

Proposed amendment to the Poisons Standard – nicotine

9 February 2020

The Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (ACDPA) strongly opposes the application to amend the Poisons Standard - nicotine to exempt “tobacco prepared and packed for heating”.

ACDPA brings together leading non-government health organisations to prevent risk factors for chronic disease and reduce the enormous burden of chronic disease in Australia. Consistent with our focus on modifiable risk factors, we strongly oppose the application based on its significant risk to population health in Australia.

ACDPA endorses the Cancer Council Australia and Heart Foundation submission, which details the evidence of risk. We highlight some key points:

- Tobacco is a leading cause of chronic disease burden. Tobacco increases risk of cancers and vascular diseases.
- The health harms from tobacco have declined over the past four decades with evidence-based public health policies contributing significantly to reducing harm in Australia.
- There is no evidence that heated tobacco products (HTPs) confer a public health benefit. There is no evidence to support the use of HTPs as a smoking cessation aid.
- There is significant risk in amending the Schedule to enable the sale and promotion of HTPs. In some countries HTPs are heavily promoted to young people and may represent a gateway to nicotine addiction amongst never smokers.
- We submit that the relevant substances in the Standard are nicotine, tobacco and HTPs. Nicotine is a highly toxic and addictive substance. Tobacco is a highly toxic substance.
- Evidence shows the only effective way to protect the population from the harms of nicotine toxicity is to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, smoking prevalence. Promotion of tobacco products (including HTPs) confers significant risk of increasing, not reducing, harms associated with the toxicity of tobacco.

We support Australia’s current precautionary approach to HTPs and highlight our obligations under the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Australia is a world leader in tobacco and nicotine reform and has set the benchmark for international tobacco control. Australia’s good position should not be compromised by accepting proposals initiated by the tobacco industry.

ACDPA strongly opposes amending the Poisons Standard - nicotine based on evidence of the potential for significant harm to the Australian population.

About ACDPA

The Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (ACDPA) is an alliance of Cancer Council Australia; Diabetes Australia; National Heart Foundation of Australia; Kidney Health Australia; and Stroke Foundation. Members work together to collectively advocate for prevention, integrated risk assessment and effective management of chronic disease risk.