

atdc

Alcohol, Tobacco  
and other Drugs  
Council Tasmania Inc.

Submission to the  
Tasmanian Government's  
Discussion Paper:

*Options for a Public  
Health Response to  
Electronic Cigarettes*

July 2015



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# The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council

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The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council of Tasmania (ATDC) is the peak body representing the interests of community sector organisations (CSOs) that provide services to people with substance misuse issues in Tasmania. The ATDC is a membership based, independent, not-for-profit and incorporated organisation.

The ATDC is the key body supporting the sector to secure adequate systemic support and funding for the delivery of evidence based alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) initiatives. We support the sector through training and sector capacity building, as well as undertaking policy and development projects with, and on behalf of, the sector.

We represent a broad range of service providers and individuals working in prevention, promotion, early intervention, treatment, case management, research and harm reduction.

We play a vital role in assisting the Tasmanian Government to achieve its aims of preventing and reducing harms associated with the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in the Tasmanian community.

By working with all levels of government and the community the ATDC seeks to promote health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians through a reduction of the harms caused by substance use. Our priorities are set by the membership and Board and focus on the prevention of the uptake of harmful alcohol or drug use, the provision of effective treatment for alcohol or drug misuse and the long term promotion of health and relapse prevention.

A broad and regionally dispersed membership base ensures the ATDC maintains a strategically relevant position within the overall understanding of what services are provided, what services are needed and how best to achieve the goal of reducing the negative impacts on the Tasmanian community from alcohol and drug use.

## Our Vision

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A Tasmania without drug or alcohol related harm or discrimination.

## Our Mission

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To provide independent leadership and advocacy; strengthen partnerships through inclusion, and support consumer participation in the promotion of holistic alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) services for all Tasmanians.

## Our Goals

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Goal 1: To provide effective leadership and representation for the alcohol, tobacco and other drugs sector.

Goal 2: To build sustainability of the ATDC and the alcohol, tobacco and other drugs sector.

Goal 3: To maximise consumer engagement in service planning and delivery.



## Introduction

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The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council welcomes the opportunity to provide a written submission to the Tasmanian Government's Discussion Paper titled, *Options for a public health response to electronic cigarettes*.

This submission makes a number of general observations about electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) and provides specific comments in response to some of the options presented within the Department's Discussion Paper. For the purposes of the options presented within the Department's Discussion Paper e-cigarettes were understood to be nicotine-free products.

## Legislation and Regulation

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The ATDC appreciates the complex legislative and regulatory environment within which tobacco and nicotine-based products must be governed. The current situation within both Tasmania and Australia means that e-cigarettes are not adequately addressed by specific legislation. Despite this fact the ATDC believes that Tasmania should not act prematurely or overzealously with legislation limiting either the availability or use of e-cigarettes.

**The ATDC recommends that the Tasmanian State Government closely monitors policy, legislative and regulatory developments at a national level and within other Australian jurisdictions to enable the appropriate adoption and adaptation of policy for the Tasmanian context.**

## Health Promotion and Public Education

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The ATDC is committed to a focus on health promotion, preventative health and early intervention, alongside more acute treatment service provision. Consistent with Option 1.2 of the Discussion Paper the ATDC believes that investment in public education resources and awareness raising activities that accurately inform the public about the potential health and safety risks and/or benefits associated with using e-cigarettes would be worthwhile.

**The ATDC recommends that the Tasmanian State Government invests in the production of accurate, informative and balanced resources regarding e-cigarettes.**

## Harm Reduction

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A statement on e-cigarettes released in March 2015 by the National Health and Medical Research Council indicated that:

*The potential risks and benefits of e-cigarettes are currently the subject of much debate among tobacco control and public health experts. Some argue that e-cigarettes have the potential to reduce the number of smoking-related diseases and deaths, by assisting smokers to quit, or by providing a safer alternative to tobacco cigarettes. This is based on the widely-held belief that e-cigarettes are likely to be less harmful than tobacco cigarettes, because they expose users to fewer toxic chemicals. There is some preliminary evidence that supports this view. (NHMRC, March 2015)*

The ATDC is concerned that the potential benefits associated with the use of e-cigarettes as an aid to tobacco smoking cessation are not being adequately recognised. The ATDC is a strong proponent of services and interventions being evidence-based. Too frequently government policy and investment decisions are made based upon conjecture and/or anecdote. It is essential that any decisions that are made in relation to legislation and enforcement are made based upon available evidence and research.

**The ATDC recommends that Tasmanian State Government monitors research regarding the use of e-cigarettes as an aid in smoking cessation.**

## Marketing and Promotion

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Many public health advocates and policy makers are rightly concerned about the manner in which tobacco and related products are marketed and promoted. The ATDC supports a considered response to the way in which smoking related devices are able to marketed and promoted, particularly to young people.

E-cigarettes have been identified as a vehicle for re-normalising smoking within the community and within public settings where smoking has already been banned. The ATDC believes that further evidence and research needs to be conducted to substantiate this claim.

**The ATDC recommends that the Tasmanian State Government regulates the advertising and promotion of e-cigarettes to ensure that minors are not targeted.**