

9 May 2023

Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall  
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Tēnā koe Minister Verrall,

**Re: The TSANZ urges the New Zealand government to work towards a ban on all non-pharmaceutical e-cigarettes in New Zealand.**

### **About the TSANZ**

The Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ) is a health promotion charity whose mission is to lead, support and enable all health workers and researchers who aim to prevent, cure, and relieve disability caused by lung disease. The TSANZ is the only Peak Body in both Australia and New Zealand that represents all health professionals working in all fields of respiratory health.

The TSANZ is a leading advocate and provider of evidence-based policy for the prevention and management of respiratory conditions in Australia and New Zealand, undertakes professional education and training, is responsible for significant research administration, and coordinates an accredited respiratory laboratory program.

### **Striking the right balance in New Zealand's tobacco control laws**

The TSANZ celebrates the Australian Labor Party's commitment to protecting future generations of Australians from the deadly consequences of tobacco addiction.

This week, the Australian Health Minister, the Honorable Mark Butler came out strong on the e-cigarette issue, calling it the "biggest loophole in Australian healthcare". He reflected that now is a moment in time where we can shut down this major threat to public health. Minister Butler made it plain that it was the government's job to take a stand against big tobacco because without proper legislative measures and enforcement, e-cigarettes will claim another generation of nicotine addicts. We are now calling on the New Zealand government to make the same commitment. Our people – especially our rangatahi - deserve this commitment.

Last year's hallmark passing of the Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products (Smoked Tobacco) Amendment Bill (the Bill) was a huge step in the right direction for New Zealand. This world leading Bill set the stage internationally for creating a largely smokefree society, promoting optimal lung health for future generations. Our membership of respiratory professionals across New Zealand and Australia thanks the government for the bold steps it has taken to protect the lung health of New Zealanders.

Where the right balance in the existing policy settings has been missed is in our e-cigarette controls. Currently, recreational use of e-cigarettes is legal for adults, but we know that our under 18-year-

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olds are still buying and getting hooked on these toxic and addictive products<sup>1</sup>. The existing settings are not working.

Regardless of age, there is strong evidence that e-cigarette products impact patients respiratory and cardiovascular health, cause severe lung injury, and in some cases, a 15-fold increase in frequent absences of school from severe asthma attacks, cases of pneumonia and significant loss of lung function in as short as two years<sup>2</sup>.

The TSANZ supports the Australian government's commitment to stopping all non-pharmaceutical e-cigarette products from entering the country – including non-nicotine containing e-cigarettes, banning single-use disposable e-cigarettes, implementing basic quality control measures and plain packaging requirements, and restricting nicotine concentrations and flavour options. While we acknowledge that New Zealand's tobacco control policy landscape and regulatory controls differ, we ask the New Zealand government to work towards a ban on all e-cigarette products. In the interim, useful measures to put in place include:

- Banning single-use disposable e-cigarettes.
- Reducing specialist vape retailer licences, and ensuring they are at least a 1km radius from schools, sports facilities, and marae.
- Setting up a working group to look into the prescription model for e-cigarettes. This group could include membership from the RNZCGPs, PSANZ, TSANZ and ARFNZ.

We implore the New Zealand government to take up this fleeting opportunity to protect future generations of New Zealanders from tobacco addiction. Ban all recreational use of e-cigarette products in New Zealand. As the Australian government ramps up its enforcement measures, the TSANZ aims to work alongside the health department to implement good public health policy, providing clinical advice and guidelines. We are available to work alongside Manatū Houora, Te Whatu Ora, Te Aka Whai Ora, and all other public health agencies and non-profit health organisations to achieve the same shared goal – optimal lung health of New Zealanders.

The TSANZ thank you for your commitment to the lung health of New Zealanders. We can be contacted at: [advocacy@thoracic.org.au](mailto:advocacy@thoracic.org.au).

Nāku iti nei, nā



**Dr. James Fingleton**  
**New Zealand Board President**  
Thoracic Society of Australia  
and New Zealand



**Professor Anne E. Holland**  
**President**  
Thoracic Society of Australia  
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<sup>1</sup> Asthma and Respiratory Foundation NZ. A 2021 Report into Youth Vaping: The ARFNZ/SPANZ vaping in NZ youth survey. Available from: [A-2021-report-into-youth-vaping.pdf \(asthmafoundation.org.nz\)](https://www.asthmafoundation.org.nz/A-2021-report-into-youth-vaping.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Banks E, Yazidjoglou A, Brown S, Nguyen M, Martin M, Beckwith K, Daluwatta A, Campbell S, Joshy G. Electronic cigarettes and health outcomes: systematic review of global evidence. Report for the Australian Department of Health. National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, Canberra: April 2022.

A member of