



**INDEPENDENT CONSUMER AND
COMPETITION COMMISSION**

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Media and Resource Centre

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Lighters in the spot light

The Independent Consumer and Competition Commission (ICCC) is proposing to ban toy-like novelty cigarette lighters in Papua New Guinea.

These items were banned in Australia in 2011 and the ICCC is concerned that they may find or have found their way into Papua New Guinea.

ICCC Commissioner Dr Billy Manoka said: “Novelty lighters are designed to produce flames to set alight cigarettes and other combustible material. The problem with these lighters is they look like toys and children are likely to be attracted to it because they look like stylized animals or cartoon characters, made in typical toy-like sizes and shape and are made in typical toy-like colours.”

For example, the frog lighter looks like a toy, makes a frog sound and emits a green flame making it attractive to children –and potentially extremely dangerous.

The novelty lighters create a risk of fire, injury and death, given that children are likely to be attracted to them and may believe them to be toys.

Novelty cigarette lighters have been banned in Australia, the United States and declared a child-resistant product in in European Union member countries.

The Commission has powers to ban any consumer goods in Papua New Guinea that would or may cause harm to consumers.

The ICCC is especially concerned about injury to children.

The Commission published the notice in the National Gazette on the 22 March 2013.

The ICCC is inviting anyone in PNG who is selling or has an interest in the supply of these products to contact it if it would like to hold a conference with the ICCC.

Please contact Dr Billy Manoka on 325 2144 or email bmanoka@iccc.gov.pg for details.

Background

The Independent Consumer and Competition Commission (ICCC) is responsible for administering the ICCC Act as well as a number of other laws. The ICCC Act is designed to enhance the welfare of the people of PNG by encouraging competition, fair trading and efficiency in business as well as preventing anti-competitive behaviour.

The ICCC has specific wide ranging powers in relation to consumer product safety. It takes its responsibility under these provisions seriously and will take immediate action when it becomes aware of a product that can affect the health or safety of consumers.

Its powers include:

- warning consumers of the possible danger of particular goods and conducting an assessment of the risks involved;
- recommending to the Minister to declare a standard that suppliers of the product must meet or for the provision of information in relation to such a product;
- issuing 'interim' bans where the Commission is of the view that such goods are unsafe;
- issuing of permanent ;bans on unsafe goods; and
- requiring compulsory recall of products that are unsafe, or not compliant with a product or information standard.

The Act provides that the Commission will on request hold a conference with any supplier who may be adversely affected by its actions.

If a conference is requested the Commission must decide as soon as practicable after the conference whether the notice is to remain in force, be varied, or be revoked. (and give a copy of the notice to each supplier at the conference)