

Good morning,

Seven months after his initial announcement, Health Minister Mark Butler has finally revealed his plan to regulate vaping.

The new regulations, set to commence in January 2024, will ban the importation of disposable single-use vapes. The personal importation of any vapes or e-liquids from overseas will be banned from 1 March 2024.

This is a regulatory regime without teeth and is bound to fail... again. It places Australia increasingly out of step with other Western countries such as New Zealand which successfully legalised and regulated vaping and has seen substantial public health gains as a result.

The medical community remains largely skeptical and poorly informed about vaping, with very few doctors willing to prescribe nicotine so far. Vapers themselves have expressed reluctance to obtain prescriptions. Just 8% of vapers hold a valid prescription. The anticipated limited range of products available through pharmacies, along with cost barriers, will deter users from engaging with the legal market.

The new regulations are a windfall for the black market. Already fuelled by the prescription-only model, the black market is robust and increasingly controlled by organised crime networks. The proposed regulations, rather than curtailing this illicit market, may drive it further underground, with illegal products continuing to flow across borders. This unregulated market poses greater risks to consumers and diminishes the effectiveness of public health measures.

The government plans to bolster enforcement with a measly \$25 million to the Australian Border Force and \$56.9 million to the Therapeutic Goods Administration over two years. This is likely to have minimal effect.

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

"Mark Butler continues to treat vaping as a public health menace instead of as a potential opportunity. When regulated sensibly as adult consumer products, other western countries have found that vaping contributes to dramatic declines in adult and youth smoking rates. It makes no sense to make a far safer alternative more difficult to access than deadly cigarettes."

"History has repeatedly demonstrated that blanket bans and punitive measures simply don't work. Butler's approach will only fuel the black market and drive it underground. The losers in this scenario are adult smokers seeking safe and effective alternatives and young people who will continue to have access to illegal products. The winners are organised crime and Big Tobacco"

- Dr Colin Mendelsohn, academic and researcher in smoking cessation and tobacco harm reduction for over 40 years

Best,
Colin

Dr Colin Mendelsohn MB BS (Hons)

11 Carlotta Road, Double Bay NSW 2028

E mendel@bigpond.net.au | M 0415 976 783

W www.colinmendelsohn.com.au | T [@colinmendelsohn](https://twitter.com/colinmendelsohn) | F [dr.colin.mendelsohn](https://www.facebook.com/dr.colin.mendelsohn)

About me

I am an academic, researcher and clinician working in smoking cessation and tobacco harm reduction for over 40 years.

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.