

# Stub out further delays

By [FAZLEENA AZIZ](#)

Thursday, 04 Aug 2022

PETALING JAYA: Public health groups want faster scrutiny of the Control of Tobacco Product and Smoking Bill by the Parliamentary Special Select Commission (PSSC) so that it is approved before GE15 is called.

“We hope the PSSC will work fast on the Bill to fine-tune the Bill and the minister will be able to cement the process to ensure the work done is not scuttled if the 15th General Elections happens earlier,” said Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Koh Kar Chai.

“It will be heart-breaking for many Malaysians if the Bill is thrown out just because of a change in government.”

National Cancer Society Malaysia managing director Dr Murallitharan M said the Bill had been politicised as evidenced by social media posts.

“As bipartisan support is unavailable, the best possible move must be made in order to ensure the Bill can continue to be worked on and presented in a manner that will obtain the best possible buy-in,” he said when contacted.

However, Dr Murallitharan said they would continue to support the ministry in moving the Bill further while ensuring the advocacy was done with scientific facts and truth.

Prof Dr Mohamad Haniki Nik Mohamed, leader of the Sustainable Smokefree Campus Community Flagship at the International Islamic University Malaysia, said that while he believed the Bill would be read in Parliament, the detour to the committee was clearly disappointing.

“It is not harm reduction when someone switches to ecigarettes but it is more like harm substitution while the ministry is actually pushing for harm elimination.

“There were certain things brought up and a lot of arguments presented. We tried to understand their point of view, and we do hope they will come to consensus,” he said in response to the Bill being further scrutinised.

Mohamad Haniki added that nicotine was still nicotine, even in other forms, and it was surprising to see people denying its addictiveness.

He also said that with New Zealand's amended Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Act, there had been a dramatic increase in the number of vapers among adolescents in a report revealed last year.

Malaysian Pharmacists Society (MPS) president Amrahi Buang is urging the Health Ministry to immediately conduct nationwide checks on possible nicotine products sold by individuals who are not licensed under the Malaysian Poisons Act 1952, especially at vape outlets.

The Act classifies nicotine as a Class C poison that can only be procured and dispensed by licenced pharmacists and medical practitioners, he said.

"It is the right remedial action via nationwide raids since public well-being has been taken for a ride for several years now while we wait for the GEG Bill to be passed," he said in a statement.

Dubbed as the Generational Endgame (GEG), the bill proposes a ban on the sale of cigarettes, tobacco and vape products to anyone born in the years 2007 and after.

Previously, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said they aimed to reduce smoking prevalence among the population in the country to below 5% by 2024.