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MEDIA RELEASE: for immediate release

‘Smoke Free Victoria’ plan misses the key ingredient: vaping

Victoria’s health organisations have overlooked vaping, the key component to establishing a smoke-free state in their announcement today, according to the Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association (ATHRA).

Several health organisations have [announced their plans](#) to combat stalled smoking rates by placing a 2025 deadline on Victoria to reduce smoking rates to below 5%.

ATHRA Chairman and Associate Professor in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine at the University of New South Wales, Dr Colin Mendelsohn, said: “The call today for a smoke-free Victoria by 2025 is a welcomed one, of course, but it has actually omitted the most effective, internationally-proven measure to significantly reduce smoking rates: legalising vaping.”

“There is growing scientific evidence that vaping helps people quit smoking. In fact, personal vaporisers (e-cigarettes) are now the most popular quitting aid in many countries including the UK, US and Europe and have helped millions of smokers to quit” Dr Mendelsohn said.

“Implementing more or less the same tobacco control measures isn’t going to have the desired impact – and we’ve seen this to be true in Australia since 2013, where smoking rates have not had a statistically significant reduction.”

“In contrast, smoking rates are falling rapidly in many countries where personal vaporisers with nicotine are legal and widely available. It is very likely that vaping is a contributing factor to this rapid decline.”

“Why is it that public health organisations are so reluctant to embrace this proven measure of reducing smoking rates?” he asked.

“Complete cessation of all tobacco and nicotine is always the preferred goal. However, many smokers are not able to quit with conventional treatment and vaping provides a far less harmful alternative. It delivers nicotine and a ‘smoking-like’ experience, without the smoke which causes most of the harm to health.”

“Let’s hope health organisations will be able to see the bigger picture when it comes to truly achieving a smoke-free society in Victoria and across Australia, which is what everybody wants.”

ENDS

Contact

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What is ATHRA?

Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association (ATHRA) is a health promotion charity registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission ABN 72 6222 11223. ATHRA was established to improve public health by raising awareness of tobacco harm reduction to reduce the devastating health effects of tobacco smoking in Australia. ATHRA's aim is to provide evidence-based information on safer alternatives to smoking such as vaping, so smokers who want to quit can make informed choices. Please visit our website for more information: <https://athra.org.au>

Board members of ATHRA

ATHRA is managed by the Board of Directors, which consists of four independent medical practitioners and one consumer representative. None of the directors have ever had any financial or commercial relationship with any electronic cigarette or tobacco company.

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