



Joint Health Ministers Special Communique on Vaping *19 April 2024 - Brisbane*

All Australian Health Ministers have come together to declare their support for coordinated action on vaping to protect young Australians.

Australia has a proud history when it comes to tobacco control.

It took decades from the time that cigarettes became widely available in the early 1900s before groundbreaking studies showed the strong link between smoking and lung cancer in the 1950s.

It was another decade before the first report of the US Surgeon General exploring all of the known impacts of smoking on health in 1964.

Tobacco control started in Australia 50 years ago with advertising, years later our understanding of the devastating health impacts continues to evolve.

Australian Health Ministers are not going to stand by and let history repeat itself.

Vapes were sold to governments and communities around the world as a therapeutic good: a product that could help hardened smokers kick the habit.

Not a recreational product – especially not one targeted at kids.

If vapes are therapeutic goods then it is entirely appropriate that Australia should regulate them as therapeutic goods, instead of allowing them to be sold alongside chocolate bars in convenience stores, often down the road from schools.

It's now clear vapes are being used to recruit a new generation to nicotine addiction, and it's working.

One in 6 high school students, and one in 4 young Australians aged between 18 and 24 are vaping.

Australian Health Ministers are not going to stand by and let our kids get hooked on nicotine.

Before the Federal Parliament there is currently world leading legislation to ban the sale, supply, manufacture and commercial possession of non-therapeutic vapes.

The Australian Medical Association (AMA), Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), Cancer Council, Australian Council on Smoking & Health (ACOSH), the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand, the Public Health Association and many other groups are all supportive of the legislation to protect the health of our children.

All Health Ministers have today urged the Australian Parliament to pass the Albanese Government legislation, to ensure consistency and coordinated action to protect the future generations of Australians.

A range of supports are available nationally to help people quit smoking and the use of vapes, including programs run through state and territory health services, Quitline, widely available nicotine replacement therapies, and smoking cessation products subsidised on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

Australian Health Ministers encourage consumers to speak with their doctor or other qualified health professional about the options for quitting vapes or the management of nicotine dependence.