

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

Submission No: 75
Submitted by: Community Enterprise Queensland
Publication:
Attachments:
Submitter Comments:

Community Enterprise Queensland Submission to Parliamentary Inquiry May 2023:

VAPING – AN INQUIRY INTO REDUCING RATES OF E-CIGARETTE USE IN QUEENSLAND

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Mark Butler MLA, recently outlined the role the Tobacco Industry has played in manipulating the concept of ‘harm reduction’ to introduce e-cigarettes into an unregulated marketplace, targeting young consumers. This situation has generated a scenario that requires urgent action. Widening the scope of tobacco control measures to better regulated e-cigarettes, will not only reduce the immediate detrimental health and social impacts but also contribute to avoiding the additional burden of preventable diseases from e-cigarettes and tobacco use in the future.

AREAS OF CONCERN

PREVALENCE OF E-CIGARETTE USE, PARTICULARLY AMONGST CHILDREN ND YOUNG PEOPLE

People who are non-smokers and young people are those most at risk for adverse outcomes from the use of e-cigarettes [2]. Young people are disproportionately affected by harm from addiction, poisoning, toxicity from inhalation, and increased smoking uptake [2]. The National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019 shows the proportion of e-cigarette use in the Queensland population.

There is a need to understand the importance for place-based solutions in reducing e-cigarette use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Recent evidence has highlighted substantial variation in the prevalence of e-cigarette use in urban, regional, remote and very remote communities. Ensuring that being data reported is sufficiently analysed and recorded by location will improve the quality of prevalence estimates and trends will improve the efficacy and focus of the diverse and varied strategies that will be required to address this issue, and the associated health impacts.

VAPING RELATED HARMS

The risks for adverse health outcomes are high for e-cigarette users, including children, youth and non-smokers. Banks et al. (2023) recently published their findings from a systematic review and umbrella review in the Medical Journal of Australia. This included conclusive evidence on nicotine e-cigarettes, which can cause poisoning and immediate inhalation toxicity (including seizures), malfunctioning devices which can cause injuries and burns, as well as environmental hazards with health implications.

Not only does the use of nicotine e-cigarettes increase the risk of poor health outcomes such as poisoning, addiction, toxicity from inhalation (including seizures), and lung injury, but when a user inhales from an e-cigarette they risk not only nicotine exposure but also solvent carriers, flavourings, tobacco specific nitrosamines, volatile organic compounds, phenolic compounds, tobacco alkaloids, aldehydes, free radicals, reactive oxygen species, furans, and metals [2].

APPROACHES BEING TAKEN

Australia's unique prescription-only model aims to avoid the use of e-cigarettes other than for the purpose of smoking cessation – particularly among non-smokers, children and young people. We are responsible for the operation of 28 retail stores throughout the Torres Strait, Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) and remote Aboriginal communities., providing access to quality fresh food, groceries and essential services like fuel, gas and ATM facilities and strongly support the need to develop, monitor and evaluate infrastructure for healthier futures.

OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE AWARENESS AND PROMOTE HEALTHIER PRODUCTS

The recent launch of the National Tobacco Strategy on Tuesday, 2 May 2023 to reduce tobacco smoking and limit nicotine addiction is welcome. Extending population specific approaches, such as the Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) program is also welcomed and acknowledges that local and regional Indigenous led and implemented multi-component, tobacco control programs and policies to promote cessation and reduce uptake need to be driven by local communities. Community Enterprise Queensland, as a not-for-profit organisation that is committed to providing essential goods and services to communities in the Torres Strait, Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) and remote Aboriginal communities, can play a role in promoting tobacco cessation support to our customers and work collaboratively with government and ACCHO tobacco control programs to create a healthier environment in communities.

CONSIDERATION OF WASTE MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF E-CIGARETTES

Waste management in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and islands where CEQ operates is a challenging issue and minimising waste generated from single use e-cigarettes is highly desirable. Some approaches to consider to address the environment aspects include:

- Strengthening and building upon local ranger programs and driving community engagement and education around the importance of caring for country
- Drawing upon the importance of how an Indigenous holistic understanding of well-being of both the individual, community and environment

CONCLUSION

The recent announcement of Australian Government to better regulate e-cigarettes is encouraging and is consistent with the evidence based, precautionary approach. CEQ welcomes Queensland Government taking action on e-cigarettes. CEQ supports the consideration of regulatory approaches as public measures to help create safer and healthier environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the communities we serve. Community Enterprise Queensland can play an important role in working with government to create safe environments and promote health messages to our customers in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Queensland.

REFERENCES

1. Colonna, E.M., R.; Cohen, R.; Marmour, A.; Doery, K.; Thurber, K.A.; Thomas, D.; Guthrie, J.; Wells, S. & Lovett, R., *Review of tobacco use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples*. Australian Indigenous Health Bulletin, 2020. **20**.
2. Banks, E., et al., *Electronic cigarettes and health outcomes: umbrella and systematic review of the global evidence*. Med J Aust, 2023. **218**(6): p. 267-275.
3. Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Health and Aged Care. *National Tobacco Strategy 2023-2030*, D.o. Care, Editor. 2023, Department of Health and Aged Care: Canberra.
4. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. *National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019*, A.I.o.H.a. Welfare, Editor. 2020, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: Canberra.
5. Heris, C., et al., *E-cigarette use and the relationship to smoking among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australian Secondary Students, 2017*. Aust N Z J Public Health, 2022. **46**(6): p. 807-813.
6. Thurber, K.A.W., J.; Maddox, R.; Marmour, A.; Heris, C.; Banks, E. & Lovett, R., *A review of evidence on the prevalence of and trends in cigarette and e-cigarette use by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and adults*. 2020, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Program, National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, Research School of Population Health, The Australian National University.
7. Maddox, R., et al., *Ethical publishing in 'Indigenous' contexts*. Tob Control, 2023.
8. Maddox, R., *Submission on potential reforms to the regulation of nicotine vaping products*. 2023, National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing, The Australian National University: Canberra, ACT.
9. The Global Goals. (2023). The 17 Goals. Retrieved from <https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/>
10. Tobacco: E-cigarettes. (2022). Tobacco: E-cigarettes. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/tobacco-e-cigarettes>
11. The Health of Queenslanders Report of the Chief Officer Queensland. (2023). Electronic cigarettes. Retrieved from https://www.choreport.health.qld.gov.au/our-lifestyle/electronic-cigarettes#section__latest-results
12. Baenziger O, Ford L, Yazidjoglou A, et al. E- cigarette use and combustible tobacco cigarette smoking uptake among non-smokers, including relapse in former smokers: umbrella review, systematic review and meta-analysis. BMJ Open. 2021; 11: e045603.)