

SMOKING ALTERNATIVE

# Vaping is less harmful than cigarettes

BETTY MOLEYA  
betty.moleya@nl.co.za

WHILE evidence shows that vaping is at least 95% less harmful than smoking, this does not mean it is safe and healthy.

CEO of Vapour Products Association Asanda Gcoyi said from the available information it was evident that vaping was more successful at helping smokers quit than other aids such as nicotine replacement therapy.

"Similarly, although not risk-free, vaping is at least 95% less harmful than smoking, which allows smokers access to the nicotine they crave with

less harm to their health.

"Thus, potentially less harmful alternatives to smoking have become critical in the fight against smoking related harms, requiring a policy approach which embeds harm reduction at its very core," she said.

As harm reduction awareness month is commemorated, the aim is to inform and educate smokers about reducing their exposure to harmful chemicals released during smoking.

Gcoyi said the industry was calling for policy recognition of vaping as an alternative to smoking, so that smokers can get a realistic shot at reducing their harmful exposure to

tobacco chemicals.

"We are proud to participate in this campaign and call on the South African vaping and smoking community to fully support this, and bring to the attention of policymakers the importance of a scientifically underpinned policy framework to regulate vaping."

In a statement, the organisation said South Africa was one of the countries facing serious social challenges including chronic addiction and mental illness.

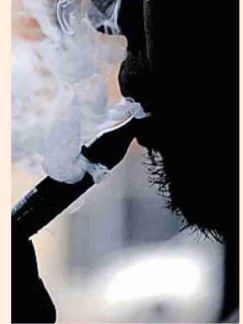
It also said the widespread availability of harmful substances, including tobacco, continues to drive up the

costs of healthcare through a growing incidence of non-communicable diseases such as cancer.

It said the inadequate provision of quitting support measures for tobacco users made the task of lowering the country's smoking incidence that much more difficult, with smokers left to fend for themselves.

Gcoyi said providing less harmful alternatives was a human rights issue.

She believes it is a sensible approach to provide consumers with access to potentially less harmful alternatives to tobacco which will, in turn, reduce the rate of smoking which causes cancer.



ACCORDING to experts, vaping is more successful at helping smokers quit than other aids. | AP