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“Gross”, “Cringe” and “Just not cool”: New Cancer Council data reveals fewer young people vaping

New national data from the Generation Vape study, led by Cancer Council in partnership with the University of Sydney, has found that among 14-17-year-olds the rate of vaping was rapidly rising in recent years but started to drop late last year, falling from 18 per cent in early 2023 to now 15 per cent in 2025.

The study shows that while vaping was rapidly rising in 2023, now in 2025 young people aged 14-17 years old are vaping less. The number of young people who have never vaped has increased to 85% compared to 82% in early 2023. Even more promising is young people who have never smoked is at its highest ever level at 94%.

This comes as the Australian Government has today announced over 10 million illegal vapes have been seized from the Australian market since January 2024.

Alecia Brooks, Chair of Cancer Council’s Tobacco Issues Committee says these enforcement figures and vaping trends are encouraging indicators that vaping laws are protecting young people, but illegal retailers persist in putting profit over public health.

“Vapes are becoming less socially acceptable, and less accessible however tobaccoists in particular continue to exploit young people. Of those who said they purchased their own vape this year, over a third said they’d purchased it from a tobaccoist or vape shop.”

“Some tobaccoists and vape shops are still blatantly selling illegal vapes to young people. With strong vaping and tobacco control laws now in place, we welcome increased government and agency enforcement action to deter and hold retailers accountable for illegally selling these harmful products.”

“What is encouraging is that vape product access through social media channels remains incredibly low. Platforms like Snapchat, the most common platform for purchases, saw a decrease from less than a tenth in February 2024 to just 4% in April 2025. Young people are also being exposed to significantly less vape ads on popular social media platforms this year compared to early 2024,” explains Ms Brooks.

Professor Becky Freeman, Chief Investigator of the Generation Vape study, University of Sydney adds, “the study also shows that the social acceptability of vaping over the past few years has shifted. Young people tried vaping as it was marketing to them as fun, “safe” and full of great flavours, but the increasingly young people report the realities of vaping addiction and harm to their wellbeing.”

Participants in the Generation Vape study have also shared how their perceptions of vaping have changed over time:

A 17-year-old male and regular vape user said, *“Like before it used to be more like cooler, like... I don’t know. I guess, like I don’t know, more fun and exciting but now it’s just like kind of like gross now.”*

A 17-year-old female and regular vape user said, *“This sounds like weird for me to say, but I feel like it’s kind of good that like I’m embarrassed by it...when I first started...where like “Oh, everyone’s doing it”, and now it’s like a lot of people think that it’s like cringe and it’s...just not cool to do that. So, I feel like it’s kind of like I don’t like to admit that I do I vape, cause it’s like it’s got this like kind of stigma around it now, yeah.”*

Ms Brooks says, “Young people are more aware about the harms of vaping, and it’s not just across 14-17-year-olds. Our latest national data shows the rate of vaping among 18-24-year-olds has dropped from 20% in 2023 to 18% in 2025, and we hope to see this decline continue among all young people.”

“This data tells us that we’re on the right track. We can’t take our foot off the pedal now and our focus needs to be on effective enforcement measures. Both retailers and the landlords who lease shops to these illegal sellers cannot be allowed to continue to profit. We welcome today’s action from all governments and agencies to stop vapes from ending up in the hands of illegal retailers, like tobacconists, to protect the health of Australians,” concludes Ms Brooks.

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Contact details

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About Generation Vape

[Generation Vape](#) is the leading Australian study to survey young people aged 14-24 years, parents and teachers 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, the NSW Ministry of Health and Cancer Institute NSW.

As Generation Vape data is continually analysed over time with multiple cohorts small differences in data points may be reported.

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

Find out more at cancer.org.au, or visit our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).