



**Australian Government**  
**Illicit Tobacco and**  
**E-cigarette Commissioner**



Illicit Tobacco and E-cigarette  
National Symposium

# **Strengthening Australia's coordinated response against illicit tobacco and e-cigarettes**

**Communiqué — for public release**

On 19 March 2026, the Illicit Tobacco and E-cigarette (ITEC) Commissioner hosted a national symposium in Canberra. The event brought together more than 100 participants representing over 50 agencies across health, law enforcement, policy, intelligence and research to strengthen Australia's coordinated national response to illicit tobacco and e-cigarettes. This was the second national symposium, with the first event held in December 2024.

## **Overview**

Anchored in the priorities set out in the 2024–25 ITEC Commissioner Report to the Australian Parliament, the symposium was about building a stronger national approach - one that improves coordination between agencies, strengthens laws and regulation, makes better use of shared intelligence and evidence, and engages more effectively with consumers. Through focused panels and practical discussions, the program fostered the collective action needed to disrupt criminal networks, reduce harm, and protect communities.

In his opening address, Assistant Minister Hill acknowledged that Australia faces a serious and widespread problem with illicit tobacco and e-cigarette trade, with organised crime penetrating the market and impacting public health, community safety and the economy. He remarked that because these markets are complex and continually evolving, they cannot be addressed by any single agency or policy portfolio. He outlined that the Australian Government is pursuing a comprehensive, unified and planned strategy of attack to reduce violence and criminal activity through things like international detection, stronger border controls, coordinated national crackdowns on illegal retailers, and tighter financial and asset-seizure measures. He emphasised that a sustained, nationally coordinated approach is required to address this complex challenge and outlined

reforms that are underway across all jurisdictions, including announcing Commonwealth legislation that proposes new offences and penalties.

Discussions throughout the day highlighted the importance of learning from international and domestic experiences to drive intelligence-led, strategic and adaptive responses to market complexity. Insights were explored regarding prevalence data, consumer behaviour and enforcement outcomes to help shape effective future policy and maintain strong deterrence. Participants emphasised that enforcement must be integrated with demand reduction and public health strategies, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led solutions. Discussions also focussed on the momentum around strengthening supply chain controls, licensing, data sharing, and trusted insider risk management.

### **Outcomes**

Participants engaged in cross-portfolio, cross-government, and cross-agency dialogue to maximise shared understanding of Australia's national priorities in addressing illicit tobacco and e-cigarettes. This forged cohesive leadership across policing, border protection, health, and regulatory agencies to support an effective national response.

Opportunities identified included, but not limited to, increasing international interventions; levelling the playing field across the country on licencing and legislation; addressing downstream impacts of disruption including with regards to prosecution and changing illicit sales mechanisms; sustained downward pressure on demand for market size reduction; responding to the inextricable market links between illicit tobacco and vapes; and, having a whole of market strategic view that sustains a focus on consistent coordinated approach to integrated risk in the face of agile criminal activity.

Overall, the national symposium reinforced the value of coordinated, system-wide action across enforcement, regulation, health, and policy. It served as an important engagement mechanism that brought leaders and practitioners together to align priorities, share insights, and test approaches. Engagement like this strengthens Australia's response to illicit tobacco and e-cigarettes, supporting a holistic approach that protects community safety and public health outcomes.

When policy and operations are aligned across portfolios, the system is stronger.

## Participants

Australian Capital Territory	New South Wales	Northern Territory	Victoria
<p>ACT Health</p> <p>ACT Police</p> <p>Access Canberra</p>	<p>NSW Crime Commission</p> <p>NSW Health</p> <p>NSW Department of Justice</p>	<p>NT Trade, Business and Asian Relations</p> <p>NT Health</p>	<p>VIC Police</p> <p>VIC Justice and Community Safety</p> <p>VIC Health</p>
Western Australia	South Australia	Queensland	Tasmania
<p>WA Health</p> <p>WA Police</p>	<p>SA Consumer and Business Services</p> <p>SA Police</p> <p>SA Health</p> <p>Preventative Health SA</p>	<p>QLD Crime and Corruption Commission</p> <p>QLD Health</p> <p>QLD Police</p>	<p>TAS Health</p> <p>TAS Police</p>
Commonwealth			
<p>Assistant Minister for Citizenship, Custom and Multicultural Affairs, The Hon Julian Hill MP</p> <p>Office of the Illicit Tobacco and E-cigarette Commissioner</p> <p>Attorney-General's Department</p> <p>Australian Border Force</p> <p>Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission</p> <p>Australian Federal Police</p> <p>Australian Institute of Criminology</p>		<p>Australian Taxation Office</p> <p>Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre</p> <p>Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</p> <p>Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, including the Therapeutic Goods Administration</p> <p>Department of Home Affairs</p> <p>Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet</p>	
International			

New Zealand Health  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime  
World Health Organisation

**Non-Government**

Australian Council on Smoking and Health  
Australian Medical Association  
Australian National University  
Cancer Council Australia  
Cancer Council NSW  
Cancer Council VIC  
Deakin University  
Lung Foundation Australia  
Public Health Association  
University of Melbourne  
University of Queensland  
University of Sydney  
Verian Australia