

Hon Nicky Wagner

Associate Minister of Health



29 March 2017

Media Statement

Nicotine e-cigarettes to become legal

Associate Health Minister Nicky Wagner today announced the sale of nicotine e-cigarettes and e-liquid will be made legal with appropriate controls.

“Scientific evidence on the safety of e-cigarettes is still developing but there’s a general consensus that vaping is much less harmful than smoking,” Ms Wagner says.

“The Government is taking a cautious approach by aligning the regulations around vaping with those for cigarettes. This ensures cigarette smokers have access to a lower-risk alternative while we continue to discourage people from smoking or vaping in the first place.”

New rules for all e-cigarettes, whether or not they contain nicotine, include:

- Restricting sales to those 18 years and over

- Prohibiting vaping in indoor workplaces and other areas where smoking is banned under the Smoke-free Environments Act
- Restricting advertising to limit the attraction of e-cigarettes to non-smokers, especially children and young people.

“This is an opportunity to see if restricted access to e-cigarettes and e-liquid can help lower our smoking rates, reduce harm and save lives,” Ms Wagner says.

“The Government is strongly committed to achieving our goal of a smoke-free New Zealand by 2025.”

All vaping products will need to meet quality and safety standards. The Ministry of Health will set up a technical advisory group to help define these standards. A regulatory regime will also be established so the Ministry can consider whether other emerging tobacco and nicotine-delivery products should be regulated as consumer products in future.

“Public consultation showed a strong appetite for change so the Government is looking to introduce an amendment to the Smoke-free Environments Act this year. The changes will likely come into force later in 2018,” Ms Wagner says.

The Ministry of Health will continue to monitor the evidence concerning e-cigarettes and other emerging tobacco and nicotine-delivery products.

Note: Q&A attached.

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