

GOVERNMENT SAYS:

“Plain packaging means that the glamour is gone from smoking.”

Nicola Roxon, Former Minister of Health and Ageing, Australia, 2011

Health warnings on the packaging of all tobacco products have progressed from simple, small, weak text warnings 30 years ago to strong, graphic warnings introduced by Canada in 2001. **CURRENTLY, PICTORIAL WARNINGS HAVE BEEN ADOPTED BY ABOUT ONE-QUARTER OF COUNTRIES, WITH SEVERAL IN THEIR SECOND ROUND OF SUCH WARNINGS.**

Health messages on cigarette packaging deliver important information directly to smokers. The message is repeated and reinforced every time a smoker reaches for a cigarette.

In one of its strongest provisions, Article 11 of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control compels Parties, within three years of becoming a Party, to require tobacco product health warnings that cover at least 30%, and preferably 50%, of the visible area on a cigarette pack. Warnings should be extended to all forms of smoking and smokeless tobacco.

In 2012, plain packaging—specifically, the standardization of cigarette packaging that removes all product advertising including colors, logos, and brand imagery, and enforces restrictions on font size and type—is a major battleground between the industry and governments.

Australia was the first country to adopt legislation to require plain packaging, and did so in the face of bitter opposition from the tobacco industry, including legal threats.

Action on Smoking and Health UK, a tobacco control advocacy group, explained, “Of all the laws on tobacco control, there are few the tobacco industry fears more than plain or standardized packaging. Even where tobacco advertising is banned, the pack is the tobacco’s silent salesman, calling out from retailers’ shelves and displayed by smokers 20 times a day. The ad men don’t simply use the pack to tell us which brand is for women and which for men, or which brands are youthful and which are sophisticated. They can also use them to send out misleading, illegal signals giving the impression that one is less harmful or less addictive than another.”

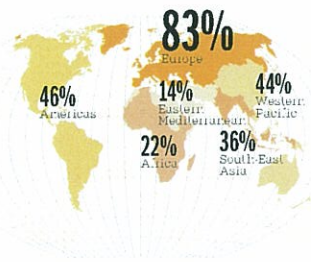
THE INDUSTRY SAYS:

“BAT Australia is opposed to the introduction of plain packaging. It is unfair and unworkable and will inevitably bring with it significant unintended consequences.”

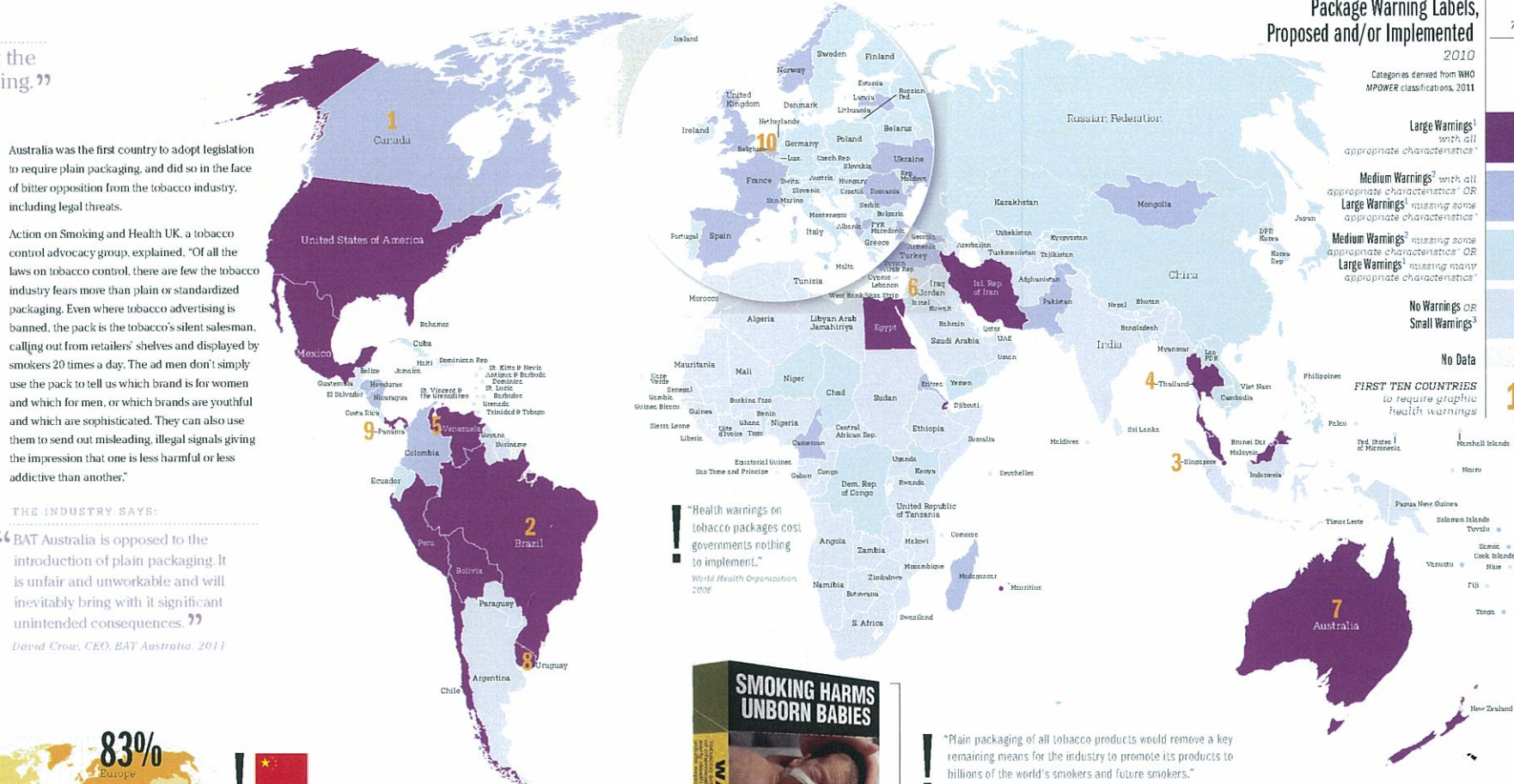
David Crow, CEO, BAT Australia, 2011

Product Labeling Laws
Prohibition of the Use of
“Light,” “Mild,” and Similar
Misleading Descriptors

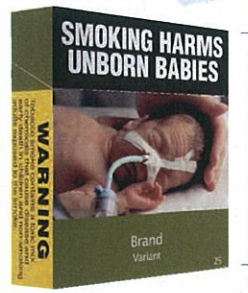
Percentage of countries by region, 2010



! In 2006 about 70% of Chinese smokers, irrespective of age, income and education, believed “light”/“low tar” cigarettes are less harmful compared with “full flavor” cigarettes.



! “Health warnings on tobacco packages cost governments nothing to implement.”
World Health Organization, 2008



! “Plain packaging of all tobacco products would remove a key remaining means for the industry to promote its products to billions of the world’s smokers and future smokers.”
Becky Freeman, Simon Chapman, and Matthew Rimmer, University of Sydney, Australia, 2008

Example of Australian tobacco plain packaging as required by 2011 Australian law. © Commonwealth of Australia

¹LARGE WARNING - Average of front and back of the package is at least 50%. ²MEDIUM WARNING - Average of front and back of package is between 30 and 49%. ³SMALL WARNING - Average of front and back of package is less than 30%. ⁴APPROPRIATE CHARACTERISTICS are based on percentage of package covered, whether warnings are mandated, whether they appear on packets and external packaging, whether they describe specific harm, are large, clear, visible, and legible, rotate, are written in principal language of country, and include pictures.