

MEDIA RELEASE**23 June 2022****Cancer Council warns urgent intergovernmental action is essential to stop an “epidemic of e-cigarette use among young people”**

With exponential increases in e-cigarette use amongst young people, and growing evidence of the harms of e-cigarettes, Cancer Council joins concerned parents and leading public health organisations in calling on all Australian governments to strengthen enforcement of existing laws.

The call comes, as the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) today released a statement following a review of the public health advice on the safety and impacts of e-cigarettes.

Libby Jardine, Chair of Cancer Council’s Tobacco Issues Committee, and a leading expert in tobacco control, said poor enforcement of laws at all levels of government has created an “epidemic of e-cigarette use among young people.”

“E-cigarette use by young Australians is a public health crisis unfolding in plain view, enabled by commercial flouting of government rules designed to protect young people from the harms of vaping,” Ms Jardine said.

“Australian Government data from three years ago showed the biggest user groups of e-cigarettes were Australians aged under 24. Evidence collected since then and reports from schools and parents show it is becoming an epidemic.

“To reverse this alarming trend, every level of government must work together to eliminate all sales of e-cigarette products, components and liquids that fall outside of the Therapeutic Goods Administration’s (TGA) pathway. This way, adults who are trying to quit smoking can continue to access e-cigarettes with a valid doctor’s prescription whilst we protect young people who are most at risk.”

Cancer Council is leading the call for:

- Urgent government action to ensure nicotine e-cigarettes are only accessed by people with a doctor’s prescription trying to quit smoking, as required by law.
- The federal government to do more to stop unlawful nicotine e-cigarette imports and the states and territories to shut down unlawful retail sales.
- All governments to abolish so-called non-nicotine e-cigarettes, which are harming children and hampering legal control of nicotine products.

The recommendations follow the most comprehensive systematic review¹ of global evidence which found that addiction, intentional and unintentional poisoning; acute nicotine toxicity; burns and injuries are amongst some of the health risks of e-cigarettes.

The same study found that the majority of e-cigarette use in Australia is not used for smoking cessation, instead finding strong evidence that e-cigarette use triples the risk of smoking uptake in never-smokers and non-smokers.

¹ Banks E, Yazidjoglou A, Brown S, Nguyen M, Martin M, Beckwith K, Daluwatta A, Campbell S, Joshy G. Summary Brief: Review of Global Evidence on the Health Effects of Electronic Cigarettes. Report for the Australian Department of Health. National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, Canberra: April 2022. Available from: <https://nceph.anu.edu.au/files/E-cigarettes%20health%20outcomes%20review%20summary%20brief%202022.pdf>



“Meanwhile, the e-cigarette industry continues to grow rapidly, and current controls are failing to protect young Australians from immediate and future health harms”, said Ms Jardine.

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Media contacts

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About Cancer Council Australia

Cancer Council Australia is Australia’s leading cancer charity, working to reduce the impact of cancer for all Australians. Cancer Council Australia works with its members, the eight state and territory Cancer Councils to:

- undertake and fund cancer research
- prevent and control cancer
- provide information and support for people affected by cancer.