



**BRITISH AMERICAN  
TOBACCO  
AUSTRALIA**

## *news release*

For immediate release: 25 June 2004

### **BATA disappointed by cigarette warnings decision**

British American Tobacco Australia (BATA) expressed its disappointment today at the decision by the Federal Government to put graphic health warnings on tobacco products.

"Given the broad community awareness of the risks of smoking, graphic images will not increase people's knowledge of the risks of smoking but will stigmatise smokers and retailers as well as damage our brands," said John Galligan, Director of Corporate & Regulatory Affairs, British American Tobacco Australia.

Only two countries have introduced this type of warning - Brazil and Canada - and the Canadian health department's own figures do not demonstrate an attributable effect on smoking rates<sup>1</sup>. There is certainly no evidence to verify the 3% decline rate figure used by the Australian government to justify the introduction of graphic health warnings here.

"Our argument is not with the health warnings - we support these and have put them on our packs for over 30 years. Our argument is with the blinkered approach at the expense of other clear areas for action," said Mr Galligan.

Community attitude research in Australia<sup>2</sup> shows that fully 88% of people interviewed believe that a national education program targeting children would be a more appropriate use of resources than putting new graphic health warnings on cigarette packets.

The same research also showed that three quarters (77%) of the community believes that graphic health warnings would have little or no effect on smoking incidence and that 64% believe there is currently enough information available about the health risks associated with smoking.

"British American Tobacco Australia supports education initiatives targeting children, retailers and the wider community aimed at stamping out youth smoking. We also call on the Government to take stronger action to eliminate the illegal tobacco trade in Australia which has been estimated to rob taxpayers of up to \$500 million every year.

"While we believe that governments should determine the best way to communicate the risks of smoking, these graphic images do not inform, rather, they are designed to shock and repel consumers and deface tobacco brands. Indeed, the community are saying that they will not work and that the Government should be looking at addressing other critical issues instead," said Mr Galligan.

For more information, please contact: John Galligan (02) 9370 1030

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Research: Environics Research Group Limited. 2003: *The Health Effects of Tobacco and Health Warning Messages on Cigarette Packaging*. Survey of Adults and Survey of Youth Prepared for Health Canada, March 2003

<sup>2</sup> Community Attitude Research undertaken by Crosby/Tetor and commissioned by British American Tobacco Australia (see attached interview schedule)



## RESEARCH RESULTS

Thinking now about information that is available in the community regarding the health risks associated with smoking. Do you think that there should be even more information about the risks of smoking or do you think that there is currently enough information or is there currently too much information about the risks of smoking?

AMOUNT OF INFORMATION CURRENTLY AVAILABLE	TOTAL
	n=600
Currently enough information	64%
Should be even more information	29%
Currently too much information	6%
Don't know/refused	1%

Being honest with yourself if new health warnings are introduced on cigarette packets in the form of graphic colour pictures do you believe that they will actually reduce smoking in the community, or will they have little or no effect, or will they actually cause an increase in smoking?

RESULT OF GOVERNMENT PLANS	TOTAL
	n=600
Little or no effect	77%
Reduce smoking	19%
Increase in smoking	3%
Unsure/Don't know	1%

Do you think that a national education program targeted at children would be a more appropriate use of Government resources than putting new health warnings on cigarette packets and further restrictions on smoking?

<b>NATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>n=600</b>
<b>Definitely yes</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>Probably yes</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>TOTAL YES</b>	<b>88%</b>
<b>Probably no</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Definitely no</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>TOTAL NO</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>D/S TOTAL YES - TOTAL NO</b>	<b>+79</b>

*Survey conducted 21-22 October 2003 with a sample of n=600 voters in  $\pm 6\%$  Federal electorates Australia-wide (excluding Victoria).*

*In general, the margin of error for a sample size of approximately 600 is  $\pm 4$  percentage points in 95 out of 100 cases.*

*It should be understood, however, that this margin of error only applies to measuring a proportion based on the total sample. Margins of error will be different for comparisons between sub samples and for quantitative measures, such as means derived from ratings scales.*

*Any variation in reported percentages of  $\pm 1\%$  is due only to rounding.*

*Research Commissioned by British American Tobacco Australia*