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World looks to New Zealand for wisdom on electronic cigarettes

While the UK embraces electronic cigarettes for the rapid drop in smoking they have experienced, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced new regulations that will albeit ban them.

A week after the UK Royal College of Physicians' report *Nicotine without smoke: tobacco harm reduction* which supports smokers to switch to vaping, the FDA ruled that electronic cigarettes would be treated the same as harmful tobacco products.

End Smoking has been lobbying for the acceptance of electronic cigarettes that contain nicotine to be legalised for sale and distribution in New Zealand, as an alternative to smoking.

"If smokers could buy ecigs containing nicotine, or the nicotine e-liquid for vaping, at a cheaper price than tobacco, we would get the rapid decline in smoking rates needed to reach Smokefree 2025." Said Associate Professor Marewa Glover, Chairwoman of End Smoking NZ.

"The current ban on the import and sale of nicotine for vaping makes it harder to access for people who don't have internet and a credit card for buying from overseas. The ban also misleads people to think that nicotine and vaping are dangerous." She said.

Dr Glover is particularly concerned about smoking among Māori which has stalled at 38% with no reduction since 2006.

New Zealand has been a leader in tobacco control but is yet to decide if regulatory change is needed to help or further hinder smokers' use of electronic cigarettes. What side New Zealand takes in the global tug of war over vaping is so important that Aaron Biebert, Director of *A Billion Lives* chose Wellington for the World Premiere of his documentary that explores the controversy.

"The tide is turning here" said Dr Glover. "*A Billion Lives* will help us progress the debate locally. With New Zealanders better informed we should see a shift from the demonising of vaping to supporting smokers to quit."

End Smoking is a sponsor of the Doc Edge Festival Premiere of *A Billion Lives* tomorrow night at the Roxy Theatre in Wellington. Cast, crew and international supporters will be welcomed with a Red Carpet event from 6.30pm. The film will be followed by a question and answer session with the Director.

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Chairwoman