

minister.health@health.vic.gov.au

Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas
Minister for Health
Level 22, 50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne, Victoria, 3000

09/05/2023

RE: The urgent need for all jurisdictions to strengthen control of vaping epidemic

Dear Minister Thomas

This week we have seen the federal government introduce the most consequential commitment to tobacco and vaping control in over a decade. This is unequivocally the right thing to do to ensure that Australians, particularly children and people who are non-smokers, are protected from nicotine addiction and other serious harms associated with vaping and tobacco products.

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is recognised as the principal non-government organisation for public health in Australia working to promote the health and well-being of all Australians. It is the pre-eminent voice for the public's health in Australia and seeks to drive better health outcomes through increased knowledge, better access and equity, evidence informed policy and effective population-based practice in public health.

The Victoria Government can be part of the most progressive and historical action against vaping in Australia and become a global leader on vaping control.

Action on vaping is heavily supported by community, with 87% of Australians wanting to see young generations protected from nicotine addiction.¹ There has never been a more opportune moment for Victoria to support, act and enforce measures to reduce vaping. This will need to include:

- amend state legislation to explicitly prohibit the sale and supply of non-prescription e-cigarettes, components, and liquids irrespective of whether they contain nicotine.
- prohibit advertising, promotion, and sponsorship in relation to e-cigarettes, components and liquids.
- increase resourcing for compliance and enforcement measures to deter non-pharmacy retailers that unlawfully sell e-cigarettes.
- Speed of implementation to drive down recreational vaping and avoid unlawful retailer stockpiling of illegal product.
- Working with other jurisdictions to put in place strong regulations covering designated outdoor smoking/vaping areas, eliminate vending machines on licenced premises and prevent the emergence of a domestic manufacturing capability.
- Ongoing comprehensive monitoring and reporting to understand the impact of policy changes on smoking and vaping behaviours.

¹ https://www.cancervic.org.au/downloads/cbrc/E-cig-policies-2023PUBLIC.pdf#_ga=2.169015143.715146743.1683159522-351033105.1683159522

As always happens, retailer lobby entities – some of which are thinly disguised creations of the nicotine industries – will protest to your Government of dire consequences for retailers from these public health measures. The challenge for businesses can be addressed by reasonable phasing in and by incentives for businesses to adapt to the reforms.

We support the Commonwealth initiative to fund a national tobacco and vaping campaign. We urge states to join this effort and ensure that it becomes a single, consistent campaign across the nation.

We welcome the intentions of the Commonwealth regarding restricting importation of vaping products that will be illegal in Australia. However, we must not create a loophole by allowing manufacturers to evade import controls by manufacturing or assembling vaping products in Australia. We urge your Government to work with other jurisdictions to prevent the emergence of a domestic manufacturing capability.

Finally, arrangements should be put in place to support comprehensive reporting and data capture, so that future policymakers can understand the true scope of smoking and vaping products across Australia.

Yours Sincerely,



Adj Prof Terry Slevin
Chief Executive Officer



Mariam Hachem
Victorian Branch President