

Dear Sir's and Madam's,

I write this today as an Ex-Smoker of over two years.
I have only been able to be free of tobacco, due to the use of a personal electronic vaping device, also known as a "E-cig" or an "E-Cigarette".

I took up smoking at the age of 14 years, knowing full well the dangers, and implications.
Still to this day I do not know why.

One thing I do know know, it was easy.
Both of my parents smoked, and I still have vivid memories of buying cigarettes for them and being able to buy lollies with the meager change.

I recall of my efforts being diminished to paddle out to the waves, as a committed surfer as a late teen due to breathlessness, but put it down to time spent studying for my HSC and not being committed to my health and well being.

In my twenties I was working, and studying, on a minimum wage, and rode a bicycle to work, yet I was still breathless. I always seemed to be out of breath. I assumed it was my meager diet that held me back. I always somehow managed to have money for cigarettes.

It wasn't until my late twenties, that I realised what it was, that was holding me back.

The cigarettes.

I tried patches, they made me sick with nausea, and irritated my skin to point that welts would appear. I tried lozenges, I would hiccup to the point my throat would become inflamed that I could barely breathe.
I tried Nicotine inhalers, my throat would become so inflamed and sore that I couldn't drink water or swallow properly.

I became destined to be a life long smoker, until it consumed me. There was no other way out. It seemed preferable to be a heroin addict, at least I could get a daily fix, a controlled dose.

Then, a glimmer of hope! A new drug! A breakthrough! Zyban.
I went straight to the local GP and requested a prescription.
After the counseling he deemed me appropriate.
I wasn't.
I would ride my bicycle to work through traffic, oblivious to any dangers, free from any care in the world.
My fiance begged me to stop, even if it meant I took up smoking again.
I did, and I did.

A few years had passed and a new miracle drug appeared, Champix.
Again, I went to the GP, had counseling, and was prescribed this miracle.
Through the wretched nausea, sleepless nights, and horrific nightmares when I did sleep, it worked. I was finally free of tobacco.
Until, the months of sleepless nights took their toll.
I fell asleep behind the wheel at work, and drove bus up a guard rail.
I was immediately taken off the road, and off the Champix, within days I was smoking again.

During this time I had started a family, I made a vow to myself, that my children would never grow up knowing me as smoker.

I quit many times, I hid it from them, I hid it from my family, gloating that I had given up.

I tried to lie to myself that I had quit.

I hadn't.

One night while searching the net, I came across an article about E-Cigarettes. I thought if these could save me the cost of one packet a week, then I'm in front.

In January 2016 I bought my first E-cigarette, I imported the liquid from overseas, which contained a concentration of nicotine. And started my journey.

At this stage I was smoking 75 grams of tobacco a week, no sooner had I started I found it was reduced to 50 grams, 35 grams, etc.

I was becoming accustomed to the flavour of the E-Liquid, my sense of taste and smell were starting to come back to me.

By the 25th April 2015, I went a whole day without a cigarette, my first time in many many years.

I have not smoked since.

As I have aged, so too has my family, I am able to run around with my incredibly active and sports talented son, I am able to get back into the ocean and enjoy surfing again.

I can ride my bicycle for 20+kms without hesitation.

In closing, I do not believe that children should have access to such devices, I do not condone the use of them by children, yet I can not believe they will be a gateway to smoking tobacco products.

As a harm reduction and alternative to tobacco products for existing users, this MUST be taken.

So far, with my interaction with the vaping community, as much as we have self regulated, we are on the same page in this regards.

I still cannot fathom how nicotine replacement products can be accessed by young unsuspecting children, in an uncontrolled manner in our supermarkets, yet we cannot have prescribed low doses of nicotine allowed in our liquids, for sale, over the counter in controlled environments.

Thank you for your considerations,

Adam Gray