

## **Submission to the Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Bill 2024**

### **Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO)**

**April 2024**

#### **Introduction**

The Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) submits this statement in support of the Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Bill 2024. ACSSO represents the voice of families, caregivers, and communities in the realm of government education policy. Our mission is to ensure the well-being and safety of students, families, and communities across Australia. The following submission outlines our position in favor of the proposed vaping reforms and provides insights from our recent survey on vaping's impact on various demographics, conducted in collaboration with stakeholders and partners.

#### **Overview of Survey Findings**

ACSSO recently conducted a comprehensive [survey on vaping](#) and its impact on students and families across Australia. The survey collected responses from 325 participants and focused on demographics, awareness, concerns, personal experiences with vaping, and opinions on addressing vaping at a societal level. Key findings from the survey include:

*Demographic Diversity:* The survey encompassed a diverse age demographic, with notable representation from the 35-54 age group, which includes parents and active vaping users. However, younger age groups (under 18 and 18-24) had relatively low participation, limiting insights into their behaviours and attitudes towards vaping.

*Awareness and Understanding:* All respondents (100%) were aware of the term "vaping," highlighting widespread recognition of this practice. However, there were diverse

descriptions of vaping, ranging from electronic cigarettes to concerns about safety and regulation.

*Health Concerns:* The majority (96.83%) of respondents knew of the potential health risks of vaping, including respiratory issues, nicotine addiction, heart problems, and exposure to harmful chemicals.

*Concerns About Youth Vaping:* A significant portion (57.14%) of respondents expressed very high levels of concern about the use of vaping products by children/teens.

*Support for Regulatory Measures:* Respondents overwhelmingly supported measures such as increasing education about vaping risks, stricter regulations on advertising and marketing, age restrictions on purchasing vaping products, and banning flavoured vaping products to address vaping at a societal level.

These findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive public health campaigns, stricter regulations, increased caregiver awareness, and peer-to-peer education to address vaping, particularly among young populations.

## **Support for the Vaping Reforms Bill**

ACSSO fully supports the Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Bill 2024. The proposed reforms align with our mission to prioritize the health and well-being of students and families. We commend the Government's efforts to address the vaping epidemic through a multi-faceted approach that includes regulatory measures, enforcement, and public awareness campaigns.

### Key Reasons for Supporting the Bill

*Protecting Youth Health:* The Bill's prohibition on the importation, domestic manufacture, supply, commercial possession, and advertisement of non-therapeutic and disposable vaping goods is crucial for protecting young people from the harms of vaping. ACSSO is deeply concerned about the rising rates of vaping among adolescents and supports measures to prevent youth access to these products.

*Creating a Consistent Regulatory Framework:* The Bill aims to create a single consistent framework that applies nationally to regulate all vapes, irrespective of nicotine content or therapeutic claims. This unified approach will enhance clarity and enforcement of

regulations, ensuring that vaping products are held to the same standards across Australia.

*Supporting Evidence-Based Policy:* The Government's decision to implement vaping reforms is based on extensive consultation, evidence gathering, and collaboration with stakeholders. ACSSO believes in evidence-based policy-making and supports measures that are grounded in scientific research and public health principles.

*Addressing Concerns About Vaping's Impact:* Our recent survey findings highlight widespread awareness and concern about the health risks of vaping, particularly among parents and caregivers. The proposed reforms align with public sentiment and address key concerns raised by our survey respondents, including the need for stricter regulations on advertising and marketing.

## **In addition**

Alongside supporting the ban, ACSSO calls for a comprehensive public health education campaign to equip teachers, families, parents, carers, and children with evidence-based information about the dangers of vaping. We emphasise the importance of cohesive and compelling messaging, including firsthand case studies, to reinforce the risks associated with vaping. Additionally, we advocate for supportive measures for young people struggling with addiction to vaping, emphasising a non-punitive approach to cessation support.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, ACSSO fully supports the Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Bill 2024. We believe that the proposed reforms are essential for protecting the health and well-being of students, families, and communities across Australia. By implementing comprehensive regulatory measures and raising public awareness about the dangers of vaping, we can mitigate the risks associated with this harmful practice and safeguard future generations.

Dianne Giblin

Chief Executive Officer



# MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Council of State School Organisations Limited

## ACSSO Supports Vaping Legislation Reforms

The Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) strongly supports the *Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Bill 2024*, designed to address the growing public health challenge of vaping, particularly among young Australians.

Recent findings from ACSSO's "[The Impact of Vaping Survey](#)" indicate widespread concern about the rise of vaping among students and the associated health risks, including nicotine addiction, respiratory issues, and mental health impacts. A significant majority of respondents (90.48%) advocate for increased education on vaping risks, stricter advertising regulations (82.54%), and the implementation of age restrictions for purchasing vaping products (82.54%).

The proposed Vaping Reforms Bill addresses concerns about the use of vaping products. It aims to amend the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989* by banning the importation, manufacture, supply, and advertisement of disposable single-use and non-therapeutic vaping products. With this Bill, access to therapeutic vapes for smoking cessation under medical guidance will be preserved. The goal is to provide a balanced approach to addressing nicotine dependence while curtailing the recreational use of vapes.

ACSSO President Damien Ellwood stated, "The Vaping Reforms Bill is a crucial step towards protecting our youth from the allure and dangers of vaping. It reflects the community's call for tighter control and regulation of vaping products. We particularly support measures prioritising public health and offer genuine solutions to those seeking to quit smoking."

The proposed legislation has considered the opinions and suggestions of various stakeholders, such as health professionals, educators, and families. This demonstrates a nationwide commitment to tackle the vaping epidemic. ACSSO recognises the government's proactive approach and urges swift passage of the Bill to protect the well-being and future of Australia's youth.

"We must act decisively to prevent a new generation from falling into the trap of nicotine addiction," added Damien Ellwood. "Education, regulation, and accessible cessation services are key to turning the tide against vaping among young Australians."

ACSSO calls on all stakeholders, including parents, educators, and policymakers, to support the Vaping Reforms Bill and contribute to a healthier, smoke-free future for Australia's children and adolescents.

