



ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH AUSTRALIA

18 April 2024

Senator Marielle Smith
Chairperson
Senate Committee for Community Affairs Legislation

Dear Senator Smith,

Re: *Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Bill 2024.*

Environmental Health Australia (EHA) is writing to the Committee to express our strong support for the *Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Bill 2024*.

Environmental Health Australia Ltd (EHA) is the premier environmental health professional organisation in Australia which advocates for environmental health issues and represents the professional interests of all environmental health practitioners. The focus of our organisation is the science of environmental health in the enhancement of environmental health standards and services to the community through advocacy, promotion, education and leadership.

Environmental health professionals are employed across all levels of government including the Australian Defence Force, in universities and in private enterprise. That said, many of our members are Environmental Health Officers' s who are front-line workers responsible for regulating public health protection at state and local government level, often as statutory and authorised officers under various legislation and responsible for enforcing legislation such as tobacco reforms.

The tobacco and vape industry have deliberately marketed vape products to young people, and vaping rates in Australia have increased significantly over recent years, particularly among children and young people. The Bill will close the loophole that is currently exploited by the tobacco and vape industry, whereby retailers sell falsely labelled "non-nicotine" vapes to children. The Bill will protect Australian children and young people, while still ensuring that people who smoke can access vaping products for smoking cessation through a prescription model.

EHA is concerned about vaping among Australian children and young people

- Over recent years, the rate of vaping in Australia has increased significantly, particularly among young people¹.
- One in ten Australian children aged 14-17 years currently vape².

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2022-23: Electronic Cigarettes and vapes. Supplementary data tables. Canberra: AIHW, 2024.

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2022-23: Electronic Cigarettes and vapes. Supplementary data tables. Canberra: AIHW, 2024.

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There are numerous established health harms from vaping. These include exposure to toxins³ and adverse effects on the cardiovascular system and lungs⁴.

- Exposure to nicotine during adolescence has been associated with cognitive and behavioural impairment and lasting structural changes in the brain⁵.
- One in ten vape shops are located close to schools⁶.
- Most teenagers say it is easy to access vapes⁷.
- 87% of Australian adults support prohibiting the sale of vapes (with or without nicotine) to people under 18 years of age⁸.
- Most teenagers try vapes out of curiosity, not to quit smoking⁹.

Environmental Health Australia is a Member of the Australian Council on Smoking and Health (ACOSH), a leading, independent, Australian tobacco control advocacy organisation. We support ACOSH's goal to create a tobacco-free and vape-free Australia.

Should have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email at national@eh.org.au or M:0402798996.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Swain LFEHA
National President
Environmental Health Australia

³ Larcombe A, Allard S, Pringle P, et al. Chemical analysis of fresh and aged Australian e-cigarette liquids. *Med J Aust* 2022;216(1):27-32.

⁴ Banks E, Yazidjoglou A, Brown S, et al. Electronic cigarettes and health outcomes: umbrella and systematic review of the global evidence. *Medical Journal of Australia* 2023;218(6):267-75.

⁵ Castro EM, Lotfipour S, Leslie FM. Nicotine on the developing brain. *Pharmacol Res* 2023;190:106716; Wood L, Greenhalgh EM, Hanley-Jones S. 5.4 Adolescence and brain maturation. In: Scollo M, Winstanley M, eds. *Tobacco in Australia: Facts and issues*. Melbourne: Cancer Council Victoria, 2019.

⁶ Tuson M, Lizama N, Kameron C, Gazey A, Wood L. Vape stores in Western Australia: growth, proximity to schools and socio-economic gradient of density. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*. 2024:100118.

⁷ Watts, C., Egger, S., Dessaix, A., Brooks, A., Jenkinson, E., Grogan, P., & Freeman, B. (2022). Vaping product access and use among 14–17-year-olds in New South Wales: a cross-sectional study. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 46(6), 814-820.

⁸ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2022-23: Electronic Cigarettes and vapes. Supplementary data tables. Canberra: AIHW; 2024.

⁹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2022-23: Electronic Cigarettes and vapes. Supplementary data tables. Canberra: AIHW; 2024.

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