



**Media Release**  
**Hon Sarah Game MLC**  
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**The TGA must recognise significant public health benefits of regulating nicotine vaping products**

Recent coverage of the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) consultation on nicotine vaping reforms have overwhelmingly favoured the voices of negative, anti-vaping naysayers who deny the public health benefits of overturning this failed prohibitionist policy.

Instead of acknowledging that the federal government's October 2021 de-facto prohibition on nicotine vaping products has failed, policymakers seem intent on listening to the very same voices that recommended this approach in the first place.

Groups such as the Australian Medical Association, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Heart Foundation, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Cancer Council, and others, are featured prominently in the media with their anti-vaping views.

Even SA Health, on their website, make false claims such as "If you vape you are 3 times as likely to take up cigarette smoking" – furthering the misleading 'gateway' theory suggesting that vapers will become smokers later in life. Public Health England, in their comprehensive review, rubbishes this claim by concluding that "the evidence does not support the concern that e-cigarettes are a route into smoking among young people".

A US study published in Journal of Consumer Policy just last week supports a growing body of evidence that suggests vaping is in fact a substitute for smoking and is the most effective smoking cessation tool available. Using all available scanner data from bricks-and-mortar retail outlets from 2014-19, the authors concluded that for every additional per-capita vape sale, cigarette sales fell by 1.4 packs per-capita.

In New Zealand, which regulated nicotine vaping products in August 2020 with bipartisan support, adult smoking has fallen by a staggering 33%. This dwarfs Australia's meagre 3.5% decline over the same period. Surely, if the 'gateway' theory was correct, smoking numbers wouldn't be declining so drastically while vaping is on the rise.

Concerns over youths vaping unregulated black-market products are real and understandable. What is less clear, however, is how further cracking down on an already-banned product that is being consumed legally all over the Western world without problematic youth vaping rates will assist in reducing youth vaping.

We need to follow the best international public health advice and strictly regulate nicotine vaping products which are successfully reducing smoking rates and improving public health in every other Western democracy.

Thousands of lives and thousands of dollars can be saved for Australians if the federal and state governments chose to follow international best practice and start regulating nicotine vapes as a consumer product with strict age verification.

**Contacts:**

Jarryd Thiel

E: [jarryd.thiel2@parliament.sa.gov.au](mailto:jarryd.thiel2@parliament.sa.gov.au)

M: 0422 636 885