As used herein, an aerosol-generating article is a heated aerosol-generating article, which is an aerosol-generating article comprising an aerosol-forming substrate that is intended to be heated rather than combusted in order to release volatile compounds that can form an aerosol. The aerosol formed by heating the aerosol-forming substrate may contain fewer known harmful constituents than would be produced by combustion or pyrolytic degradation of the aerosol-forming substrate. An aerosol-generating article may comprise, a tobacco stick.

As used herein, an 'aerosol-generating device' relates to a device that interacts with an aerosol-forming substrate to generate an aerosol. The aerosol-forming substrate forms part of an aerosol-generating article, for example part of a smoking article. An aerosol-generating device may comprise one or more components used to supply energy from a power supply to an aerosol-forming substrate to generate an aerosol.

An aerosol-generating device may be described as a heated aerosol-generating device, which is an aerosol-generating device comprising a heater. The heater is preferably used to heat an aerosol-forming substrate of an aerosol-generating article to generate an aerosol.

An aerosol-generating device may be an electrically heated aerosol-generating device, which is an aerosol-generating device comprising a heater that is operated by electrical power to heat an aerosol-forming substrate of an aerosol-generating article to generate an aerosol. An aerosol-generating device may be a gas-heated aerosol-generating device. An aerosol-generating device may be a smoking device that interacts with an aerosol-forming substrate of an aerosol-generating article to generate an aerosol that is directly inhalable into a user's lungs thorough the user's mouth.

As used herein, the term 'aerosol-forming substrate' relates to a substrate capable of releasing volatile compounds that can form an aerosol. Such volatile compounds may be released by heating the aerosol-forming substrate. An aerosol-forming substrate may be adsorbed, coated, impregnated or otherwise loaded onto a carrier or support. An aerosol-forming substrate may conveniently be part of an aerosol-generating article or smoking article.

An aerosol-forming substrate may comprise nicotine. An aerosol-forming substrate may comprise tobacco, for example may comprise a tobacco-containing material containing volatile tobacco flavour compounds, which are released from the aerosol-forming substrate upon heating. In preferred embodiments an aerosol-forming substrate may comprise homogenised tobacco material, for example cast leaf tobacco.

The specification relates to a smoking article and a method of using a smoking article. In one embodiment, a smoking article comprising a plurality of elements, including a front-plug and an aerosol-forming substrate, is provided. The front-plug defines a hole or slit through which a heating element may be inserted. The front-plug is substantially cylindrical and has a diameter of 5 mm or greater and a length of at least 2 mm.

The smoking article may comprise a rod. In one embodiment, the plurality of elements, including the front-plug and the aerosol-forming substrate are assembled in contact with a

substrate. For the avoidance of doubt, in the following description the term heating element is used to mean one or more heating elements.

It may be preferable for the heating element to contact or penetrate the aerosol-forming substrate. In such embodiments, the aerosol-forming substrate may shrink into contact with a heating element during an aerosol-generating phase. The aerosol-forming substrate may also shrink such that its contact with the cigarette paper is reduced. Without a front-plug, the withdrawal of the heating element from the rod may also result in the withdrawal of the aerosol-forming substrate due to increased adhesion of the aerosol-forming substrate with the heating element coupled with decreased adhesion of the aerosol-forming substrate with the cigarette paper. However, the front-plug may facilitate removal or extraction of the heating element from the rod by restricting the movement of the aerosol-forming substrate towards the distal end of the rod. The front-plug blocks the passage of the aerosol-forming substrate and therefore prevents the aerosol-forming substrate from being withdrawn from the rod.

The front-plug may be made from a filter material that allows air to be drawn through the front-plug. The front-plug may conveniently be formed from the same material as a conventional mouthpiece filter. For example, the front-plug may be formed from a length of cellulose acetate tow. Permeability of the front-plug may be varied to help control resistance to draw through the smoking article. Alternatively, the front-plug may be formed from a material that is not permeable to air, although some air may be drawn through the hole or slit defined in the front-plug, depending on tolerances between the hole or slit and a heating element inserted therethrough.

