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#### Directors

Dr Joe Kosterich, Chairman  
A/Prof Colin Mendelsohn  
Dr Alex Wodak AM  
Mr Ean Alexander

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Industry body to represent modern day smoking clinics

The Australia Tobacco Harm Reduction Association (ATHRA) has welcomed the establishment of a new peak industry group representing hundreds of Australian vaping businesses today in Canberra.

The Australian Retail Vaping Industry Association (ARVIA), backed by the Australian Retailers Association (ARA) will support Australian vape shops which are helping smokers quit, Conjoint Associate Professor Colin Mendelsohn, a Director of ATHRA said today.

“Vape shops are modern-day smoking clinics which provide a valuable public health service at no cost to the Government and fill an important gap in our health care system which currently provides very little support for Australia’s three million smokers” said Dr Mendelsohn.

“Very little training in smoking cessation is provided for health professionals in Australia and vape shops fill this gap, providing expert, personalized advice for smokers wanting to quit smoking cigarettes.

“The establishment of ARVIA will further strengthen this vital industry which is saving lives.”

Dr Mendelsohn together with ATHRA Director Dr Alex Wodak AM and former smoker of 33 years now turned vaper Jason Rubin attended the launch in Canberra.

“It was not until going into a vape shop in Canberra where I made the solid choice to quit cigarettes”, said Mr Rubin.

“It was the vape shop staff on multiple visits that helped me to quit smoking - It wasn't gum, it wasn't a team of doctors - it was a support group of friendly and well-informed people who were 100 per cent honest.

“I can only think that maybe I wouldn't have wasted 33 years of my life on smoking if there was a vape shop that could educate me on a healthier alternative to smoking.”

Dr Mendelsohn said that more than 21,000 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.

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

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

“With the establishment of ARVIA today I hope public health officials and key decision makers take notice of this vital industry which is proving to be the most effective strategy against the scourge of smoking related illness and death in Australia” Dr Mendelsohn said.

**ENDS**

## **Contact**

Conjoint Associate Professor Colin Mendelsohn (UNSW)  
M: 0415 976 783 | E: [colin@athra.org.au](mailto:colin@athra.org.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](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.