

British American Tobacco Australia declined an interview with Four Corners.

In response to detailed written questions, British American Tobacco Australia responded with the following statement.

It is widely recognised that the majority of the health risks associated with smoking come from inhaling toxicants produced as a result of the burning tobacco.

That is why Australians are making the decision themselves to switch to vaping and why globally, British American Tobacco (BAT) is committed to developing a range of alternative nicotine products, backed by robust science, that don't burn tobacco to deliver nicotine. Our product science is done in an open and transparent manner. We submit the results of our research to peer-reviewed scientific journals, irrespective of the findings, and publish details of our scientific research on www.bat-science.com.

We have always been clear that our products are targeted at adult smokers and adult nicotine consumers as we seek to drive tobacco harm reduction. It is important that adult consumers should be made aware of the reduced risk potential of these products compared to smoking, so that they are able to make an informed decision based on available science.

Legalise Vaping Australia, to their credit, also recognises the potential for vaping to reduce the harm caused by conventional cigarettes.

BAT Australia (BATA) views their advocacy as important and worthy of support, and as previously reported to the ABC in 2019, this includes the aid of a media monitoring consultant where it is required by them. Indeed, we wish to work with multiple stakeholders with a view to ensuring adult, age verified consumers can receive high quality, regulated products from retailers rather than struggling with a failed prescription model.

Moreover, if the former Australian government was not such a global outlier on this issue and was willing to have a sensible discussion about the role of vaping in tobacco harm reduction, there would be a limited need for groups like Legalise Vaping Australia. Until such a time where Australian Governments realise that many countries around the world, including the United Kingdom, Japan, Canada and the Ardern Government in New Zealand can't all be wrong about vaping and alternative nicotine products, we will continue to align with advocacy groups who maintain a progressive approach to policy reform.

Almost the entire vaping market in Australia is unregulated and unenforced, leading to unintended consequences such as adult vapers taking up products that do not meet quality and standards as well as youth uptake of vaping.

BAT Australia estimates that there are now over one million adults regularly vaping in Australia and the vast majority are doing so without a prescription. The TGA's prescription model for vaping simply isn't workable in the context of the global demand by adults for vaping products and that's why very few adults choose to use it.