For further comment: Damien Ellwood

Dianne Giblin

*The Australian Council of State School Organisations is the national voice for families, carers, and communities in government education across Australia. ACSSO advocates for the rights and well-being of students and works towards ensuring quality education for all Australian children.*

*The national voice for families, carers, and communities in government education*



## Australian Council of State School Organisations results from The Impact of Vaping Survey

### Executive Summary

This executive summary provides an overview of the key findings and insights derived from our recent survey on vaping and its impact on various demographics. The survey collected responses from 325 participants and focused on demographics, awareness, concerns, personal experiences with vaping, and opinions on addressing vaping at a societal level.

### Methodology

The Impact of Vaping survey successfully employed a multi-faceted approach, including strategic social media engagement, collaboration with state and territory parent organisations, and partnership with the Cancer Council ACT to gather valuable insights into the vaping habits and perceptions of students and their families in Australia.

### Demographic Information: Age

The survey encompassed a diverse age demographic, with notable representation from the 35-54 age group, which includes parents and active vaping users. However, younger age groups (under 18 and 18-24) had relatively low participation, limiting insights into their behaviours and attitudes towards vaping.

### Demographic Information: Gender

The survey demonstrated a clear predominance of female respondents (80.95%), while male, non-binary, and undisclosed gender identities constituted smaller sample proportions.

### Demographic Information: Location

Participants were geographically diverse, representing various states and territories in Australia and some international locations such as Florida and Mississippi in the United States.

### Awareness of Vaping

All respondents (100%) were aware of the term "vaping," highlighting the widespread recognition of this practice.

### Understanding of Vaping

Respondents provided diverse descriptions of vaping, ranging from electronic cigarettes to concerns about safety and regulation. Common themes included associations with health risks, appeal to youth, and concerns about the lack of regulation in the vaping industry.

### Information Sources

Participants cited various sources of information about vaping, including television, the internet, friends or family, schools, and healthcare professionals.

### Awareness of Health Risks

The majority (96.83%) of respondents knew of the potential health risks of vaping.

### Concerns About Youth Vaping

A significant portion (57.14%) of respondents expressed very high levels of concern about the use of vaping products by the child/teen in their care.



### Perceived Health Risks of Vaping

Respondents associated vaping with various health risks, including respiratory issues, nicotine addiction, heart problems, and exposure to harmful chemicals. Poisoning, mental health concerns, and the potential emergence of undisclosed health issues were also highlighted.

### Worries About Vaping

The most worrisome aspects of vaping for respondents were health effects and potential risks, addiction and dependency, accessibility and availability of vaping products, and lack of regulation and oversight.

### Discussions About Vaping with Youth

While the majority of respondents had extensive (44.44%) or brief (36.51%) discussions about vaping and its risks with the child/teen in their care, a notable portion (22.22%) had not yet broached this important topic.

### Confidence in Preventing Youth Vaping

Respondents reported varying confidence levels in preventing the child/teen in their care from using vaping products. While some felt very confident (17.46%), others expressed lower levels of confidence (12.70% not at all confident), indicating the need for increased support and education for parents/caregivers.

### Personal Use of Vaping Devices

Most respondents (85.71%) had never used electronic vaping devices. A smaller percentage had experimented in the past (7.94%), and an even smaller percentage were currently using them (6.35%).

### Reasons for Trying Vaping Devices

The primary reasons cited for trying vaping devices were curiosity (61.54%), flavour options (23.08%), belief in their safety compared to smoking (15.38%), marketing/advertisement influence (15.38%), and attempts to quit smoking (15.38%).

### Addressing Vaping at a Societal Level

Respondents overwhelmingly supported measures such as increasing education about vaping risks (90.48%), stricter regulations on advertising and marketing (82.54%), age restrictions on purchasing vaping products (82.54%), and banning flavoured vaping products (79.37%) to address vaping at a societal level. Investment in research to understand long-term effects also received support (71.43%).

### Additional Comments

Respondents emphasised the effectiveness of anti-smoking campaigns in reaching and influencing young people and suggested adopting similar strategies for anti-vaping campaigns. Peer-to-peer influence was recognised as crucial in educating young individuals about the dangers of vaping.

The survey findings highlight the need for comprehensive public health campaigns, stricter regulations, increased caregiver awareness, and peer-to-peer education to address vaping, particularly among young populations. These insights are instrumental in developing targeted strategies to mitigate the risks associated with vaping and protect public health.



## The Impact of Vaping

The Impact of Vaping survey aimed to evaluate vaping awareness and its impact on Australian students and families.

### Methodologies Employed

#### Social Media Engagement

72 posts were strategically crafted and shared across various social media platforms, including ACSSO Australia, Australian Council of State School Organisations, Parents Australia, Family Engagement Network, Instagram, and X (formerly known as Twitter).

These posts were designed to be informative, engaging, and visually appealing, with a clear call to action to participate in the survey.

The posts were scheduled at optimal times to maximise reach and engagement.

#### Collaboration with Stakeholders

State and Territory peak parent bodies actively promoted the survey.

Information about the survey was included in their newsletters, reaching a wider audience through trusted channels.

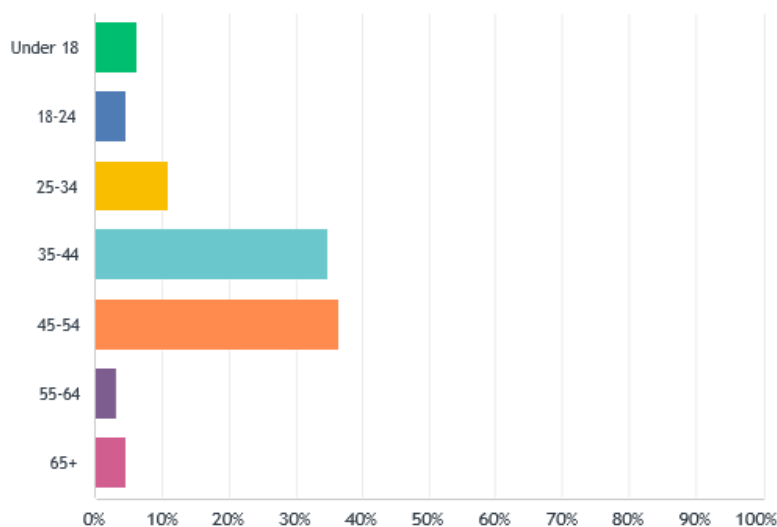
Stakeholders and partners were encouraged to share and amplify survey-related content, increasing the survey's visibility.

