



Health sector responds to tobacco giant's sale of asthma inhaler company

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Lung health and public health peak bodies have responded to the proposed sale by tobacco giant Philip Morris International of its inhaler subsidiary Vectura by questioning the links between the purchaser and seller, and the tobacco company's intention to keep selling inhaler products.

The Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand and the Public Health Association of Australia had called for medical and health groups to boycott Vectura and its products. In recent weeks, the Society has met numerous pharmaceutical and medicine companies to explain Big Tobacco ties to the company.

"We are seeking more information on the ultimate owners and beneficiaries of the sale of Vectura, if it is finalised," Thoracic Society President, Prof Anne Holland, said.

"In addition, we have asked Medicines Australia, which represents pharmaceutical companies, to establish a principle and set a high fence for future tobacco and vaping companies to cross.

"Philip Morris International's own statement indicates while it's selling Vectura, it now has enough knowledge since its 2021 purchase to develop a pipeline of inhaler products which it intends to make and sell after has rebranded that business unit."

Thoracic Society CEO, Vincent So, thanked representatives from Australian pharmaceutical companies who've met the Society's executive team and indicated they would sever ties, or rule out dealing with, Vectura prior to this announcement.

"We also acknowledge the advocacy to media outlets, government officials and industry from our Society's members."

PHAA CEO, Adj Prof Terry Slevin, congratulated the many individuals and groups worldwide who fought for this result.

"The public health community will continue to monitor and fight tobacco companies who try to launder their harmful practices like this tobacco giant has done," he said.

"Tobacco and other nicotine delivery products have caused carnage to their users around the world for decades. The multinational corporations who have built enormous profits on the back of deaths, disease and misery should not be allowed to profit from their efforts to continue to sell health-destroying products, while also profiting from products to address that harm.

"Theirs is a shameful business. They should be treated accordingly."

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