

## WA Council of State School Organisations Inc.

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### **WACSSO SUBMISSION: Proposed reforms to the regulation of nicotine vaping products**

The Western Australian Council of State School Organisations Inc. (WACSSO) is the peak body representing parents of public school students in Western Australia. For over 100 years, WACSSO has provided services and representation at State and National levels to more than 660 Parents and Citizens Associations (P&Cs). WACSSO is primarily a volunteer organisation comprising a President and State Councillors (representatives) from geographically based electorates. As such, the organisation has a wide representative reach across the state. In addition, WACSSO uses our strong networks with parents, carers and stakeholders in public education to inform our advocacy efforts.

This submission raises the concerns of Western Australian parents regarding vaping among children and teenagers. Parents are alarmed by the rapid growth of vaping amongst young people and in schools. Far from being a senior school issue, parents report primary school-aged children being exposed to vaping on school buses, in school toilets, and in social settings outside of school. Parents are deeply concerned about the long-term health and wellbeing impacts that vaping will have on children.

### **Changes to border controls for nicotine vaping products to curb the unlawful supply of nicotine vaping products in Australia**

WACSSO calls for Government to enforce current legislation that bans the selling of vaping products unless for medical purposes, as endorsed by the Australian Therapeutics Goods Administration. WACSSO requests that vaping products are not permitted through the Personal Importation Scheme. The lack of enforcement regulations and records from government authorities in relation to importation through the scheme is problematic. WACSSO sees the value in implementing import permits and calls for controls on importing all vaping products through the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956. Although the consultation paper highlights the increased cost implications to both industry and Government of stricter regulations WACSSO believes the long-term cost of addiction to the individual and public health must be considered as a comparison.

### **Strengthening the product standard regarding minimum quality and safety standards for nicotine vaping products to make them less attractive to children and adolescents**

“Less attractive” is weak terminology and open for interpretation. The consultation paper cites the desirability that flavoured vapes have for young people. WACSSO affiliates strongly oppose marketing vaping products to children and young people. Governments are responsible for protecting children and young people from blatant marketing, which lures

young people into an early and potentially lifelong addiction to vaping, and other tobacco products. WACSSO views advertising campaigns, product setting, branding, and flavouring that target children and young people as predatory and unethical. Parents do not want their children targeted by companies wishing to entice them to try their addictive and harmful products.

## **Conclusion**

While WACSSO is pleased that the Australian Government, through the Therapeutic Goods Administration, is investigating potential reforms to the regulation of nicotine vaping products, there is a sense from parents that the issues being experienced by schools and families due to young people's use of vaping products should have been captured much earlier. Therefore, WACSSO urges the State and Federal Governments and their regulatory bodies to work together to:

- deliver an urgent and holistic response to educate the public about the health impacts of vaping, to strengthen and enforce current legislation by improving the controls on importation and the selling of all vaping products;
- apply the same restrictions that relate to tobacco products, such as legislation to specify 'vape-free' public areas in line with current smoke-free zones;
- implement ingredient labelling laws for all vape products, including an accurate description of nicotine content;
- ensure child resistant packaging on all vape products; and
- implement mandatory warnings of addiction risks and health impacts on all vape products.

Any queries regarding this submission can be directed to:

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