



# PHILIP MORRIS

AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND PACIFIC ISLANDS

## Briefing Note: Tobacco Harm Reduction

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### In Australia, only smoking is permitted

Philip Morris International (PMI) has publicly announced a global commitment to a [Smoke-Free Future](#). In Australia, this commitment is unachievable due to Commonwealth laws banning the sale of [low risk alternatives to cigarettes](#) (which we refer to as Reduced Risk Products or RRP), such as electronic vaporisers. Only "tobacco products prepared and packed for smoking" are allowed.

### Australian smoking prevalence rates have stagnated

The most recent **Australian Department of Health** report<sup>1</sup> on smoking rates in Australia states:

- that for the first time in more than 2 decades, the daily smoking rate did not significantly decline over the most recent 3-year period; and
- there was only a slight and non-significant decline in the number of cigarettes smoked per week

### The opportunity

[Professor Ron Borland](#), the Nigel Gray Distinguished Fellow in Cancer Prevention at Cancer Council Victoria co-authored a series of papers estimating the population health impact of RRPs, developing [A framework for evaluating the public health impact of e-cigarettes and other vaporized nicotine products](#) in 2016. Last year, the same lead authors published a study<sup>2</sup> based on this population health impact framework which found that in the United States:

*"Compared with the Status Quo, replacement of cigarette by e-cigarette use over a 10-year period yields 6.6 million fewer premature deaths with 86.7 million fewer life years lost in the Optimistic Scenario. Under the Pessimistic Scenario, 1.6 million premature deaths are averted with 20.8 million fewer life years lost. The largest gains are among younger cohorts, with a 0.5 gain in average life expectancy projected for the age 15 years cohort in 2016."*

[In Australia](#) this would equate to preventing about 500,000 smoking-related deaths.

### International best practice

Earlier this month, **Public Health England** released an evidence review<sup>3</sup>, the main findings include:

- vaping poses only a small fraction of the risks of smoking and switching completely from smoking to vaping conveys substantial health benefits
- e-cigarettes could be contributing to at least 20,000 successful new quits per year and possibly many more
- e-cigarette use is associated with improved quit success rates over the last year and an accelerated drop in smoking rates across the country
- many thousands of smokers incorrectly believe that vaping is as harmful as smoking; around 40% of smokers have not even tried an e-cigarette
- the evidence does not support the concern that e-cigarettes are a route into smoking among young people (youth smoking rates in the UK continue to decline, regular use is rare and is almost entirely confined to those who have smoked)

<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2016: detailed findings* (available [here](#)).

<sup>2</sup> Levy et al. *Tobacco Control Journal*, *Potential deaths averted in USA by replacing cigarettes with e-cigarettes* (available [here](#)).

<sup>3</sup> Public Health England, *E-cigarettes and heated tobacco products: evidence review* (available [here](#)).

















