

## Proposed tobacco bill to cut informal traders' profits

Staff Writer

THE impact of the proposed Tobacco Products Control Bill will have dire consequences for the informal trading industry, which stands to lose a third of its income.

This is according to the SA Informal Traders Association (Saita), which conducted a walkabout in Khayelitsha yesterday.

The bill was published by the Department of Health for public comment in May and the comment period ends on Wednesday.

The bill aims to, among other things, control smoking in public places, regulate the sale and advertising of tobacco products, make provision for the standardisation of packaging of cigarettes, and put a ban on the sale of loose cigarettes.

Saita president Rosheda Muller said informal traders could face a five-year prison sentence if they displayed cigarettes for sale.

Saita would make a formal submission to the Department of Health, Muller said.



**WALKABOUT:** Rosheda Muller president of the SA Informal Traders Association at Site C taxi rank in Khayelitsha yesterday morning.

"During the meeting with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation and the Department of Health,

they confirmed they would be banning the sale of single cigarettes. If you look at any taxi rank or township trader,

you will see that these are the backbone of the informal trade.

"Traders feed their fam-

ilies and send their children to school from the sale of these products. Our customers cannot afford full packs and if they can't buy single cigarettes, they will simply buy illicit instead," Muller said.

The department said strides had been made in the fight against tobacco between 1993 and 2010 when several pieces of legislation were introduced, starting with the Tobacco Products Control Act 83 of 1993 – the main legislation governing tobacco control efforts in the country.

It was amended three times over a 15-year period with the Tobacco Products Control Amendment Act 12 of 1999, the Tobacco Products Control Amendment Act 23 of 2007, and the Tobacco Products Control Amendment Act 63 of 2008.

"According to the Department of Health, the above efforts, together with sharp increases in the excise tax on tobacco products, led to reductions in smoking prevalence and consumption as well as smoking-attributable deaths," the department said.