

Vaping - An inquiry into reducing rates of e-cigarette use in Queensland

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Joe KELLY MP STATE MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES



Committee Secretary
Health and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Thursday May 4th 2023

Re: a submission to the *Inquiry into reducing the rates of e-cigarette use in Queensland.*

Dear Committee Secretary,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Health and Environment Committee's (HEC) Inquiry into reducing the rates of e-cigarette use in Queensland.

As a registered nurse of over 32 years who began work in Queensland in the 1980's, I have seen the debilitating health-effects of long-term smoking and nicotine addiction. I have cared for people who have developed chronic emphysema, lung cancer and heart disease and have seen many Queenslanders live their final years in suffering and die too young.

Over the last 30 years I have also seen the amazing advances of treatment for nicotine addiction and preventative health campaigns to prevent the uptake of smoking, particularly among young adults. I have also seen Government's use of economic and public health policy levers to reduce smoking rates among existing smokers, such as plain packaging reforms, the progressive increase of tobacco excises and smoke free areas to name some.

To ensure future Queenslanders, particularly young Queenslanders, do not follow a similar path to chronic disease and debilitating health outcomes, I strongly believe Governments must investigate:

- the prevalence of e-cigarette use, particularly among young people,
- the health implications of e-cigarette use on individuals and the response needed from the health system, and;
- approaches to discourage e-cigarette use that are informed by best practices and successful public and preventative health policies that have reduced smoking rates

While this is my experience, the community I represent has taken a great interest in this inquiry and offer a range of perspectives that I would like to highlight with the committee. Among the perspectives of local school staff, fellow health professionals, e-cigarette users, parents of children and young people, former smokers and many others, Greenslopes constituents have shared with me their concerns about vaping's health effects, the effects on young people's brain and lung

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development and the action they would like to see from Government. From consultation I took with constituents over the period of the 11th of April to 4th May 2023, I would highlight that:

- 9% of respondents currently vape or previously vaped
- the vast majority (87%) are concerned about the potential health risks of regular e-cigarette use
- the vast majority (73%) strongly agree that e-cigarettes are unsafe to use
- the majority (67%) strongly agree that vaping can harm the developing brain
- the vast majority (77%) strongly agree that vaping can damage the lungs
- the vast majority (78%) strongly agree that e-cigarette use during adolescence can cause addiction
- most disagree (59%) that vaping is healthier than smoking tobacco cigarettes
- The vast majority (77%) believe it is unsafe to vape around others
- 75% strongly disagree that nicotine is harmless
- 76% of respondents would like further restrictions and enforcement over the sale of illegal vaping products
- 71% of respondents would like the Federal Government to restrict the marketing of vaping products
- 67% of respondents would like accessible and accurate information about the chemicals in vaping

Taken together these responses show there is broad concern from my community about the health impacts of vaping among young people, it's accessibility and that there is strong support for reform of the legal framework around vaping. I would ask that the committee take this into account during their investigations.

I would also highlight the Federal Government's recent announcement's regarding vaping, to ban disposable vapes, constrict the black market of illegal vaping products and centralising doctors roles in prescribing e-cigarettes for better medical supervision. I ask the committee to consider how best to complement these measures.

Yours sincerely



Joe Kelly MP
Member for Greenslopes

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