

## **VAPING: NOT ONLY A DANGER TO AUSTRALIAN HEALTH BUT A DANGER TO THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY.**

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The Australian healthcare system is estimated to be losing upwards of \$180 million annually due to the prevalence of e-cigarettes.

This research comes after The Australian Government banned the import of vapes as of January 1, 2024, with the only way for Australians to purchase and possess an e-cigarette is via a prescription from their GP; with costs being upwards of \$150 per vape now legally.

According to QIMR Berghofer researcher Professor Louisa Gordon, “13 per cent of people who take up e-cigarettes move into tobacco smoking, which translates into about 110,000 Australians.”

Such transition results in a greater financial cost to the healthcare system, with the estimated cost to be \$180 million per year to treat respiratory diseases, cancers, and cardiac disease.

“This research proves how expensive it’s going to be if we don’t crack down on vaping” said Professor Gordon.

The Australian ambulance system is also said to be under pressure from the higher volume of vape-related callouts they are receiving.

“They’re receiving calls relating to nicotine intoxication, seizures and young people vomiting and having nausea,” Professor Gordon said.

She goes on to say staff in the poison’s information centre are receiving “an abundance of phone calls” as well as the people in the quit-line people being “overworked” due to Australian’s struggling to give up vaping.

“We have all of this activity bubbling away in our community, taking up resources and costing us,” she said.

Lynn Bennett’s, smoker of 40 years, has opposing views to this economic crisis describing the vape ban as “fraud at its best.”

“The Federal government already make \$17 Billion dollars profit per year by taxing a product that does not even belong to them, in fact, the government bragged about getting smokers to pay off Australia’s debt when they implemented the 12.5% tax increases, it is time to give smokers a real alternative.”

She also said that Medicare costs will go “through the roof”, costing taxpayers a lot more, and prescription e-cigarettes will force people to buy illegal tobacco and other substances more than they do now.

“Either way we pay,” Bennett said, “we pay the governments fraudulent tax, we pay in health issues, and we pay in discrimination, so I for one consider all smokers are paid up front for any health conditions we may incur health wise which may require hospitalisation in the future.”

Recent studies from AIHW report that 19.8 per cent of Australians aged 14 and over have used e-cigarettes at least once in their lifetime, with 7 per cent using e-cigarettes at least daily, weekly, or monthly.

“More research is needed to assess the true burden of e-cigarette use on people’s health and the resulting impact on the Australian healthcare sector and the nation’s economy,” Professor Gordon said.

QIMR Berghofer, Medical Research Institute, is continuing to uncover the effects on vaping of the Australian economy.

Sources:

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