**New Zealand to make nicotine e-cigarettes legal**

2 August 2016

End Smoking NZ applauds the Government on its decision to make nicotine for vaping (using electronic cigarettes) legally available in New Zealand. The Government has agreed in principle that nicotine for e-cigarettes should be legally available for sale with appropriate controls. Currently it can only be imported for personal use creating often insurmountable barriers preventing smokers from switching to vaping.

“The Associate Minister of Health, Peseta Sam Lotu-Iiga has made the right decision.” Said End Smoking’s Chairperson Associate Professor Marewa Glover. “He has listened with compassion to smokers and vapers. We are so relieved that our pragmatic nature as a country has triumphed over the negative misinformation and unfounded fears that have dominated the debate for too long.”

Long-time advocate of nicotine e-cigarettes and founding Board member, Dr Murray Laugesen started work on e-cigarettes in 2007. “I’m absolutely delighted.” He said. “This will be a turning point that will have a significant impact on reducing the death and disease caused by smoking. It also gives us a real shot at achieving Smokefree 2025.” He said.

“This announcement by the Minister gives health professionals a clear message that smokers who choose to use vaping to help them quit can be supported to do so.” Said Board member Dr George Laking.

The Ministry of Health is calling for submissions on how to legislate electronic cigarette products and what regulations or controls need to be in place.

“Vaping nicotine has been estimated to be 95% safer than smoking tobacco, thus End Smoking doesn’t believe we need overly restrictive or costly regulation and controls of e-cigarette products. However, some concerns such as restricting sales to minors will be wise to prevent retailers who currently sell tobacco to minors pushing e-cigarette products on to kids.” Dr Glover said.

Some public health researchers and advocates in New Zealand and around the world have concerns that vaping will re-normalise smoking, be a gateway to smoking, and establish nicotine addiction among new users. However, there is no evidence that this is occurring in countries where vaping is established.

Whilst there is still some way to go before nicotine for vaping will be legally available in New Zealand, End Smoking says the first steps are positive.

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