



October 2018

ECI Position Statement on e-cigarettes in Australia

There continues to be insufficient scientific evidence to support the use of e-cigarettes as a smoking cessation device.¹ In addition, there is increasing evidence of direct health harm related to the use of e-cigarettes, and there is also insufficient evidence to support the less-harm position with regard to e-cigarette use.

Accordingly, the Eliminate Cancer Initiative (ECI) support a precautionary approach on the availability and use of e-cigarettes in Australia. This is in line with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the majority of Australia's leading medical, scientific and health organisations.^{2,3}

E-cigarettes are battery operated devices that heat a liquid (called 'e-liquid') to produce a vapour that users inhale. The composition of e-liquid varies; however, it typically contains a range of chemicals including solvents and flavouring agents, and often contains varying levels of nicotine.²

Current evidence indicates that the balance of harm at a population level significantly outweighs any potential net-benefit of e-cigarette use. The key facts in informing this position include:

- Growing evidence that e-cigarette use is a precursor to cigarette smoking initiation in young people.⁴
- Growing evidence of direct health harms, including increased risk of respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease and carcinogenesis.^{5,6}
- The absence of conclusive evidence that e-cigarettes are effective as an aid to quitting smoking.^{7,8}
- There is evidence from longitudinal studies to suggest that e-cigarette use in non-smokers is associated with future uptake of tobacco cigarette smoking.^{1,2}
- The extent to which e-cigarettes reduce harm to the user through exposure to fewer toxic chemicals than conventional tobacco cigarettes has not been determined.¹⁻⁴

ECI recognises the need for high quality research to establish the long-term safety of e-cigarettes. Further work is required to determine if e-cigarettes should play any role in tobacco cessation in Australia. As such, ECI believes that the current cautionary approach to e-cigarettes by the Australian Government, supported by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is appropriate.^{8,9}

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read 'Andrew Forrest', is written over a faint, light blue grid background.

Andrew Forrest
Chairman

Eliminate Cancer Initiative

PO Box 3155 Broadway, Nedlands WA 6009

+61 8 6460 4949 | eliminatecancer.org | info@eliminatecancer.org

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References:

1. National Health and Medical Research Council. NHMRC CEO Statement: Electronic Cigarettes (E-cigarettes). Accessed from: <https://nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/ceo-statement-electronic-cigarettes>.
2. World Health Organisation – Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems and Electronic Non-Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS/ENND). Accessed from: http://www.who.int/fctc/cop/cop7/FCTC_COP_7_11_EN.pdf.
3. Cancer Australia Statement on E-cigarettes February 2018. Accessed From: https://canceraustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/statement_on_e-cigarettes_february_2018_0.pdf.
4. Leventhal AM, Strong DR, Kirkpatrick MG, Unger JB, Sussman S, Riggs NR, et al. Association of electronic cigarette use with initiation of combustible tobacco product smoking in early adolescence. *JAMA*. 2015;314(7):700-7.
5. Australian Medical Association. AMA Submission to the Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport Inquiry into the Use and Marketing of Electronic Cigarettes and Personal Vaporisers in Australia. Submission 289. Accessed from: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Health_Aged_Care_and_Sport/Electronic_Cigarettes/Submissions; 2017.
6. Cancer Council Australia and The Heart Foundation – Joint Position Statement on Electronic Cigarettes. Accessed from: http://wiki.cancer.org.au/policy/Position_statement_-_Electronic_cigarettes.
7. Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, *E-cigarettes, smoking and health*, August 2018. Accessed From: <https://www.csiro.au/en/Research/BF/Areas/Nutrition-and-health/E-cigarettes-report>.
8. National Health and Medical Research Council. NHMRC submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Use and Marketing of Electronic Cigarettes in Australia. Submission 167. Accessed from: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Health_Aged_Care_and_Sport/Electronic_Cigarettes/Submissions; 2017.
9. Therapeutic Goods Administration, Scheduling Delegates Final Decision, March 2017, *Scheduling Medicines and poisons*. Accessed from: <https://www.tga.gov.au/scheduling-decision-final/scheduling-delegates-final-decisions-march-2017>.

Information, fact sheets and FAQs from Government Departments

ACT Health – Electronic Cigarettes

<http://www.health.act.gov.au/public-information/public-health/tobacco-and-smoke-free/electronic-cigarettes>

New South Wales Department of Health – Electronic Cigarettes

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/tobacco/Pages/electronic-cigarettes.aspx>

Product Safety Australia – Electronic Cigarette Safety

<http://www.productsafety.gov.au/news/electronic-cigarette-safety>

Therapeutic Goods Administration – Electronic Cigarettes

<https://www.tga.gov.au/community-qa/electronic-cigarettes>

Western Australia Department of Health – Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes)

http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Electronic-cigarettes-e-cigarettes

State and Territory Health Departments – Contact Details

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-related.htm#state>

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