communities and the often-slow response rates. Enforcement activity is often in shops, rather than illicit sales outside of shops e.g., from cars.
- Retailers can adapt to declining tobacco sales, but it comes with costs, and they need lead in time to implement changes. It was considered that thinking about minimising impact on the retailers is important to make it proportional and workable.
- Decline in tobacco is long, slow and predictable which is helpful for retailers.
- Challenge 25 is considered to be very effective and helps retailers to ask for proof of age and change the expectation of the customer and allow them to challenge customers.
- The ACS said its members recognised tobacco as a uniquely dangerous product.
- There was a discussion around the challenges of the New Zealand 'SmokeFree generation' model for tobacco retailers. It was noted not to underestimate the challenges of implementation and operational challenges of the rollout.
- ACS considered that there is value in age 18 restricted consistency which is clear for retailers.
- There was a brief discussion on disposable e-cigarettes coming on the market with newer supply chains, and the importance of quality standards to protect consumers and give retailers confidence in the products they stock.
- The ACS considered a tobacco license a severe measure, as retailers already regulate who buys the product. They re-emphasised that the illicit market is the question to focus on and often where children are being sold tobacco.