

23 November 2018

MEDIA RELEASE: for immediate release

ATHRA endorses New Zealand's new vaping regulations

The New Zealand Associate Minister of Health, Jenny Salesa announced today progressive new regulations on vaping and other smokeless tobacco products as part of the plan towards becoming smokefree by 2025.

ATHRA applauds the regulations which strike a sensible balance between helping smokers to switch to safer nicotine products and protecting people who don't smoke, particularly young people.

'The progress in New Zealand highlights how far Australia is falling behind best practice by denying safer alternatives to smokers who are unable to quit', said Associate Professor Colin Mendelsohn, Chairman of the health promotion charity, the [Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association](#) (ATHRA). 'Australia's inaction is costing lives: fifty people die each day as a result of smoking.'

'Tobacco harm reduction is barely recognised in Australia. Australian governments take a quit or die approach to smoking and a punitive approach to smokers.'

'Vaping is effectively banned in Australia and discouraged by most tobacco control, government, health and medical organisations. Smokers who are unable to quit are forced to either break the law and vape or take a two in three chance of being killed by smoking.'

'Hopefully the Australian government will take some lessons from the New Zealand approach. However, there is some urgency' Dr Mendelsohn said. 'We can't wait forever.'

'The regulations recognise the difficulty some smokers have in quitting and their need for help', said Dr Joe Kosterich, Board Member of ATHRA.

'Alternative products such as nicotine vaporisers (e-cigarettes), snus and heated tobacco products are much safer and cheaper than smoking and switching to these will ultimately save many lives.'

While the evidence on vaping is still emerging, the New Zealand government has recognised that there is a scientific consensus that, although not risk-free, vaping is significantly less harmful than smoking (around 95%).

Ms Salesa acknowledges the concerns that some young people may take up vaping, and the legislation will minimise that risk. In any case she says 'There is no robust evidence that vaping may be a 'gateway' to smoking for young people. Most young people who vape daily are smokers or ex-smokers.'

Measures to protect children include continuing the ban on sales to under 18s, banning vaping in smokefree areas, bans on advertising and promotion and childproof catches.

The regulations will also improve the quality and safety standards of products available in New Zealand. There will be a system for reporting adverse reactions and a recall process for faulty devices.

ENDS

Source

[Cabinet paper: Supporting smokers to switch to significantly less harmful alternatives](#)

Media release: [Vaping and smokeless tobacco products to be regulated](#)

ATHRA blog: [New Zealand introduces sensible, balanced regulation for vaping](#)

Contact

Associate Professor Colin Mendelsohn
Chairman, Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association
School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of New South Wales, Sydney
M: 0415 976 783 | E: c.mendelsohn@unsw.edu.au

Dr Joe Kosterich
General Practitioner; Board Member Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association
M: 0417 998 697 | E: joe@drjoe.net.au

What is ATHRA?

Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association (ATHRA) is a registered health promotion charity established to reduce the harm from tobacco smoking in Australia. ATHRA aims to raise awareness of less harmful alternatives for adult smokers who are otherwise unable to quit. ATHRA's broader goal is to encourage the complete cessation of tobacco smoking in Australia. For more information, visit www.athra.org.au.

ATHRA is funded by unconditional donations from businesses and the general public. It does not accept donations from tobacco companies or their subsidiaries.

None of the directors has ever had any financial or commercial relationship with any electronic cigarette or tobacco company.

Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association
11 Carlotta Rd, Double Bay 2028
T: 0401 113 0372 E: info@athra.org.au
W: www.athra.org.au

ATHRA is registered as a charity with the
Australian Charities and Not-for-profits
Commission | ABN 72 6222 11223



Directors: A/Prof Colin Mendelsohn | Dr Alex Wodak AM | Dr Joe Kosterich | Dr Catherine Silsbury | Mr Stephen Elsom