

To the committee on tobacco harm reduction, thank you for the opportunity to make a public submission.

This issue is one I feel most passionately about.

As a now 56 year old, I was a pack and half a day smoker for just over 40 years.

I had tried many times to quit, from cold turkey to using all available cessation tools available such as nicotine patches, gum, inhalers/nasal sprays, lozenges etc and even hypnosis.

Nothing worked or came even close to satisfying my cravings for cigarettes.

Until I was introduced to vaping.

I knew within just 2 days of vaping I had found the tool that would finally help me kick the disgusting habit.

I have now been vaping for just over 18 months and have not had a cigarette since. Not one single puff.

I do not crave cigarettes and consider vaping truly a blessing

As a disability support pensioner it has considerably improved my quality of life.

Financially being one of the major benefits.

I was spending anywhere between \$150 to \$200 plus per week on cigarettes.

As the price went up I found myself resorting to roll your own and much lower quality tobacco products.

Which compounds the health issues even more.

I at times even had to resort to the cheaper illegal chop shop cigarettes which are readily available and becoming a huge social health problem and ticking time bomb.

Vaping now only costs me \$5 to \$10 per week, to at most \$20 every couple of months if I need to resupply e-liquid, nicotine or other vaping apparatus.

I can now afford much healthier food and can even enjoy a few small luxuries like internet & foxtel.

I have actually started saving a few dollars for the first time in many years.

I initially started vaping with e-liquid containing 24mg strength nicotine and I have now gradually reduced that to 3mg.

I intend to ultimately be completely nicotine free and eventually stop vaping altogether.

I cannot begin to describe what this has meant to my life and health.

I not only have considerably better lung capacity, stamina and overall fitness but my taste and smell has returned.

My blood pressure has also come down, before vaping I was on the verge of requiring medication to reduce it.

I have also introduced vaping to family members and close friends who had also smoked for many years, had tried everything but couldn't stop.

Some have also been able to kick the cigarettes after years of trying.

So far I have a success rate of about 60% and I am still working on the others still teetering or struggling to quit. A few have cut their daily cigarette intake considerably.

It is indeed a great feeling when the successful ones who manage to quit altogether come and thank me for saving their lives by introducing them to vaping.

Vapers better than anyone, understand and appreciate the concerns of politicians and relevant authorities regarding minors vaping and possibly progressing to smoking.

Nobody wants minors to start vaping or smoking.

However surely, as is the case with cigarettes and alcohol, the vaping industry can be regulated to minimize access and protect minors?

Specialist outlets like tobacconists and bottle shops with turnstyle entry/exit points, with photo ID required and tough penalties for any vendors or persons caught selling to or supplying minors can be implemented.

We vapers find it very hard to understand why vaping is being targeted in such a rushed unconsidered fashion which will ultimately destroy the industry entirely, while much more harmful cigarettes, the real problem, are allowed to continue?

It makes little sense to those of us who attribute vaping to saving our lives.

We find it bewildering and to be frank, quite insulting.

We implore the committee to report favourably to parliament and to not throw the baby out with the bath water.

Vaping is immensely less harmful than smoking and as has been experienced by millions around the world, can be a very useful smoking cessation tool.

I really hope our Australian government will take the sensible science based approach as the UK and the Royal College of Physicians has.

Please do not ban vaping or over regulate so as to make it virtually unworkable.

As the needlessly oppressive and overly regulated nicotine prescription model being proposed by some is likely to result in. Vapers have to be able to easily apply for permission to purchase small amounts of nicotine without they or doctors having to jump through endless hoops.

There has to be a happy median where minors are protected but adults struggling with cigarette addiction can still readily access vaping as a cessation tool.

Some common sense regulations with severe penalties for anyone breaking those regulations would be a good outcome for all concerned.

I thank you for your consideration.

Please, please, please don't take this tool away from smokers who have tried everything else.

Vaping works

Kind regards