

Youth Action response to question on notice



Question on notice: *Is there a particular group of young people that are particularly at risk of vaping?*

Youth Action was unable to locate any published data on particular groups of young people that were more likely to engage in e-cigarette use. However, we have outlined what we have heard anecdotally from young people and the youth sector about which groups of young people are more likely to be impacted and recent statistics regarding the age of young vapers.

Youth Action data:

Young people reported that those with mental health concerns often used e-cigarette products as an affordable and accessible way to manage stress and other mental health concerns. They felt that young people dealing with poor mental health or suicidality often turned to vapes when they were not aware of other support options or otherwise able to access mental health treatment.

Anecdotally we heard through our survey and consultations that particular age groups and demographics were more likely to use e-cigarettes. In preparation for our submission, we asked the youth sector: *Have you noticed that certain age groups or demographics of young people are more likely to vape?* We heard that 61.54% of youth workers identified particular cohorts of young people that were more likely to engage in e-cigarette use. In particular, many noted that those aged 13-17 were vaping, with many youth workers noting a

concern with younger and younger demographics engaging in the habit. Some cited ages as young as under 12, occurring at primary school age.

Other respondents identified young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or those with involvement in the justice system often tend to vape more than others. Others identified young people doing it tough such as young people living in transitional or insecure housing, young people with mental health concerns or from low social-economic backgrounds.

Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care:

Secondary school students' use of tobacco and e-cigarettes – 2022–2023: survey of over 10 000 students aged 12 to 17.

- 30% of secondary students had tried vaping at least once
- 12.9% of 12-15-year-olds had vaped in the last month
- 22.1% of 16-17-year-olds had vaped in the last month.