#### Partnership with The Cancer Council ACT

The Cancer Council ACT actively shared the survey link, lending credibility and trust to the survey.

This partnership extended the survey's reach to individuals concerned about health-related issues, particularly vaping.

### Q1 Demographic Information Age







Under 18: respondents (6.35%)

The fact that over 6% of respondents are under 18 is concerning, as vaping is typically illegal for individuals under 18 in many places due to health risks and legal restrictions. It suggests that there may be accessibility or enforcement issues in preventing underage vaping.

18-24: respondents (4.76%)

The representation of the 18-24 age group is relatively low. Given that this group is often associated with a higher prevalence of vaping, it might be valuable to have more respondents from this age range to understand their perspectives and behaviours.

25-34: respondents (11.11%)

The 25-34 age group has a moderate representation in the survey. This demographic includes many young adults who may be frequent users of vaping products, so their insights are essential for understanding the impact of vaping on this age group.

35-44: respondents (34.92%)

The 35-44 age group represents a substantial portion of the survey respondents. This suggests that a significant number of individuals in their mid-thirties to mid-forties participated in the survey, indicating that vaping impacts this age group significantly.

45-54: respondents (36.51%)

The 45-54 age group is also well-represented in the survey, with a similar percentage to the 35-44 age group. This age group may include parents of teenagers, which could be why it's highly represented in a survey about vaping's impact.

55-64: respondents (3.17%)

The representation of the 55-64 age group is quite low. While older adults can also use vaping products, this suggests that fewer respondents from this demographic participated in the survey.

65+: respondents (4.76%)

The 65+ age group also has a relatively low representation. This is consistent with the idea that vaping is less common among older adults, but their perspectives can still be valuable, especially concerning health impacts.

In summary, the survey appears to have a diverse age demographic, with a notable number of respondents from the 35-54 age range, including parents and individuals who might be more actively using vaping products. However, the relatively low representation of younger age groups (under 18 and 18-24) may limit insights into the behaviours and attitudes of these populations, which are often more affected by vaping trends.

## Q2 Demographic- Gender

The respondent demographic information for the vaping survey, which had a total of 325 participants, is presented below:

### Gender Distribution

#### *Male*

This category comprises 15.87% of the survey participants, totalling 52 respondents.

#### *Female*

Most respondents, constituting 80.95% of the sample, are female, accounting for 264 respondents.



#### *Non-binary*

A smaller percentage of participants, approximately 1.59%, identified as non-binary, representing 5 respondents.

#### *Prefer not to say*

A total of 3.17% of respondents chose not to disclose their gender, accounting for 10 respondents.

It's important to note that the survey's gender distribution demonstrates a clear predominance of female respondents. In contrast, males, non-binary individuals, and those who prefer not to disclose their gender make up smaller proportions of the overall sample. These demographic insights are crucial for understanding the perspectives and experiences of different gender groups in relation to vaping, and they provide context for analysing the survey data and drawing meaningful conclusions.

#### *Q3 Demographic- Location [Specify your state]*

The participants' locations are diverse, with responses from various states and territories in Australia and some international locations like Florida and Mississippi in the United States.

#### *Q4 Have you ever heard of the term "vaping"*

All respondents (100%) have heard of "vaping."

#### *Q5 Respondents were asked to give what they understood by the term "Vaping"?*

Respondents provided various descriptions of vaping, mentioning terms like electronic cigarettes, inhaling chemicals, and using battery-operated devices. Many respondents highlighted concerns about the safety and regulation of vaping products. Some emphasised the dangers of vaping, especially among youth.

The responses highlight various perspectives and opinions regarding vaping, including its initial purpose, impact on health, regulation concerns, and appeal to different demographics.

#### *Summary of Responses*

##### *Electronic Cigarettes*

Many respondents associated vaping with electronic cigarettes, indicating that vaping involves inhaling chemicals through battery-operated devices as an alternative to traditional cigarettes.

##### *Health Concerns*

Many respondents expressed concerns about the health risks associated with vaping. Some stated that vaping can be more toxic than tobacco, while others highlighted the presence of harmful chemicals and toxins in vape products.

##### *Appeal to Youth*

Several respondents mentioned that vaping specifically appeals to young people due to social and traditional marketing tactics and the availability of enticing flavours. This has raised concerns about the potential for young individuals to become addicted to vaping.

##### *Gateway to Smoking*

A notable perspective is that vaping, initially introduced as a smoking cessation aid, has been co-opted by the tobacco industry to introduce non-smokers to smoking. It is perceived as a gateway product, particularly for young people.



### *Regulation Issues*

Multiple respondents expressed concerns about the lack of regulation in the vaping industry. Some noted that vaping products are readily available, including to minors, and contain more nicotine than advertised.

### *Flavoured Vaping*

A common theme was the variety of vaping products' flavours, making them more appealing to users. However, some respondents criticised the use of flavours as deceptive, especially when nicotine content is high.

### *Public Health Crisis*

Respondents in Australia highlighted inadequate government regulation and messaging as factors leading to ignorance about the dangers of vaping, particularly among young people.

### *Original Purpose*

Some respondents mentioned that vaping was initially considered a safer alternative to smoking and a tool for quitting cigarettes. However, this perception has shifted over time.

### *Toxicity and Addiction*

Vaping was commonly described as toxic and addictive, often compared to smoking in terms of its health risks.

### *Filtered Smoke*

A few respondents referred to vaping as "filtered smoke" or mentioned devices designed to filter vapour.

The responses regarding "vaping" reveal a complex and multifaceted perception of this practice. While some individuals still associate it with its initial purpose as a smoking cessation aid, many express concerns about its health risks, marketing tactics targeting youth, and the lack of regulation. Overall, vaping remains a topic of debate and raises significant public health and regulatory challenges in many regions. Understanding the diverse perspectives presented here is crucial for effectively addressing the issues associated with vaping.

