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AMA SUPPORTS AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT’S STANCE ON E-CIGARETTES AND VAPING

The AMA welcomes today’s decision by the Australian Government to make it harder for Big Tobacco to get more young Australians addicted to nicotine.

The announcement that the Government intends to continue the ban on the importation of e-cigarettes containing vapouriser nicotine, unless prescribed by a doctor, comes on the back of two key decisions last week to protect Australians from tobacco harm.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) ruled against a final appeal against Australia’s plain packaging rules, and the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) retained its ban on heated tobacco products.

“Nicotine is a highly addictive substance, and there is no level of tobacco use which is safe,” AMA Vice President, Dr Chris Zappala, a respiratory specialist, said today.

“Australia has done a great job in reducing the number of smokers, and we now have one of the lowest smoking rates in the world.

“However, we must not become complacent.

“Big Tobacco has sought to promote e-cigarettes and vaping as healthy alternatives to normalise smoking among younger people. They are not healthy.

“The AMA welcomes the move to strengthen the response to the importation of nicotine liquids for use in e-cigarettes. Stronger enforcement should see a reduction in the amount of illegally imported nicotine solution coming to Australia.

“The AMA is concerned about the quality of imported nicotine solutions. Some have been found to contain higher levels of nicotine than advertised, as well as other adulterants that may pose a risk to users’ health.

“The continued ban will also prevent non-smokers from unintentionally developing nicotine addiction, which can lead to traditional tobacco use. Given the experience in the US, this is a particular concern for young people in Australia.

“GPs are a great source of information and advice for those wishing to quit smoking, and can also prescribe nicotine solutions to patients where appropriate.”

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