

Statement on e-cigarettes in Australia

February 2018

Based on current evidence, the potential benefit of e-cigarettes on smoking cessation is not established, and there is increasing evidence of health harms. Accordingly, the undersigned health and medical organisations support a precautionary approach to the promotion and availability of e-cigarettes in Australia. This is in line with recommendations from the World Health Organization and the World Federation of Public Health Associations.

E-cigarettes are battery operated devices that heat a liquid (called 'e-liquid') to produce a vapour that users inhale. Although the composition of this liquid varies, it typically contains a range of chemicals, including solvents and flavouring agents, and may or may not contain nicotine.¹

Current evidence indicates that the balance of harms at a population level significantly outweighs any potential benefit of e-cigarette use.

Key facts in informing our position at this time include:

- Growing evidence that e-cigarette use is a precursor to smoking in young people.¹⁻³ As Australia has a national smoking rate of less than 2% among 12 to 17 year olds⁴ and one of the world's lowest adolescent smoking rates among comparable nations⁵, this is of significant concern.
- Growing evidence of direct health harms, including increased risk of respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease and carcinogenesis.^{1,6-8}
- Growing evidence to suggest that e-cigarette use in non-smokers is associated with future uptake of tobacco cigarette smoking.¹
- The absence of conclusive evidence that e-cigarettes are effective as an aid to quitting smoking. The National Health and Medical Research Council has reviewed the evidence to date and concluded that evidence of cessation benefit is insufficient.⁹
- The extent to which e-cigarettes reduce harm to the user through exposure to fewer toxic chemicals than conventional tobacco cigarettes has not been determined.¹

The need for high quality research to establish the long term safety and efficacy of e-cigarettes in harm minimisation is recognised.¹

This statement is in line with the statements on e-cigarettes from the World Health Organization, National Health and Medical Research Council and the Therapeutic Goods Administration, and is supported by the following health and medical groups and health authorities.



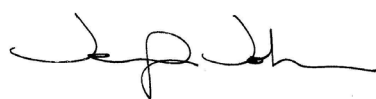
Dr Michael Gannon
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Professor Sanchia Aranda
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Dr Jennifer Johns AM
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National Heart Foundation of Australia



Ms Tanya Buchanan
Chief Executive Officer
Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand

Additionally, the following health organisations support a precautionary approach to e-cigarettes:

- National Health and Medical Research Council
- Australian Medical Association
- Cancer Council Australia
- National Heart Foundation of Australia
- Public Health Association of Australia
- Royal Australasian College of Physicians
- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- Lung Foundation of Australia
- Australian Association of Smoking Cessation Professionals
- Australian Council on Smoking and Health
- Australian Competition & Consumer Commission
- Departments of Health in Australian states/territories
- World Health Organization
- World Medical Association
- World Heart Foundation
- World Federation of Public Health Associations
- Forum of International Respiratory Societies
- International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
- British Medical Association
- Royal Pharmaceutical Society
- New Zealand Cancer Society
- Heart and Stroke Foundation, Canada
- American Association for Cancer Research
- American Society of Clinical Oncology
- US Surgeon General
- American Lung Association
- American Thoracic Society
- National Association of Attorneys General (USA)
- American College of Preventive Medicine
- American Medical Association
- American Society of Addiction Medicine
- American Osteopathic Association
- American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
- American College of Cardiology
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Society of Thoracic Surgeons
- American College of Chest Physicians.

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9. National Health and Medical Research Council. NHMRC submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Use and Marketing of Electronic Cigarettes in Australia. Submission 167. https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Health_Aged_Care_and_Sport/ElectronicCigarettes/Submissions; 2017.