### *Q6 How did you come across information about vaping?*

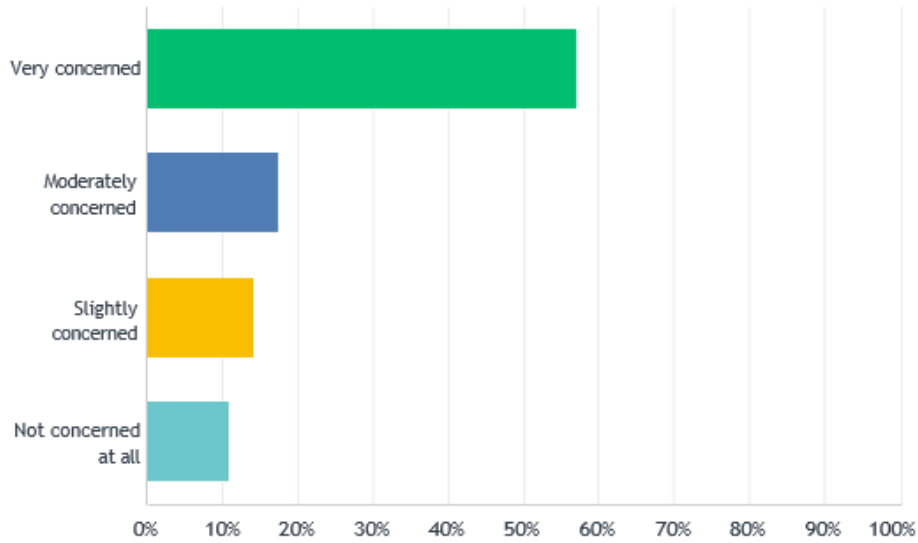
Respondents mentioned multiple sources of information about vaping, including television, the internet (websites, social media, online articles), friends or family, schools or educational programs, and healthcare professionals. Some participants specified their workplace as a source of information.

### *Q7 Are you aware of the potential health risks associated with vaping?*

The majority (96.83%) of respondents know the potential health risks of vaping.



### Q8 How concerned are you about the child/teen in your care using e-cigarettes or vaping products?

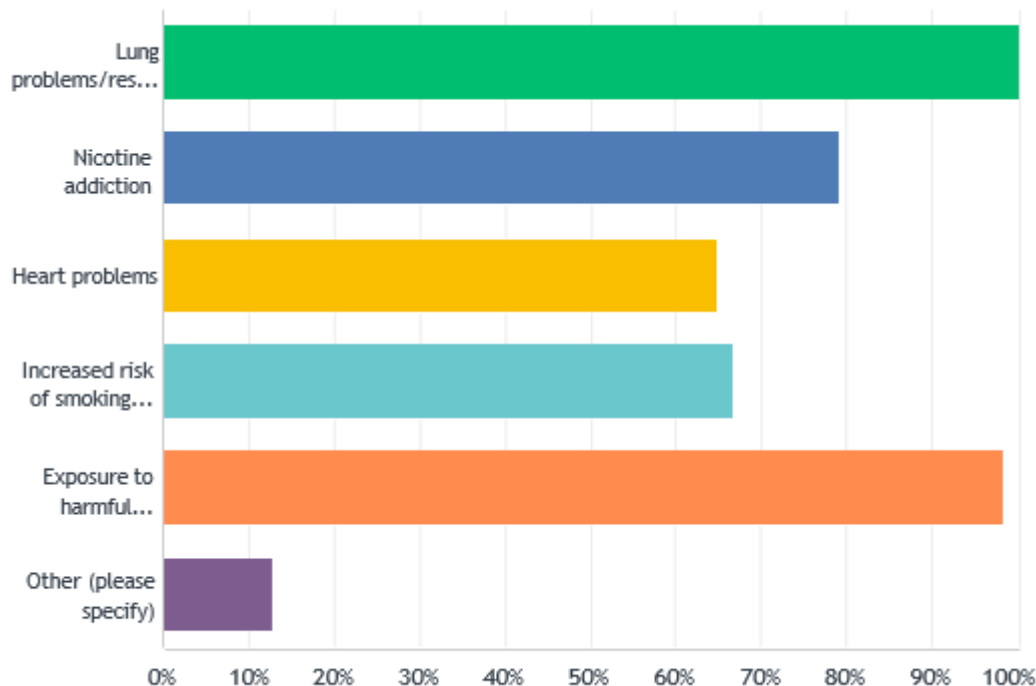


According to the survey data, there are concerns among certain individuals about children or teenagers under their care using e-cigarettes or vaping products. The majority of respondents, approximately 57.14%, expressed being "Very concerned" about this issue, indicating a high level of worry among this group. About 17.46% of respondents stated being "Moderately concerned," signifying a moderate level of apprehension. A smaller percentage, around 14.29%, reported being "Slightly concerned," implying a relatively lower level of concern. Lastly, 11.11% of respondents said they are "Not concerned at all" about the child/teen in their care using e-cigarettes or vaping products, indicating the least concern about this issue.

Overall, these results suggest that a significant portion of respondents are very concerned about young people using e-cigarettes or vaping products, while others have varying levels of concern, with a minority expressing little to no concern.



Q9 What health risks or issues do you associate with vaping?



Respondents associated vaping with various health risks, including lung problems/respiratory issues, nicotine addiction, heart problems, increased risk of smoking cigarettes, and exposure to harmful chemicals. Respondents expressed particular concern in the following areas.

Poisoning

It seems that this response pertains to unintended consumption or contact with the liquid utilised in e-cigarettes, which may contain nicotine and other substances. If the liquid is consumed or absorbed through the skin, poisoning may occur. This emphasises the importance of appropriately storing and managing vaping products.

Nicotine Dependence and Mental Health

Respondents expressed concerns about the link between nicotine addiction and mental health issues. Nicotine is a highly addictive substance found in most vaping products. The perception of its negative impact on mental health underscores the need for increased awareness and support for individuals struggling with addiction.

Becoming a Loser

While this response is somewhat vague, it may suggest a broader concern about the social consequences of vaping. It could reflect worries about how vaping might negatively affect one's image, reputation, or social standing, especially among young people.

Undisclosed Health Issues

Some respondents anticipate that vaping may have as-yet-undisclosed health issues that could emerge. This response reflects uncertainty and underscores the importance of ongoing research into the long-term health effects of vaping.



### Social Pressures and Depression

Vaping has become a social activity for many, and respondents recognise that social pressures can lead individuals, especially young people, to start vaping. The association with depression may reflect concerns about the emotional well-being of those who use vaping as a coping mechanism.

