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**Directors**

Dr Joe Kosterich, Chairman  
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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**New report shows nicotine vaping will save lives**

The Australia Tobacco Harm Reduction Association (ATHRA) has welcomed the recommendations of a new report by ASH New Zealand and End Smoking New Zealand which highlights the potential for nicotine vaping to rapidly reduce population smoking rates.

The report which has been compiled by leading tobacco control experts outlines how facilitating smokers switching to smoke-free nicotine products such as vaping products, heated tobacco and smokeless tobacco products will save lives.

Conjoint Associate Professor Colin Mendelsohn, a Director of ATHRA said the report highlight the need for more to be done in Australia to reduce the smoking rate which has remained stagnant since 2013.

“New Zealand, where vaping is legal has a goal of 5 per cent adult daily smoking by 2025. However, in Australia we have a goal for 10 per cent for 2025 and ultimately this will result in the unnecessary and preventable deaths of thousands of Australian smokers,” said Dr Mendelsohn.

“The current strategy isn’t working, and Australia remains the only western democracy to ban the use and sale of nicotine for vaping.

“More than 19,000 Australians will die this year as a result of a smoking-related illness, yet we have alternatives available that are being ignored by public health officials in Australia.

“Now more than ever we need to have a sensible evidence-led discussion on the use of nicotine vaping as an effective quit smoking aid, yet in Australia the current debate is focused on scaremongering.”

Dr Mendelsohn also said that misleading reports coming from the United States were creating unnecessary fear. Vaping nicotine from reputable suppliers to quit smoking should be distinguished from the inhalation of black-market street drugs.

“It is now clear that this outbreak which has claimed nearly twenty lives is almost certainly due to contaminated THC liquid (the psychoactive ingredient in cannabis) being used in vaping devices,” said Dr Mendelsohn.

“It’s understandable that some Australians are confused about the risks from vaping with some health organisations and experts carelessly implying that nicotine vaping is the cause of these tragic deaths in the US.

“It would be a disaster if vapers went back to smoking, or smokers avoided switching to vaping because of these misleading safety concerns as that would ultimately cost more lives.

“Millions of people have been vaping nicotine for over a decade without any evidence of serious lung damage. Vaping is a safer substitute for smokers who are unable to quit smoking or nicotine with the available treatments.”

**ENDS**

## Contact

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## Background

- [ASH New Zealand and End Smoking Report](#)

## 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](http://www.athra.org.au).

ATHRA is funded by public donations and not accept donations from tobacco companies or their subsidiaries. To establish ATHRA as a registered charity, in 2017 we accepted some financial support from the small business vape retail sector. ATHRA has not accepted industry funding since March 2019.