

Media Release

Wednesday 30 September 2020

Landmark report vindicates Australia's precautionary approach to e-cigarette policy

E-cigarette users three times more likely to become smokers

A landmark new report from the Australian National University shows that e-cigarette users are three times more likely than non e-cigarette users to take up smoking.

Megan Varlow, Director of Cancer Control Policy at Cancer Council Australia, said, "This report highlights Cancer Council's long held concern that e-cigarettes are a dangerous on-ramp to smoking.

"The report, two years in the making, highlights that there is no evidence of a 'hardened smoker' population for whom e-cigarettes could provide a benefit, and that never smokers who have used e-cigarettes were on average, around three times as likely as those who have not used e-cigarettes to try smoking conventional cigarettes and transition to regular tobacco smoking"

The report is consistent with previous systematic reviews of the evidence and strengthens the precautionary position on e-cigarettes taken by all Australian governments, evidence-based non government public health organisations and the World Health Organisation.

Cancer Council congratulated Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, for supporting Australia's evidence-based, precautionary approach to e-cigarettes, in concert with his state and territory colleagues.

Australia's world leading approach to tobacco control has seen the nation reach an all-time high of 97% of Australian 14 to 17-year-olds who have never smoked, an unimaginable figure a generation ago.

This comes as overall smoking prevalence in Australia continues to decline with further drops predicted if successful interventions such as Australia's world-leading National Tobacco Campaign are supported.

Megan Varlow explained, "Australia's decline in smoking, particularly amongst youth, is great news for public health, but bad news for the tobacco industry, which needs a new generation of nicotine addicts to maintain and build profits.

"This report exposes the relentless false claims made by e-cigarette companies and retailers that e-cigarettes are a legitimate smoking cessation tool. It demonstrates that e-cigarettes are more likely to encourage smoking than reduce smoking prevalence."

Cancer Council cautions doctors, who can prescribe liquid nicotine for use in e-cigarettes under an interim government proposal, to take heed of the evidence that e-cigarettes lead to smoking and are no more effective than far safer quitting methods.

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Click [here](#) to view the summary report on use of e-cigarettes and relation to tobacco smoking uptake and cessation, relevant to the Australian context