

I have been a long term smoker I started smoking cigarettes when I was 13 years old, so I have been smoking for over 29 years. I have a 3 children and I work in the retail sector but prior to that I was working in the hospitality sector which had a high rate of smokers and retail is not much different. I have a long term partner who is a smoker he has been smoking for 18 years and he started in high school as well as me.

We both had tried for over 10 yrs to quit smoking by using the products that were available to us

- Patches.
- Gum.
- Inhalers.
- Champix ( which give my partner violent dreams and made my mental health issues worse as I was having suicidal thoughts and I could not stop eating) we took ourselves of these tablets due to the severe side effects.
- Cold turkey (which we constantly failed these attempts).
- Sprays
- Lozenges

All of these quit tools failed so we just give up giving up until I seen someone vaping outside and asked about it and if it worked. His wife said he had quit and it was a lifesaver for both of them and saved them money. I talked to my partner and we both researched vaping and was put in touch with vaping shops online as my town does not have one. We ordered our vaping devices and our liquids for the vaping machines and the day it arrived we switched cigarettes for vaping even tho we had 3 packets of cigarettes sitting there we never touched them and now we vape instead and gave away the cigarettes.

We both have been smoke/cigarette free for over 8 months and nearly going onto 9 months, no other quit tool as worked as well as vaping it has been 100% successful in helping us give up smoking. There has been a lot of studies and research done into vaping which state that vaping is 95% safer then smoking and a better quit tool which I have to agree it has been a life saver for my partner and I.

We can do more stuff with the kids as we have money to be able to get them the things they missed out on due to our expensive smoking habit, recently we had to get a new 2<sup>nd</sup> hand car for work and we were able to pay \$9000 of the total price of the car which prior to quitting we would never have been able to do this as we could not save due to having to keep buying cigarettes for our hard to quit habit. We both were a packet or 2 a day smokers and buying a packet of 40s and it is not cheap so we gave up buying priority things so we would have money to buy smokes, now we can save money and it is a great feeling to be able to do this.

My partner is asthmatic and he used to have bad coughing attacks which made him vomit and have to use his inhaler a lot and now he does not have these attacks of coughing and only uses his inhaler when needed which is not much, vaping has saved his life and health. I was having bad chest pains to the point of crumpling over in pain and since I have given up smoking I do not suffer these much at all I cant even remember the last time this has happened and I also had a chest xray to see if there was any damage to my lungs from smoking and the results were amazing they are clear but if I kept smoking the outcome could have been a lot worse.

There have been studies in other countries eg England, New Zealand there is a massive decline in smoking rates since vaping with nicotine liquids has been legalised and regulated and is freely accessible to smokers who want to quit cigarettes. Having a prescription model makes it harder and nearly impossible for anyone to access these liquids, the pharmacy guild of Australia also states that they do not want this type of model and do not want vapers to go to a chemist to access these things. Doctors have even stated they will not give prescriptions for this.

We are the only country besides Turkey who do not have nicotine liquid freely accessible for smokers to be able to quit cigarettes using this method. I can walk into any store and buy a packet of smokes. You can also go to a local shopping centre and buy gums etc and a child could walk into these shops and buy these thru a self serve as they are freely accessible. Why is it easier to buy cancer sticks eg cigarettes but not to be able to purchase a nicotine flavour for a vape. Nicotine is not the problem as it is no less harmful than coffee but a cigarette contains thousands of chemicals that are bad for your health and cause cancer and yet nicotine is being portrayed as the bad chemical and yet cigarettes are worse and available anywhere.

Please look at all the research that has been done overseas and not look at the new supposed study that cherry picked things to fit Greg Hunts narrative as this was a very flawed study and contradicted every other study that has been done which shows vaping is 95% healthier and children have not taken up vaping and Is a very successful quit tool. Why would someone want to go from vaping nice flavours to stinky horrible tasting and much more expensive product eg cigarettes that makes no sense, I see high school kids smoking not vaping when I pick my daughter up from school.

Please regulate and legalise vaping liquid with nicotine so my partner and I can continue out quit journey and allow other smokers the option of using this as a quit tool. Legalising it would create more jobs as it could open up the industry and I might even be able to walk into a proper vape shop for advice and to purchases products of a local retailer, even the retailers association are happy about this as this could help local retailers. Thank you for having this committee and allowing the forgotten ones 'vapers' the opportunity to contribute our life stories of our quit journey and be able to be heard.

Yours sincerely