



## MEDIA RELEASE

28 March 2018

### LEADING HEALTH ORGANISATION APPLAUDS REPORT ON E-CIGARETTES

The Australian Council on Smoking and Health applauds a report on e-cigarettes released today by a House of Representatives Committee.

“This majority report took account of the latest published medical and scientific evidence<sup>i</sup> on the health effects of e-cigarettes”, said Mr Maurice Swanson, President of the Australian Council on Smoking and Health (ACOSH).

“It is also consistent with a report released in January this year by the US National Academy of Sciences (NASEM), which reviewed more than 800 published papers on e-cigarettes in an authoritative report and concluded the following:

- There is insufficient evidence about the effectiveness of e-cigarettes as aids to help smokers quit.
- There is substantial evidence that the use of e-cigarettes increases the risk of children ever using traditional cigarettes.
- There is no conclusive evidence whether or not e-cigarettes increase the risk of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.”

The majority report supports the role of Australia’s leading health authorities, the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), by recommending that the NHMRC fund an independent and comprehensive review every two years of the available evidence e-cigarettes.

These expert health organisations have appropriately advised the Federal Government to take a precautionary approach to making e-cigarettes more widely available.

“There is strong and increasing evidence from countries where e-cigarettes are widely used that young people using e-cigarettes, who are not current cigarette smokers, are much more likely to become regular smokers.

“Changing existing laws to make e-cigarettes more easily available would be a marketing bonanza for Big Tobacco that owns many of the companies producing e-cigarettes, assisting them to recruit a new generation of smokers,” Mr Swanson said.

ACOSH supports all the recommendations made in the majority including that the TGA continues to oversee classification of nicotine of the assessment of any e-cigarette products as a therapeutic good.

The Australian Government needs to continue with evidence-based strategies to further reduce the prevalence of smoking, which has been steadily declining since the early 1980s, and not put at risk this major public health achievement.

“We would also urge the Federal Government to re-introduce a well-funded and sustained mass media campaign that encourages and supports smokers to quit.” Mr Swanson said.

This has been missing from Australia’s strategy for five years and should be re-introduced in the forthcoming Federal Budget. We need evidence-based action such as this, not distractions that suit tobacco interests, but are likely to promote smoking by children and young people”.

For further information please contact: Maurice Swanson, President Australian Council on Smoking and Health, 0401 090 915

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<sup>i</sup> National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Public health consequences of e-cigarettes. 2018. <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/24952/public-health-consequences-of-e-cigarettes>.