

# CONSTITUENT QUESTION

## Tobacco Control House of Assembly on 21 May 2024

ASKED BY: Hon Guy Barnett MP

ANSWERED BY: Simon Behrakis MP

### QUESTION:

Recently I have been contacted by a local business owner who is worried about tobacco shops selling unregulated or black market tobacco products. The regulation of tobacco is a matter for the Department of Health, and this business owner is concerned that their oversight is not strong enough. The individual I spoke to has conveyed a genuine concern about the potential consequences of this issue growing. Is this an issue your department is aware of, and can you provide more information on the department's tobacco control arrangements already in place?

### ANSWER:

I am advised that the Public Health Services Tobacco Control Team employs 3.7 FTE as nominated officers under Part 4 Tobacco and Other Smoking Product section of the Public Health Act 1997. This includes two Tobacco Control Officers (North and South).

There was a vacancy in the Tobacco Control Officer (South) role between 23 November 2023 and 28 April 2024. This position is now filled and there are currently two substantive Tobacco Control Officers employed – one in the south and one in the north of Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Government is working to increase the Tobacco Control Team's capacity to enforce a national ban on e-cigarettes outside of the prescription pathway. This increased enforcement capacity is timely with the planned increases in tobacco tax and following the introduction of the Commonwealth Public Health (Tobacco and other Products) Act 2023 that will further standardise tobacco packaging.

Public Health Services is also working with Tasmania Police and has a representative on the National Illicit Tobacco Enforcement and Compliance Working Group led by Australian Border Force.

The Tasmanian Government aims to reduce the prevalence of smoking and the harms it causes, guided by the Tasmanian Tobacco Action Plan 2022-2026. This includes actions to address the concerns you have raised. We will continue to undertake compliance and enforcement activity among all premises licensed to sell smoking products and to build on initiatives to reduce retail availability particularly in low socioeconomic areas.

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guy Barnett', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Hon Guy Barnett MP  
**Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Date: 7 June 2024