

Subject: Media alert | Experts warn government against vape crackdown

Good morning,

Forty five leading tobacco treatment, public health and addiction experts from Australia and New Zealand are urging lawmakers to listen to the *Australian National Advisory Council on Alcohol and Other Drugs* (ANACAD) ahead of Health Minister Mark Butler's proposed vaping crackdown.

In a letter sent to all federal, state and territory members of parliament, [available here](#), the experts (with no links to tobacco or e-cigarette companies) endorsed the Council's concerns about the proposed regulations, which were revealed earlier this month under the Freedom of Information Act. The ANACAD emails can be found [here](#).

In particular, it is the Council's view that:

- Further bans will **make the black market worse**: "Further restrictions will likely only make the problem worse and we'll end up criminalising more people."
- Sensible, **balanced regulation is the way forward**: "Sensibly balancing reduction of access and uptake among children and young people with increasing access for adults who want to stop smoking. Regulation that is too severe risks making smoking more attractive."
- Policy should be **driven by evidence**: "We should encourage the TGA to ensure an evidence based policy. We want to avoid making policy driven by unsubstantiated anecdotal evidence or selective interpretations of the data."
- **Border control won't work**: "Border control efforts with other illicit drugs is hugely costly with, typically, very little impact on the black market and virtually no impact on use."
- **All flavours should NOT be banned**: "There is evidence that flavours that appeal to smokers encourage uptake of vaping instead of smoking among adults ... Again, banning anything tends to increase the black market and possibly even experiments with home mixing of flavours."
- **The 'gateway' theory of drug and alcohol use is flawed**: "There's no evidence that vaping results in young people who are not at risk of smoking tobacco to take up smoking."

The startling advice from ANACAD has so far been ignored by the Health Minister. The proposal crackdown will see the importation and sale of all vaping products banned except from pharmacies with a doctor's prescription.

Without change, the proposal will result in a further surge in the black market, continued access for young people to illicit, unregulated vapes and stagnant smoking rates. Leading tobacco control experts and ANACAD agree on this issue.

Please find a quote attributable to myself below. I am available for interview.

“We need to recognise that overly restrictive policies will have counterproductive results. The current prescription-only model has been disastrous proof of this problem. Implementing more severe restrictions on vaping products will only spur the black market and reduce smoking quit rates. We urge lawmakers to urgently step in and place a stop to the proposed crackdown and listen to the expert advice from tobacco control and addiction experts including ANACAD on this crucial issue.”

Best,
Colin

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About Me

I am a member of the Expert Advisory Group that develops the [RACGP Australian national smoking cessation guidelines](#). I am the Founding Chairman of the [Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association](#), a registered health promotion charity dedicated to raising awareness of low-risk nicotine products as a substitute for smoking for smokers who can't quit.

I was an Associate Professor in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine at the University of New South Wales until 2020, and a past Vice President of the Australian Association of Smoking Cessation Professionals, Australia's peak body for experts in the field of smoking cessation.

I am the author of a book, [Stop Smoking Start Vaping](#).

I have never received funding from e-cigarette or tobacco companies.

More information about me is available at www.colinmendelsohn.com.au