### Throat and Mouth Problems

Vaping involves inhaling aerosolised substances, potentially irritating the throat and mouth. Respondents are rightly concerned about the physical effects of vaping on these areas of the body.

### Negative Impact on Health (Through News Stories or social media)

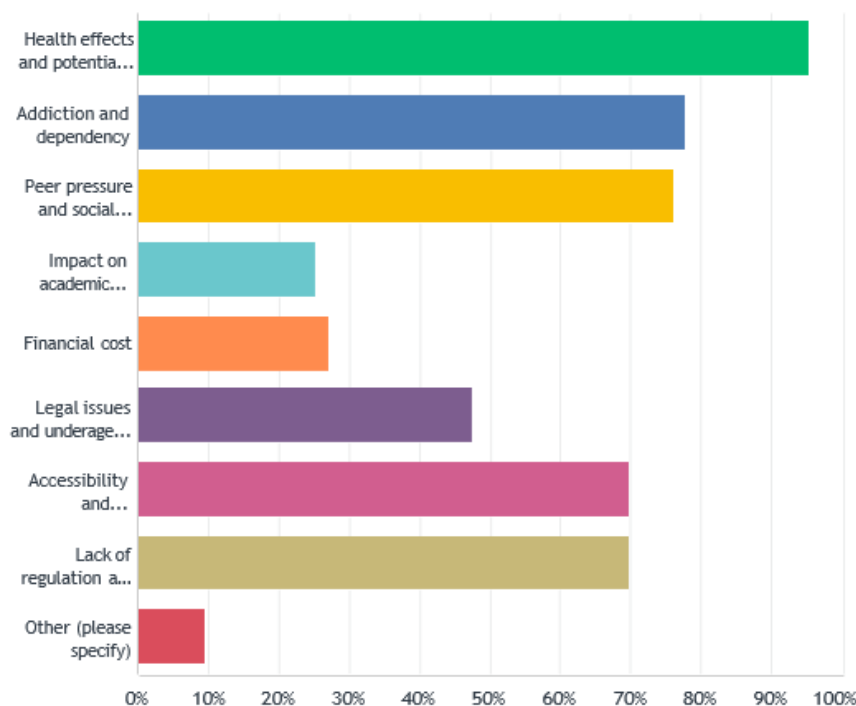
This response indicates that respondents have seen or heard news stories or social media content highlighting the adverse health effects of vaping. Media coverage is crucial in shaping public perception and awareness of vaping-related health risks.

### Peer Influence

Peer pressure is a significant factor in young people's initiation and continuation of vaping. Respondents recognise the role of peer influence in promoting vaping.

Public perception of the health risks of vaping is multifaceted and influenced by various factors, including media coverage, social influences, and personal experiences. The concerns raised by respondents in this survey highlight the need for comprehensive public health campaigns, increased education on the risks of vaping, and ongoing research to understand the long-term health effects better. It is essential to address these concerns to reduce the prevalence of vaping, especially among youth, and to mitigate potential health consequences.

### Q10 Which of the following aspects of vaping worry you the most?



The most worrisome aspects of vaping for respondents include health effects and potential risks, addiction and dependency, accessibility and availability of vaping products, and lack of regulation and oversight.



The survey results show that the aspect of vaping that worries people the most is "Health effects and potential risks," with a staggering 95.24% of respondents expressing concern about this issue. This is not surprising, given the growing body of research linking vaping to various health problems, including respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Additionally, the emergence of vaping-related lung injuries and deaths in recent years has raised significant alarm.

At 77.78%, the second-highest concern is "Addiction and dependency." This is a valid concern as vaping products often contain nicotine, a highly addictive substance. Nicotine addiction can lead to long-term health problems and make it difficult for individuals to quit vaping.

"Peer pressure and social influence" follows closely at 76.19%. This concern highlights the impact of social factors on vaping behaviour, especially among young people who may feel pressured to vape to fit in or be seen as cool. Social influence can play a significant role in initiating and sustaining vaping habits.

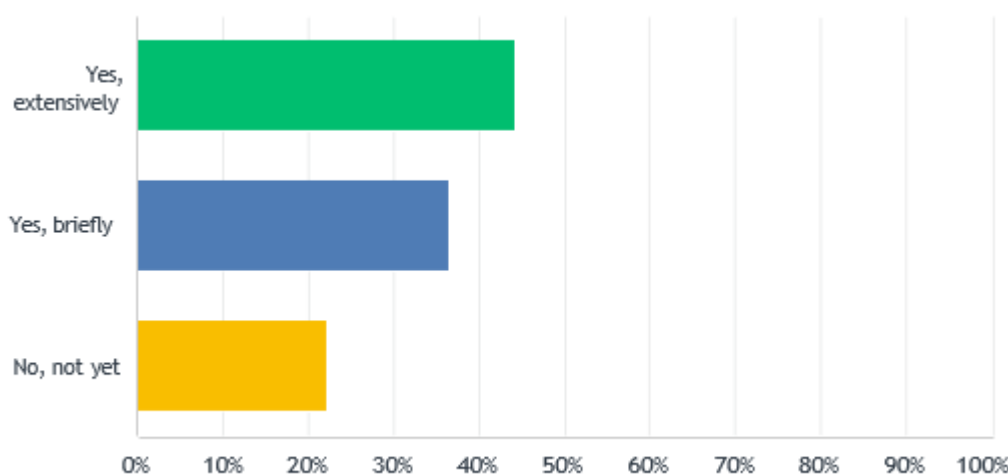
"Impact on academic performance," "Financial cost," and "Legal issues and underage use" are all rated lower, with percentages ranging from 25.40% to 47.62%. While these concerns are still significant, they seem to be overshadowed by worries about health and addiction.

"Accessibility and availability of vaping products" and "Lack of regulation and oversight" both have a concern rating of 69.84%. These issues are closely related, as the availability and lack of regulation of vaping products can contribute to the widespread use of these products, particularly among young people.

Finally, "Other (please specify)" accounts for 9.52% of responses, suggesting additional concerns not covered by the provided options. It would be valuable to explore these specific concerns further to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the public's worries regarding vaping.

These survey results indicate that the health effects and potential risks of vaping and concerns about addiction and peer pressure are the most pressing worries among respondents. These findings underscore the importance of public health efforts to address these concerns and provide education and support for those affected by vaping-related issues.

