

Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety Inquiry into E-cigarette regulation and compliance in New South Wales

12 April 2024

QUESTION

Mr PHILIP DONATO: Are either of you aware if any vaping-related safety incidences have occurred at any of your schools, either kids being hospitalised or having to be treated by ambulance or any other injuries that have been sustained whilst they've been vaping at school?

MARTIN GRAHAM: I don't have specific incidences but I certainly know that it has happened. I don't have kids' names but I certainly have heard of incidents—I think particularly kids who are vulnerable, perhaps have asthma and so on. I guess there's always the question of, "Was it the vapes?", and so on. I don't have an exact clinical diagnosis.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: Are you able to take that on notice and provide a written response to this Committee, Mr Graham?

MARTIN GRAHAM: I can see what we've got on that. But, as I said, sometimes incident data won't exactly identify that, but I can certainly see what we've got.

The CHAIR: We don't need children's names, just the number of incidences.

ANSWER

In the period January 2023 to April 2024, there were 49 incidents reported to the Incident Report and Support Hotline involving usage and consumption of vapes reported on school grounds. Three of these incidents required an ambulance to be contacted by the school.

Smoking and vaping are managed under the Student Behaviour Policy and Drugs in Schools Policy with disciplinary matters, including those related to e-cigarettes and vaping, managed by schools.

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Mr PHILIP DONATO: The vaping round table discussion that you said was held last year—what were the recommendations or findings that came from it?

MEGAN KELLY: There were quite a few recommendations that came out of that. Many of those actions were already underway. It's just ensuring that we're delivering on those. One of those recommendations was to bring the education and the resources and support down to a younger age group. We had been looking at high school students specifically—so bringing it down to our years 5 and 6 students. That work is underway. Development of a guide for our teachers—we've already got a whole lot of advice but are consolidating that into a guide that they can use. The additional professional learning has already gone live. Linking our resources and support to the latest health campaign—that work is underway.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: Are you able to provide this Committee in the next seven days with a copy of those recommendations?

The CHAIR: You can take that on notice.

MEGAN KELLY: Certainly. And they are published on our website. They're publicly available now, but we can, yes.

MARTIN GRAHAM: We can provide them.

ANSWER

NSW held the first Roundtable on Vaping in Schools on Thursday 16 November 2023, where it heard from students, teachers, principals and evidence from health experts and researchers about vaping behaviour and how it is affecting young people. Further work is underway to develop resources to better support and inform students, teachers, and principals in managing this issue in our schools. This work will complement and enhance the ongoing efforts of NSW Health to increase the awareness of the dangers of vaping in the wider community.

There are 11 actions which are part of the department's Prevention and support framework – e-cigarette use (vaping). Details of each action are outlined on the department's website at <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/pdhpe/drug-education/community-information>.