

Media release

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New study challenges findings used by tobacco and e-cigarette manufacturers to lobby against effective policies

[New research](#) from The Daffodil Centre, a joint venture between Cancer Council NSW and The University of Sydney, on vaping and smoking trends among New Zealand adolescents is challenging previous findings used by tobacco and e-cigarette (vape) manufacturers to lobby against effective e-cigarette policies. The research examines the potential impact of vaping on smoking trends among nearly 700,000 14-15-year-old students over a 25-year period.

“Our research has shown that contrary to an influential previous study that suggested vaping might be displacing smoking among New Zealand youth, we found that vaping may have actually slowed New Zealand's progress in preventing adolescent smoking,” explains Sam Egger, Statistician at The Daffodil Centre, “this new research shows the prevalence of daily vaping in New Zealand increased from 1.1% in 2015 to 10.0% in 2023 marking a staggering nine-fold increase over eight years.”

In 2023, approximately 12.6% of 14-15-year-old students in New Zealand had ever smoked, nearly double the projected 6.6% had 'ever smoking' rates continued on their pre-vape era trajectory. Similarly, in 2023, around 3.0% of students were smoking regularly, but this rate would have been just 1.8% had it followed its pre-vaping trend.

“New Zealand serves as a potentially useful case study for examining the negative impacts of light controls on e-cigarette availability and promotion. Our research shows that laws that facilitate easy access to vaping products for adults may have unintended negative health consequences on young people.” Mr Egger says.

“The findings underscore the importance of effective policy approaches in Australia to curb both vaping and smoking among adolescents,” explains Alecia Brooks, Chair of Cancer Council's Tobacco Issues Committee, “We know that teenagers aged 12-17 who had vaped are five times more likely to start smoking in the future than those who had not, which is why effective laws and enforcement to protect our youngest generations from the harms of e-cigarettes remains critical”.

“The previous claims used by tobacco and vaping industries to prevent effective regulations in Australia are now clearly corrected.

“In Australia, we have seen early positive signs from new vaping laws across the country, and the health of Australian teenagers will be better for it. However, this research serves as an important reminder that we can't get complacent. We must continue to enforce these laws and protect these policies from vested commercial interests.” Ms Brooks concludes.

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Support:

If you or your child use vapes, speak to your healthcare professional or call [Quitline](https://www.quitline.com.au) on 13 7848 for advice and support tailored to you.

If this story raises any concerns for you, call Cancer Council on 13 11 20

About The Daffodil Centre: The Daffodil Centre is a joint venture between [Cancer Council NSW](https://www.cancer.org.au) and the [University of Sydney](https://www.usyd.edu.au). As a leading research centre on cancer control and policy, the Daffodil Centre provides timely and relevant evidence to national and international policy-makers to inform best-practice decision-making in cancer control. For more information on the Daffodil Centre, visit daffodilcentre.org