

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Wednesday 25 October 2023**

### **Alarming new data reveals 9 in 10 teens find access to illegal vapes easy**

New research from Generation Vape led by Cancer Council reveals that nine in ten (87%) teenagers aged 14-17 find access to vapes easy, reinforcing the urgency for the Federal Government to implement planned tobacco and e-cigarette reforms.

The study reports that more than two thirds (67%) of teenage 'ever-vapers' had used an e-cigarette knowing that it contained nicotine. Ever-vapers are those who have had at least a few puffs of an e-cigarette.

This is cause for alarm as e-cigarettes containing nicotine are only legally available with a prescription under current laws.

Alecia Brooks, co-author of the study and Chair of Cancer Council's Tobacco Issues Committee, says addressing easy access to e-cigarettes should remain a top priority for governments to curb the concerning rise in youth vaping.

"1 in 3 'never-vapers', those who have never used an e-cigarette, are curious about vaping and evidence shows that 14-17-year-olds who use e-cigarettes are three times as likely to go on to smoke regular cigarettes," Ms Brooks says.

"We know interference from industry is troublesome because manufacturers and retailers continue to exploit and market directly to young people."

Meanwhile, there are concerns among parents and teachers; four in five (82%) parents see preventing their child from vaping as a high priority and three in four (76%) teachers report addressing vaping as a high priority. Also, as many as three quarters of parents and carers (72%) suspect their child is using a disposable vape.

The study also notes that nearly a third of parents reported seeing anti-vaping messages in the past three months, and more than two thirds of teachers have said that their school had communicated about vaping two or more times in the past six months.

"We can't place the burden of managing this public health crisis on parents and teachers, when we know e-cigarette products continue to be imported and sold illegally alongside lollies and snacks at convenience stores and tobacconists in their community.

"Until the planned tobacco and e-cigarette reforms are implemented and enforced, the industry will continue to profit at the expense of young people.

“We are supportive of the Federal Government’s proposed approach to e-cigarettes which recognises that these products are readily available to young people and is focused on reducing access and supply of e-cigarettes, so they do not get into the hands of young people in the first place.

“Cancer Council encourages all levels of government to support these reforms so we can protect the health of young Australians and prevent a new generation from becoming addicted to nicotine.”

-ENDS-

If you smoke or vape, speak to your healthcare professional or call the Quitline on 13 7848 for advice and support tailored to you.

**Notes to the Editor:**

- Generation Vape is the leading Australian study to survey teenagers about their experiences and perceptions of vapes. It is led by Cancer Council NSW in partnership with the Daffodil Centre and the University of Sydney, and funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, Minderoo Foundation, the NSW Ministry of Health and Cancer Institute NSW.

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**About Cancer Council Australia**

Cancer Council Australia is Australia’s leading cancer charity, working to reduce the impact of cancer for all Australians. Cancer Council Australia works with its members, the eight state and territory Cancer Councils to:

- Undertake and fund cancer research
- Prevent and control cancer
- Provide information and support for people affected by cancer
- Shape and influence policy and practice

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