

Subject – Submission to the Tobacco Harm Reduction Committee

Department of the Senate
Select Committee on Tobacco Harm Reduction

PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee,

This submission is a name withheld submission. Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on this issue. My name is _____ from _____. I am 41 years old and I smoked for 14 years. I tried to quite smoking dozens of times without success. This included the use nicotine patches, gum, sprays, lozenges and cold turkey. I have included my journey from smoker from vaper below as I hope it will provide some context by giving a voice to individuals like me who have benefited from vaping products.

I started smoking when I was 14. By the time I was 30 I was overweight, coughing constantly. Couldn't exercise, couldn't go up a flight of stairs without being out of breath, I would have constant asthma attacks, my teeth had been badly impacted and I would get serious lung infections/colds at least once or twice a year requiring time off of work.

I had tried everything multiple times to give up, but it never worked for more than two weeks. After looking around on the internet for ways to give up smoking, I found e-cigarettes. I ordered a very early set (this was, I think in 2009 – 2010). After receiving the e-cigarettes, I had given up smoking in two weeks and haven't gone back in 11 years. (please focus on this point. You have no idea how big that is. I had tried literally for years to give up smoking. With vaping it took two weeks.) Over time, I have slowly reduced the amount of nicotine I include in my e-liquid to the point that it is very very low. However, for me it is part of a long term habit that I have never been able to break.

That being said, after giving up smoking I started exercising, running, weights, I started riding a bike to work, I lost my cough, I lost all my weight (although in my 40s it has started to come back, but I blame my kid for that). I stopped getting sick, my asthma went away. I really cannot describe to you the fundamental difference between the health of a heavy smoker and a heavy vaper, they are not correlative at all. My quality of life as a vaper for the past 10-11 years has been dramatically improved by vaping.

The downside is I am still addicted to nicotine. However, this doesn't affect my health in any noticeable way. The idea that this life saving alternative that has allowed me to live a normal, healthy life because I was stupid enough to start smoking when I was kid terrifies me. I was a smoker for 14 years, I know what the health consequences are. Please don't prevent me from continuing to live a normal healthy life. Please reject the prescription only model and allow individuals to exercise their rights as free citizens to obtain the means to deal with their addiction in the way that best suits them.

Thank you for reading my submission.