#### Q11 Have you discussed vaping and its risks with the child/teen in your care?





The responses to the question regarding discussions about vaping and its risks to children or teens in one's care provide valuable insights into the level of communication and awareness among parents/caregivers.

First, it is positive that most respondents (44.44%) have had extensive discussions about vaping and its risks with the child or teen in their care. This suggests that a substantial portion of parents/caregivers are actively educating and informing the younger generation about the potential dangers of vaping. Extensive discussions likely include explanations of health risks, addiction potential, and the importance of making informed choices.

The fact that 36.51% of respondents have had brief discussions about vaping and its risks is also encouraging. While not as in-depth as extensive discussions, brief conversations can provide essential information and raise awareness. These discussions may serve as initial steps toward a more comprehensive dialogue about the risks of vaping.

However, it is noteworthy that 22.22% of respondents have not yet discussed vaping and its risks with the child or teen in their care. This is a cause for concern because many parents/caregivers have not broached this important topic. Given the prevalence of vaping among young people and the potential health consequences, it is crucial for parents/caregivers to engage in conversations about vaping to ensure that children and teens are well-informed and equipped to make responsible decisions.

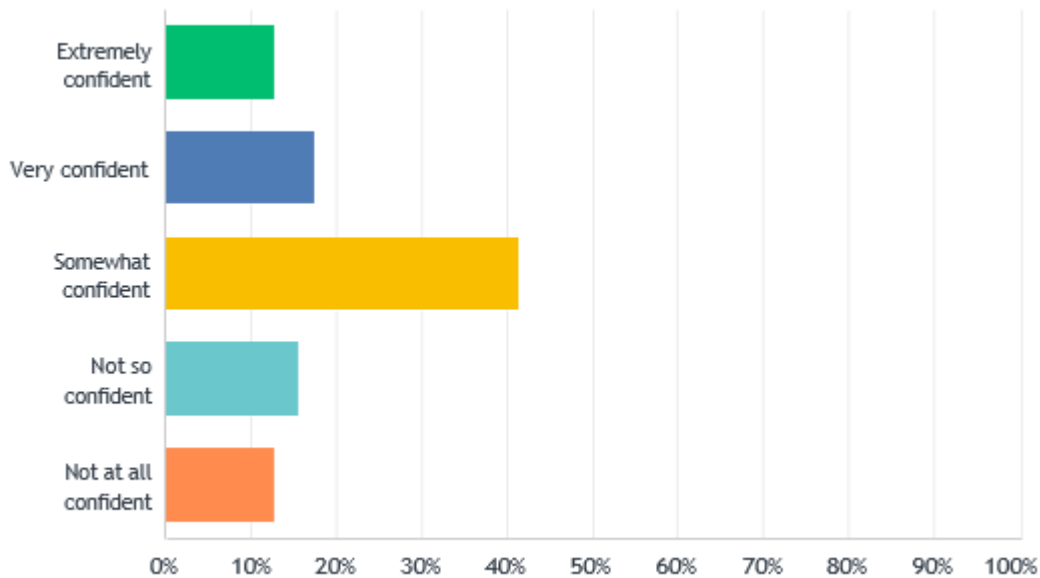
To address this gap, there should be increased efforts to promote awareness among parents/caregivers about the risks of vaping and the importance of discussing this issue with their children and teens. Educational campaigns and resources can help parents/caregivers feel more confident and prepared to have these conversations.

These results show a mix of engagement levels among parents/caregivers when it comes to discussing vaping and its risks with the young individuals in their care. While many have had extensive or brief discussions, a notable portion has not yet broached the topic. Encouraging and facilitating these conversations is essential in mitigating the risks of vaping among young people.





Q12 How confident are you in your ability to prevent the child/teen in your care from using vaping products?



The responses to the question regarding parents/caregivers' confidence in their ability to prevent the child or teen from using vaping products reveal a range of sentiments and attitudes.

**Somewhat confident (41.27%)**

The largest group of respondents falls into the "somewhat confident" category. This suggests that many parents/caregivers feel moderately assured about their ability to prevent vaping product use among the young individuals they are responsible for. They likely have some strategies or knowledge about the topic but may still have concerns or uncertainties.

**Very confident (17.46%)**

This group expresses a higher degree of confidence in their ability to prevent vaping product use. They may have a strong understanding of the risks associated with vaping, possess effective communication skills, and have implemented preventive measures successfully.

**Not so confident (15.87%)**

This category represents parents/caregivers with lower confidence levels in preventing vaping among the youth in their care. They may feel less equipped to handle the issue and may require additional information, resources, or support to improve their confidence.

**Not at all confident (12.70%)**

The fact that a notable portion of respondents falls into the "not at all confident" category is concerning. This suggests that some parents/caregivers feel helpless or ill-prepared to address vaping among the children or teens they are responsible for. This group may need targeted education and resources to empower them to tackle this issue effectively.

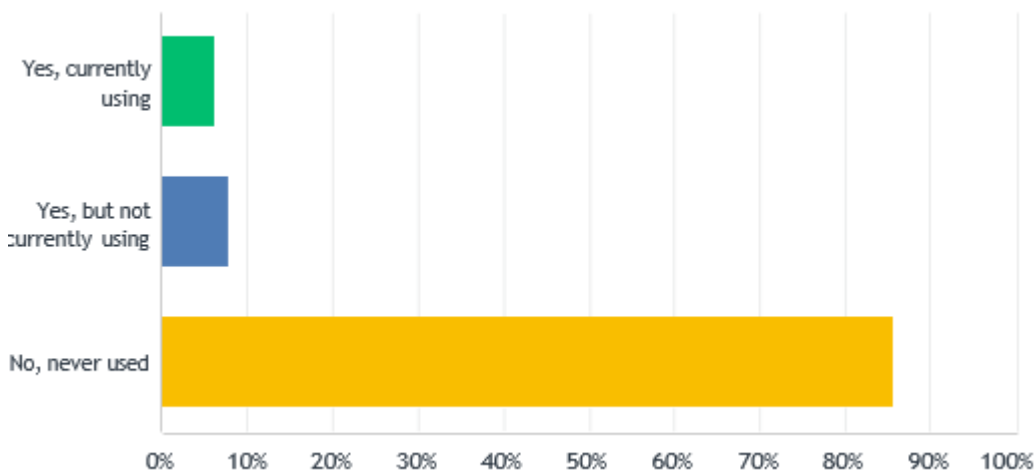


Extremely confident (12.70%)

Although the smallest percentage, this group is notable for expressing an extremely high confidence in their ability to prevent vaping. These parents/caregivers may have significant knowledge about vaping, strong communication skills, and effective strategies in place.

