

TASKFORCESUBMISSION: submission

NAME: Robert Nalis

POSITION:

ORGANISATION:

SUBMISSION1: Submission in response to Technical Report no. 2:
Tobacco control in Australia: making smoking history.

1. Increase of excise and customs duty on tobacco to discourage smoking.

"A target for 2020. Smoking prevalence of no more than 9%..." (p.3)

Pipe smokers account for 1% to 2% of the population (QUIT Campaign website), less than a quarter of the "target for 2020". There is no need for any increase in duty to discourage smoking amongst this group. Pipe tobacco in Australia is already amongst the most expensive in the world: it costs twice as much as it does in Germany, and three times as much as in the USA. For example: Peterson's Irish Flake (50g) costs AUD\$36 in Australia, 9.35 euros in Germany and US\$10 in the USA.

If anything, duty on pipe tobacco could be decreased, not only in recognition of the fact that pipe smoking is nowhere near as detrimental to a person's health as cigarette smoking, but also as a way of encouraging die-hard cigarette smokers to switch to a form of smoking which is not as addictive or unhealthy.

Given the current high price, any further increase in duty on pipe tobacco could be misinterpreted as an attempt to force pipe smokers to switch to cigarettes as a cheaper alternative.

2. Banning of internet sales of tobacco products.

A lot of pipe smokers like to have a varied selection of blends from which to choose, and will actively seek out different and interesting blends to add to their collection. Due to the tiny market for pipe tobacco in Australia, there is a very limited range of tobaccos available, a lot of which are rather mediocre and avoidable. The more complex and high-quality blends can only be obtained by purchasing from overseas establishments via the internet. Any ban on internet sales of tobacco products would unjustifiably prevent pipe smokers from obtaining high-quality tobaccos, and might in extreme cases lead to some smokers switching to readily available and less-expensive cigarettes.

3. Snuff.*

There is no mention in the report of snuff. Snuff is an ideal replacement for cigarettes, as it has the same fast nicotine absorption rate as cigarettes and can provide other ritualistic components of the smoking habit.**

After 300 years of use there has been no evidence of it having any detrimental effect on the health of users. Health warnings in Europe were changed from "...seriously damages your health and causes cancer" to "...can damage your health and is addictive" in recognition of the fact that it is non-carcinogenic. In England, where they have very high taxes on smoking tobacco, there is no tobacco tax levied on snuff, in recognition of its being harmless to the user.

"Switching from cigarettes to snuff could have enormous health benefits...Snuff could save more lives and avoid more ill-health than any other preventive measure likely to be available to developed nations well into the 21st century."**

Unfortunately, the federal and state governments of Australia have actively prevented cigarette smokers from switching to a tobacco product that will not kill them by banning the retail sale of snuff and, in 2007, reclassifying snuff for import purposes so as to effectively increase duty payable by almost 1500%. No other government in the world is pursuing such a ludicrous course. If the government was serious about getting people off cigarettes, they would repeal the bans on the sale of snuff and return it to its pre-2007 classification for import purposes, thus allowing cigarette smokers to swap their lung cancer for a large paisley handkerchief.

*By snuff, I am referring specifically to the European style of nasal snuff, and not to oral tobaccos, toothpaste, or bizarre mixtures of ash, lime and animal faeces which might also be referred to as snuff.

***"A new age for snuff?" Russell, Jarvis, Feyerabend. The Lancet. 1980. pp 474-475

PRIVACY: yes

SUBMIT: Submit