

MEDIA RELEASE

TUESDAY 14 FEBRUARY

New data reveals nine in ten Australians want government action to stop Australia's escalating e-cigarette crisis

A new [report](#) shows growing support for policy action to limit the availability and use of e-cigarettes, with almost nine in ten Australian adults (87%) supporting government action to stop a new generation of Australians becoming addicted to nicotine.

The new data comes just weeks after the TGA received numerous submissions on proposed reforms to the regulation of nicotine vaping products from concerned Australians and public health organisations, including Cancer Councils and Quit, urging immediate action on nicotine vaping products.

In these submissions, Cancer Councils called for border controls on the importation of all vaping products, to support enforcement by state and territory agencies and stop illegal sales.

“Together, Australia’s leading public health experts urged state, territory and federal governments to step up, and work together to stop the illegal importation and sale of e-cigarettes. We have laws in place designed to protect Australians from the many immediate and future health impacts of vaping. But they are being blatantly disregarded”, said Libby Jardine, Chair of Cancer Council’s Tobacco Issues Committee.

The Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer report, commissioned by Cancer Council Australia and Quit, also reveals that an increasing number of Australians understand the health harms of e-cigarettes. In 2022, more than eight in ten Australians (81%) agreed that e-cigarettes are highly addictive, a significant increase from 70% in 2021.

“Interestingly, this new data shows that the overwhelming majority (83%) of 18- to 24-year-olds agree that e-cigarettes are ‘highly addictive’”, said Ms Jardine

It echoes the contacts Quitline in Victoria receives from Australians – as young as 12 years old – experiencing addiction and looking for support to quit e-cigarettes.

“Young people are clearly concerned about these harmful products. This age group, who also [have the highest rate of e-cigarette use](#), are just as likely to support stronger policy action (86%) as any other age group”, added Ms Jardine.

“It sends a strong signal to government that the majority of people across the country recognise this escalating public health crisis and want government action before it’s too late”, said Ms Jardine.

E-cigarette use has the significant potential to sabotage decades of world-leading successful tobacco control in Australia, as people aged 18-24 who try e-cigarettes are [three times more likely to subsequently take up smoking](#).

“Many e-cigarettes are falsely labeled as nicotine free in a bid to get them imported into Australia, however many contain nicotine. Some e-cigarettes have been found to contain as much nicotine as [50 cigarettes](#), unbeknownst to those who use them.

“Since it’s not practical for law enforcement officers to determine whether an e-cigarette product contains nicotine without laboratory testing, e-cigarettes remain too easy to access,” warns Ms Jardine.

“This tsunami of illegal products being imported, stored in warehouses, sold in shops, marketed online and supplied to young people without detection, can be stopped. The federal government must take stronger action at the border to stop these products entering the country, whilst eliminating the supply of so-called ‘non-nicotine’ e-cigarettes”, recommends Ms Jardine.

“The longer we wait to enforce and strengthen existing laws, the more people – especially young people – we’ll see experiencing nicotine addiction, poisoning, seizures, burns and lung injury. We can stop this, but only if all Australian governments step up now”, Ms Jardine concludes.

Visit Cancer Council’s [website](#) for further information on how all governments can stop a new generation becoming addicted to nicotine.

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About the data

The new [report](#) from Cancer Council Victoria’s Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer (CBRC) examined perceptions of e-cigarettes and support for policies concerning their availability and use among Australian adults in September 2021 and again in September 2022. Data for this report were collected through the Social Research Centre’s probability based-panel Life in Australia™.

Notes to editor

We suggest that any content of this nature should direct to a consumer resource for further information or support. Cancer Council Australia and Quit Victoria recommend the inclusion of the following line within any content:

Call Quitline (13 7848) for free advice. Quitline counsellors can answer any questions you may have about e-cigarettes and can help you think of ways to approach the conversation.

If your teenager or young person wants help to quit vaping, they can have a confidential, live chat with a Quitline counsellor at quit.org.au.

Contact details

For all media enquiries and interview opportunities, please contact:

- Cancer Council Australia.
media@cancer.org.au
02 8256 4109 (redirects to mobile outside of business hours)
- Quit (Victoria)
Prue.gildea@cancervic.org.au
03 9514 6462 (redirects to mobile)

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

About Quit

Established in 1985, Quit works to reduce the prevalence of smoking and to reduce tobacco and nicotine-related harm in Australia. Quit is a program of Cancer Council Victoria, funded by Cancer Council Victoria, VicHealth, the Victorian Department of Health and the Australian Government's Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Branch. Quit Victoria administers the Quitline in Victoria (established 1993), dedicated to supporting people wanting help to give up smoking or vaping. Quit is evidence-informed and works closely with Cancer Council Victoria's Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer.