

# Illicit tobacco

**Criminals profit. Your community pays.**



## What is illicit tobacco?

- Tobacco grown, manufactured and/or produced in Australia.
- Imported tobacco for which no customs duty has been paid.
- Tobacco sold without payment of taxes.

## \$2.7 billion

went to criminals instead of the community\*

\*2022-23

### ATO partnerships

The ATO is part of the Illicit Tobacco Taskforce (ITTF), which was established to detect, disrupt and dismantle serious organised crime syndicates that deal in illicit tobacco.

## Life cycle of illicit tobacco



Land is ploughed and ready to plant tobacco seedlings.



Seedlings take 2 to 3 months to grow into mature tobacco plants. November to May is peak growing season in Australia.



Matured tobacco plants are harvested when they become large and leafy.



Harvested tobacco leaves are dried in a kiln and then cut and sold as loose tobacco, otherwise known as 'chop-chop'.

## Would you recognise a tobacco plant?

- 2.5 metres tall.
- Large green leaves.
- Long trumpet-shaped, white-pinkish flowers.
- May resemble kale, cabbage or corn.

## Signs of an illicit growing operation

- Intense labour production between November and May.
- People approaching real estate agents, landowners or farmers to lease land.
- Unusual earthworks along creeks and rivers.
- Unexplained and potentially unlawful use of water resources.
- A strong tobacco odour.
- Unusual source of loose tobacco.

## Types of illicit tobacco products

Illicit tobacco products may include:

- cigarettes
- cigars
- loose tobacco (also known as 'chop-chop')
- tobacco leaf and plant matter.

## Let's cut illicit tobacco off at the root

- Report growing operations.
- Don't buy illicit tobacco products.
- Report illicit tobacco products being sold.
- Report suspicious activity.

If you identify suspicious activity, report it to the ATO online at [ato.gov.au/tipoff](https://ato.gov.au/tipoff), or phone **1800 060 062**. Visit [ato.gov.au/illicittobacco](https://ato.gov.au/illicittobacco) for more information.



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