

Media Information  
For immediate release

## **Proposal to Ban Vending would take €143 million from exchequer over-night**

**Significant job losses also a certainty if measure is introduced**

**Dublin, 25 June 2014:** The Irish Cigarette Machine Operators Association (ICMOA) has today called on the Minister for Health and Government to reconsider proposals to Ban Cigarette Vending in Ireland. If introduced, the measure will have a devastating impact on the Vending Industry, resulting in immediate losses of €143 million to the exchequer and over 145 jobs across Ireland.

*“We’re very concerned about the Department of Health’s proposals to Ban Vending Machines during the lifetime of the current Government. Very tight restrictions already exist on cigarette Vending sales through the token system that was introduced in 2009. Consumers must prove their age to staff in pubs and clubs before they can purchase a token to use the tobacco vending machines. Therefore, with already tight restrictions to ensure minors cannot access tobacco through this channel, the proposal to introduce a Ban is simply ludicrous. The only guarantee from such a move is the large scale economic impacts”.* says ICMOA spokesperson John O’Brien.

Mr O’Brien continued, *“Furthermore, more than 145 people are directly employed in the vending sector, all of whom face the prospect of losing their jobs if this measure is introduced.”*

In addition to the losses to the Exchequer this measure will lead to, it will also put an end to the €5.2million in commissions paid by the vending industry to pubs, clubs, hotels and retailers. This will clearly have a negative knock-on effect for these businesses.

*“ICMOA members service more than 6,000 outlets across Ireland, mainly bars, pubs and hotels. Vendors are mostly one-man or small family-run operations, which will cease to exist if the Department of Health goes ahead with the plan to introduce a Ban,”* says Mr O’Brien.

The level of the illicit tobacco trade in Ireland is one of the highest across Europe, and the world. Illegal sales have already had an impact on Vendors for many years. The proposed Ban on Vending would only make the problem worse: *“This latest move by the Minister for Health plays directly into the hands of the criminal gangs involved in the illicit tobacco trade in Ireland. These criminals illegally sell tobacco in pubs, clubs and elsewhere in defiance of every regulation which legitimate traders fully comply with. A Ban on Vending will be a major bonus to these gangs and a massive blow to our lawful industry,”* concluded Mr O’Brien.

\*\*\* ENDS \*\*\*

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**The ICMOA:**

The ICMOA is the trade association representing operators of cigarette vending machines in Ireland. The association was founded in 1982 and currently has over 60 member businesses with over 150 people employed. The ICMOA was instrumental in the introduction of the token system in 2004 to ensure that minors cannot access tobacco through vending machines. ICMOA members contribute approx. €200m to the exchequer from excise and VAT per annum. See [www.icmoa.ie](http://www.icmoa.ie) for further information.