

Media release:

First ever **Aussie Vape Day** launched as new study confirms effectiveness of vaping as quit aid

Thursday 30th May, 2019: Just days after a breakthrough study of more than 18,000 smokers¹ showed that vaping increased chances of successfully quitting by 95%, adult Australian smokers who can't or won't quit nicotine are being encouraged to consider vaping as a less harmful alternative to conventional cigarettes as part of the first ever **Aussie Vape Day** on Thursday 30th May 2019.

The chosen day immediately precedes the World Health Organisation's **World No Tobacco Day** on May 31st.

The campaign promotes tobacco harm reduction and maps out the legal pathway to less harmful nicotine products for Australian smokers. It shines a light publicly – for the first time - on how smokers can legally switch from conventional cigarettes to vaping. **Aussie Vape Day** has been established by the Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association (ATHRA), Legalise Vaping Australia and the New Nicotine Alliance Australia.

ATHRA Chairman Conjoint Associate Professor Colin Mendelsohn says that quitting completely is always the preferred option. However, for smokers who are unable or unwilling to quit nicotine, switching to vaping can lead to substantial health benefits.

“Vaping is not risk-free, but the UK Royal College of Physicians estimates that it is at least 95% less harmful than smoking²,” said Associate Professor Mendelsohn. “Unfortunately, awareness of these facts is very low in Australia compared to other countries. Just 35% of Australian say they understand that vaping is a lot less harmful than conventional cigarettes. In the UK this figure is 59%³.”

“This new study just published also adds to the growing evidence that vaping can act as an effective aid for many smokers who are looking to quit,” added Associate Professor Mendelsohn.

“Vaping is also a lot cheaper than smoking conventional cigarettes. Cigarette prices have tripled in Australia in the last 10 years and the high prices are causing financial pain for many smokers who are unable to quit. Vaping is about 10% of the cost of smoking. A 20-pack a day smoker will save \$9,000 per year on average by switching,” said Associate Professor Mendelsohn.

Adult smokers are encouraged to visit the campaign website (www.aussievapeday.com.au) for more information and to visit their GP to discuss whether vaping is appropriate for them. It is permissible to import and use nicotine liquid to assist in quitting if the user has a prescription from a registered medical practitioner. Currently very few Australians who vape liquid nicotine have a prescription. A recent survey by Legalise Vaping showed only 2% of the 985 vapers who filled out the survey said they “purchase my nicotine liquids with a prescription from a GP or doctor⁴.”

Australia is the only western democracy to ban the sale and use of nicotine liquid for vaping. This is despite the fact vaping is contributing to rapidly falling smoking rates in countries like the US and UK. A separate recent randomised controlled trial found that vaping nicotine was almost twice as effective in helping smokers quit cigarettes as nicotine replacement therapy such as nicotine patches combined with nicotine gum⁵.



Vaping is only recommended for smokers and is not for non-smokers or young people under 18 years of age.

The campaign will feature a dedicated website with information about vaping and how to make the switch, educational videos including one narrated by celebrity vaper Joe Hildebrand, testimonial videos and case studies. There will also be media resources, social media promotion and a launch event in Sydney on 30 May.

“If you can’t quit, switching to vaping could save you a packet. More importantly, it could save your life,” concluded Associate Professor Mendelsohn.

ENDS

For more information on the campaign go to www.aussievapeday.com.au. For vaping case studies, photo opportunities or interviews, contact

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Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association (ATHRA)

ATHRA is a health promotion charity registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission ABN 72 6222 11223. ATHRA was established in 2017 to improve public health by raising awareness of tobacco harm reduction to reduce the devastating health effects of tobacco smoking in Australia. ATHRA’s aim is to provide evidence-based information on safer alternatives to smoking such as vaping, so smokers can make an informed choice on whether to use them and how use them. ATHRA is funded by donations from the public and does not accept funding from the tobacco industry or from the vape industry.

Visit: www.athra.org.au

Legalise Vaping Australia

Legalise Vaping Australia was formed in 2017 as a joint initiative of MyChoice Australia and the Australian Taxpayers' Alliance, as a unique grassroots advocacy and activist organisation. Legalise Vaping Australia is dedicated to campaigning for the legalisation and risk proportionate regulation of vaping and e-cigarettes across Australia.

Along with the help of experts and leading researchers, the Legalise Vaping Australia team is engaged with key politicians across Australia and across the political spectrum to find the right regulatory balance that ensures these products are available to all Australian smokers who are trying to quit. Legalise Vaping Australia does not accept funding from the tobacco industry.

Visit: www.legalisevaping.com.au/

New Nicotine Alliance Australia

The New Nicotine Alliance Australia is a registered not-for-profit organisation, working towards improving public health through a greater understanding of risk-reduced nicotine products and their uses. The NNA comprises of a group of individuals who have contributed to improving individual, organisational and public understanding of what is known as ‘tobacco harm reduction’.

The NNA has representation in the UK, Sweden, Estonia and Australia. Its board members, associates and advisers represent a broad range of professions and specialities – scientists, chemists, pharmacists, public health specialists, policy advisers, medical professionals and consumer vapers.

Visit: www.nnalliance.org.au



References

1. Jackson S. et al. Moderators of real world effectiveness of smoking cessation aids: A population study. *Addiction*. May 2019. [[link](#)]
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3. Yong H et al. Prevalence and correlates of the belief the electronic cigarettes are a lot less harmful than conventional cigarettes under the different regulatory environments of Australia and the UK. *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*. 2016 [[link](#)]
4. Legalise Vaping online survey. March 2019. Q: "How do you purchase your vape nicotine liquids? (all responses will be kept anonymous). n=985
5. Hajek P et al. A Randomized Trial of E-Cigarettes versus Nicotine-Replacement Therapy. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2019. [[link](#)]