

27 June 2017

Mr Trent Zimmerman MP
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Dear Mr Zimmerman,

Re: Inquiry into the Use of Electronic Cigarettes and Personal Vaporisers in Australia

Thank you for your recent invitation to comment on the Terms of Reference for the above Inquiry. The RACGP has a strong interest in this area and publishes the evidence based guideline: *Smoking cessation: a guide for health professionals*. We provide comments relating to the following Terms of Reference:

- 1.The use and marketing of E-cigarettes and personal vaporisers to assist people to quit smoking
- 2.The health impacts of the use of E-cigarettes and personal vaporisers

General practice prescribing

The RACGP only supports the general practice prescribing of medicines and therapeutic devices that are registered through or approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

Currently in Australia the regulation of E-cigarettes is complex and differs by state, with the sales of these nicotine containing devices being illegal unless they are registered by the TGA. At this time, none of these devices are registered under the TGA. Under certain conditions, the devices may be imported for personal therapeutic use. Part of these conditions is a prescription from an authorised medical practitioner, registered in the relevant state or territory which may pose some barriers to access through general practice.

Evidence of therapeutic efficacy and safety

The RACGP supports evidence-based measures that assist people to quit smoking, such as nicotine replacement therapy. The evidence around the short and long term safety and clinical efficacy of E-cigarettes and personal vaporisers is still emerging. Current evidence suggests that vapor devices



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can be as effective as other nicotine replacements as aides to quitting and may reduce exposure to carcinogens (compared to smoking tobacco).¹ However, as the NHMRC Electronic Cigarette statement suggests¹ "E-cigarettes may expose users to fewer toxic chemicals than conventional tobacco cigarettes; however the extent to which this reduces harm to the user has not been determined."

As such, the RACGP recognises there may be an important role for E-cigarettes and personal vaporisers and supports ongoing research into their safety and efficacy and as aides to assist people in quitting tobacco smoking.

In the coming months, the RACGP will commence an update of [Supporting smoking cessation: A guide for health professionals](#) and will undertake a thorough review of the evidence in this area.

We look forward to hearing on this Inquiry's progress and outcomes.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Bastian Seidel
President

¹ [NHMRC CEO Statement: Electronic Cigarettes \(E-Cigarettes\) April 2017](#)