



MEDIA STATEMENT

Doctors urge Albanese Government to consider the community's most vulnerable in new vaping reforms

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The Quit Collective, a group of like-minded Australian doctors, experts and telehealth professionals, say the TGA's just-released consultation paper into proposed reforms into the regulation of nicotine vaping products (NVP), fails to appropriately consider some of Australia's most vulnerable citizens.

The Quit Collective's, Dr Carolyn Beaumont said whilst it supports many key points raised in the TGA's consultative reform paper, there remain important issues which, if not addressed, may alienate vulnerable Australians, forcing them to revert to smoking.

Dr Beaumont said the TGAs proposed regulation of therapeutic vape flavours, ingredients and a blanket ban of single-use NVPs were of particular concern.

"The Quit Collective's strong view on the proposed ban of single-use disposable vaping products comes from our determination to protect some of Australia's most at-risk people," Dr Beaumont said.

"We know that disposable vapes are often associated with low quality, black market products.

"But in reality, there are many single-use therapeutic vape products that meet Australian Standards contain quality ingredients, are recyclable and designed to assist smokers who may for a variety of health and social reasons find these products easier to use.

"Prefilled pod devices are simple to use, however they need to be recharged regularly. This creates a barrier to use for certain populations, for whom disposable vapes are more appropriate.

"Older people and those with physical and intellectual disabilities may otherwise struggle with a more complex vaping device that requires recharging. Populations such as prisoners and the homeless require disposable vapes without the barrier of recharging.

"Many of these people are also located in remote or rural communities and peri-urban centres, making access an even greater issue.

"The bottom line is, there is a need within the community for simple, easy-to-use therapeutic vape devices that don't involve complicated instructions, recharging or refilling of liquids.

"We urge the TGA and Federal Government to take this into account with their proposed reforms," Dr Beaumont said.

The TGA consultative paper on vaping reform also includes a recommendation to reduce the number of available flavours of NVPs to only two: tobacco and mint, including to non-descript levels.

"We understand the TGA's position and determination to stop the vaping black market targeting young people with appealing colours and flavours. But they must also keep in mind the many Australians who are relying on these therapeutic vape products for smoking cessation purposes.



“Let’s not put our determination to stop the black market for vapes, which is being tackled, ahead of our care for the millions of Australians hoping to quit smoking.

“Our primary aim is to help smokers quit, and we know that Australian Standard vaping products can provide that pathway. Indeed, flavours actually play an important role in helping people to switch from smoking tobacco, to less harmful vapes.

“It separates nicotine from an association with tobacco. One could even argue that tobacco-flavoured vapes should be banned, and other flavours allowed, in an effort to further separate vaping from smoking,” she said.

Dr Beaumont suggests that simple descriptions of flavour profiles should be allowed when the new reforms, which are subject to Federal Parliament’s approval and future State law changes, take effect.

“Flavours such as ‘mint’, ‘blueberry’ and ‘apple’ should be allowed to ensure therapeutic vape products remain appealing and take smokers forever away from tobacco.

“The reality is, if these products are no longer palatable, smokers will either relapse or turn to the black market, which may provide further incentive for it to persist.

“It is already difficult enough for smokers to access a vaping prescription. Removing preferred flavours will simply provide another driver towards the black market or relapse to smoking,” Dr Beaumont said.

“The Quit Collective recognises some good things have emerged from the TGAs consultation paper and we look forward to seeing these new reforms soon come to fruition before Federal Parliament.

“We support the import process announced by the TGA, but access concerns remain about vapes requiring a prescription.

“We’re happy to see the TGA have recognised how critical it is to ensure that smokers wishing to quit are able to practically access prescriptions for therapeutic vapes via their GP.

“We support the TGA’s proposal to remove the GP authorised prescriber requirement. However, significant barriers to access a doctor remain, as does a greater need for doctor education about vaping. These issues must be addressed for the therapeutic approach to be successful.

“We ask that when it comes time for the Federal Government to finalise these reforms, the needs of our most vulnerable citizens are carefully considered,” concluded Dr Beaumont.

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About The Quit Collective

The Quit Collective is a group of like-minded Australian doctors, experts and telehealth professionals who believe vaping is a credible and sustainable smoking cessation tool.

Members of *The Quit Collective* may vary slightly on the approach to regulating vaping in Australia, but they share the common goal of eradicating combustible tobacco cigarettes due to the damage they cause to millions of adult Australians. All group members recognise the vital role vaping plays in making that a reality.

More details at: <https://quitcollective.com.au/>