

24 April 2023

Select Committee on Electronic Cigarettes and  
Personal Vaporisers (Vaping)  
Via email: [LA.Committees@nt.gov.au](mailto:LA.Committees@nt.gov.au)

Dear Select Committee

**Re: NT HEALTH – QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE**

On 17 April 2023, representatives of NT Health appeared before the Committee to provide an initial briefing on Electronic Cigarettes and Personal Vaporisers (Vaping). The below information is provided in response to questions taken on notice:

1. Can you provide any medical evidence regarding harms from vaping – in particular any evidence of medical episodes from vaping in the NT?

A comprehensive review of the major issues in smoking and health in Australia is maintained by the Cancer Council Victoria. Chapter 18 of *Tobacco in Australia: Facts & Issues* relates to e-cigarettes and other alternative nicotine products and summaries evidence on the relationship between e-cigarette use and pregnancy outcomes, adolescent brain development, cardiovascular disease risk, cancer risk, the risk of non-infections respiratory diseases, the risk of infections diseases, oral health, other health effects and exposure to second-hand e-cigarette emissions. This online resource is updated as new evidence emerges and is available at [www.tobaccoinaustralia.org.au](http://www.tobaccoinaustralia.org.au).

The Australian National University's National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health published a report titled *Electronic cigarettes and health outcomes: systematic review of global evidence* for the Australian Department of Health in April 2022. The report provides an overview of the contemporary evidence on the health outcomes directly related to e-cigarette use, including dependence, cardiovascular disease, cancer, respiratory disease, oral diseases, reproductive outcomes, injuries and poisonings, mental health conditions and environmental hazards with human health implications. The report is available at [Electronic cigarettes and health outcomes: systematic review of evidence \(anu.edu.au\)](http://Electronic%20cigarettes%20and%20health%20outcomes:%20systematic%20review%20of%20evidence%20(anu.edu.au)). This report includes a summary of conclusions from previous reviews, including the European Union Scientific Committee on Health, Environmental and Emerging Risks (SCHEER) review, which concluded that there is moderate evidence that e-cigarettes are a gateway to smoking for young people.

New South Wales maintains a comprehensive [evidence summary](#) and Queensland is conducting an [inquiry into reducing rates of e-cigarette use in Queensland](#). The Queensland process will provide further information on the risks of vaping.

Currently, there is no local data available on medical episodes from vaping in the NT. The longer-term impacts of vaping are still largely unknown and will be difficult to distinguish from other forms of smoking/tobacco -consumption. Though not yet published, the most recent NT Adult Population Health Survey is expected to show that 6% of adults in the NT are using e-cigarettes.

Nicotine may be a contributing factor in some local mental health presentations although not recorded as such.

Vaping has a longer history in international markets. Poison centres in the United States began receiving calls about e-cigarettes and liquid nicotine products in 2011, coinciding with the arrival of e-cigarettes in the US market. E-cigarettes often contain a greater concentration of nicotine than other nicotine/tobacco products on the market. Children and toddlers who use e-cigarette devices or liquid nicotine have become very ill; requiring emergency department visits with nausea and vomiting being the most common presentations. The American Association of Poison Control Centres tracks e-cigarettes as an [emerging hazard](#).

2. Can you provide information on the TGA's advice regarding the regulation of flavoured vaporisers?

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)'s *Therapeutic Goods (Standard for Nicotine Vaping Products) (TGO 110) Order 2021* is a product standard made under section 10 of the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*. The TGO 110 sets out minimum safety and quality requirements for nicotine vaping products that are not registered in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG). All nicotine vaping products currently available in Australia are unregistered nicotine vaping products, however, consumers can legally access these nicotine vaping products with a valid prescription. The requirements in TGO 110 apply to unregistered nicotine vaping products imported into, supplied in, or exported from, Australia and includes both products that are ready for immediate use by consumers (ie where the nicotine is 'pre-mixed' with the flavouring) and products that are designed for consumers to mix with flavourings/other diluents at home prior to use.

There are a number of ingredient requirements in TGO 110 including a list of prohibited ingredients with known health risks associated with inhaling these substances. If one or more of these prohibited ingredients is an ingredient in a flavour, the TGO 110 prohibits the use of that flavour. This does not mean that all other flavours are safe. It's important to note that there is limited evidence available about the safety of inhaling the ingredients (including flavourings) used in nicotine products – just because an ingredient is safe to consume as a food or in a tablet or capsule does not necessarily mean it is safe to inhale. Additionally, different flavoured products of the 'same' brand, or different brands of products with the 'same' flavour, may have different safety profiles and should not necessarily be considered substitutable.

The TGA consultation on proposed reforms to the regulation of nicotine vapes has now closed. The TGA has considered the submissions and is now providing advice to the Australian Government on possible options for reform. A summary of the responses is available on the TGA website at [Proposed reforms to the regulation of nicotine vaping products - Therapeutic Goods Administration - Citizen Space \(tga.gov.au\)](#) and includes strong support for prohibiting/restricting flavours and certain other ingredients.

Should you require any further clarification on information provided, please contact Mr David Scholz, Director Clinical Policy and Planning, Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Branch on [david.scholz@nt.gov.au](mailto:david.scholz@nt.gov.au) or 8999 2790.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cecelia', is centered on a light-colored, textured background.

Cecelia Gore  
Executive Director  
Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Branch  
NT Health