

WHO hails Australia tobacco packaging ban

August 15 2012

The World Health Organization on Wednesday welcomed the decision by Australia's High Court to [dismiss a legal challenge against plain cigarette packaging](#) and hoped it would have a "domino effect" in other countries.

"The industry's attempt to derail this effective [tobacco control](#) measure failed," said the UN health agency's director general Margaret Chan.

Four companies led by British American Tobacco (BAT) had challenged Australia's plans to enforce the sale of tobacco products in plain packaging from December 2012.

They claimed it infringed their intellectual property rights by banning brands and trademarks from packets, and was unconstitutional. But Australia's High Court on Wednesday ruled against the challenge.

Chan pointed out that other countries had been watching the outcome of the hearing and were considering similar measures.

"With so many countries lined up to ride on Australia's coattails, what we hope to see is a [domino effect](#) for the good of public health," she said.

"Plain packaging is a highly effective way to counter industry's ruthless marketing tactics," added the WHO chief.

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Citation: WHO hails Australia tobacco packaging ban (2012, August 15) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-08-hails-australia-tobacco-packaging.html>

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