The Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association
A registered health promotion charity

Global Forum for Nicotine 2018

Associate Professor Colin Mendelsohn
Friday 15 June 2018
# THR in Australia

| Vaping                  | • Illegal to possess or use nicotine w/o prescription  
|                        | • 2y jail or $45,000  
|                        | • Regulated as tobacco products  
|                        | • 1.2% vapers (240,000) |
| Heat-not-burn          | • Illegal |
| Snus                   | • Legal but heavily taxed ($1,000 p kg) |
Negative public messaging

- Government policy
  - Precautionary approach
  - ‘Insufficient evidence’
- Federal, state health departments
- Health charities
- Medical associations
- Negative media stories
- Misinformation

NHMRC CEO Statement: Electronic cigarettes, April 2017
Therapeutic Goods Administration, March 2017
Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association

• Registered health promotion charity
• Educate public and health professionals
• Board of Directors

A/Prof Colin Mendelsohn
Dr Alex Wodak
Dr Joe Kosterich
Dr Catherine Silsbury
Steve Elsom

• Credible source of evidence-based information for the media, politicians and other stakeholders
Funding

• Foundation costs: legal and website
  – Industry and KAC

• Ongoing income
  – Unrestricted tax-deductible donations
  – Credibility and independence
  – No commercial sponsorship, membership or financial partnerships
  – No tobacco company donations
Website

• Legal restrictions: information = advertising
• No ‘promotion’ of
  – Unapproved therapeutic products eg snus
  – Prescription products eg e-cig for quitting
  – Illegal products eg HnB, e-cig for harm reduction
• No medical advice
• No ‘promotion’ of brands or products
What is ATHRA?

Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association (ATHRA) is a registered health promotion charity established to reduce the harm from tobacco smoking in Australia. ATHRA’s aim is to provide smokers and health professionals with evidence-based information on safer alternatives to smoking. ATHRA’s broader goal is to encourage the complete cessation of tobacco smoking in Australia.

Smoking and health

Quitting is the most important thing you will ever do for your health. Your mental and physical health will start to improve immediately after quitting and you will live longer. Smokers who quit at the age of 40 gain 9 years of life.

How to quit

The most effective way to quit smoking is with professional counselling to help break the smoking habit and medication to relieve the cravings for nicotine and withdrawal symptoms. The support and advice of a health professional has been shown to increase your chance of success.

What is tobacco harm reduction?

Tobacco harm reduction refers to switching to less harmful nicotine products for those who are not able to quit smoking or nicotine use. The focus is on eliminating smoke and preventing harm to health and not on preventing the use of nicotine itself.

What is vaping?

Personal vapourisers (electronic cigarettes) heat a liquid solution to create an aerosol which is inhaled and exhaled. Vaping delivers nicotine without most of the harmful chemicals in smoke. Vaping also replicates the behaviour and sensations of smoking.
Videos

E-cigarette safety: the facts explained (2 mins)

Blog Posts

About Quitting

Battery safety of vaping devices. What is the real risk?
Posted on May 7, 2018 by Colin
The media has reported the tragic story of a 38-year old man who died in Florida after an apparent explosion of a...

Vape shops are helping smokers quit
Posted on May 4, 2018 by Colin
Vape shops provide a valuable role in helping smokers to switch from smoking to vaping and can give helpful smoking cessation advice,...

E-cigarette report misses golden opportunity to save 500,000 Australian lives
Posted on March 28, 2018 by Colin
A federal parliamentary committee today missed a key opportunity to give Australia’s three million smokers access to a far less harmful alternative,...

Latest research on vaping
Posted on March 17, 2018 by Colin
Australia needs a balanced regulatory policy that restricts vaping by young people while supporting its use for adult smokers who are otherwise...

See more videos

See all blog posts

Board of Directors

A/Prof Colin Mendelsohn
Tobacco treatment specialist

Mr Stephen Elson
Consumer representative

Dr. Joe Kosterich
General Practice

Dr Catherine Silsby
Addiction Medicine Specialist

Dr Alex Wodak
Addiction Medicine Specialist

Supporters of Tobacco Harm Reduction

Health & Medical Organisations
Royal Australasian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
Drug and Alcohol Nurses of Australasia
Royal College of Physicians, UK
Public Health England
British Lung Foundation
British Heart Foundation
British Medical Association
Royal College of General

Australian Health Professionals
Professor Wayne Hall, Centre for Youth Substance Abuse, Uni Qld
Professor Ric Day AM, Professor of Clinical Pharmacology
Professor David Castle, Psychiatrist
Prof Ian Webster AO, Public Health, Community Medicine, UNSW
Professor Steve Robson, Obstetrician & Gynaecologist
Dr Ingrid van Beek AM, Addiction Medicine Specialist
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Health Professionals

This section provides information for health professionals who want to know more about vaping and the scientific evidence underpinning it. We also provide practical advice on how to assist patients who wish to try vaping and how to write a prescription for nicotine.

For best practice advice on helping smokers to quit with conventional therapies please refer to the RACGP guidelines: Supporting smoking cessation: a guide for health professional.

Health professionals need to be informed about vaping. Smokers are increasingly asking questions about it and health professionals are a trusted source of information and advice. Furthermore, vaping has a place as a tool in the medical treatment of smoking, especially where other treatments have failed.
Other activities

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WNTD 2018 campaign

- Media release
- Key message: stalling of smoking rates in Australia vs other countries with THR
Australia has the highest priced cigarettes in the world, so why aren't people quitting?

Australia has the highest priced cigarettes in the world, yet the number of people giving up smoking has slowed in recent years.

England, USA, Canada, Norway and Iceland are among a long list of western countries that are seeking to phase out smoking. But Australia's 2.5 million smokers are lagging behind with just a 0.8 per cent decrease in smokers between 2015 to 2016.

Associate Professor Colin Mendelson, Chairman of Australia's Tobacco Harm Reduction Association (ATHRA), told Yahoo! News that the 'high prices simply aren't working anymore'.

"Australia is no longer the world leader in tobacco control it once was," he said.

Australia's once declining population of smokers has hit a wall.

"I think we have taken our eye off the ball, there is this idea that we have dealt with smoking and that we now need to move onto ice addiction and other health problems... addicted smokers who haven't quit by now aren't just going to suddenly quit smoking."

Smoking is still the most preventable cause of death in Australia, we still lose 18,000 people to tobacco each year in Australia.

"Up until 2012 we used to have regular national campaigns but now all we have is the occasional advertisement. It does not receive the comprehensive message it used to."

Australia lags behind Iceland, Norway, USA, the UK, Canada and New Zealand, where just last week the sale of nicotine e-cigarettes and e-liquids as consumer goods was legalised on the basis that vaping is a much safer alternative to smoking and could help many smokers to quit.