



Hon Lawrence Springborg MP  
Minister for Health

27 NOV 2014

Mr Neil Laurie  
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Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter regarding petition number 2332-14, tabled in Parliament on 28 October 2014, in relation to legislating personal vapourisers as smoking products.

The petition draws to the attention of the House the position of signatories that personal vapourisers are not smoking products and are harm-reduction alternatives to regular tobacco cigarettes. Petitioners recommend a review of proposed amendments to the *Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998* (Tobacco Act) in regard to personal vapourisers.

The Queensland Parliament is currently considering amendments to the Tobacco Act to capture personal vapourisers (commonly called electronic cigarettes) as smoking products. This is in response to increasing use of these products (including in existing no-smoking indoor and outdoor areas) and potential risks to health. There is also concern that widespread and visible use of such products in public places may promote their popularity amongst young people, and encourage the uptake of regular tobacco products.

Under the proposed amendments electronic cigarettes will be subject to the same laws as regular cigarettes. This will mean that these devices will not be able to be used in existing no-smoking indoor and outdoor public places; sold to children less than 18 years of age; or advertised, promoted or displayed at retail outlets.

These laws capture electronic cigarettes as smoking products because, whether they contain nicotine (listed as a poison in Queensland) or not, they produce vapour containing unknown particulate matter which resembles smoke. It cannot be assumed that this vapour has no health effects, either from direct inhalation into the lungs, or from second-hand consumption. In addition, these products are designed to mimic the act of smoking, with many devices are also similar in appearance.

Claims that electronic cigarettes can assist quitting or reduce smoking remain unsubstantiated. No electronic cigarette currently on the market has been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for safety, quality or efficacy as a quit smoking aid.

In addition, there is evidence that users of electronic cigarettes continue to use tobacco cigarettes, therefore reducing benefits from quitting. There are many legal, TGA approved nicotine replacement therapy products available to assist smokers to quit. If in future, electronic cigarette products receive TGA approval, then they may be legally purchased and used by smokers for the purpose of assisting smoking cessation. However, their purchase and use would be in accordance with proposed laws.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



**LAWRENCE SPRINGBORG MP**  
**Minister for Health**