

19 March 2025

Dr Heidi Carroll  
Chief Health Officer  
Queensland Health

**By email:** [REDACTED]

**Subject: Regulation of nitrous oxide**

Dear Dr Carroll

AMA Queensland has been advised of concerns in the community regarding the use of nitrous oxide for recreational purposes, particularly by young people. Reports from doctors are also consistent with community concerns.

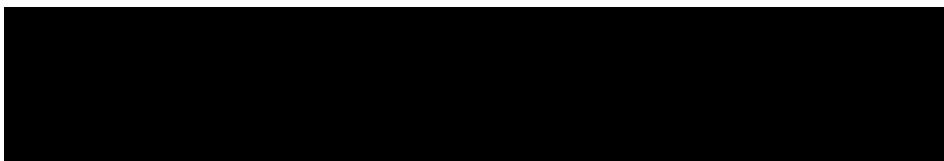
Nitrous oxide, known colloquially as 'nangs' and 'NOS', is a dissociative drug when used outside of health settings. For most users, it produces immediate and very short-lived (less than 2 minutes) effects that include euphoria, numbness, dizziness, uncontrolled laughter and sedation. If used regularly and for long periods, however, it can produce harmful health outcomes mostly linked to vitamin B12 depletion such as memory loss, incontinence, hand and feet numbness and psychosis.

Increasing popularity and use among young people is reportedly fuelling a rise in unscrupulous business models by convenience and tobacco retailers, similar to those we have seen for vapes and other smoking products. For example, nitrous oxide has traditionally been sold to health practitioners (e.g. dentists) for relevant health procedures and to bakers, caterers and similar businesses for the making of whipped cream, however, retail sales of larger-sized cannisters with added flavours and colourful packaging are now available both in-store and online for rapid delivery.

It is our view that the lack of regulation of nitrous oxide presents a public health risk that warrants swift government action. The implementation of sensible, timely regulatory controls as seen in other jurisdictions would mitigate against nitrous oxide becoming the next avoidable public health threat to our young people. Governments at all levels failed to do this for vaping products and we urge you to act quickly now to avoid the same occurring with nitrous oxide.

We are willing to meet to discuss this important issue further and how we can assist in achieving appropriate reforms.

Yours sincerely



Dr Nick Yim  
**President**  
**AMA Queensland**

Dr Brett Dale  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**AMA Queensland**