



New Zealand Customs Minister Nicky Wagner and Associate Health Minister Peseta Sam Lotu-lig retrospectively celebrated the duty free tobacco allowance reduction today.

In a statement, both said that the 'more than 800kg of tobacco and cigarettes' left at the border since 1 November 'is a further step towards reducing the damage caused by smoking'. This follows the well-publicised duty free allowance reduction from 200 cigarettes to 50, which came in on 1 November.

To be exact, both Ministers said that the reduction has resulted in 'about 810kg of cigarettes and tobacco' being left by travellers at the country's airport border points and almost NZ\$259,000 (US\$201,669) in tobacco revenue 'being raised'.

At Customs Air Cargo Inspection Facility in Auckland, the Ministers today also oversaw a quantity of 390kg of cigarettes left by passengers who – the government worded strongly – 'chose not to pay duty on their excess cigarettes'.

Customs Minister Nicky Wagner (*pictured above*) said: "The change to the new limit went smoothly. Domestic and international advertising made passengers aware of the change and new streamlined processes at airports made it easy for travellers to dispose of, or pay, the duty on any excess cigarettes. The gift concession for tobacco has also been removed, where previously parcels received from overseas containing tobacco were permitted.



[Inbound travellers at all airports in New Zealand (not just Auckland above) now have to pay GST and duty on tobacco exceeding the allowance of 50 cigarettes, which has been reduced from 200, or 50 grams of cigars or tobacco. The approximate duty levels payable on excess quantities can be found here: <http://www.whatsmyduty.org.nz/changes-tobacco-limits>]

TODAY'S STATEMENT - 'A TIMELY REMINDER'

She continued: "I was pleased to see good cooperation between Customs, Ministry for Primary Industries, airport companies and duty free shops to help passengers adjust. Most travellers now know about the new duty free limit of 50 cigarettes or 50g of tobacco. With many Kiwis travelling or hosting visitors from overseas these holidays, it's timely to remind everyone of the change."

Associate Health Minister Peseta Sam Lotu-lig commented: The tobacco left at the border is a harmful product that will now not be used by smokers. Decreasing the duty free concession gives smokers another incentive to quit by reducing the availability of cheap tobacco.

"Price is a strong incentive to get people to stop smoking and deter young people from starting. The smoke-free 2025 goal is a challenge, but one that can be realistically achieved with continued and additional efforts on a range of tobacco control fronts."

[TOP IMAGE: Customs Minister The Honourable Nicky Wagner and Associate Minister Hon Peseta Sam Lotu-liga pose today with some 390kg of confiscated tobacco products left by passengers - as a result of the tobacco duty free reduction - at the Customs Air Cargo Inspection Facility at Auckland International Airport].

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