



The Royal Australasian
College of Physicians

Media Release

RACP welcomes crackdown on sale of e-cigs to minors in NSW

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The Royal Australasian College of Physicians welcomes NSW legislation that comes into force this week making it an offence for retailers to sell e-cigarettes to minors or for anyone to purchase e-cigarettes on their behalf.

RACP President, Laureate Professor Nick Talley said this is an important step towards protecting children from the harms of smoking and the potential health risks of 'vaping'.

"The growing appeal of e-cigarettes is due to an almost cult-like community of 'vapers' who use the internet and social media to discuss and review favourite flavours, products and accessories," he said.

"These products mimic and glamourise smoking behaviour, and many are sold and promoted using strategies to target the younger generation.

"Techniques include the use of fruit, candy and alcohol flavourings, seductive advertising and the use of celebrity ambassadors who ascribe images of fame, desirability and being cool.

"The new legislation in NSW will go some way in protecting a generation who have never previously been exposed to the blatant marketing tactics that were used by tobacco companies in relation to traditional cigarettes.

"In Australia, liquids for e-cigarettes cannot legally contain nicotine but because the market is unregulated, some users are inhaling nicotine whether they know it or not.

"This is frightening because we know full well from our experience with tobacco, that nicotine, and the associated ritualistic behaviours are highly addictive.

"There is a huge risk that by allowing widespread use of e-cigarettes we will inadvertently re-normalise smoking behaviour and once again promote a culture of smoking in our community.

"In Australia, we should be proud to know that in the latest National Drug and Alcohol Survey 2013, the results showed that 95 per cent of 12-17 year olds had never smoked. This shift is a huge win for public health.

From December 1, the second stage of Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment (E-cigarettes) Act 2015 will come into effect in NSW.

This includes many of the provisions that apply to the display and advertising of tobacco products also applying to e-cigarettes and accessories.

The sale of e-cigarettes and accessories to a minor will be subject to the same maximum penalty as the sale of a tobacco product to a minor.

To maximise the effectiveness of this legislation, Professor Talley said all states need to commit to legislation making it an offence to sell e-cigarettes to minors.

“We need to ensure our young Australians are protected from the threat of these products by affording them the same legal protection,” he said.

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