Public Health Association of Australia
submission on the Vaporised Nicotine Products Bill 2017

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Introduction

The Public Health Association of Australia

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. The PHAA works to ensure that the public’s health is improved through sustained and determined efforts of the Board, the National Office, the State and Territory Branches, the Special Interest Groups and members.

The efforts of the PHAA are enhanced by our vision for a healthy Australia and by engaging with like-minded stakeholders in order to build coalitions of interest that influence public opinion, the media, political parties and governments.

Health is a human right, a vital resource for everyday life, and key factor in sustainability. Health equity and inequity do not exist in isolation from the conditions that underpin people’s health. The health status of all people is impacted by the social, cultural, political, environmental and economic determinants of health. Specific focus on these determinants is necessary to reduce the unfair and unjust effects of conditions of living that cause poor health and disease. These determinants underpin the strategic direction of the Association.

All members of the Association are committed to better health outcomes based on these principles.

Vision for a healthy population

A healthy region, a healthy nation, healthy people: living in an equitable society underpinned by a well-functioning ecosystem and a healthy environment, improving and promoting health for all.

Mission for the Public Health Association of Australia

As the leading national peak body for public health representation and advocacy, to drive better health outcomes through increased knowledge, better access and equity, evidence informed policy and effective population-based practice in public health.

Preamble

PHAA welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the inquiry into the vaporised nicotine products bill 2017. The reduction of social and health inequities should be an over-arching goal of national policy and recognised as a key measure of our progress as a society. The Australian Government, in collaboration with the States/Territories, should outline a comprehensive national cross-government framework on promoting a healthy ecosystem and reducing social and health inequities. All public health activities and related government policy should be directed towards reducing social and health inequity nationally and, where possible, internationally.
PHAA submission on the Vaporised Nicotine Products Bill 2017

PHAA Response to the bill

Intention of the bill

This bill proposes to amend the Airports Act 1996 to provide that the regulation of smoking at airports does not apply to the use of e-cigarettes and other similar products; the Therapeutic Goods Act 1989 to exclude e-cigarettes and other similar products from regulation by the Therapeutic Goods Administration; and the Tobacco Advertising Prohibition Act 1992 to provide that the ban on the advertising of smoking does not apply to the advertising of vaping and other similar products.

PHAA comments on the bill

The PHAA strongly opposes each of the components of this bill, and recommends that it be withdrawn. This position is based on the lack of robust evidence supporting these changes and concerns about their implications. There have been arguments made that e-cigarettes and other similar products are a harm reduction approach. However, the Australian National Drug Strategy 2017-2026 emphasises that to reduce harm a three pillared approach is necessary: supply reduction, demand reduction and harm reduction. The proposed legislation ignores this strategy. Rather than reducing harm, it would facilitate both an increase in supply and an increase in demand and, by doing so, increase harm.

Full details of the evidence supporting our position is found in our recent submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport’s inquiry into the use and marketing of electronic cigarettes and personal vaporisers in Australia. The PHAA submission to this inquiry is number 301 and is available at www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Health_Aged_Care_and_Sport/ElectronicCigarettes/Submissions

Conclusion

PHAA strongly opposes this bill, and refers the Committee to its submission to the recent inquiry into the use and marketing of electronic cigarettes and personal vaporisers in Australia for further details.

The PHAA appreciates the opportunity to make this submission and the opportunity to comment on the bill.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require additional information or have any queries in relation to this submission.

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