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**Press Release:** [**End Smoking NZ**](http://www.endsmoking.org.nz/) **For immediate release**

**Support for smoke-free alternatives key to Smokefree 2025 goal**

The Government’s recent decision to legalise nicotine for e-cigarette vaping shows just how serious it is about New Zealand Smokefree 2025 goal, according to a group of leading public health researchers.

The lobby group, End Smoking, strongly believes that giving smokers access to less harmful alternatives to smoking tobacco will greatly speed efforts to reduce smoking to 5% or below – the Smokefree 2025 goal.

“The Associate Minister of Health Nicky Wagner is to be congratulated for having the vision to open up access to nicotine for vaping so that lower socioeconomic, Māori, Pacific and rural smokers have a chance to try switching to a less harmful product. It’s these groups with stable higher rates of smoking that her policy change will help the most” said End Smoking’s Chair Associate Professor Marewa Glover.

Currently nicotine containing electronic cigarettes and liquid cannot be legally imported for sale. New Zealand smokers interested in switching to e-cigarettes can only **legally** access nicotine e-liquid from overseas when they travel or by ordering it from overseas suppliers.

“Our End Smoking research, and preliminary results from a Health Promotion Agency survey suggest that males more than females have accessed electronic cigarettes so far” said Dr Penny Truman, a co-investigator of End smoking’s survey of vapers.

Preliminary results from the Health Promotion Agency’s 2016 Health & Lifestyle Survey found that 17% of adults aged 15 and over had tried an e-cigarette, but only 2.7% were vaping at the time of the survey. Of them almost half were vaping to help them completely stop smoking and a further 29% were trying to cut down how much they smoked.

“Many groups are not reducing their smoking. This was one of our main concerns in our submission on the Ministry of Health’s electronic cigarette discussion document last September. We were relieved to see almost all of our recommendations are reflected in the proposed Amendment” said Associate Professor Glover.

“One remaining concern we have, however, is that the Associate Minister has indicated that other types of greatly harm-reduced alternatives to smoking products will have no place in New Zealand.”

Talking about Philip Morris’ iQos product, Associate Minister Nicky Wagner said on TVNZ’s Sunday (21 May) programme, “it may be that in other countries there is capacity for them but I don’t think New Zealand is really the place for them.”

While recognizing that the evidence for reduced harm needs to be soundly established, End Smoking’s position, as detailed in their submission to the Government, is that “No one cessation product or alternative nicotine delivery product will help every smoker either switch off or abstain from smoking tobacco. A range of products is required. We should not limit New Zealand smokers to just one type of e-cigarette or just one type of greatly harm-reduced alternative to smoking product.” They will be resubmitting this next week when the Ministry of Health begins a new round of consultation on Emerging Tobacco and Nicotine Delivery Products.

End Smoking’s submission to the Ministry of Health on Electronic Cigarettes is available on their website [www.endsmoking.org.nz](http://www.endsmoking.org.nz)

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