

17 August 2022



www.amaq.com.au

88 L'Estrange Terrace
Kelvin Grove 4059

PO Box 123
Red Hill 4059

Ph: (07) 3872 2222
Fax: (07) 3856 4727

amaq@amaq.com.au

ACN: 009 660 280
ABN: 17 009 660 280

Hon Yvette D'Ath MP
Minister for Health and Ambulance Services
1 William Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

By email: [REDACTED]

Subject: Queensland Dishonourable Recipient of Dirty Ashtray Award

Dear Minister D'Ath

Queensland has received the Dirty Ashtray Award for our embarrassing failure to prevent the sale of vaping products to children. The award was presented by the Australian Council on Smoking and Health and the AMA at the AMA's recent National Conference on 30 July 2022.

Despite laws prohibiting the sale of illegal e-cigarettes to children, Queensland does not:

1. enforce the existing regulations; or
2. require tobacco product retailers to be licenced.

We call on you to urgently rectify these failures before Queensland children become the next generation of smokers and suffer the associated catastrophic health results.

Aggressive marketing campaigns have been used to imply vaping products are a safe alternative to smoking, despite the fact they are linked to serious lung disease and often contain known carcinogens. A recent National Health and Medical Research Council review highlighted the increased risks of adverse health outcomes from vaping including poisoning, seizures, burns and lung injury. An Australian National University review also revealed using e-cigarettes triples the likelihood of taking up conventional smoking.

Whilst it is illegal in Australia to sell nicotine vaping products without a prescription, Queensland's failure to enforce its laws means these products are easily accessible including some falsely labelled 'nicotine free' and others that contain up to 50 times more nicotine than a cigarette.

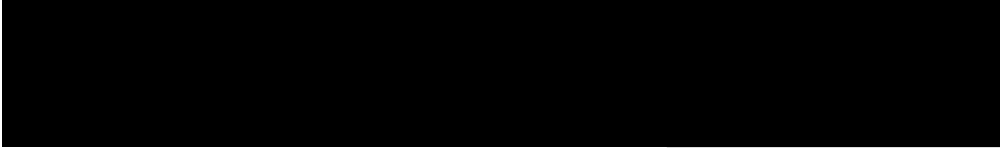
In addition, the deliberate use of bright, colourful packing and fruity flavours has made vaping products directly appealing to children and young people, with increasing use amongst 12-24 year olds. Over 21% of young adults (aged 18-24 years) used an e-cigarette in 2020-2021.

Even more alarming has been recent efforts by big tobacco to incentivise pharmacies to stock vaping products and refer patients to GPs for prescriptions. AMA Queensland condemns such efforts to compromise health practitioners' integrity via inducements and incentives, however, without enforcement and licensing, there is a huge risk these efforts will be successful.

Decades of public health initiatives have put Australia amongst the most successful nations in reducing rates of smoking amongst adults but the alarming use of e-cigarettes amongst young people is set to undermine these efforts. Queensland must not be the state responsible for creating a future generation of smokers and associated health catastrophe.

AMA Queensland plans to display the Dirty Ashtray Award at Cancer Council Queensland's upcoming Health Expo at Parliament House to raise awareness amongst parliamentarians about this looming health crisis. We invite you to visit our stall and discuss this important issue.

Yours sincerely



Dr Maria Boulton
President
AMA Queensland

Dr Brett Dale
Chief Executive Officer
AMA Queensland