Overall, the distribution of confidence levels indicates room for improvement in supporting parents/caregivers in preventing vaping among the youth in their care. Education and awareness campaigns and access to resources and support networks can help boost parents/caregivers' confidence and equip them with the tools they need to address this important issue effectively. It's crucial to bridge the gap between those who feel extremely confident and those who feel not so confident or not at all confident to ensure a more comprehensive approach to vaping prevention.

Q13 Have you ever used an electronic vaping device (e-cigarette, vape pen, etc.)?



The responses to the question regarding personal use of electronic vaping devices provide insight into the prevalence of vaping among the surveyed population.

No, never used (85.71%)

Most respondents fall into this category, indicating that a significant portion of the surveyed individuals have never used an electronic vaping device. This suggests that most respondents have chosen to abstain from vaping, which is a positive sign, particularly considering the potential health risks.

Yes, but not currently using (7.94%)

This group represents individuals who have experimented with electronic vaping devices at some point in the past but are not currently using them. It's possible that they tried vaping out of curiosity or peer influence but have since decided to discontinue this behaviour. This indicates an awareness of the risks and a willingness to stop vaping.

Yes, currently using (6.35%)

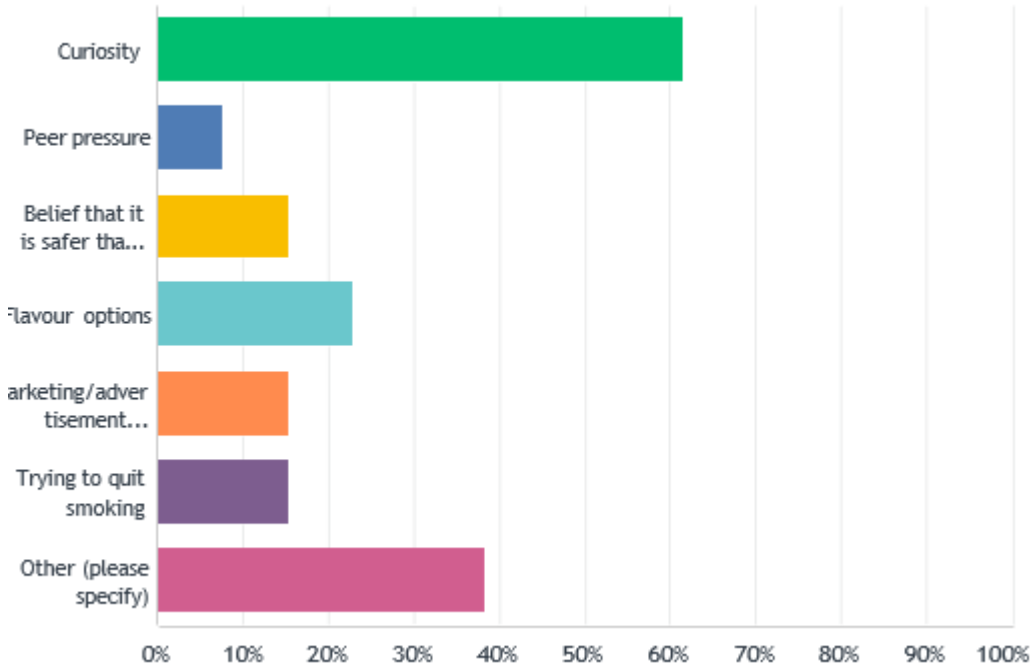
The percentage of respondents who are currently using electronic vaping devices is relatively low. However, it's still a cause for concern, as this group is actively engaged in vaping. Current use suggests ongoing exposure to the potential health risks and challenges associated with vaping.

Overall, the fact that most respondents have never used electronic vaping devices indicates that many individuals have made informed decisions to avoid this behaviour. However, efforts should continue to educate individuals, particularly young people, about the potential dangers of vaping and



to support those who have experimented with it in their efforts to quit. This survey data underscores the importance of ongoing public health campaigns to reduce vaping prevalence and promote healthier choices among the population.

Q14 If you have used vaping devices, what were the reasons for trying them?



The responses to the question regarding the reasons for trying vaping devices shed light on the various motivations that individuals may have had when experimenting with vaping.

Curiosity (61.54%)

The most common reason cited for trying vaping devices is curiosity. This is a common factor, especially among young people, who may be intrigued by the novelty of vaping or want to see what it's like. Curiosity-driven experimentation can lead to vaping initiation, underscoring the importance of providing accurate information about the potential risks of vaping.

Flavour options (23.08%)

A significant percentage of respondents tried vaping because of the wide variety of flavour options available. Flavours have been a major attraction for many, especially younger users. While flavours can make vaping more appealing, it's essential to emphasise that the pleasant taste doesn't mitigate the potential health risks.

Belief that it is safer than smoking (15.38%)

Some individuals may have tried vaping based on the belief that it is a safer alternative to traditional smoking. While there is evidence to suggest that vaping might be less harmful than smoking combustible cigarettes for adult smokers, it is not without risks, especially for non-smokers and youth. This perception highlights the importance of clear and accurate public health messaging.

Marketing/advertisement influence (15.38%)

Some respondents tried vaping due to the influence of marketing and advertisements. Vaping companies have been known to target young audiences with appealing advertisements, which can



encourage experimentation. This underscores the need for stricter regulations on vaping product marketing and advertising to protect vulnerable populations.

