



## **Press Release**

10 September 2010

# **Retailers call for shelving of Lees-Galloway Bill**

The Association of Community Retailers (ACR) today calls on the Government to shelve the anti-commerce Bill promoted by the Palmerston North Labour MP Iain Lees-Galloway to have point of sale tobacco displays banned.

The Bill has apparently been drawn from the Parliamentary Ballot and Mr Lees-Galloway is seeking cross party support for it to become legislation.

“There are very real concerns over this Bill from small, family-owned community retailers throughout New Zealand,” says ACR spokesperson Richard Green, who runs a tobacconist in Palmerston North. The ACR urges the Government to shelve the Bill.

First, there is already a process being undertaken through the Associate Minister of Health, Mrs Tariana Turia, to review tobacco displays in retail outlets.

Secondly, the Maori Affairs Select Committee has for the last year been running an inquiry into the tobacco industry. While not directly related to the terms of reference for the inquiry, the debate has generally focussed around retailers being able to continue having a legal product on display.

Third, according to a recent survey, over 60 percent of Kiwi retailers don't agree with banning displays of tobacco products and almost 90 percent believe that any such ban won't reduce smoking.

Fourth, other countries are rejecting calls to ban tobacco displays. Denmark and Sweden recently rejected bans because there was no evidence that displays cause people to smoke and instead chose to be more active in educating retailers in their legal responsibilities. The UK looks set to review and overturn its current ban.

Fifth, there will be increased thefts from dairies and convenience stores if shopkeepers are forced to have tobacco hidden.

“This Bill completely goes against the views of retailers who make up the backbone of this country's economy. It's best that this bill is nipped in the bud before it does any real economic damage,” Mr Green said.

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**For more information and interviews, contact Richard Green 027 492 4670 or Murray Gibson (Timaru) 03 688 9677**