

Media Release

The Hon Enver Erdogan MP

Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Corrections

Minister for Youth Justice



Thursday, 22 January 2026

APPLY NOW FOR A TOBACCO LICENCE OR FACE HEAVY PENALTIES

The Allan Labor Government is calling on tobacco retailers and wholesalers to apply for a tobacco licence, with less than two weeks left before enforcement begins as part of its crackdown on the illicit tobacco trade and organised crime.

Enforcement will be supported by close co-operation between the regulator, Victoria Police and other authorities to stamp out the illegal tobacco trade.

Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation Enver Erdogan said businesses must lodge their applications before 31 January 2026, ahead of licences becoming mandatory from 1 February 2026.

More than 3,300 applications have already been received by Tobacco Licensing Victoria since the scheme commenced on 1 July, with more expected ahead of the deadline.

Anyone who sells tobacco in Victoria will need to apply for a licence if they have not already done so, including supermarkets, convenience stores, liquor stores, petrol stations and online retailers.

Businesses that apply before 1 February can continue to trade while their application is assessed. Anyone who applies on or after 1 February must wait until they are granted a licence before selling tobacco.

From 1 February, licensing inspectors will be on the ground to ensure businesses are complying with their obligations and act against those who break the law.

The biggest deterrents are our tough new penalties as anyone found selling tobacco without a licence faces fines of up to \$170,948.40 or up to five years in jail – while businesses face fines of more than \$854,000. Anyone caught selling illicit tobacco faces fines of up to \$366,318 or up to 15 years in jail, with businesses risking penalties of more than \$1.8 million.

Licences will only be granted to fit and proper people who pass a strict test, with the regulator able to refuse a licence based on a person's history or known associates.

Tobacco Licensing Victoria will have strong new enforcement powers – including suspending or cancelling licences, seizing illegal tobacco products, and court action. They'll be working closely with Victoria Police to support intelligence-gathering efforts targeting serious and organised crime.

The *Victorian Budget 2025/26* delivered \$46 million to establish the new licensing scheme and regulator and help smoke out the illegal tobacco market.

For more information and to apply for a licence through Service Victoria, visit vic.gov.au/apply-tobacco-licence.

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Quotes attributable to Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation Enver Erdogan

“Victoria is working to smoke out illicit tobacco operators, with tough penalties for anyone selling illicit tobacco or selling tobacco without a licence from February.”

“As the deadline approaches, we’re urging every legitimate business that sells legal tobacco to apply now, so we can continue our strong crackdown on illegal tobacco and the criminal activity that sits behind it.”