

Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

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Health, Environment and Innovation Committee
Parliament House
George Street BRISBANE QLD 4000

7th April 2025

Dear Committee Members,

Re: Queensland Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

We appreciate the opportunity to take part in the consultation and we commend the Queensland Government's efforts to continue to strengthen regulations and keep vaping products out of the hands of young people and non-smokers.

We support the amendments proposed in the *Queensland Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2025* relating to vaping goods, including the forfeiture and destruction of vaping goods, cost recovery from convicted persons and minor and technical amendments.

The Queensland Government has made a commitment to the National Preventive Health Strategy, and National Tobacco Strategy, and play a key role in leading public health reforms and protecting the health of Queenslanders. We commend the government on taking measures to remove illicit vaping products from the community and prevent vaping use among Queenslanders.

Strengthening regulations on e-cigarettes and novel and emerging products is a key priority outlined in the National Tobacco Strategy, and we commend the Queensland Government in implementing additional measures to continue enforcement efforts to prevent illegal supply in line with Action 9.8.

In Queensland and around Australia there has been a rapid rise in the use of e-cigarettes particularly among young people. The toxic chemicals that are in e-cigarettes, many of which are known to be carcinogenic, can cause respiratory harm including breathing issues and lung damage. Nicotine is known to cause cardiovascular damage, harm brain development, impact learning, attention, mood and impulse control, and exacerbate the symptoms of anxiety. Nicotine is a highly addictive drug that may increase the risk of future addiction to other drugs.¹ E-cigarettes are a known gateway to smoking with the rate of smoking initiation for those who ever-vaped nearly 5 times that of those who have never-vaped.²

Accessibility of e-cigarettes and other nicotine products creates social acceptability and normalisation and encourages uptake and ongoing use. By keeping these products as pharmacy or

prescription only products it sends a clear signal that they are not recreational products to be used by the broader population and should only be used as a last line smoking cessation therapy to treat long term nicotine dependence.

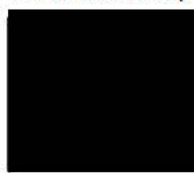
We applaud the government's ongoing efforts to protect Queenslanders from the harms of vaping and nicotine products, and the ongoing work of Queensland Health in e-cigarette education, policy and enforcement, and acknowledge the tremendous work that continues to be done to enforce e-cigarette regulations to date. We do highlight the need for **ongoing adequate funding and strengthening of enforcement efforts wherever possible** to ensure the continued success of the legislation.

Additional recommendation for future action:

1. We recommend that the Queensland Government amend the *Electoral Act 1992* to include the banning of political donations from both the tobacco and vaping industry. This has already been done in New South Wales, with additional jurisdictions exploring opportunities to protect public health and the political system from industry interference. Whilst we acknowledge it is not within scope of this Act or consultation, we seek to raise this opportunity with the Health, Environment and Innovation Committee members and reiterate that Australia is a signatory to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) which states that public policy should be free from influence from the tobacco industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the *Queensland Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2025*. We look forward to continuing to work together to help reduce rates of smoking and vaping and to protect the health of all Queenslanders.

Yours sincerely



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Laura Hunter

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References

1. 20116 Nicotine Dependence. CAMH. Accessed April 1, 2025. <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/nicotine-dependence>
2. Egger S, David M, Watts C, et al. The association between vaping and subsequent initiation of cigarette smoking in young Australians from age 12 to 17 years: a retrospective cohort analysis using cross-sectional recall data from 5114 adolescents. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*. 2024;48(5):100173. doi:10.1016/j.anzjph.2024.100173