

Issues Paper E-cigarettes and Vaping



“ Vapes can look like gum or a highlighter and are easily hidden.

- Quit Victoria

What are vapes?



Vapes are battery operated devices that work by heating chemicals to an aerosol so it can be inhaled. It is not just water vapour.

Nicotine is highly addictive and high amounts have been found in vapes and liquids labeled nicotine free.

Chemicals known to cause cancer are common in vaping liquids, including formaldehyde, acetaldehyde and acrolein (common in glue and weed killer).

The nicotine in 1 vape can equal 50 cigarettes, but can be much higher.

There are no safety standards holding vape companies to account and labelling cannot be trusted.

Are vapes legal?



A prescription is needed for adults to legally access e-cigarettes that contain nicotine.

It is illegal in Victoria to:

- supply vapes (or accessories) to a person under the age of 18 years (even if it does not contain nicotine)
- use vapes in designated smoke free areas (even if the sign only reads no smoking)

“ Increase in vaping could undermine decades of tobacco control in Australia.

- Quit Victoria

How common is vaping?



22% of adults in Victoria had ever vaped in 2022 (up from **17%** in 2018-19)

6.1% were current users (3.0%)
3.5% were regular users (1.6%)

The largest increase in vaping was among people under 30 years

19.4% of males 18-24 years currently vaped in 2022 (up from **10.8%** in 2018-19)
15.2% of females 18-24 years (**2.8%**)

Of all current e-cigarette users, **25%** had never smoked

An Australian school staff survey indicated **78%** were concerned about vaping in primary and secondary schools

Important Facts



Vapes (e-cigarettes) pose serious health risks:



Seizures and poisoning in some users



Some chemicals can impact the heart and lungs and cause cancer



Exposes users to heavy metals and fine particulate matter (also found in air pollution from traffic and bushfires)



Short term impacts may include coughing, breathing problems, vomiting, swelling and throat irritation



Students report poor mental health, social interactions and school/sport performance



Vapes generally contain much more nicotine than cigarettes



Young people who vape are more likely to smoke tobacco cigarettes later



Vapes containing nicotine can be bought in some Gippsland shops under the counter or online



Vaping is harder to detect than smoking because there may be no odour or a sweet, fruity smell



Vapes are actively and illegally marketed to children and young people by the tobacco industry



A fruity or sweet flavour does not make vaping safe

What can we do?



1. Advocate for a ban on import and sales of vapes and products
2. Enforce existing laws that make it illegal to sell vapes
3. Access [Quit resources for parents, carers, schools and teens](#)
4. Access [resources and fact sheets](#), including “No smoking or vaping” signs
5. Encourage anyone vaping to quit, see the [Quit Centre](#) for the latest information for health professionals on smoking cessation
6. Read the [Quit and Heart Foundation position statement on smoking cessation](#)
7. Invite young people to contribute to design and delivery of local resources and services