

To the Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care & Sport

This is a personal submission for the inquiry into the use and marketing of Electronic Cigarettes and Personal Vaporisers in Australia.

My name is Sarah. I am a 29-year-old New Zealand citizen but have been living in Western Australia for the past 6 years.

I began dabbling with cigarettes at age 12 and I believe I was addicted by age 14. Over the last 15 years, many of the people that dabbled with me in cigarettes either never really got into it, or quit. It only just occurred to me in the last 3 years to be jealous of their ability to put cigarettes down for good.

Now, my health so far has not 'suffered' for my smoking with any chronic illness. But I ALWAYS got chest infections when I got the cold or the flu, and more often than not, a sinus infection too. Asthma inhalers were recommended when the chest infections would get bad, even though I don't have asthma. I would often cough for weeks as the cold lingered. Despite this, I would continue to smoke, while sick. Dragging myself outside, when it was freezing cold, even when I really didn't want one.

I came to hate it. It wasn't the smell (because I couldn't smell it anymore), or the cost, or any other trivial part of smoking that people always talk about. I hated the fact that I couldn't sit through a whole movie without wanting to go out for a smoke. I hated that I couldn't have an in-depth conversation without having to excuse myself to go outside. I hated that my husband hated the smell, and that he worried about me. But mostly I hated that I relied on something other than myself so completely.

I had tried to quit cold turkey and with patches/gum, and had spoken to my General Practitioner about Champix. I had even started thinking about hypnotherapy. I had heard about vaping but did not know much about it, and certainly did not consider it an option until a work colleague of mine went from smoking a pack a day to vaping in two days, and within 3 months was off the vape too. I became very curious when he described his lack of cravings which was what always wore me down in my previous attempts.

After finding hundreds of personal accounts of people who had also quit using vaping, I started to think that my colleagues experience was not a fluke. After further research into the devices and ingredients in e-liquid, I decided to order a vape and some e-liquid to try for myself. At this stage I was not looking to quit, I just wanted to see if maybe I could cut down my cigarettes a little.

I was not thinking about quitting, it just happened and as of today, the 30th of May 2017, I have been smoke free for 41 days. From receiving the vaporiser and e-liquid to completely smoke free in 36 hours, without even trying. This is the longest I have been without a cigarette since first becoming addicted, 15 years ago.

This may not seem like enough time to be conclusive to some people, but it is to me. I can now smell a cigarette from a mile away and can tell you, they smell disgusting. I have no desire to sit next to a

smoker, let alone pick one up. While I can't say there have not been any cravings at all during this time, they have been small, fast to pass, and easily overcome by using my vaporiser. I am still currently using my vaporiser, and have begun reducing my nicotine content with the aim of being completely nicotine free before the end of August.

While I understand that ongoing research is necessary, I have a cold currently and it has not resulted in any secondary illnesses or asthma inhaler use for the first time in over 10 years. This to me, is enough to show that I have made a positive change for myself.

This is my first time speaking to any government about an issue, however this is something that I honestly feel passionate about. I understand that I am not qualified to make recommendations, I would like to offer some suggestions:

- Legal sale to over 18's only for both the vaporisers and nicotine.
- All nicotine must be sold in child-proof packaging, like pharmaceutical liquids.
- No advertising in traditional media outlets (e.g.. Tv, press, radio)
- Vape/e-cigarette use not allowed indoors of public buildings.
- Importing of products following these guidelines be allowed
- Selling of these products following these guidelines be allowed
- Use of these products following these guidelines be allowed
- Recognition of the difference between tobacco products and e-cigarettes/vaporisers & e-liquids
- Regulation of safety standards for e-cigarettes/vaporisers, including their battery components

While this list is not exhaustive, I ask that common sense prevail. While cigarettes and approved nicotine replacement therapies are legal, so should their electronic counterparts. Regulate, sure; prohibit the sale to minors, absolutely; but any opportunity for people to quit inhaling foul tobacco smoke should be explored not buried.

Thank you for taking the time to read my personal account. I hope that it was useful in any small way.

Kind Regards,

Sarah Fulton McIsaac

30/5/2017