The front-plug may comprise one or more materials selected from the group comprising ceramic, polymer, biopolymer, metal, zeolite, paper, cardboard, inert material, and inorganic material. The front-plug has a diameter that is approximately equal to the diameter of the smoking article. Preferably, the front-plug has a diameter between about 5 millimetres and about 10 millimetres. The front-plug has a length that may be defined as the dimension along the longitudinal axis of the smoking article. ~~The~~ In one embodiment, the length of the front-plug may be between about 1 millimetre and about 10 millimetres, for example between about 4 millimetres and about 8 millimetres. It is preferred that the front-plug is substantially cylindrical has a length of at least 2 millimetres in order to facilitate assembly of a smoking article, preferably at leat 3 mm or at least 4 mm. A longer plug may also provide an improved cleaning effect as there is a greater amount of the front plug material available for wiping the heating element as the heating element is withdrawn from the plug. It is preferable that the diameter of the plug is greater than 5 mm, for example between 6 mm and 8 mm.

In some embodiments, the front-plug may be partially or entirely formed from an aerosol-forming substrate. For example, the aerosol-forming substrate may be a material comprising tobacco or processed tobacco and the front-plug may comprise this material. If an aerosol-

In one embodiment, the smoking article has a total length of approximately 45 millimetres. The smoking article may have an external diameter of approximately 7.2 millimetres. Further, the aerosol-forming substrate may have a length of approximately 10 millimetres. Alternatively, the aerosol-forming substrate may have a length of approximately 12 millimetres. Further, the diameter of the aerosol-forming substrate may be between approximately 5 millimetres and approximately 12 millimetres. The smoking article may comprise an outer paper wrapper. Further, the smoking article may comprise a separation between the aerosol-forming substrate and the filter plug. The separation may be approximately 18 millimetres, but may be in the range of approximately 5 millimetres to approximately 25 millimetres.

In another embodiment, a method of using, consuming or smoking a smoking article comprising a plurality of elements is provided. The elements include a front-plug and an aerosol-forming substrate. The front-plug is substantially cylindrical and has a diameter of 5 mm or greater and a length of at least 2 mm. The method involves the steps of inserting a heating element into the smoking article through a hole or slit defined through the front-plug, raising the temperature of the heating element to heat the aerosol-forming substrate sufficiently to form an aerosol, and withdrawing the heating element from the smoking article.

The aerosol generated by heating the aerosol-forming substrate may be inhaled by the user. The rod can be defined as having a mouth end and a distal end located upstream from the mouth end. Typically, a user applies his or her lips to the mouth end of the rod and inhales at the same time as the aerosol-forming substrate is heated by the heating element. Air and any aerosol generated within the rod are drawn through the mouth end of the rod to be inhaled by the user.

In some embodiments, the heating element is brought into direct contact with the aerosol-forming substrate, and in some embodiments, the heating element is inserted into the aerosol generating substrate. As described above, the aerosol-forming substrate may adhere to the heating element. The aerosol-forming substrate may also contract after heating and become loose within the rod. In such circumstances, the aerosol-forming substrate is susceptible to being withdrawn from the rod when the heating element is withdrawn. Thus, the method may provide a step in which the front-plug prevents egress of the aerosol-forming substrate as the heating element is withdrawn from the smoking article. The aerosol-forming substrate may move within the rod towards the front-plug and impinge the front-plug. This impingement may allow the adherence between the heating element and the aerosol-forming substrate to be overcome, thereby allowing the heating element to be withdrawn from the smoking article.

As described above, fragments of aerosol-forming substrate may adhere to the heating element. Furthermore, residues of the aerosol-forming substrate or residues derived from the aerosol-forming substrate may be deposited or formed on the heating element. The method