

Media Release

The Hon Enver Erdogan MP

Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Minister for Corrections
Minister for Youth Justice



Friday, 30 January 2026

SMOKING OUT ILLICIT TOBACCO

The Allan Labor Government is intensifying its crackdown on illicit tobacco – with Tobacco Licensing Victoria to begin enforcing Victoria’s new tobacco licensing scheme next week.

Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation Enver Erdogan today announced inspectors will start compliance and enforcement operations – working with legitimate retailers to meet their licensing requirements and gathering intelligence to take action against operators selling illicit tobacco.

Inspectors will undertake compliance and enforcement operations to ensure businesses are meeting their licensing obligations – and take strong action against stores breaking the law.

Under tough new penalties, anyone found selling illicit tobacco faces fines of almost \$370,000 or up to 15 years in jail, while businesses risk fines of more than \$1.8 million.

Since the scheme started on 1 July 2025, Tobacco Licensing Victoria has received more than 4,100 licence applications, with more than 2,000 licenses now granted.

Businesses that lodge their application before 1 February can continue trading while their application is assessed.

Tobacco Licensing Victoria can suspend or cancel licenses, seize illegal tobacco products and take court action.

Inspectors will also work closely with Victoria Police and other enforcement agencies, providing intelligence as part of broader efforts to disrupt organised crime and illicit tobacco supply chains.

Victoria Police continue to run intelligence-led operations targeting organised crime groups involved in illicit tobacco.

Tobacco Licensing Victoria will provide regulatory intelligence to support these broader investigations, enabling police to use their additional powers – including executing warrants and dismantling criminal supply chains – to disrupt illegal activity at every level of the market.

Victorians can also report stores selling illegal tobacco via the Tobacco Licensing Victoria website. A list of licensed tobacco retailers and wholesalers will be publicly available and regularly updated.

The *Victorian Budget 2025/26* included \$46 million to establish the new licensing scheme and regulator, which oversees the legal supply of tobacco products in Victoria including licensing, compliance and enforcement.

For more information or to apply for a tobacco licence, visit vic.gov.au/tobacco-licensing.

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

“Inspectors will be out in the community and won’t hesitate to act on operators who think they can ignore the law.”

“This scheme gives Victoria Police and other agencies the intelligence and powers they need to crack down on organised crime.”

“If you are doing the wrong thing and dealing in illegal tobacco, you will get caught and you will face the toughest penalties in Australia.”

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