

Ban on vaping

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By Tamara Clark

The City of Melbourne has is proposing to ban e-cigarettes and vaping after an attempt to synchronise the city's local laws with Victorian tobacco laws.

"E-cigarettes are relatively new, but we know that there is a possible link to serious lung disease and growing evidence that e-cigarettes can lead young people to start smoking regular cigarettes," Lord Mayor Sally Capp said last month.

Cr Capp said it was "concerning" to see that 20 per cent of students between the ages of 16 and 17 had experimented with vaping.

"This change to the local law would mean e-cigarettes would be banned anywhere that smoking is banned in the City of Melbourne, making smoke-free areas simpler for everyone to understand," she said.

Cr Beverly Pinder said banning vapes in smoke-free areas may help raise awareness that e-cigarettes were not a healthy option.

"You really don't know what you're inhaling," Cr Pinder said.

“E-cigarettes are often marketed as a way to help smokers to quit, or as a ‘safe alternative’ to regular cigarettes, but health experts agree that there simply isn’t the evidence to support these claims,” she said.

If the amendment is passed, anyone found vaping or smoking in smoke-free areas will be fined \$100.

The City of Melbourne will begin issuing fines for smoking in Bourke Street Mall after the public becomes sufficiently educated on the change.

The proposed amendment was scheduled to be heard by councillors at the March 17 Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting but, along with a number of other items, was withdrawn to reduce meeting time in response to COVID-19.

“We want to make sure questions are relevant and indeed urgent in relation to time,” The Lord Mayor said.

Former City of Melbourne councillor Stephen Mayne raised the issue with the Lord Mayor at the meeting during public question time.

“I was very surprised to see you supporting a nanny state on vaping when most of the medical advice is that vaping is an excellent pathway out of smoking and probably, almost, should be encouraged,” he said.

“So, I’d just like to hear from you as to, what were you thinking?”

The Lord Mayor said the item would be addressed in the next meeting and that councillors were “looking forward” to the debate.

Smoke-free areas in Melbourne include Bourke Street Mall, Goldsbrough Lane, QV, The Causeway, Howey Place, Equitable Place, The Tan, Princes Park running track, Collins Way and Fulham Place.

The ban of smoking cigarettes in outdoor dining areas will continue in correlation with state government laws brought into use in August 2017 •