Trying to quit smoking (15.38%)

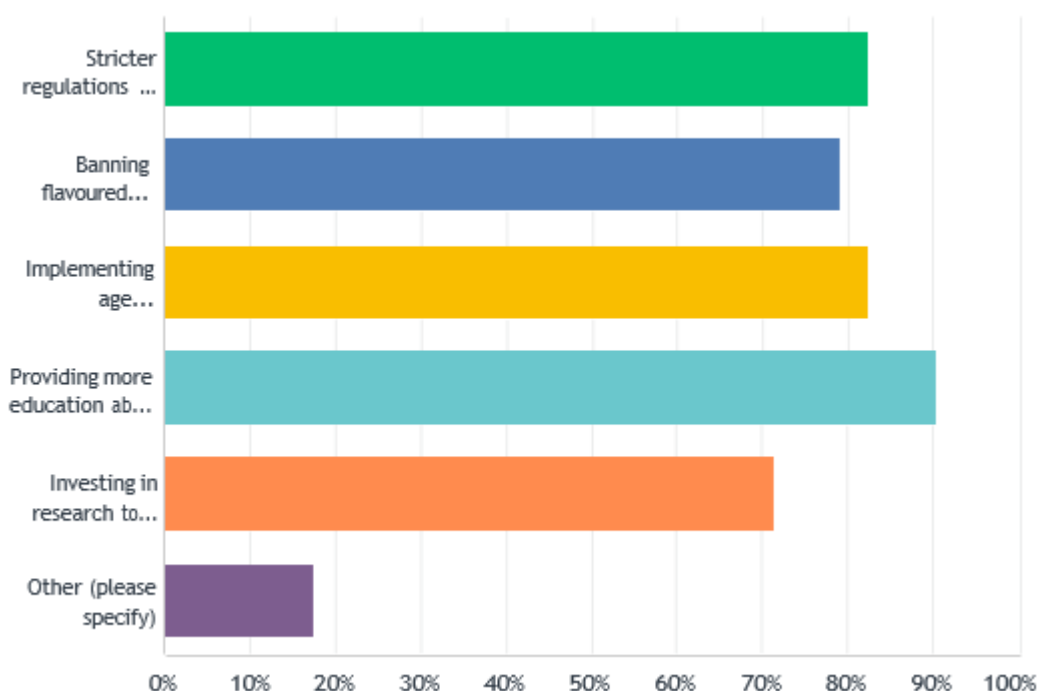
Some respondents may have turned to vaping as a method to quit smoking traditional cigarettes. While some consider vaping a smoking cessation tool, research on its effectiveness is mixed. It's essential for individuals using vaping for this purpose to be aware of the potential risks and consult with healthcare professionals.

Other (please specify) (38.46%)

The "other" category, with a relatively high percentage, suggests that there are diverse and potentially unique reasons beyond those listed. These reasons include personal experiences, cultural factors, and individual circumstances that influenced their decision to try vaping.

The reasons for trying vaping devices are multifaceted, ranging from curiosity and flavour preferences to perceptions of safety and marketing influence. To address the issue of vaping initiation, public health campaigns should focus on accurate information dissemination, flavour regulation, and stringent marketing controls while acknowledging the diversity of individual motivations.

Q15 How do you think vaping should be addressed at a societal level?



The responses to the question about how vaping should be addressed at a societal level reflect a strong consensus on several key measures and some room for individualised approaches.

Providing more education about the risks of vaping (90.48%)

The overwhelming majority of respondents support the idea of increasing education about the risks of vaping. This is crucial in preventing vaping initiation and encouraging informed decision-making among the public, especially young people. Comprehensive and accessible educational campaigns can help individuals better understand the potential health consequences associated with vaping.



#### Stricter regulations on advertising and marketing (82.54%)

A large percentage of respondents favour stricter regulations on the advertising and marketing of vaping products. This is a critical measure to limit the influence of attractive marketing tactics, particularly on youth. Tighter regulations can help reduce the appeal of vaping products and discourage their use among vulnerable populations.

#### Implementing age restrictions on purchasing vaping products (82.54%)

An equally high percentage of respondents support the implementation of age restrictions for purchasing vaping products. Restricting access to these products for underage individuals is a fundamental preventive measure, and enforcing such regulations is essential to curb vaping among young people.

#### Banning flavoured vaping products (79.37%)

The majority of respondents favour a ban on flavoured vaping products. Flavours have been a significant driver of vaping initiation among youth, as they make these products more appealing. Banning flavours can help reduce the attractiveness of vaping and discourage its use, especially among young users.

#### Investing in research to understand long-term effects (71.43%)

While not as widely supported as the other measures, investing in research to understand the long-term effects of vaping still received substantial support. Long-term research is essential to fully comprehend the health implications of vaping and inform policy decisions effectively.

#### Other (please specify) (17.46%)

The "other" category suggests that some respondents have unique or specific ideas for addressing vaping at a societal level. Responses indicated a growing concern about the use of vaping products, and several measures have been proposed to address this issue. Some suggestions include limiting the supply of vaping products to medical prescriptions only and regulating their distribution. There is also a call for more education programs to raise awareness about the dangers of vaping. Additionally, there are suggestions to ban the sale of vaping products in Australia and impose fines on those who sell them to minors. The government is also urged to take responsibility for public health and regulate imports of vaping products. Overall, there is a need for stricter regulations to control the use and distribution of vaping products in Australia.

The survey results demonstrate a clear consensus on the need for increased education, stricter regulations on advertising and marketing, age restrictions, and potential bans on flavoured vaping products to address vaping at a societal level. These measures collectively aim to reduce the appeal and accessibility of vaping products, especially to young individuals, and provide more comprehensive information to the public regarding the risks associated with vaping.

#### Q16 Additional comments

The additional comments emphasised the importance of peer influence in educating young people about the dangers of vaping. They also highlight the success of anti-smoking campaigns in reaching and impacting young audiences.



### Summary of Additional Comments

- Anti-smoking campaigns have proven effective in reaching and influencing young people. These campaigns have played a significant role in reducing smoking rates among youth.
- The comments emphasise the importance of utilising a similar approach when addressing vaping. Just as anti-smoking campaigns have succeeded in conveying the risks of tobacco use, anti-vaping campaigns should adopt strategies that resonate with young audiences.
- Peer-to-peer influence is crucial in convincing young individuals of the dangers of vaping. This approach recognises that young people often listen to and are influenced by their peers. Therefore, involving peers in educational efforts can be highly effective.

These comments underscore the need for tailored anti-vaping campaigns that leverage the success of anti-smoking initiatives and prioritise peer-to-peer communication as a key strategy for educating young people about the risks associated with vaping.