



AS THE Control of Tobacco Products and Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems Bill draws closer, there are talks about whether vapour products should be subjected to the same regulations as cigarettes. | ROBERT F BUKATY AP Photo

## Call for own vaping regulations

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VAPING companies are calling for separate legislation to the Control of Tobacco Products and Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems Bill.

As the industry awaits new laws in the pipeline since 2018, vaping companies say they don't encourage non-smokers to vape and that the product should be viewed as a less harmful alternative to smoking.

According to Vapour Products Association of SA chief executive Asanda Gcoyi, there is an estimated 350 000 vapers in South Africa. "The current provisions of the Tobacco Control Bill expects a vaping product to list that it can cause cancer, which we see in tobacco products. We cannot label information that is scientifically not true," said Gcoyi.

The industry agreed to be regulated, but not in the same way as tobacco products, she said. "Let's have separate regulations. Not a lot is known about vaping, so the labelling aspect provides a chance to educate. You need to say that nicotine is addictive, but not harmful," she explained.

"They said there was a need to list all of the ingredients on the label, as well as the age restriction of 18. The main objective is to reduce the number of smokers in the country.

"We found over years of research that e-cigarettes are the number one option that helps smokers move away from smoking into less harmful substances. With vaping you need to advertise, because you need to educate on tobacco reduction," added Gcoyi.

"We understand that the clouds people blow out are also not acceptable. It is about manners. We want designated areas. If you are not a smoker, vaping is not for you."

Dr Delon Human, co-chair of the Africa Harm Reduction Alliance, added that he was disappointed that combustible tobacco was equated with non-combustible e-cigarettes. "It is the consumers' right to have labelling so that they can make an informed choice. If labelling is untruthful and not science-based or does not depict what is inside the package, then it doesn't help," he said.

If the labelling forces manufacturers to equate combustible tobacco with vaping products, this would scare

off consumers. "It will lead to more tobacco-related disease and premature death. We are in favour of a separate bill, because it is a separate product," said Human.

Meanwhile, Heart and Stroke Foundation of SA' chief executive Professor Pamela Naidoo, said: "I think that there is more evidence to show that vaping does affect one's health, especially with respiratory disorders like Covid-19." The damage had been done because they made it attractive to young people, she said.

"Vaping increases your risk of dying of heart disease and strokes. The argument that we are putting forward is, 'do we allow our people to be guinea pigs?' and the answer is no," said Naidoo.

Dr Sharon Nyatsanza, communications manager, at the National Council Against Smoking, said the bill would play a key role in reducing tobacco use in the country.

"There are health hazards that come with it. Some of them actually require nicotine content on how much nicotine a product should have. There are no regulations for vaping," she said.