



\$40 million in illegal tobacco seized from QLD Toowoomba region

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This is a joint media release between the Australian Taxation Office and Queensland Police.

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) executed a warrant earlier this week in Linthorpe, Queensland, seizing 25 tonnes of illicit tobacco. We joined forces with Queensland Police to uncover 10 acres of mature tobacco with an estimated excise value of almost \$40 million.

The ATO is responsible for detecting, investigating and prosecuting those who domestically grow or manufacture illicit tobacco products.

Assistant Commissioner Ian Read says engaging in the illicit tobacco trade is not victimless. It significantly deprives the community of taxes that are required to fund essential community services such as roads and schools.

“The trade of illicit tobacco products in Australia has widespread negative consequences across the community. Tobacco growing operations are not run by small producers or farmers. They are run by organised criminal syndicates who deliberately engage in illegal activities,” Mr Read said.

“Organised criminals who deal in illicit tobacco rob the Australian community by using their profits to fund their criminal behaviour well beyond the sale of illegal tobacco.”

If you suspect that illegal tobacco is being grown or manufactured in your community you can confidentially report it online at ato.gov.au/illicittobacco or by calling **1800 060 062**.


“Signs to look out for include intense labour production between November and May, suspicious enquiries about land for lease and unexplained use of water resources. Mature tobacco plants can be up to 2.5 metres tall, have large green leaves and long trumpet-shaped, white-pinkish flowers, and may resemble kale, cabbage or corn,” Mr Read said.

It has been illegal to grow tobacco in Australia for more than a decade. If convicted, growing tobacco carries a maximum penalty of up to 10 years imprisonment. The ATO estimates that illicit tobacco costs the Australian community \$822 million in lost revenue each year.

The ATO is part of the Illicit Tobacco Taskforce (ITTF), which enhances the ability of the ATO and our partner agencies to protect Commonwealth revenue by proactively detecting, disrupting and dismantling serious organised crime syndicates that deal in illicit tobacco.

For more information about illicit tobacco, visit ato.gov.au/illicittobacco.

Media images and video

- [Illicit tobacco infographic \(PDF 613KB\)](#) 
- Tobacco crop image 1
- Tobacco crop image 2
- Tobacco flower image
- Tobacco seed image
- [Tobacco crop destruction video \(MP4 30.6MB\)](#) 

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